SUPPLEMENT TO ORLEANS/NIAGARA BOCES K-12 REOPENING PLAN

Consistent with Supplemental Guidance from the New York State Department of Health, this Supplement to the Orleans/Niagara BOCES Reopening Plan addresses the issues of Remote Learning, COVID-19 Testing, and Contact Tracing. Like the remainder of the Reopening Plan, this Supplement is subject to revision as warranted by circumstances or additional information.

Remote Learning

In an effort to assure high-quality education, the BOCES continuity of learning plan for the 2020-2021 school year consists of guidance for teaching and learning in-person, remotely, and through hybrid models of instruction. Our plan will assure that instruction is aligned with the New York State Learning Standards and provides equity as well as quality for all learners.

Equity is at the heart of all school instructional decisions. All instruction in our BOCES will be designed so that whether it is delivered in-person, remotely, or through a hybrid model due to a local or state school closure, there are clear, comprehensive, and accessible learning opportunities for all students. Such opportunities will be aligned with state standards. Our teaching and instructional plan outlines routine, scheduled times for students to interact and seek feedback and support from their teachers. Our plan is centered on instruction and academic programming that includes regular and substantive interaction with an instructor regardless of the delivery method (e.g., in person, remote or hybrid). Our teaching and learning plan includes a clear communication plan for how students and their families/caregivers can contact the school and teachers with questions about their instruction. This information will be accessible to all, widely disseminated, and include clear and multiple ways for students and families to contact schools and teachers (e.g., email, online platform, and/or by phone) in an effort to assure learning for all.

As we enter the new school year, teachers will be encouraged to spend time building relationships, supporting students with the transition back to school, and teaching social distancing etiquette at developmentally appropriate levels.

At the time of this submission, all classes are anticipated to be in person.

Given the possibility that communities may experience spikes in COVID-19 cases at any point during the school year, which may prompt short-term or long-term school closures, the BOCES is prepared to utilize a hybrid/blended learning model and schedule that can continue in a fully remote environment.

The BOCES will transition its instructional learning to a remote learning platform if and when we need to do so. We will continue to work collaboratively with our component school districts to assist them in identifying any inequities that exist. Our career and technical education students (greater than 1,700) and our special education students (greater than 400) will continue to receive instruction through Google Classroom. Instructors will provide both asynchronous and synchronous learning opportunities for all participants. The component districts will be working with those students who may have limited internet and device access in an attempt to ameliorate the issue. The BOCES will provide alternate instruction (printed packets) for those students until the limited access issue is resolved.
When a remote or hybrid learning model is necessary, certain groups of students will be prioritized for in-person learning to the greatest extent possible. Those include, but are not limited to, special education students, English language learners, and students who did not engage in remote learning during the Spring of 2020.

Acknowledging that the typical content in a given grade level or course may need to be adjusted, content will be prioritized to ensure that students receive instruction for the prioritized learning standards, key understandings, and skills necessary for students’ success in future study.

Instruction will not focus only on “core” subject areas, to the exclusion of elective courses. Consideration has been given to prioritizing hands-on and lab-based activities while students are onsite in school buildings. All instruction will continue to be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards.

Student schedules will remain the same whether instruction is in person or remote so that students do not encounter conflicts wherein synchronous lessons for different subjects are offered simultaneously.

Remote learning opportunities for secondary students will include a greater emphasis on synchronous instruction, with teachers finding ways to provide live instruction and lessons to students. While recording of live lessons is still essential for students unable to attend at a scheduled time, teachers will ensure that their students are directly engaged with them and their class peers in experiential learning on a regular basis.

To ensure high-quality remote learning experiences, we will standardize the use of a single online learning platform, to the extent practicable, and follow a common, coordinated set of guidelines for teachers to follow when using the platform with students.

Grading practices will follow a standards-based framework designed to provide direct feedback regarding students’ mastery of course content.

