

COVID-19 Guidance for Educational Institutions from the Wyoming Department of Health: What to Expect if a Student or Staff Member has COVID-19

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This document provides general guidance on what students, staff, and parents can expect if a person tests positive for COVID-19 within an educational institution. Public health officials will make specific recommendations based on each situation. Public health officials are responsible for identifying individuals with COVID-19 and for identifying contacts; this is not an expectation of school officials. Public health officials will actively reach out to notify and make recommendations for all individuals with potential exposure to COVID-19.

Case Interview

When a positive test result is reported to public health, a local or state public health official will contact the person who tested positive, or the parent if the person is less than 18 years of age, to complete an investigation and gather the following information:

- School, grade, classroom, and activities for students; job title and workplace for staff
- Symptoms and symptom onset date
- Underlying health conditions
- Close contacts including those in the home, in the school, and other close contacts. Close contacts are people that have been within six feet of a person with COVID-19 for ten minutes or more while the person with COVID-19 was infectious. The infectious period begins 48 hours before symptoms start (or before the test was collected if the person has no symptoms) and lasts until the person with COVID-19 is released from isolation.
- Date of last contact with the person with COVID-19 for close contacts
- Any other information deemed relevant by public health officials

The school will be contacted by public health to notify the school of the positive result and to gather additional information such as seating charts and schedules.

The person with COVID-19 will be issued isolation orders. These orders direct the person to stay home except to seek medical care. If the person with COVID-19 has symptoms, the case will remain in isolation until:

- 10 days have passed since symptoms started, and
- The person has been fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication, and
- The person has noticed improvement in respiratory symptoms

If the person with COVID-19 has no symptoms, he or she will remain in isolation until at least 10 days have passed since their COVID-19 test was collected.

Contact Tracing

Those people considered to be close contacts (close, prolonged contact with the person with COVID-19 as defined above), will be contacted by public health. The public health official will gather the following:

- Basic demographic information
- Current symptoms, if any



Public Health officials will recommend that close contacts get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible, and then again a week later if the first test was negative.

Public health officials will issue quarantine orders directing the contact to stay home except to seek medical care for 14 days following the last exposure to the person with COVID-19. The quarantine period will last 14 days, even if a person tests negative, because it can take up to 14 days for a person to become sick with COVID-19

Release from Isolation and Quarantine and Return to School

Once public health officials determine the person with COVID-19 is no longer infectious, he or she will be given a release from isolation letter. The person can return to school and resume normal activities.

Close contacts under quarantine may return to school and resume normal activities once they have completed their 14 day quarantine period if they have not tested positive for COVID-19 or developed any symptoms.

Cleaning and Disinfecting after a Person is Diagnosed with COVID-19

CDC recommends that areas used by the person during their infectious period be closed off to others. Outside doors and windows should be opened to increase air circulation in these areas. If possible, schools should wait 24 hours after the infectious person had been in the area to begin cleaning and disinfecting. However, in the majority of cases, 24 hours will have already passed between the time an infectious person was in the area and a positive test is resulted. All areas (offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill persons should be cleaned and disinfected, with focus on frequently touched surfaces. If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. If at least 7 days have passed since the infectious person was in the area, no additional cleaning measures are needed.

More detailed information about cleaning and disinfecting schools can be found on CDC's website: [Interim Guidance for Child Care Programs and K-12 Schools](#)

Will a School Have to Close if a Student or Staff Member is Diagnosed with COVID-19?

Whether a school has to close, as well as the length of any closures, will depend on multiple factors, including but not limited to the number of cases detected within the school, the extent of COVID-19 spread within the community, and the extent to which COVID-19 precautions have been implemented within the school. In most instances, a single case of COVID-19 in a school would not warrant closing the entire school. Short dismissals may be recommended for a school or a segment of the school to allow time to complete the appropriate cleaning and for public health officials to conduct the contact investigation. If there is a significant outbreak within a school, then more extensive closures may be necessary.

Public health officials will provide recommendations to schools on whether a closure is needed and the length of closure needed based on each specific situation. Public health officials will also work with school officials to determine whether a school needs to move into a different tier of operations - for example, move from Tier 1 into Tier 2 according to the SmartStart Guidance.

More resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for schools and institutes of higher education:

[School Settings | COVID-19](#); [Colleges and Universities | COVID-19](#)

For more information about the COVID-19 outbreak please visit: health.wyo.gov or cdc.gov.

