

# Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

**First Issued:** 8/26/2020

**Revised:** 1/11/2022 (See Change Log/Appendix F)

**SUBJECT:** Investigation of COVID-19 Cases in Pre-K-12 Schools

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
Division of Disease Surveillance

## I. PURPOSE

This SOP provides a framework for responding to COVID-19 cases among students, teachers, or staff within a school. The guidance in this SOP is not exhaustive, nor does it replace a school's strategic plan for COVID-19, or direct engagement with the Maine Department of Education (Maine DOE) or Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC). The primary goal of this document is to enable students and staff to remain in the school classroom through vaccination, pooled testing, isolation/quarantine, and masking.

## II. ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE

### Case Definitions

Maine CDC is following case definitions for COVID-19 as established by the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists. The current case definitions can be found [here](#). These case definitions are subject to change.

### School Responsibilities

A designated school staff member affiliated with the school where a case of COVID-19 is identified will be the primary point of contact and serve as an essential part of any epidemiological investigation. The designee should contact other applicable designated school administrators, school health advisors/school physicians, as needed.

The designated school staff member shall serve as the primary point of contact for families of confirmed cases. The designee should:

- Communicate with the family of a COVID-19 case and share guidance on [isolation and quarantine](#) for the COVID-19 case and for family members living in the same household;
- Provide an anticipated release from isolation date;
- Make social service referrals with the family's permission to [covidsocialsupport@maine.gov](mailto:covidsocialsupport@maine.gov);
- Recommend that the parent/guardian monitor other family members for [symptoms](#) of COVID-19;
- Advise families to alert their health care provider of the positive COVID-19 test, especially if symptoms worsen; and
- Advise close contacts to seek a COVID-19 test 5 days following exposure.

### Laboratory Testing

Maine CDC recommends testing close contacts of COVID-19 cases. Asymptomatic close

contacts should test on day 5 following exposure. Symptomatic close contacts should test as soon as possible.

Individuals identified as close contacts should follow the U.S. CDC's [guidance on quarantine](#). Testing of close contacts also helps identify additional cases and helps identify further close contacts who should quarantine. PCR confirmation of a positive antigen test is not required if the antigen test is conducted on an individual with a known exposure to a positive case or linked positive PCR pooled test. Pooled testing participants do not need additional testing beyond the pooled and follow-up testing if identified as close contacts, provided they remain asymptomatic.

In general, individuals who test positive should not be retested for 90 days following the date of the positive test result. However, an individual who develops new onset of symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection during the 90-day period following the initial positive test collection date should be retested and should isolate until 24 hours after symptoms have resolved although there will not be contact tracing. An individual who tests positive again 90 days after the last positive test must complete isolation following the new, positive result.

### **At-Home Test Results**

With increasing availability of at-home COVID-19 tests, schools may choose to accept the results from such tests. Please note that Maine CDC does not investigate or accept reports of positive results from at-home tests or count such positive results as cases.

Maine CDC recommends that schools that choose to accept home-based test results do so when the school is able to verify the collection date and patient. Having this information will help determine the start and end dates of isolation and quarantine, if indicated.

### **School-Based Pooled Testing**

Maine CDC and Maine Department of Education (DOE) have implemented a pooled PCR testing program, available to public and private schools (private pre-K-only programs are not eligible to apply). Pooled testing involves mixing several test samples together in a "batch" or "pool" and then testing the pooled sample with a PCR test for detection of SARS-CoV-2. Students who participate in this pooled testing program can avoid quarantine if exposed to COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status.

In December 2021, the U.S. CDC issued [guidance](#) on a "Test to Stay strategy" for students exposed to COVID-19. Test to Stay is a practice comprising contact tracing and serial testing to allow school-associated close contacts who are not fully vaccinated to continue in-person learning and avoid quarantine. Maine's "Test to Stay" program is the pooled testing program. Maine CDC recognizes that schools may opt for an alternative Test to Stay strategy via daily antigen testing as another approach to minimize quarantine.

