

ACTION PLAN FOR A COVID-19 CASE IN A DANE COUNTY SCHOOL

This action plan is to be used by the staff member in a school who is responsible for contact tracing. This may be a school nurse or other staff member. Following this action plan is a requirement, [per public health orders](#).

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BinaxNOW Antigen Testing for Schools

UW-Madison is working to provide Dane County schools access to BinaxNOW rapid antigen tests for symptomatic staff and students. Test kits are limited and will be given on a first come, first served basis. UW-Madison is currently working to get more kits.

If you are interested in getting antigen tests for your school, please refer to this [website](#). It is important to understand when to test and what the test result means for your students and staff, including when they can return to school following a positive antigen test result. You can find additional information on this [flow chart](#). For reporting information related to antigen testing, please [refer to our guidance](#).

Reporting Someone with COVID-19 & Contact Tracing

When should I report someone with COVID-19?

- Schools should report all individuals who have a positive test for COVID-19 to Public Health Madison & Dane County (Public Health). Schools should only report individuals that have a positive test result and should not report close contacts or suspected cases.
- Schools do not need to ask for documentation of the positive test result from staff or students. Schools should keep a list of all cases reported to Public Health (use template provided).
- Schools do not need to report probable cases (note that this is different from Wisconsin Department of Health Services' guidelines to better support our local response).
- Students and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 should be tested to confirm or rule out COVID-19.

What should I do if a student or employee has a positive test?

1. **Report the case to Public Health.** You do not need to ask for documentation of the positive test result.
 - a. If you have access to the Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS): Report the case to us through WEDSS.
 - b. If you do not have access to the Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS):
 - i. [Request access](#). Request access by sending an email to the Wisconsin Division of Public Health WEDSS staff. Contact information is available on this website: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wiphin/wedss.htm. More than one person in a school/district can request access to WEDSS.
 - ii. In the meantime, report the positive case by calling Public Health at (608) 266-4821 and ask for the Communicable Disease Nurse on-call. You may leave a

message, as our voicemail is confidential. In your message, include your contact information, your school, and the case's name and date of birth. We will gather information about the positive case and return the call within 1-2 business days (note this might not occur with all cases when Public Health is in crisis contact tracing due to a high burden of cases in Dane County).

2. **Expect a call from a Public Health case investigator.** For all individuals reported by a school, a case investigator will contact the school within one to two days of receiving the report of a positive test. If you do not hear from the case investigator within two business days of initially reporting the case, call Public Health's Communicable Disease Nurse on-call at (608) 266-4821 (note this might not occur with all cases when Public Health is in crisis contact tracing due to a high burden of cases in Dane County).
3. **Gather information related to the case.**
 - a. Determine whether the individual was on school grounds or used school transportation while infectious, working with Public Health as necessary.
 - b. Identify individuals who had close contact with the person who tested positive, both on school grounds and on school-related transportation. Record this information on the [provided line list](#) and share with your school's case investigator (see close contact definition on the bottom of page four below).
4. **Contact employees and families of students identified as close contacts using the letter templates provided by Public Health.**
 - a. This letter will let them know they are a close contact and need to quarantine.
 - b. If you did not receive the letter templates, [please email us](#) to request them.
 - c. Public Health will not contact these individuals separately.
 - d. For confidentiality purposes, the individual who tested positive must not be identified in communications to the families, students and employees.
 - e. You are encouraged to send these letters as soon as possible. If you'd like to consult with us before sending letters, please wait for the case investigator to contact you as listed #2 above.
 - f. We will ask for you to share the copy of letters you sent to close contacts (both employees and students) with us.
5. **Notify families, as appropriate.**
 - a. For the first positive case of the 2020-2021 school year, you may wish to notify all families that someone in the school building tested positive and that close contacts are being notified. We have a template letter should your school wish to take this approach. This letter was provided directly to schools. If you need this template letter, [please email us](#).
 - b. Schools do not need to notify all families about each case (please note this is different from Wisconsin Department of Health Services' guidelines to better support our local response).