**COVID-19 Testing**

Despite mitigation efforts such as daily health surveys and the BOCES’ best efforts to minimize transmission with class cohorts, face coverings, and physical distancing, among others, infections can still happen in a school setting. The school has four basic responsibilities in connection with having a person, who has symptoms suggestive of COVID-19, referred for testing: (1) recognition and assessment; (2) isolation and containment; (3) notifications to parents/students and the county health department; and (4) referral to the private physician or other health care provider for testing. The BOCES does not perform, or require the performance of, COVID-19 testing.

Faculty and staff who observe a person with symptoms that are suggestive of COVID-19 will immediately refer that person to the school health office. School nurses will rely on symptom-based criteria as directed by our school physician to recognize and assess a person with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19. When our school nurse suspects that there may be a COVID-19 case, the nurse will immediately isolate and contain that individual from others. The nurse will then notify the emergency contact that dismissal is necessary and keep the individual safe and
comfortable until dismissal. (Should the school nurse later learn from the individual or a parent that the individual tested positive, the nurse will also notify the county health department.) The school nurse will recommend to the individual or the parent/guardian to contact their physician or other health care provider that same day, and inform the health care provider of the symptoms. The nurse will give the individual written information from the Centers for Disease Control and Infection (CDC) and/or the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) regarding what to do if you are ill with COVID-19.

The school nurse and school physician will work with the county health department and the private physician or other health care provider, as needed. However, the private physician or other health care provider and the county health department will determine who will be tested and will conduct the testing.

All positive laboratory-confirmed or physician-diagnosed probable cases are managed on a case-by-case basis for a return out of isolation and back to school. Health certificates from the private physician or other health care provider and the public health department's direct guidance will be required. Lacking testing, individuals must follow CDC and NYSDOH symptom-based criteria for a return to school.

Frequently asked questions documents pertaining to reopening of schools, from the Niagara County Department of Health and the Genesee and Orleans Health Departments, respectively, are included with this Supplement. Those documents, like any of the other contents of our guidance documents, may be revised or updated at any time.

**Contact Tracing**

Contact tracing is a complex investigative tool that involves identifying people who have an infectious disease (index cases) and people with whom they came in contact (contacts). The BOCES does not perform contact tracing. The BOCES works closely and cooperatively with the public health officials who perform contact tracing.

The BOCES is required to keep track of and to report to the county health department the names of contacts within the school of a first (index) case for any reportable infection. Schools have done so in the past for common childhood illnesses like mumps, whooping cough, and unusual highly contagious diseases like meningococcal meningitis. Now we will do so for COVID-19. The county health department will, through contact tracing, be in direct contact with persons who may have been exposed to COVID-19. The BOCES will send correspondence to staff, parents, and students, as appropriate, providing notice of a case of COVID-19. Such correspondence will not identify the person having COVID-19.

Prevention measures will also facilitate contact tracing. To the extent practicable, as discussed in the K-12 Reopening Plan, students will be in self-contained cohorts of appropriate group sizes, and measures will be taken to prevent or restrict intermingling across cohorts. Additionally, the BOCES will restrict access to buildings, enforce face-covering and social distancing requirements, and require health screenings, as discussed in the Reopening plan.

Frequently asked questions documents pertaining to reopening of schools, from the Niagara
County Department of Health and the Genesee and Orleans Health Departments, respectively, are included with this Supplement. Those documents, like any of the other contents of our guidance documents, may be revised or updated at any time.

Dated: August 14, 2020
Frequently Asked Questions Regarding School Reopening
from Niagara County Department of Health

Niagara County Department of Health partners with local school districts to ensure the health and safety of students and staff in our community. These FAQs are dynamic and subject to change as more information is made available by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), New York State Department of Health (NYDOH), New York State Education Department (NYSED), and New York State Center for School Health (NYSCSH).

What are the symptoms of Coronavirus?