### **Isolation**

- Isolation is the process of separating individuals who are infected with COVID-19 from others.
- All students, teachers, or staff who test positive for COVID-19 shall isolate until they meet the [U.S. CDC criteria for release from isolation](#), regardless of vaccination status. *See Appendix G.*
- If a student, teacher, or staff has access to a test and wants to test during isolation, the best

approach is to use an [antigen test](#) toward the end of the 5-day isolation period. Follow [U.S CDC guidance for details on testing](#). If the test result is positive, continue to isolate until day 10. If the test result is negative, isolation can end (on or after day 6), and the student, teacher or staff can return to school.

- When returning to school after isolation, wearing a well-fitting [mask for an additional five days](#) (until day 10) is required at all times when around others indoors, except when eating or drinking.
  - The school should ensure there is a plan for people ending isolation and undergoing their 5 additional days after the end of isolation to stay masked at all times.
  - During times in the school day when students or staff members may typically remove masks indoors (such as during lunches, snacks, etc.), schools should have a plan for them to adequately distance from others and ensure they wear their masks when not actively participating in these activities (such as when they are not actively eating).

### **Contact Tracing and Quarantine**

- Contact tracing is the process of identifying and notifying individuals (or their families) who have had close contact with someone infected with COVID-19. Quarantine is the process of separating and restricting the movement of persons who were in close contact with someone who tested positive or had symptoms of COVID-19. *See* Appendix H.
- Maine CDC recommends that schools conduct contact tracing unless the school consistently observes and enforces a universal masking policy (*see* Section V) for all teachers, students, staff, and visitors. Schools that are not conducting contact tracing may continue to notify parents and families of in-school exposures, where such close contact identification is possible.
- Schools that do not observe and enforce a universal masking policy should continue to conduct contact tracing. After isolating a positive case, the school-designated contact tracer should identify and notify all close contacts (*see* Appendices).
- For schools that are conducting contact tracing:
  - Maine DOE will work with school officials to provide technical assistance to identify close contacts within schools, if needed. In a school setting where there is no assigned seating the whole classroom will be counted as close contacts. Where a school strictly adheres to assigned seating, close contacts will be identified using the definition in the glossary (*see* Section V).
  - Close contacts must quarantine at home from all activities outside the home, including school and school activities, for 5 days from last COVID-19 exposure, and then must wear a well-fitting mask at all times when around other indoors, except while eating or drinking, for an additional 5 days.
  - The school should ensure that there is a plan for people identified as close contacts and people returning to school after quarantine to stay masked at all times (except while eating

and drinking) as outlined in U.S. CDC guidelines.

- During times in the school day when students, teachers, or staff members may typically remove masks indoors (such as during lunches, snacks, etc.), schools should have a plan for them to adequately distance from others and ensure they wear their masks when not actively participating in these activities (such as when they are not actively eating).
  - Exposures that occur in outdoor settings or on a school bus do not constitute a close contact and, thus, do not require quarantine, regardless of vaccination status. This applies even where there is physical contact in outdoor settings (*e.g.*, during sporting events).
  - Designated school staff, along with other school officials, should make initial contact with close contacts to ensure they begin their quarantine period in a timely manner. If close contacts need to quarantine from school, and are identified while school is in session, they may complete the day and must be masked. If private transport is unavailable, taking the bus home is acceptable.
- Those close contacts who are enrolled in the pooled testing program may continue to attend school and school activities so long as they remain asymptomatic. They should be informed of their need to quarantine in the community, unless they meet other quarantine exceptions, outlined below, and the need to monitor for symptoms.