A case lives outside of Dane County. How do I report this case?

If a case lives outside of Dane County, schools can still report the case via WEDSS or by calling the individual's local health department (list located [here](#)). By reporting the case in WEDSS, the case will be referred to the individual's local health department.

Since the school building is located in Dane County, the school should still identify and notify close contacts. Schools should also contact the Public Health Communicable Disease Nurse on-call at (608) 266-4821 to report the case and arrange to send the line list of contacts ([see #3 in section above](#)). We will enter the contacts into WEDSS and individuals who live outside of Dane County will be referred to their local health department.

Positive Case Follow-Up

We receive notification of all positive cases within Dane County. When an individual tests positive, their health care provider, testing center, or Public Health will notify them of their positive test and given isolation instructions.

Unfortunately, Public Health may not be able to follow up with all individuals who test positive. We will prioritize contacting individuals with a positive diagnosis over contact notification. We aim to have case investigators follow up with schools when the school reports a positive case, but due to a high burden of cases in Dane County and staff capacity, this might not occur with all cases when we are in crisis contact tracing. Therefore, your contact tracing and recommendations for quarantining will play a critical role in reducing disease transmission.

When is someone infectious?

Someone who *tested positive* is considered to be infectious from two days before symptom onset until they meet all of the following criteria: 24 hours fever free without fever-reducing medication, other symptoms are improving (but may still be present), and at least 10 days after symptom onset.

If the individual who *tested positive* does not have symptoms, they are considered to be infectious from two days before the test date until ten days after the test was collected.

I'll be doing contact tracing for my school. How can I get more training?

We recommend that the school nurse or designated employee(s) responsible for contact tracing within the school/district take the free online [Johns Hopkins COVID-19 Contact Tracing Course](#) and review [DPI's contact tracing PowerPoint](#).

Close Contacts

How do I determine who is a close contact?

An individual is considered a close contact if any of the following is true:

- Were within 6 feet of a positive person for more than 15 minutes total in a day
- Had physical contact with the person
- Had direct contact with the respiratory secretions of the person (i.e., from coughing, sneezing, contact with dirty tissue, shared drinking glass, food, or other personal items)
- Lives with or stayed overnight for at least one night in a household with the person

This definition applies even if any or all parties were wearing face coverings or if physical barriers were used. These measures reduce the risk of spread but do not eliminate it.

What do close contacts need to do?

If a student or employee had close contact with another student or employee who tested, the close contact should follow quarantine protocols on the [exclusion table](#). If a close contact has a positive test for COVID-19, they should follow the isolation protocols on the [exclusion table](#).

How long do close contacts need to quarantine?

The CDC recently [reduced its quarantine recommendations](#) for close contacts from 14 days to 7 or 10 days.

It is up to the school or district to determine quarantine guidelines. You can either choose to have close contacts quarantine for 14 days, or 7 or 10 days after exposure. Even if a family chooses the 7 day quarantine option, the school or district can enforce the 14 day quarantine for attendance at their site. The 7 day quarantine requires a negative test that was collected 6 or more days after the last exposure.

It is safest if you quarantine for 14 days after your last exposure.

When does a close contact *not* need to quarantine?

If an individual who is a close contact had a positive viral test (PCR) for COVID in the 90 days before the exposure, they do not need to quarantine (the 90 days should be calculated using their first positive test). If someone had a positive test more than 90 days before the exposure, they do need to quarantine.

Individuals who completed a COVID vaccine series (2nd dose for a 2 dose vaccine and 1st dose for a 1 dose vaccine) at least 2 weeks before the exposure do not need to quarantine. They should be notified of the exposure, monitor for symptoms, and get tested if they develop symptoms.

What can help me identify possible close contacts easier?

