

Exclusion Category	Scenario	Criteria to return to school
Diagnosis	Person has tested positive with an antigen test but does not have symptoms of COVID-19 and is not known to be a close contact to someone diagnosed with COVID-19.	<p>If the person has a repeat PCR/molecular test performed in a laboratory within 24 – 48 hours of their positive antigen test, and that PCR/molecular test is negative: the positive antigen test can be considered a false positive and the person can immediately return to school; OR</p> <p>If the person does not have a repeat PCR/molecular test, or has one within 24 – 48 hours and it is also positive, the person can return to school 10 days after the first positive test, as long as they did not develop symptoms.</p> <p>The person is not required to have documentation of a negative test in order to return to school.</p>
Diagnosis	Person has tested positive with a PCR/molecular test but the person does not have symptoms.	Person can return to school 10 days after their positive test.
Symptoms	Person has symptoms of COVID-19 and has tested positive with an antigen test or PCR/molecular test	<p>Person can return to school when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been 10 days since the first day of symptoms; AND • It has been at least 24 hours since the person had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); AND • Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving. <p>The person is not required to have documentation of a negative test in order to return to school.</p>
Symptoms	Person has symptoms of COVID-19 but has not been tested for COVID-19 nor has visited a health care provider. Therefore, the person who has symptoms is presumed positive for COVID-19 due to the presence of a clinically compatible illness in the absence of testing.	<p>Person can return to school when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been 10 days since the first day of symptoms; AND • It has been at least 24 hours since the person had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); AND • Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving.
Symptoms	Person has symptoms of COVID-19 but has received a negative test for COVID-19* or has visited a health care provider and received a an alternate diagnosis that would explain the symptoms of COVID-19 *In a person with symptoms, a negative test is defined as either (1) a negative PCR/molecular test or (2) a negative antigen test if the person has a low likelihood of SARS-CoV-2 infection (e.g., the person has no known or suspected exposure to a person with COVID-19 within the last 14 days or is fully vaccinated or has had a SARS-CoV-2 infection in the last 3 months.) See CDC antigen algorithm for interpretation of antigen tests	<p>Person can return to school when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been at least 24 hours since the person had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); AND • They have felt well for at least 24 hours. <p>Note: The health care provider is not required to detail the specifics of the alternate diagnosis.</p>
Exposure	Person who is not fully vaccinated and has been in close contact with someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19. (Fully vaccinated persons and persons who have tested positive in the last 3 months and do not have any symptoms after a close contact do not need to quarantine.)	<p>Person can return to school after completing up to 14 days of quarantine. The 14 days of quarantine begin after the last known close contact with the COVID-19 positive individual. Alternatively the person may complete a 10-day quarantine if the person is not presenting symptoms of COVID-19 after daily at-home monitoring, or they may complete 7 days of quarantine if they report no symptoms during daily at-home monitoring, and the individual has received results of a negative antigen or PCR/molecular test on a test taken no earlier than day 5 of quarantine.</p> <p>Follow the recommendations of your local public health department if someone at your schools should quarantine. Local public health authorities make the final decisions about how long quarantine should last in the communities they serve, based on local conditions and needs.</p>

		<p>If quarantine is discontinued before day 14, the individual should continue to monitor symptoms and strictly adhere to all non-pharmaceutical interventions (e.g. wear a mask, practice social distancing) through 14 days after the date of last exposure.</p> <p>Note: NCDHHS recommends that schools not require an individual who is fully vaccinated (at least 2 weeks after getting their second dose in a 2-dose series or one-dose of a single-dose series) or tested positive for COVID-19 in the past three months to quarantine if they have had no symptoms after being a close contact to someone with COVID-19, and they do not live in a congregate setting (such as a shelter).</p>
<p>Exposure</p>	<p>K-12 student who is not fully vaccinated but has been in close contact with someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19, in which both individuals were wearing a mask the entire time</p>	<p>NCDHHS does not recommend quarantine of students following exposures in school settings if masks were being worn appropriately and consistently by both the person with COVID-19 and the potential exposed person. This applies to exposures in classrooms, other in-school settings, and school transportation but does not apply to exposures during extracurricular activities, including athletic activities. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.</p>

All schools could consider:

- Post signage at the main entrance requesting that people who have been symptomatic with fever and/or cough not enter. Examples of signage such as Know Your Ws/Stop if You Have Symptoms flyers (English: Color, Black & White; Spanish: Color, Black & White).
- Educate students, families, teachers, and staff about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, when they should stay home, and when they can return to school.
- Schools should also allow flexible, non-punitive, and supportive paid sick leave policies and practices that encourage sick workers to stay home without fear of retaliation, loss of pay, or loss of employment level. Employers should ensure that workers are aware of and understand these policies. Establish and encourage liberal use of sick days for students, provide excused absences for students who are sick, and discontinue attendance-dependent awards and ratings.
- Developing plans for backfilling positions of employees on sick leave and consider cross-training to allow for changes of staff duties.