



Managing a COVID-19 Case in School: A Guide for School Administrators

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LIVINGSTON COUNTY 
Health Department

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Introduction

This toolkit is intended to assist K-12 public and private schools in Livingston County in creating an internal process for managing a school-related COVID-19 case for the 2021-2022 school year.

Managing COVID-19 in the School

Designate a COVID-19 Point of Contact (POC)

Designate a staff person (e.g., school nurse) to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. All school staff and families should know who this person is and how to contact them. Identify a secondary person as well to help with difficult situations and cover absences.

LCHD School Liaisons

Each school district is assigned a Livingston County Health Department (LCHD) school liaison as their health department contact. The district school liaison serves as the point person for questions regarding COVID-19 in the school, including but not limited to, contact tracing, isolation, quarantine, return dates, and infection prevention.

Emergency Operations Plan

Schools are expected to maintain a COVID-19 Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that is comprehensive in nature and continually updated throughout the school year.

School Action Steps for a Positive Case

School and LCHD learn of a student or staff member diagnosed with COVID-19

If the school becomes aware of a case of COVID-19 in a student, a teacher, or a staff member, notify the LCHD school liaison immediately. LCHD will send a list of cases to the school's designated POC in a secure email by 3:00pm on weekdays. Only a select few at the school should know the identity of the person with COVID-19. Those few individuals are critical to helping LCHD identify close contacts to the case and to determine what areas of the school need special attention for disinfection and cleaning. Other than those few individuals, the person's identity is kept confidential in respect for their privacy as well as following regulations of Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (for schools) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) (for LCHD).

If the school becomes aware of a case of COVID-19 in a student or staff member:

1. Isolate the student or staff member.
2. Ensure proper cleaning and disinfection.
3. Notify LCHD.
4. Notify the school community.
5. Identify close contacts and provide this list to LCHD.
6. Immediately notify close contacts.
7. LCHD sends quarantine or exposure letters to close contacts.
8. LCHD notifies school COVID-19 liaison of return to school dates.

Isolate the student, teacher, or staff member

Continue to monitor the health status of the student or staff member in the Isolation/mitigation room while they are awaiting transport home or to a health care provider.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Affected Area

The risk of transmission of COVID-19 through fomites (surfaces) is low. Using a product identified on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency List N: Disinfectants for COVID-19 list (<https://bit.ly/3BcPPif>) to clean once daily is sufficient to remove potential virus on surfaces. When an infectious student is identified in the school building, school staff should clean and disinfect areas that the ill student occupied following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting (<https://bit.ly/36IFGfm>). Ensure safe and correct usage and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children.

Reporting Suspect Cases to LCHD

If a student is showing symptoms prior to attending school, then the parent/guardian should not send their child to school and should contact the school to let them know. School employees should be well-versed in the school's policies to provide the parent/guardian with information about next steps and requirements for getting the student back to school.

Schools must report daily suspect cases of COVID-19 in students and staff using the Mandatory Report of Communicable Diseases in Michigan Form (<https://bit.ly/2EgPeDD>). Schools must also continue weekly communicable disease reporting of students through the LCHD website (<https://livingstonlive.livgov.com/CDReporting/>).

Notify the School Community

The October 6 epidemic order (<https://bit.ly/2VCbUXn>), Reporting of Confirmed and Probable Cases of COVID-19 at Schools, requires that if the local health department notifies the school of a case of COVID-19 associated with the school, the school must provide public notice to the school community in a highly visible location on the school's website. Further, schools are encouraged to provide the school community information about measures in place to protect against the transmission of COVID-19.

Identify Close Contacts to a Confirmed or Probable Case (Contact Tracing)

A person with confirmed or probable COVID-19 is considered to be contagious 48 hours prior to symptom onset or, if asymptomatic, 48 hours prior to the test specimen collection date. All individuals who were in contact with the case in that timeframe should be identified by the school. Using this list of individuals, the school determines who meets the threshold of close contact based on guidance provided by LCHD. LCHD does not determine close contacts in schools. LCHD solely provides guidance for the schools to make informed and judicious decisions. When assessing for close contacts, it is essential for schools to account for virtual students, student absences, and affected extracurricular activities, like sports. Close contacts are deemed to be at higher risk of developing an infection and thus are required to quarantine for at least 10 days. However, this is simply a guideline and at times, an individual in excess of 6 feet may be considered a close contact based on certain factors like duration, frequency, type of activity, etc. These situations are evaluated on a case-by-case basis with guidance from LCHD.