### **Quarantine Exceptions**

Schools that are conducting contact tracing should continue to place students/faculty/staff who are close contacts into quarantine. However, if at least one of the following conditions applies, students/staff can be exempt from quarantine:

1. The close contact is 18 or older and has received [all recommended vaccine doses](#), including [boosters](#) and [additional primary shots](#) for some immunocompromised people; **or**
2. The close contact is 5-17 years and completed the [primary series](#) of COVID-19 vaccines; **or**
3. The close contact had COVID-19 within the last 90 days; **or**
4. The close contact (staff or student) participates in school pooled testing; **or**
5. The school consistently observes and enforces a universal masking policy for all teachers, students, staff, and visitors.

Staff and students who do not fall within exceptions 1-5 above must quarantine if they are a close contact, regardless of the location of exposure.

Staff and students who only fall within exceptions 4-5 must quarantine in the community, per Maine CDC quarantine guidelines.

### III. OUTBREAK RESPONSE

Beginning in January 2022, Maine CDC will open an epidemiological investigation in a school when at least either 15% of students or staff are absent due to illness. This approach is consistent with Maine CDC's approach to other communicable diseases, including other respiratory illnesses.

Schools will use the absenteeism reporting module in NEO, which is the standard process for reporting health-related absenteeism. Schools who do not have access to NEO should report the 15% absenteeism to Maine CDC by email to [disease.reporting@maine.gov](mailto:disease.reporting@maine.gov) (do not send any personal identifying information), by fax at 207-287-6865, or by phone to 1-800-821-5821.

When a school reports 15% absenteeism in either students or staff, Maine CDC will follow up with the school to obtain additional information and determine if the absenteeism report meets outbreak status. An outbreak in a school is defined as greater than or equal to 15% absenteeism among either students or staff in a single day where the majority of those absent are due to COVID-19 illness. Among other pieces of information, Maine CDC will inquire about:

- Number of COVID-19 positive students and staff;
- Number of COVID-19 positive students and staff by test type (PCR or antigen);
- Number of students and staff who are in quarantine and not in school; and
- Number of students and staff working/attending remotely.

After the initial 15% absenteeism report, a school must then report absenteeism daily while in outbreak status.

Outbreaks will be closed after 14 consecutive days with reports of <15% absenteeism. If a school on day 15 has  $\geq 15\%$  absenteeism, then a new outbreak would be opened.

The school should notify all associated individuals of the outbreak (*see* Section IV below). School officials should make such notifications in writing, using a template provided by Maine CDC (*see* Appendix E).

School outbreak status does not necessarily warrant school closure and can be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Maine CDC may, however, recommend suspending some or even all in-person extra-curricular activities for the duration of the outbreak.

### IV. NOTIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION

#### **Notification of a Confirmed or Probable Case to Maine CDC**

School officials may be notified of a confirmed or probable case among a student or staff member by the individual or parents (if the case is a student). If school staff are notified by a parent/guardian that their child received a positive COVID-19 test result, school staff should contact the designated school personnel. That individual will report the suspect case using the DOE Positive Case Reporting Form. The school may be notified by either Maine DOE or Maine CDC if the case is confirmed or probable, and the school may begin its notifications of close contacts. The designated school personnel will be the communication link among the family, the Maine DOE and the Maine CDC.

### **Communication with Family Members**

Maine CDC recommends that the designated school staff member communicate with the family of a case (when that case is a student). The designated school staff member will be best suited to provide information to the family. The designee should also reach out to the DOE COVID-19 Hotline or use the reporting link to inform Maine DOE and Maine CDC of the case. The school should notify family members of students that will be in quarantine, if applicable. Sample letters are available in the appendices.

### **Communication with School Community**

Maine CDC recommends that the school notify community members as school-associated confirmed or probable cases are detected. The school is best able to notify parents, staff, teachers, and other community stakeholders (*e.g.*, Board of Education, Superintendent, etc.) of the confirmed or probable case(s). Sample letters for such communication are available in the appendices.

### **Public Reporting**

Maine CDC may report publicly when an epidemiological investigation has confirmed an outbreak of COVID-19 associated with a school, as it does in other settings. Schools should notify their school community before Maine CDC announces a school is in outbreak status when possible.