For a classroom or school transportation, a closed cohort model (where classrooms do not mix) and/or assigned seating will make it easier to identify close contacts and limit the number of people potentially exposed. It may be difficult for students to both maintain 6 feet of distance and to recall close contacts. Therefore, if school staff cannot identify close contacts in a classroom or on school transportation, the entire classroom/school bus would be required to quarantine.. If close contacts in the classroom/school bus are known, then only those identified as close contacts would be required to quarantine.

How should I separate sick and well students?

We recommend that schools have a room or space separate from the health office, where students or employees (if the employee cannot leave right away) who may have COVID-19 wait to be evaluated or picked up.

Only essential employees and students assigned to the room should enter, everyone should sign-in and out so that there is a record of the people who entered the room. The room should be disinfected several times throughout the day if it is being used. Everyone should maintain physical distancing and employees should wear [appropriate PPE](#), as defined by CDC.

Students who are ill should be walked out of the building to their parent or guardian.

What if a student tests positive and has siblings or other students in their household?

- If a student has a positive COVID-19 test, their siblings or other students living in the same household would be required to quarantine because they are a close contact.
- If the close contact is unable to have complete separation from the student or person who had a positive COVID test, quarantine starts after the person who tested positive ends their isolation.
- If the close contact is able to completely separate from the person who tested positive, they must quarantine after last contact with the person who tested positive.
- If this household member eventually has a positive test, they will then follow the COVID-19 isolation guidelines for a person with a positive test.

When can someone come back after being isolated or quarantined?

For information on COVID-19 like symptoms, exclusion criteria, and when to return, please refer to the [exclusion table](#).

Closing a Building

When might a school building close?

On a case-by-case basis, Public Health will review outbreak data and several factors (including but not limited to number of positive cases, extent of exposure, and contact tracing capacity) and will make a recommendation about closure at a school or district level. According to [WI statute 252.02](#), the Wisconsin Department of Health Services has authority to close schools. If it is necessary, we will consult with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services about possible mandated school closures.

Schools and district administrators may also choose to close their schools and districts based on impediments to school functioning, such as high absenteeism and staff shortages.

Resources & More Information

Other Key Public Health Madison & Dane County Resources

- Fact Sheet: [Q&A about Schools that have someone with COVID-19 \(in Spanish\)](#)
- Webpage: [What to Do If an Employee is Sick or was Possibly Exposed \(in Spanish / in Mandarin\)](#)
 - Includes scenarios that are relevant to both employees and also students.
- Webpage: [What to Do if You are Sick or Possibly Exposed \(in Spanish / in Mandarin\)](#)
 - [Factsheet and quarantine calculator](#) on what to do if someone lives with another person who has COVID-19
- Webpage: [Testing in Dane County](#)

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction & Wisconsin Department of Health Services Resources

For general school guidance, reference the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) [Education Forward Resource](#). For COVID-19 information specific to health services, reference [DPI's School Health Services](#).

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has also published [Guidelines for the Prevention, Investigation, and Control of COVID-19 Outbreaks in K-12 Schools in Wisconsin](#). We will generally follow these guidelines with several exceptions to better support our local response:

1. Schools should not report close contacts to Public Health or do contact tracing for close contacts. Schools should only take action in the event someone has a positive test (PCR or antigen) for COVID-19.
2. Schools are responsible for sending a letter to close contacts that were on school grounds or school transportation. Public Health does not contact these same close contacts that were on

school grounds or school transportation. Public Health contacts close contacts outside of the school setting.

3. Close contacts who have a positive test need to isolate but do not need to complete their quarantine if isolation is shorter.
4. Schools do not need to call Public Health if they have three people report respiratory symptoms within 72 hours.

These exceptions are consistent with the guidelines that we have been using for case and contact follow-up throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to these exceptions, other details may vary such as suggested communication processes, specific information requested, etc.

For [DHS definitions of COVID-19 cases](#) reference the “Reporting and Surveillance Guidance” under “Physical Health and Safety Guidance”.