Confirmed Cases

The definition of a confirmed case of COVID-19 is that an individual has a positive polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test result. Confirmed cases are placed in isolation.



Probable Cases

The definition of a probable case is that an individual must have an epidemiological link (contact with a known case) and clinical symptoms of COVID-19. Or, the individual has to have a positive antigen test. Probable cases are placed in isolation.

Who is a close contact?

For COVID-19, a close contact is most often someone that has been within 6 feet (about two arms' length) of an infectious person for at least 15 minutes of cumulative time. Every case is different however, and LCHD considers how COVID-19 is spread and how a person gets infected when providing guidance for close contact identification.

Contacts of Close Contacts

Since close contacts are not yet known to be infectious, the contacts to those contacts do not need to be in quarantine and do not need to be identified or contacted. The large majority of close contacts do not get COVID-19, but because it is very contagious caution must be taken.

Reporting Close Contacts of Confirmed or Probable Cases to LCHD

Close contacts to a person with confirmed or probable COVID-19 are at risk of getting sick and must be identified and placed in quarantine to reduce the risk of spreading the virus further. To track and report close contacts of the case to LCHD, use the School Contacts Spreadsheet. Upon notification of a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, the school must collect close contact information as soon as possible. A School Contacts Spreadsheet must be completed for each COVID-19 case. The spreadsheet must include each person who came into close contact (less than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes of cumulative time) with the infected individual such as if they ate lunch together, if they were on the same team, if they carpoled, etc.

Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines

Isolation

Isolation separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick. Students and staff members diagnosed with COVID-19 should isolate by staying at home until it is safe for them to be around others. Individuals with mild to moderate disease who have COVID-19 with symptoms can be around others after:

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **and**
- Symptoms have improved.

Students and staff members with COVID-19 and no symptoms can be around others after 10 days have passed since the date the individual had a positive test.

Quarantine

Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected but don't have symptoms. Individuals that have been exposed to COVID-19 can be around others after:

- 10 days from the last date of exposure **and**
- The individual has remained asymptomatic for the duration of the quarantine period

In order to determine if quarantine is needed for exposed individuals, LCHD may request vaccination or recent COVID-19 infection status for students, teachers, and staff from the school if available.

In a situation where the school learns of a positive individual in the classroom or bus setting, the following quarantine guidance is recommended for exposed students:

Quarantine for Exposed Students: Educational Setting with Non-Universal Masking

Applies to students exposed in a classroom or bus setting where:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individuals (case and close contacts) are NOT wearing masks covering their nose and mouth 2. Infection control guidelines are NOT being followed as outlined in the CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools 	
Outcome:	
Fully Vaccinated or Recent Infection Students	Unvaccinated Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully vaccinated asymptomatic individuals and those who have had COVID-19 within the last 3 months do not need to quarantine and can continue to attend in-person school. • Exposed, fully vaccinated individuals are recommended to wear a mask and get tested 3-5 days after an exposure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unvaccinated students (who are close contacts) identified within 6 feet should quarantine.

Quarantine for Exposed Students: Educational Setting with Universal Masking

Applies to students exposed in a classroom or bus setting where:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All individuals (case and close contacts) are wearing masks covering their nose and mouth 2. Infection control guidelines are being followed as outlined in the CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools 	
Outcome:	
Fully Vaccinated or Recent Infection Students	Unvaccinated Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully vaccinated asymptomatic individuals and those who have had COVID-19 within the last 3 months do not need to quarantine and can continue to attend in-person school. • Exposed, fully vaccinated individuals are recommended to wear a mask and get tested 3-5 days after an exposure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unvaccinated students (who are close contacts) identified within 3 feet should quarantine. • Unvaccinated students (who are close contacts) identified between 3 to 6 feet should be notified of their exposure and asked to monitor their health for 14 days from the date of exposure. These students do not have to quarantine and can continue to attend in-person school.



In a situation where the school learns of a positive individual outside of the classroom or bus setting (i.e. school-related sports or extracurricular activities), the following quarantine guidance is recommended for exposed students:

In non-educational settings, the following quarantine guidance is recommended for exposed <u>students</u> :	
Fully Vaccinated or Recent Infection Students	Unvaccinated Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully vaccinated asymptomatic individuals and those who have had COVID-19 within the last 3 months do not need to quarantine and can continue to attend in-person school. Exposed, fully vaccinated individuals are recommended to wear a mask and get tested 3-5 days after an exposure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unvaccinated students (who are close contacts) identified within 6 feet should quarantine.