What is the difference between a quarantine and an isolation?
A quarantine is someone who was in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 and is separated away from others. A quarantine is instructed to stay home for 14 days, to check their temperature twice a day and to watch for symptoms of COVID-19.
An isolation is someone who tested positive for COVID-19 and is separated away from others. An isolation is instructed to stay home for at least 10 days since symptoms started or if asymptomatic (no symptoms) since the day of their positive test.

What is a Person Under Investigation (PUI)?
A PUI is a person who has signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and either is a known contact to a case or traveled to a state with a significant community spread. PUIs are monitored by county and/or state contact tracers.

Who should a school nurse contact if they have clinical questions?
All clinical questions from school nurses and school medical directors should be directed to the Niagara County Department of Health Nursing Division at 716-278-1900.

What PPE should a person wear when performing temperature checks or working in an isolation room?
Screeners providing in person temperature checks should be provided and use PPE, which includes at minimum, an acceptable face covering or mask, and may also include gloves, a gown, and/or a face shield.

Source: NYSDOH Interim Guidance - https://on.ny.gov/31A6tm Page 20

School health office staff caring for sick individuals must exercise both standard and transmission-based precautions. In areas with moderate to substantial community transmission, eye protection (i.e., googles or face shield) should be added. When caring for a suspect or confirmed individual with COVID-19, gloves, a gown, and a fit-tested N-95 respirator should be used, if available (or surgical face mask and face shield, if not available), as well as eye protection.

Source: NYSDOH Interim Guidance - https://on.ny.gov/31A6tm Page 20

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When should a symptomatic student or staff member return to school?
If a student or staff member is sent home with symptoms of COVID-19, in order to return to the in-person learning environment, the individual will need at minimum, documentation of evaluation by a health care provider (health care provider note clearing a person to return to school) and a negative COVID-19 test as well as symptom resolution. If the COVID-19 test is positive, release from isolation will be managed by the Niagara County Department of Health (NCDOH) (in alignment with New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) guidance).

Source: NYSCSH Health Information Portal - https://bit.ly2PMMak1
NYSDOH Interim Guidance - https://on.ny.gov/31A6tm

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Who are essential personnel and when can they return to work if identified as an asymptomatic quarantine?
If an asymptomatic essential staff member answers yes to one or more of the following health screening questions:

- knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;
- has traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days.

he or she is considered a quarantine. The individual may return to work if he/she maintains compliance with NYSDOH Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure:
https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/06/doh_covid19_publicprivateem ployeereturntowork_053120.pdf to include at minimum:
- direct commute to and from his/her workplace
• maintain use of an appropriate face covering while at his/her workplace
• takes his/her temperature twice a day to ensure it is below 100.0°F
• maintain at least six (6) feet from others whenever possible

Source: NYSED Who are Essential Personnel:
https://www.schoolhealthny.com/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=530&ViewID=7b9f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&c=0&FlexDataID=4422&PageID=286
NYSDOH Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure:

Who should be tested and where can they go for testing?

Staff or students that are sent home with symptoms of COVID-19 as well as those that answer yes to the screening questionnaire should be referred to their healthcare provider for further evaluation and testing. The medical provider and/or the school district may provide a list of COVID-19 test sites in Niagara County: https://www.niagaracounty.com/health/Services/Public-Health-Preparedness/2019-Novel-Coronavirus-COVID-19. The Niagara County Department of Health recommends COVID-19 testing for quarantines managed by the NCDOH (to include close contacts, those with international travel as well as those who traveled to a state with widespread transmission of COVID-19). In the event that large-scale testing at the school is needed, a local drive-thru COVID-19 sample collection site may be utilized by coordinating with the NCDOH.

