

Dear K-12 Partners:

After two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to use the most effective and appropriate public health tools we have, along with consideration of other resources available and the status of COVID-19 in our community. Our greatest public health tools are vaccination (including boosters), masking, testing after exposure, ventilating areas, and staying home when sick. Growing options of medical treatments are also available and changing the way we deal with the pandemic.

Contact tracing has been an important tool for slowing the spread of COVID-19, especially earlier in the pandemic when we had fewer tools available. While it continues to be important in certain high-risk settings or situations, individual contact tracing is a less effective tool for responding to the pandemic at this phase in most settings and situations. Therefore, individual contact tracing and exclusion from school after a lower risk exposure, which will now be referred to as low-intensity exposures*, is no longer recommended in K-12 schools. However, schools should still notify parents and staff of exposures so they can receive appropriate public health guidance, testing, and access to any resources that might be needed to assist them with their own healthcare decision making. This can be done as a group notification for most exposures. Those with low-intensity exposures* should be expected to wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days after exposure.

High-intensity exposures* will primarily occur outside of the school setting and identification of these exposures and notification of contacts will be the responsibility of the individual with COVID-19 or their parent/guardian. You are asked to try and identify any high-intensity exposures in the school setting that a student/staff member may not identify on their own. This should not be a burdensome or time-consuming activity. In other words, do not spend a great deal of time trying to identify contacts any longer.

You are still required to report cases of COVID-19, as well as outbreaks of any illness, to the local health department within 24 hours. Management of an outbreak of COVID-19 may vary from that described below. Management may also change based on rates of COVID-19 in the community and new variant activity.

When the school becomes aware that someone within the school community has COVID-19, or symptoms of COVID-19, the school should take the following steps in response:

Row numbers are in reference to the "I am SICK and/or I have tested POSITIVE FOR COVID-19/I have been EXPOSED to someone with COVID-19" flowsheet.

Step 1:

- Find out the date the person with COVID-19 started showing symptoms (if they have symptoms) or
- If they don't have symptoms, the date the person tested positive for COVID-19 (use the date the test was *collected*).

Step 2: If they tested positive:

- Report the positive case to local public health within 24 hours, as required by the public health code (more information regarding these requirements can be found in [Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools](#)).
 - Arrange with your local public health department their preferred means to receive such reports.

Step 3: If they tested positive or have symptoms but didn't test/didn't see a healthcare provider:

- Provide isolation guidance
 - See the "**K12 Schools Isolation Letter**" template that can be edited and used for this purpose.
 - This provides the person with important information on how to isolate, when they can return to school, and how to notify high-intensity contacts.
 - You can also include a copy of, or refer to, the "I am SICK and/or I have tested POSITIVE FOR COVID-19/I have been EXPOSED to someone with COVID-19" flowsheet.
- Refer to Rows One through Four for Isolation Management guidance.

Step 4: If they tested positive:

- Notify the student's teachers, coaches, club leaders, etc. and ask them to identify any **high-intensity contacts*** in the school or school activities that the person who has COVID-19 may not be able to self-identify or contact.
 - This identification should start from 2 days prior to the beginning of the person's symptoms. If the person with COVID-19 does not have symptoms, identify contacts from the 2 days prior to their positive test result (use the date the test was collected).
- If any high-intensity contacts are identified, see Row Five and Row Six for management and notify them of their need to quarantine or test-to-stay.
- The "**K12 School Individual Close Contact Letter**" template can be used to notify contacts.
 - You can also include a copy of, or refer to, the "I am SICK and/or I have tested POSITIVE FOR COVID-19/I have been EXPOSED to someone with COVID-19" flowsheet.

Step 5: If they tested positive:

- Notify students/staff with **low-intensity contact* as a group**.
 - Do not perform contact tracing to identify individual "close contacts," rather those in a shared indoor airspace for more than a cumulative total of 15 minutes (within a 24-hour period).
 - This would include classmates, teammates (that are not high-intensity contacts), coworkers in meetings together, etc.
 - Notifications should be provided to all individuals in these low-intensity settings, including those who are vaccinated and/or recently infected.
- See "**General Exposure Notification**" template.
 - You can also include a copy of, or refer to, the "I am SICK and/or I have tested POSITIVE FOR COVID-19/I have been EXPOSED to someone with COVID-19" flowsheet.
- Refer to Row Seven for management.

NOTE: Efforts are being made to educate the public regarding how long to stay in isolation and quarantine and to notify their own close contacts using www.tellmycontacts.org (Michigan resources [here: www.mi.gov/containcovid](http://www.mi.gov/containcovid), CDC resources [here: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-)

[ncov/if-you-are-sick](#)). If your school becomes aware of or has concerns that a staff or student's household member has COVID-19 or is a close contact due to a non-school exposure, direct them to these resources. You can advise them to quarantine as directed by these resources. If they have questions or concerns, advise them to contact their healthcare provider or local health department or dial 211 or call the MI COVID Hotline at 888-535-6136. **You are not responsible for the direction of out-of-school cases and contacts, and you should handle these situations as you would any other self-reports of illness.**

***What is meant by a high-intensity contact and a low-intensity contact?**

People who have a high level of exposure to COVID-19 are the most likely to get COVID-19.¹ In other words, the more virus that gets in your body, the more likely you will get infected. Examples of high-intensity contacts include the following:

- Household contacts
- Family members that visit often
- Romantic or intimate partners
- Friends or family that have spent the night
- Roommates
- Caregiver to someone ill with COVID-19, but not household member
- Shared personal items (water bottles, food, candy, toothbrush, cigarettes, etc.)
- Anyone you shared a car for a significant time with windows closed. Significant time is typically an hour or more, but is less if you are not using a mask, the person with COVID-19 is talking a lot, eating, coughing, etc.
- Close, repeated physical contact while breathing heavily (exercise, athletics, roughhousing, etc.)
- Meal partner if mealtime was long and sat close together

What is meant by a low-intensity contact?

Low-intensity contacts is anyone you were within 6 feet or less for at least 15 minutes in a 24-hour period that are not high-intensity contact.

¹ DeAnna J Friedman-Klabanoff, Meagan C Fitzpatrick, Meagan E Deming, Vaidehi Agrawal, Sandra Sitar, Torin Schaafsma, Elizabeth Brown, Kathleen M Neuzil, Ruanne V Barnabas, Miriam K Laufer, Hydroxychloroquine COVID-19 Postexposure Prophylaxis Study Team, Risk of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 Acquisition Is Associated With Individual Exposure but Not Community-Level Transmission, The Journal of Infectious Diseases, 2022,, jiac029, <https://doi.org/10.1093/infdis/jiac029>