## V. GLOSSARY

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Close contact	In general, being within 6 feet of a person infected with COVID-19 (with or without a face mask) for at least 15 minutes (cumulatively in a day).
Community transmission	Occurs when individuals acquire COVID-19 through contact with someone in their local community, rather than through travel to an affected location.
Confirmed case	A person who has tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 infection (the virus that causes COVID-19) using a molecular test.
Contact tracing	Process of identifying and notifying individuals who have had close contact (see definition above) with someone infected with COVID-19.
Cohort	A consistent group of students and staff who interacts with each other but not with members of other groups on a regular basis. When in a cohort, each group must physically distance themselves from each other and from other cohorts.
Fully vaccinated	2 weeks after the second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's vaccine.
Incubation period	The time between exposure to an infection and the appearance of first symptoms. SARS-CoV-2 has an incubation period of 2-14 days.
Infectious period (asymptomatic cases)	2-days prior to the date the specimen/swab was collected, until federal CDC criteria to discontinue isolation are met.
Infectious period (symptomatic cases)	2-days before any symptom onset within 10 days prior to positive test result until federal CDC criteria to discontinue isolation are met.
Isolation	Process of separating individuals who are infected with COVID-19 from others.
Outbreak investigation	Greater than or equal to 15% absenteeism among students or staff in a single day where the majority of those absent are due to COVID-19 illness.
Pooled testing participant	An individual who is participating in school pooled testing that has either tested in the most recent pooled testing or was absent and used an antigen or molecular test in place of pooled testing.
Probable case	Individual who has a positive antigen test or is a symptomatic close contact of a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19.
Quarantine	Process of separating and restricting the movement of persons who were in close contact with someone who tested positive or had symptoms of COVID-19.
Symptomatic individual	A person who is experiencing one or more of the <a href="#">symptoms</a> of COVID-19 as defined in U.S. and Maine CDC guidelines.
Testing	Three types of tests are available for COVID-19: molecular, antigen, and antibody tests. Molecular and antigen tests indicate if you have a current infection while antibody tests indicate a previous infection. In this SOP, 'testing' refers to molecular or antigen-based tests to diagnose a person with COVID-19 infection.
Universal	A policy of requiring consistent and correct usage of well-fitting masks in indoor

masking	spaces for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors, and across all school-based and school-sponsored activities. A universal masking policy allows for removal of masks while eating/drinking in designated spaces, but not for indoor "mask breaks."
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## **Appendix A: Sample notification letter to school communities: an individual associated with [School] recently tested positive for COVID-19**

Dear Staff, Students, and Families,

This letter is to inform you that an individual associated with [School] recently tested positive for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). We are informing you out of an abundance of caution.

Please monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, which can include:

- fever or chills
- cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- fatigue
- muscle or body aches
- headache
- new loss of taste or smell
- sore throat
- congestion or runny nose
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhea

Please remember that being up-to-date on influenza and routine vaccinations can help minimize the occurrence and transmission of other respiratory illnesses.

Maine CDC recommends prevention measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19. These measures include proper handwashing with soap and warm water, which is especially important after using the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. When soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands and avoid close contact with people who are sick. Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others. Wear a well-fitting mask in public indoor spaces, especially if you are not vaccinated. Masks are recommended in schools and childcare settings for people over 5 years of age. Get a COVID-19 vaccine and COVID-19 booster when it is available to you. When in public, avoid social distances of less than 6 feet and direct physical contact.