In a situation where the school learns of a positive individual in the classroom or bus setting, the following quarantine guidance is recommended for exposed staff and teachers:

In educational and non-educational settings, the following quarantine guidance is recommended for exposed <u>staff</u> :	
Fully Vaccinated or Recent Infection Staff	Unvaccinated Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully vaccinated asymptomatic individuals and those who have had COVID-19 within the last 3 months do not need to quarantine and can continue to attend in-person school. Exposed, fully vaccinated individuals are recommended to wear a mask and get tested 3-5 days after an exposure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unvaccinated staff (who are close contacts) identified within 6 feet should quarantine.

[Considerations for Quarantine Length](#)

Based on individual assessment, public health may continue to require individuals to quarantine for the full 14 days per existing CDC recommendations. The 14-day option most greatly mitigates the possibility of post-quarantine transmission and continues to be the strategy with the most evidence for reducing risk to others at present. Thus, for the majority of close contacts, if the individual meets the above quarantine criteria, they can discontinue quarantine after 10 days after the last exposure. At this time, given the MDHHS guidelines and the limitations in local testing capacity, discontinuation of quarantine at seven days with a negative COVID-19 test result is not a current option. Certain vulnerable populations and setting may still require a 14-day quarantine. It is at the discretion of the LCHD health officer and/or medical director to implement a 14-day quarantine when appropriate.

[Alternative Quarantine Strategies](#)

LCHD is currently working on an alternative quarantine testing strategy for students exposed to COVID-19 in school. Additional information regarding this alternative strategy will be provided in a supplemental quarantine packet.



Notification of Exposure

Schools should have a process in place to notify staff and students of their exposure to COVID-19. This message should detail that LCHD will follow-up with affected individuals to provide guidance, education, and support.

Issuing Isolation and Quarantine Letters

LCHD is responsible for following up with the affected person/family member and issues quarantine or isolation letters to ensure the infected person receives instructions regarding isolation/quarantine including restrictions, requirements, and timeframe. Only public health officials can determine isolation and quarantine guidelines using the Michigan Public Health Code; healthcare professionals are not authorized to isolate or quarantine individuals. If there are additional questions regarding isolation or quarantine, please contact your LCHD school liaison.

Return to School

The LCHD School Liaison will return the School Contacts Spreadsheet to the School COVID-19 POC with return dates for quarantined staff and students.

Self-Reporting a Positive COVID-19 Test

Schools should continue to advise teachers, staff, and household family members of students to self-report their positive COVID-19 test to LCHD. Teachers, staff, and household members are able to request isolation and quarantine letters through the LCHD COVID-19 Self-Report Form (<https://bit.ly/3xsFD2j>). LCHD will provide daily information to the school about isolation and quarantine for affected individuals.

School Closures and Remote Learning

Students who are excluded from school should be afforded the opportunity, as soon as feasible when they are well enough to participate in classwork, to make up any missed classwork without penalty in order to reduce mental or physical anxieties about missed academic opportunities. Schools should prepare for students to attend school via remote learning while in isolation or quarantine. LCHD refers students and parents to their school for direction regarding education during isolation or quarantine.

There may be a time where cases in a school increase to a point where closing the school for in-person learning might be the best option to protect students and staff. If multiple students/staff members are diagnosed with COVID-19, LCHD and school officials will discuss whether additional measures (including closure of a building or a school) are warranted. Other reasons (local epidemiologic data or results from public health investigations) may also warrant discussion regarding potential closures. Schools should be prepared to transition into remote learning with minimal notice. This is a fluid situation and schools need to be adaptable to these changes.

Resources

National, State, and Local Guidance

LCHD K12 Infection Prevention Guidance – Coming Soon!

MDHHS Interim Recommendations for Operating Schools Safely (<https://bit.ly/3hXia4R>)

CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools (<https://bit.ly/3hVmPnS>)

Reference Materials

LCHD Reference Materials

LCHD Vaccination Data Dashboard – Coming Soon!

LCHD Vaccination Scheduling (<https://bit.ly/3eHwaxu>)

MDHHS Materials

MDHHS COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard (<https://bit.ly/3xWPlpf>)

MI Start Map (<https://bit.ly/3wTyCHh>)

CDC Materials

COVID-19 Data Tracker (<https://bit.ly/3xYdQaP>)