Source:
NYSDOH Interim Guidance - https://on.nv.gov/31A16tm
CDC https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-testing.html

Contact Tracing

The Niagara County Department of Health (NCDOH) has the authority and responsibility to perform contact tracing. Once notified of a positive case, the NCDOH conducts an investigation and will contact and notify the school nurse (or other designated person as determined by the school district). Depending on the specifics of the case and potential exposures, additional close contacts will be elicited, and quarantine and/or notification may be determined. The school will support the NCDOH contact tracing efforts with information relevant to who may have had contact at school with a confirmed case by sharing supporting documents such as:
• Attendance records of students and staff members
• Visitor logs to include date, time, rooms visited
• Roster of students on the bus route
• Class schedule of activities (such as cafeteria, playground, gym)
• Relevant contact information for close contacts (name, address, phone number)
According to the NYSDOH, the definition of close contact with COVID-19 cases, for purposes of contact investigations and potential movement restrictions such as quarantine, includes, but is not limited to:

- Sharing the same household;
- Direct physical contact;
- Direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g. being coughed on, touching used paper tissues with a bare hand); or
- Being within 6 feet of a case for 10 minutes or more (e.g. room, car).

The NCDOH will also consider other factors such as proximity of contact, duration of exposure (e.g. longer exposure time likely increases exposure risk), and whether the individual has symptoms (e.g. coughing likely increases exposure risk), when deciding whether an exposure resulted in close contact. Close contacts are required to be quarantined according to NYSDOH for 14 days and are monitored by NCDOH. Confidentiality will be maintained as required by federal and state law regulations. NCDOH will only discuss names of cases with appropriate school personnel consistent with HIPAA. No parents or other students will be informed of names or identifying information.

In some cases, a school may decide to make notifications to other students and staff in the classroom or building who are not close contacts. These individuals could be considered proximate contacts. A proximate contact is considered as being in the same enclosed environment such as a classroom, office, or gathering but greater than 6 ft. from a person displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or someone who are tested positive for COVID-19. These individuals should be monitored for signs and symptoms but are not part of the contact tracing effort.

Source: NYSDOH Health Advisory 040820 https://on.ny.gov/3fSBRGs
NYSDOH Guidance https://on.ny.gov/33S6idC
CDC Community Exposure: https://bit.ly/2PHqlp

How often and by whom should high touch surfaces such as desks be cleaned?

Cleaning and disinfection are the primary responsibility of the school’s custodial staff. Disposable wipes may be provided to faculty and staff so that commonly used surfaces such as desks and cafeteria tables can be wiped down before and/or after use, followed by hand hygiene.

How often and by whom should school busses be cleaned?

According to the CDC, school buses should be cleaned and disinfected at least daily or between use as much as possible. Drivers should practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff (e.g. hand hygiene, cloth face coverings).

To clean and disinfect school buses according to CDC bus transit operator guidance:

A schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection is advised by CDC. Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.

Updated 8.13.2020
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT LOCAL SCHOOL REOPENING

Geneese and Orleans County Health Departments (GO Health) appreciate all the effort of local school districts to reopen amid COVID-19 safety requirements and reopening plans. We understand that school districts face many unique and complex challenges, and we are here to support your measures for health and safety for both students and staff at this time. The health and safety of our communities is our paramount concern. We understand that there are likely to be lingering questions for the reopening process, and the following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are meant to assist reopening plans and general communication between local schools and GO Health. These FAQs are dynamic, subject to change, and can be expanded upon as necessary. Our guidance and suggestions remain dependent upon and secondary to guidance provided by New York State.

GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR NYS SAFETY PLANNING:

1. What documents are essential to consider for NYS reopening of schools?
Found at https://forward.ny.gov/phase-four-industries, NYS guidance for Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools is offered through four separate documents: summary guidelines, detailed guidelines with required affirmation, reopening plan checklist, and supplemental guidance. Specific links can be found as follows:


Similar guidance can also be found through the NYS Education Department at http://www.nysed.gov/coronavirus/guidance-p-12-schools, which includes their own FAQ document found at http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/reopening-schools/school-reopening-faq.pdf