Questions for the school can be directed at (Name of school representative) by calling (contact number). For general COVID-19 questions, dial 211 (or 1-866-811-5695). You can also text your ZIP code to 898-211 or email [info@211maine.org](mailto:info@211maine.org). Call a health care provider for questions about your symptoms. More information can be found at [www.maine.gov/dhhs/coronavirus](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/coronavirus) or [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

Sincerely,

## **Appendix B: Sample notification letter to school communities: close contacts who do not meet any quarantine exceptions**

Dear Staff, Students, and Families,

This letter is to inform you that an individual associated with [School] recently tested positive for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and that you/your student has been identified as a close contact. We are aware that you/your student do not meet any of these below quarantine exceptions:

1. You/your student is 18 or older and have received [all recommended vaccine doses](#), including [boosters](#) and [additional primary shots](#) for some immunocompromised people; **or**
2. You/your student is 5-17 years and has completed the [primary series](#) of COVID-19 vaccines; **or**
3. You/your student has had COVID-19 within the last 90 days; **or**
4. You/your student does participate in school pooled testing; **or**
5. Your/your student's school consistently observes and enforces a universal masking policy for all teachers, students, staff and visitors.

This means that you/your student must quarantine and stay home for 5 days per US CDC and Maine CDC guidelines. Maine CDC encourages you/your student to get tested 5 days following exposure. After that, you/your student can leave your house and return to school and you/your student must continue to wear a mask at all times, when around others indoors, except for while eating and drinking, for at least 5 additional days. If you/your student develop symptoms, get tested, stay home, and call a healthcare provider for questions or concerns about your/your student's symptoms.

Please monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 which can include:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> fever or chills                             | <input type="radio"/> headache                   |
| <input type="radio"/> cough                                       | <input type="radio"/> new loss of taste or smell |
| <input type="radio"/> shortness of breath or difficulty breathing | <input type="radio"/> sore throat                |
| <input type="radio"/> fatigue                                     | <input type="radio"/> congestion or runny nose   |
| <input type="radio"/> muscle or body aches                        | <input type="radio"/> nausea or vomiting         |
|   | <input type="radio"/> diarrhea                   |

Please remember that being up-to-date on influenza and routine vaccinations can help minimize the occurrence and transmission of other respiratory illnesses.

Maine CDC recommends prevention measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19. These measures include proper handwashing with soap and warm water, which is especially important after using the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. When soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands and avoid close contact with people who are sick. Stay

home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others. Wear a well-fitting mask in public indoor spaces, especially if you are not vaccinated. Masks are recommended in schools and childcare settings for people over 5 years of age. Get a COVID-19 vaccine and COVID-19 booster when it is available to you. When in public, avoid social distances of less than 6 feet and direct physical contact.

Questions for the school can be directed at (Name of school representative) by calling (contact number). For general COVID-19 questions, dial 211 (or 1-866-811-5695). You can also text your ZIP code to 898-211 or email [info@211maine.org](mailto:info@211maine.org). Call a health care provider for questions about your symptoms. More information can be found at [www.maine.gov/dhhs/coronavirus](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/coronavirus) or [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

Sincerely,

## Appendix C: Sample notification letter to school communities: close contact who meets at least one quarantine exception

Dear Staff, Students, and Families,

This letter is to inform you that an individual associated with [School] recently tested positive for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and that you/your student has been identified as a close contact.

. We are aware that you/your student meet at least one of the below quarantine exceptions:

1. You/your student is 18 or older and have received [all recommended vaccine doses](#), including [boosters](#) and [additional primary shots](#) for some immunocompromised people; **or**
2. You/your student is 5-17 years and has completed the [primary series](#) of COVID-19 vaccines; **or**
3. You/your student has had COVID-19 within the last 90 days; **or**
4. You/your student does participate in school pooled testing; **or**
5. Your/your student's school consistently observes and enforces a universal masking policy for all teachers, students, staff, and visitors.

This means that you can continue to participate in school and school activities. You/your student must wear a well-fitting mask at all times, when around others indoors, except for while eating and drinking, for at least 10 days, and Maine CDC encourages you/your student to get tested 5 days after exposure. If you/your student only falls within exceptions 4-5, you/your student must quarantine in the community per Maine CDC quarantine guidelines. If you/your student develop symptoms, get tested, stay home, and call a healthcare provider for questions or concerns about you/your student's symptoms.

Please monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 which can include:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> fever or chills                             | <input type="radio"/> headache                   |
| <input type="radio"/> cough                                       | <input type="radio"/> new loss of taste or smell |
| <input type="radio"/> shortness of breath or difficulty breathing | <input type="radio"/> sore throat                |
| <input type="radio"/> fatigue                                     | <input type="radio"/> congestion or runny nose   |
| <input type="radio"/> muscle or body aches                        | <input type="radio"/> nausea or vomiting         |
|   | <input type="radio"/> diarrhea                   |

Please remember that being up-to-date on influenza and routine vaccinations can help minimize the occurrence and transmission of other respiratory illnesses.

Maine CDC recommends prevention measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19. These measures include proper handwashing with soap and warm water, which is especially important after using the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. When soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands and avoid close contact with people who are sick. Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others. Wear a well-fitting mask in public indoor

spaces, especially if you are not vaccinated. Masks are recommended in schools and childcare settings for people over 5 years of age. Get a COVID-19 vaccine and COVID-19 booster when it is available to you. When in public, avoid social distances of less than 6 feet and direct physical contact.

Questions for the school can be directed at (Name of school representative) by calling (contact number). For general COVID-19 questions, dial 211 (or 1-866-811-5695). You can also text your ZIP code to 898-211 or email [info@211maine.org](mailto:info@211maine.org). Call a health care provider for questions about your symptoms. More information can be found at [www.maine.gov/dhhs/coronavirus](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/coronavirus) or [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

Sincerely,

## **Appendix D: Sample notification letter to student, staff or family: you/your student recently tested positive for COVID-19**

Dear Staff, Student, and Families,

This letter is to inform you that you/your student recently tested positive for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). This means that you/your student must isolate and stay home for at least 5 days per US CDC and Maine CDC guidelines.

If you/your student have no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days, you can leave your house and return to school on day 6. When returning to school after isolation, you/your student must continue wearing a well-fitting mask for an additional five days (until day 10) at all times when around others indoors, except when eating or drinking. During times in the school day when you/your student may typically remove masks indoors (such as during lunches, snacks, etc.), our school will have you/your student adequately distance from others and ensure you/your student wear masks when not actively participating in these activities (such as when they are not actively eating).

If you/your student have persistent or worsening symptoms after 5 days, stay home until you/your student has no symptoms or you/your student's symptoms are resolving AND until 24 hours after you/your student's fever resolves without the use of medications. At that time, you/your student can leave the house and return to school. You/your student must continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others at all times, except while eating and drinking, for at least 5 additional days, until day 10. If you have questions about you/your student's symptoms, please call a healthcare provider.

Maine CDC recommends prevention measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19. These measures include proper handwashing with soap and warm water, which is especially important after using the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. When soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands and avoid close contact with people who are sick. Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others. Wear a well-fitting mask in public indoor spaces, especially if you are not vaccinated. Masks are recommended in schools and childcare settings for people over 5 years of age. Get a COVID-19 vaccine and COVID-19 booster when it is available to you. When in public, avoid social distances of less than 6 feet and direct physical contact.

Questions for the school can be directed at (Name of school representative) by calling (contact number). For general COVID-19 questions, dial 211 (or 1-866-811-5695). You can also text your ZIP code to 898-211 or email [info@211maine.org](mailto:info@211maine.org). More information can be found at [www.maine.gov/dhhs/coronavirus](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/coronavirus) or [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

Sincerely,

## Appendix E: Sample notification letter to school communities: letter for outbreaks

Dear Staff, Students, and Families,

This letter is to inform you that there is an outbreak of COVID-19 at (School Name). Maine CDC opens a school-based outbreak investigation when at least 15% of students or staff/teachers in a school are absent in a single day where the majority of those absent are due to COVID-19 illness. Based on recommendations from the Maine CDC, we are taking steps to help prevent further spread of COVID-19. A school representative will contact you directly if you/your student are identified as a close contact of someone who tested positive.