COMMUNICATIONS FROM AND WITH GO HEALTH

2. Should the school district have a designated representative for COVID-19, and what should this representative do?
Yes, GO Health recommends school districts designate an internal COVID-19 representative (CR). This could be, for example, one CR for the district, or one CR for each building or a number that makes sense for the district. CRs are responsible for answering questions from students, faculty, staff, and parents or legal guardians of students regarding COVID-19 public health emergency and plans implemented by the school. CRs should also work closely with GO Health and other schools to monitor public health conditions and jointly develop monitoring strategies. A recommended way for the CR to be trained in the basics of COVID-19 and contact tracing is through the online course offered by Johns Hopkins University at: https://www.coursera.org/learn/covid-19-contact-tracing?cdocomorph=covid-19-contact-tracing.
3. How and when should the school district communicate with GO Health?
GO Health should be contacted Monday-Friday as follows:
  - At (585) 589-3278 from 8-4pm for Orleans County
  - At (585) 344-2580 ext. 5555 from 8:30-5pm for Genesee County
If there is reason to believe that a confirmed positive COVID-19 case may have not yet been reported to GO Health, please contact us as soon as possible during regular business hours. For any more urgent needs, please refer to our internal contact protocol.

4. Does GO Health know about all cases of COVID-19?
GO Health receives all confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Genesee and Orleans from residents that are electronically transmitted from laboratories, by law. Importantly, confirmed cases in all district employees that live outside of GO Health counties will be investigated by the jurisdiction that they reside in, and will likely receive first contact from their local county health department. If a district is made aware of a case, and no contact has yet occurred from GO Health, please contact us as soon as possible.

5. What information will GO Health share, and what will remain confidential?
GO Health will only discuss names of cases with preapproved school personnel consistent with HIPAA. After informing the parents/guardians, schools will be notified of all students and staff placed under mandatory quarantine or isolation, as well as when there is release from quarantine or isolation, as this status will affect necessary absences.

Positive cases will be identified in press releases for the media as follows:
  - By school district for a staff member
  - By school district and building for a student
No further information will be shared about location of positive cases with the media by GO Health.

TESTING

6. To what extent will GO Health assist with COVID-19 testing?
GO Health recommends COVID-19 testing source and location to be prioritized as follows:
  - Primary care physicians or urgent care as needed
  - Appointment based NYS-run testing sites (currently at Monroe Community College, Niagara Community College, and Perry St. next to the KeyBank center in Buffalo)
  - Further information can be found at [https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you).
  - GO Health is not currently a viable option for necessary negative COVID-19 testing.

7. When is a negative COVID-19 test necessary?
In addition to documentation from a healthcare provider, all students and staff who screen “positive” according to appropriate screening questions and symptom assessment must receive a negative COVID-19 test before returning to in-person instruction.

CONTACT TRACING

8. Who does the contact tracing for COVID-19 positive cases?
Genesee and Orleans County Health DepartmentsFAQ for School Reopening 8/13/2020
GO Health will do case investigations for all COVID-19 positive cases who live in their counties. If a positive case lives in an adjoining county, that county’s health department is responsible for conducting the case investigation. If a case who lives outside Genesee or Orleans County has contact with any Genesee or Orleans County residents, GO Health is notified and follows up with those contacts.

9. How does contact tracing work?
GO Health receives lab results from all its residents through an automated system. As soon as GO Health is notified of a positive resident, a nurse or epidemiologist from GO Health interviews the positive person and finds out who they have had recent close contact with (less than 6’ for 10 minutes or more). People with COVID-19 are often contagious up to 2 days before coming down with symptoms, so GO Health staff ask all patients about their contacts beginning two days before they began to feel sick. The person with COVID-19 is placed on mandatory isolation for at least 10 days after the day they first felt sick. If the person with COVID-19 is a child, GO Health staff speak with the parent(s), guardian(s), and/or teacher(s) of the child to figure out who the close contacts are. GO Health staff then call all of the contacts of the positive person, notify them of the date of their exposure, ask them if they are having any symptoms, and place the contact on mandatory quarantine for 14 days after their last date of close contact with the COVID-19 positive person.