Please monitor yourself/your student for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, which can include:

- fever or chills
- cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- fatigue
- muscle or body aches
- headache
- new loss of taste or smell
- sore throat
- congestion or runny nose
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhea

If you/your student develop symptoms, get tested, stay home, and call a healthcare provider for questions or concerns about your/your student's symptoms. Please remember that being up-to-date on influenza and routine vaccinations can help minimize the occurrence and transmission of other respiratory illnesses. Maine CDC recommends prevention measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19. These measures include proper handwashing with soap and warm water, which is especially important after using the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. When soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands and avoid close contact with people who are sick. Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others. Wear a well-fitting mask in public indoor spaces, especially if you are not vaccinated. Masks are recommended in schools and childcare settings for people over 5 years of age. Get a COVID-19 vaccine and COVID-19 booster when it is available to you. When in public, avoid social distances of less than 6 feet and direct physical contact.

Questions for the school can be directed at (Name of school representative) by calling (contact number). For general COVID-19 questions, dial 211 (or 1-866-811-5695). You can also text your ZIP code to 898-211 or email [info@211maine.org](mailto:info@211maine.org). Call a health care provider for questions about your symptoms. More information can be found at [www.maine.gov/dhhs/coronavirus](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/coronavirus) or [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

Sincerely,

## Appendix F: Quarantine

### When to Stay Home

#### Calculating Quarantine

The date of your exposure is considered day 0. **Day 1 is the first full day after your last contact with a person who has had COVID-19.** Stay home and away from other people for at least 5 days. [Learn why CDC updated guidance for the general public.](#)

<b>IF YOU</b> Were exposed to COVID-19 and are <b>NOT up-to-date</b> on COVID-19 vaccinations	<b>Quarantine for at least 5 days</b>  <b>Stay home</b> Stay home and <a href="#">quarantine</a> for at least 5 full days.  Wear a well-fitted mask if you must be around others in your home.  <b>Get tested</b> Even if you don't develop symptoms, get tested at least 5 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.	<b>After quarantine</b>  <b>Watch for symptoms</b> Watch for symptoms until 10 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.  <b>If you develop symptoms</b> <a href="#">Isolate</a> immediately and get tested. Continue to stay home until you know the results. Wear a well-fitted mask around others.	<b>Take precautions until day 10</b>  <b>Wear a mask</b> Wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days any time you are around others inside your home or in public. Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask.  <b>Avoid travel</b>  <b>Avoid being around people who are at high risk</b>
<b>IF YOU</b> Were exposed to COVID-19 and are <b>up-to-date</b> with vaccination OR had confirmed COVID-19 within the past 90 days (you tested positive using a viral test)	<b>No quarantine</b> You do not need to stay home <b>unless</b> you develop symptoms.  <b>Get tested</b> Even if you don't develop symptoms, get tested at least 5 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19	<b>Watch for symptoms</b> Watch for symptoms until 10 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.  <b>If you develop symptoms</b> <a href="#">Isolate</a> immediately and get tested. Continue to stay home until you know the results. Wear a well-fitted mask around others.	<b>Take precautions until day 10</b>  <b>Wear a mask</b> Wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days any time you are around others inside your home or in public. Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask.  <b>Avoid travel</b>  <b>Avoid being around people who are at high risk</b>

The information above is from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html#end-isolation-symptoms> (updated Jan 9, 2022). It does not reflect quarantine exemptions from school discussed in Section II of this SOP.



## Appendix G: Isolation

### Calculating Isolation

Day 0 is your first day of symptoms or a positive viral test. **Day 1 is the first full day after your symptoms developed or your test specimen was collected.** If you have COVID-19 or have symptoms, isolate for at least 5 days.

**IF YOU  
Tested positive  
for COVID-19 or  
have  
symptoms,  
regardless of  
vaccination  
status**

#### **Stay home for at least 5 days**

Stay home for 5 days and [isolate](#) from others in your home.

Wear a well-fitted mask if you must be around others in your home.