10. What is the difference between isolation and quarantine?
Isolation is required to separate a case (someone who tests positive for COVID-19) from his/her contacts for a minimum of 10 days. Quarantine is required to separate people who have been exposed to COVID-19 (as a result of interacting with a case or travel from a designated area) from other well persons during the incubation period of an illness, which is 14 days. Close contacts are required to be quarantined according to NYS Department of Health for 14 days after last contact with a case and are monitored by GO Health and NYS contact tracing efforts. During the period of quarantine, a contact could become a case and isolated.

11. What is the difference between a close contact and a proximate contact?
Per NYS guidelines, a close contact is defined by any of the following:
- within 6 feet of a positive case for more than 10 minutes up to 48 hours before case’s symptom onset to case’s isolation
- exposed to or give care to positive case
- direct touching
- shared food
- exposed to sneezing or coughing

A proximate contact is considered as being in the same enclosed environment such as a classroom, bus, office, or gatherings but greater than 6 ft. from a person displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Many factors affect the degree of concern associated with proximate contacts, and proximate contacts will be quarantined at the discretion of GO Health.

12. What is a Person Under Investigation (PUI)?
A PUI is a person who has signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and either is a contact to a case or traveled to an area with a high disease burden. PUIs are monitored by GO Health and the NYS contact tracing effort.

13. What can school districts do to assist GO Health with contact tracing efforts?
GO Health recommends the following:
- Attendance list and designated seating charts specific to classrooms
- Attendance list and designated seating charts specific to buses
- Attendance list for all staff that includes records of location

Genesee and Orleans County Health DepartmentsFAQ for School Reopening 8/13/2020
• Awareness and record of substitute travel and work at multiple districts
• Awareness and record of outside vendors or visitors
Such records should be kept on hand and made available to GO Health should need arise to investigate a confirmed case.

14. What should be done after an elevated temperature reading or other positive symptom screening?
Temperatures and other known symptoms should be monitored daily for all students and staff, and be measured above any normal baseline to assess new illness onset. Environmental factors should be considered as part of the screening process. Should reason exist to doubt the validity of a temperature reading, body temperature can be retaken at the discretion of school district protocol. Any student being sent home as the result of a positive screening should be immediately separated from other students and supervised until their parent/legal guardian or emergency contact can retrieve them from school. Staff should also be immediately sent home without any further in-person interactions. Any staff or students with a positive screen should follow established protocols for any return to in-person instruction.

15. Are teachers considered essential workers, and therefore eligible to work while under quarantine according to provisions allowed for essential workers?
This determination is made by NYS, as seen at https://esd.ny.gov/guidance-executive-order-2026, and districts are encouraged to work within ongoing State guidance on this issue. Any essential worker must follow State guidelines for return to work, found at https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/04/doh_covid19_essentialpersonnelreturntowork_rev2_033120.pdf

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONCERNS OVER CONTACT TRACING

16. As a parent, I heard from someone else that my child had contact with a COVID-19 positive person. What should I do?
If your child was indeed a close contact with a COVID-19 positive person, you and your child will be contacted as soon as possible by the GO Health contact tracing effort.

17. My child has been isolated due to a positive test for COVID-19. What does this mean for our family?
Your child will have to isolate in your home for at least 10 days after your child started feeling sick. Household members will be placed on mandatory quarantine, meaning they can’t leave the home, and can’t have any visitors. If any household members are essential workers, they may be allowed to continue going to work only if they are healthy and free of any COVID-like symptoms, and they and their employer meet certain New York State requirements. New York State offers paid leave for many workers who have to miss work due to being quarantined: https://paidfamilyleave.ny.gov/COVID19

18. My child was out sick from school with COVID-19. She has been in isolation for 10 days now, and is all better. When can she go back to school?
New York State currently requires that children who had COVID-19 get a negative test before they can go back to school, out of an abundance of caution, as well as documentation from a healthcare provider. Once your child has recovered from COVID-19, and once 10 days have passed since your child first got sick, she will be released from isolation by the health department. That means GO Health will no longer be monitoring your child, and she will be able to leave the home and see family and friends again.