#### **Ending isolation if you had symptoms**

[End isolation after 5 full days](#) if you are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and your symptoms are improving.

#### **Ending isolation if you did NOT have symptoms**

[End isolation after at least 5 full days](#) after your positive test.

#### **If you were severely ill with COVID-19**

You should isolate for at least 10 days. [Consult your doctor before ending isolation.](#)

#### **Take precautions until day 10**

##### **Wear a mask**

Wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days any time you are around others inside your home or in public. Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask.

##### **Avoid travel**

**Avoid being around people who are at high risk**

The information above is from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html#end-isolation-symptoms> (updated Jan 9, 2022).

## **Appendix H: Change Log**

**Date of original version: 8/26/2020**

<b>Date of Change</b>	<b>Description of Change</b>	<b>Author</b>
9/9/2020	To reflect designation of close contacts from school sports	Team
9/15/2020	To clarify conditions under which an outbreak investigation is opened	Team
9/23/2020	To clarify the definition of close contacts in an outbreak	Team
9/28/2020	To clarify case investigation process, AHOC, and bus windows	Team
9/29/2020	To clarify the role of antigen testing and, separately, school sports by creating Appendix B	Team
9/30/2020	To clarify bus exposures and, separately, to add Appendix C for school-based testing documents	Team
10/2/2020	To clarify cleaning guidance and community-based sports	Team
10/4/2020	To add Appendix D, which will track all subsequent revisions	NDS
10/31/2020	Updated Outbreak G section to match Table 4	AF
11/14/2020	Updated Community sports link, probable case investigation, outbreak school letter	AF
12/8/2020	Updated with changes to definition of “probable case,” case investigation prioritization, contact tracing, quarantine, and community sports	JML
12/12/2020	Updated background section and formatting	AF
2/25/2021	Updated requirements of quarantine and isolation for those with a previous positive test in the last 90 days, quarantine requirements for fully vaccinated individuals; Addition to role of designated school personnel, DOE contact tracing team and superintendent if school deemed an outbreak, insert page numbers; Updated guidance regarding quarantine of individuals who are identified as close contacts of a case and use of antigen testing, role of the designated school personnel clarified use of BinaxNOW testing for essential teachers/staff	MA
3/31/2021	Clarify the preliminary and official ending of outbreak timelines, updated close contacts within a school setting	MA
5/13/2021	Addition of pooled testing guidance and home-based	MA

	testing clarification on close contact for those in School Pooled testing, updated testing guidance in sample notification letter for close contacts, updated infectious period for symptomatic cases definition in glossary	
8/3/2021	Simplification of close contact definition, update testing recommendations for vaccinated individuals, addition of guidance for informing pooling close contacts of the need to quarantine in the community, addition of 4 new COVID-19 symptoms	Team
8/10/2021	Interpretation of federal exception for quarantine; reorganization of isolation and quarantine section, addition of Table 2 for understanding quarantine exceptions	Team
8/12/2021	Updated exception to close contact quarantine per US CDC changes.	NDS
9/8/2021	Clarified Purpose, created a “cleaner” table 2, ordered contact tracing section before quarantine and concomitant exceptions, added proscription for essential workers to staff exceptions to quarantine, removed tables 3 & 4 and summarized the difference between assigned and non-assigned seat contact tracing in-text, removed emergency orders section from pooled testing description, changed BinaxNOW references to generic antigen	CS
10/29/2021	Updated to reflect recommendation for vaccinated close contacts to test 5-7 days after an exposure and the provide the recommended pool testing size	NDS, DB
12/29/2021	Changes to definition of ‘outbreak’ in a school setting; removed outdoor close contact from definition of close contact; additional changes to align with recent U.S. CDC isolation/quarantine guidance	Team
1/11/2022	Updated to note that schools can pause contact tracing when universal masking requirements are in place. Added tables from US CDC regarding release from isolation and quarantine. Clarified outbreak definition in response to questions from schools.	Team