Genesee and Orleans County Health DepartmentsFAQ for School Reopening 8/13/2020
19. My child has been quarantined due to close contact with a classmate or teacher who tested positive
for COVID-19. What does that mean for our family?
Your child will have to quarantine in your home for 14 days following the last date of close contact with the
positive person, meaning the child can’t leave the home, and can’t have any visitors. The family members
of the child are not under quarantine, and are able to continue going to work, school, etc. If the child is too
young to be home alone, a parent or guardian will have to miss work to take care of him/her. In that case,
New York State offers paid leave for many workers who have to miss work due to caring for a quarantined

20. Can’t my child just be tested for COVID-19 to get off of quarantine earlier?
Unfortunately, no. After being infected with COVID-19, it takes people between two and fourteen days to
start feeling sick. People often don’t test positive for COVID-19 until about the time that they start feeling
sick. This means that, even if your child tests negative during the quarantine period, he/she may still be
infected with COVID-19 and may get sick.

21. I’m pretty sure my family already had COVID-19. If my child has a positive antibody test, can
he/she avoid being quarantined?
No, for two reasons. Firstly, the antibody test may come back positive because your child was recently
infected with one of the other coronaviruses that infects humans, not with the coronavirus that causes
COVID-19. Four of these different coronaviruses cause cold symptoms in people, and are common.
Secondly, we don’t know yet if having COVID-19 antibodies will fully protect your child from getting
COVID-19 again. That is why New York State doesn’t allow us to take antibody test results into
consideration when quarantining people.

22. My child’s classmate had COVID-19 and only had to isolate for 10 days, but my child has to
quarantine for 14. Why is that?
The purpose of isolation is to keep contagious people away from healthy people, to stop the spread of
COVID-19. Studies show that people who have COVID-19 start out being very contagious just before they
start to feel sick, and then become less and less contagious as the days pass during their illness. Unless
someone is extremely sick or has a weakened immune system, by the tenth day of their illness, people are
no longer contagious. This is why isolation ends after the 10th day, as long as the patient is feeling better.
The purpose of quarantine is to keep people who may become contagious away from healthy people. We
know that when someone is infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, it takes between two and
fourteen days for that person to start to feel sick. This is why we quarantine potentially infected people for
fourteen days after their last date of exposure.

23. I think my child’s classmate had a false positive. Why does my child still have to quarantine?
The way COVID-19 tests work, it is possible for a negative test to be wrong, meaning it’s possible for the
test to be unable to find the virus even though a person really is infected. This can happen if the sample
wasn’t collected properly, or if the person was tested too early or too late in their illness. But it is nearly
impossible for a positive test to be wrong, that is, it’s extremely unlikely for the test to find the virus even
though a person is really not infected. Many people who have COVID-19 don’t have symptoms, or have
symptoms that they confuse with something else like allergies or indigestion. People who test positive for
COVID-19, even if they don’t have symptoms or think their symptoms are caused by something else, may
still be able to transmit the infection to others. Because of this, all positive test results are treated as
positives by GO Health. People who are COVID-19 positive are required to isolate, and their close
contacts are required to quarantine.
24. My child was wearing a mask when she was exposed, and so was the positive person. Why does my child still have to quarantine?

Cloth masks aren't all equally effective. Some are made of tightly woven materials or multiple layers, while others are made of materials that allow more droplets to pass through. Some fit more snugly to the face, and others have large gaps. Some people wear their mask properly over their nose and mouth, and other people let their mask slide down so their nose is exposed. All of these factors have a huge effect on how much protection a mask provides, and make it very difficult for investigators to determine the exact level of risk someone who was exposed while wearing a cloth mask. Because of this, and out of an abundance of caution, New York State requires that we quarantine people who had close contact with a positive case, even if the positive case or the contact were wearing cloth masks at the time.