



INTRODUCTION

While studies have found that people under 18, especially younger children, appear to be anywhere from one-third to one-half as likely to contract the virus, with community spread of infection it is inevitable that schools will have a student or staff become positive for COVID-19. Effective July 27, all Hoosiers age 8 and older are **required** to wear masks in indoor public places, including schools, with some exceptions for health reasons, eating or drinking or physical exercise. Schools also are urged to implement other non-pharmaceutical interventions, including socially distancing students and staff when feasible, cohorting students, washing hands frequently, and disinfecting regularly. The goal of these measures is to significantly limit the number of students required to quarantine with a positive case.

HOW TO MINIMIZE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN SCHOOLS

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) strongly recommends that schools establish a framework by which to implement non-pharmaceutical interventions. This includes masks, socially distancing students and staff when feasible, cohorting students, hand washing, and disinfection. The goal of these measures is to significantly limit the number of students required to quarantine with a positive case.

- Students desks should be spaced out as far as possible. They should all face forward.
- Consider cohorting younger students into pods that can interact when needed, including playing at recess or in physical education together.
- Carefully plan older students' schedules so that a minimum number of students are close contacts each day. For example, if 5 students all take the same classes, ensure that those 5 students are assigned to seats near each other in each of those classes.
- It is essential that families understand the importance of not hosting events such as birthday parties where the students are not socially distanced, as this may lead to an outbreak in the class or grade.
- Families should be educated on COVID-19 symptoms and expected to monitor for symptoms daily.
- Immediately isolate and send home any student or staff member who develops symptoms during the school day.

DEFINITIONS

Close Contact: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a close contact is a person who spends greater than 15 minutes within six feet of a positive COVID-19 person from the 48 hours prior to the positive person's symptom onset or positive test collection date if asymptomatic. While mask use decreases the risk of infection, at this time it does not change recommendations for



quarantine. Close contacts need to quarantine at home for 14 days after the date of their last exposure.

Contact Tracing: Contact tracing is used by health departments to prevent the spread of infectious disease. In general, contact tracing involves identifying people who have an infectious disease and their contacts (people who have been exposed) and working with them to interrupt disease transmission.

To accomplish this, it is essential that the school have available students' schedules, assigned seats, bus seating, cohort groups, lunch seating, extracurricular activities and other potential contact settings.

Isolation: A positive student or staff member with symptoms must isolate at home for 10 days from onset **and** be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and have a reduction in symptoms. A positive student/staff member without symptoms must isolate at home for 10 days after the date the positive specimen was collected.

Quarantine: Close contacts who have been exposed should quarantine at home for 14 days after last date of exposure to the positive student/staff member.

Indiana Centralized Contact Tracing Program (ICCTP): The contact tracing program is supported by the Indiana State Department of Health. Contact tracers collect information on the positive cases and their close contacts. The close contacts are notified, and quarantine and symptom monitoring are explained. Positive cases and close contacts get texted daily to follow up on symptoms.

STEPS AFTER NOTIFICATION OF A POSITIVE CASE

- 1.) Notification of a positive case to school: This may come from the local health department, the Indiana Centralized Contact Tracing Program (ICCTP), or, the most likely scenario, from the positive student's parents or staff/faculty.
 - a. Schools should have in place a person/phone number for a designated point of contact.
 - b. Symptomatic Case: The point of contact should collect information on the date of symptom onset. Contact tracing starts 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms.
 - c. Non-Symptomatic Case: The point of contact will need to know the date that the positive specimen was collected. Contact tracing starts 48 hours prior to collection of the positive specimen.
- 2.) If the school finds out about the positive case from a parent/staff/faculty, the school notifies call the local health department of the positive case.
- 3.) If one student or staff member tests positive in a classroom, it is recommended that contact tracing be done on that person. This would include all students or staff who spent greater than 15 minutes within 6 feet of the positive student/staff in the 48 hours prior to the positive student/staff's symptom onset until the date of isolation, or, if the positive student/staff is asymptomatic, the 48 hours prior to collection of the positive specimen until the date of isolation.



- 4.) Start identifying the potential close contacts of the case utilizing the student's/staff's schedule, seating charts, cohort groups, extra-curricular activities, transportation, etc.
- 5.) Establish a line list of those contacts' names, dates of birth and phone numbers.
- 6.) Report the contacts' information to the local health department so the local health department can import this information into the ICCTP.
 - a. If a local health department is unable to import the information or it is a request of the local health department or school, the school may also call 1-833-670-0067 to give the information directly to the ICCTP.
 - b. School officials must identify themselves as such and have available pertinent information on the positive case.
- 7.) In working with the local health department, the school or local health department will notify close contacts that they have been exposed and give recommendations for quarantine.
- 8.) Close contacts will also get follow-up messaging and monitoring from the ICCTP for the duration of their quarantine period.
- 9.) If any of the close contacts test positive, start the process over again. See below for thresholds for recommendations for closing classrooms, grades or school.

THRESHOLDS

For one positive student, it is recommended that contact tracing be done for that student only and close contacts (students or staff) quarantine for 14 days from the date of last exposure. An exception may occur for Pre-K through Grade 2 when cohorting and assigned seating may not be feasible. In those cases, the entire classroom may need to quarantine.

If more than one student tests positive in a given classroom, it is recommended that the entire classroom quarantine for two weeks.

There is no threshold for closing the entire school. If this is being considered because of widespread positive cases throughout the school, it is recommended that school officials work with the local health department and the Indiana State Department of Health for further recommendations. This may include, but is not limited to, short-term closure for cleaning and disinfecting or moving to virtual learning for students, with an option for students to do their virtual learning on site with supervision.

POSITIVE FACULTY/STAFF

Faculty and staff should take all precautions to keep >6 feet from students during instruction. It is understandable that one-on-one instruction is necessary at times. Both the teacher and student should wear masks during these interactions and contact should be kept under 15 minutes when possible. Faculty/staff will need to track which students they worked with one-on-one in the event the faculty or student becomes positive.



SCHOOL INFECTION PREVENTION STRIKE TEAMS

If a local health department or school has concerns about infection prevention practices, an increase in positive cases, or any other concerns an ISDH infection preventionist will work with the school. This may be a conversation by phone or an in-person visit if needed. From these conversations, recommendations such as changes in cohorting, infection prevention measures, and/or targeted testing may be made. Send requests for ISDH infection prevention assistance to striketeamrequest@isdh.in.gov

DUTIES OF ISDH, LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS AND SCHOOLS

Task	Responsible for task Not Responsible/capable for task		
	ISDH/Call Center Agents	Local Health Department (LHD)	Schools
Initial Case Investigation			
• Demographics			
• Symptoms and Outcomes			
• Clinical Information			
• Pre-existing Conditions			
• Exposure History			
• Contact Tracing			
○ Work and Location Exposure			
○ Exposure to Individuals			
○ Add close contacts as identified			
Identify close contacts within the school setting and contact the centralized contact tracing call center at 1-833-670-0067 to add to case			
Monitoring of close contacts if entered into centralized contact tracing system			
Monitoring of any close contacts not entered into centralized contact tracing system			
Obtain and Enter Information or contact the call center to enter data into Dynamics Record			
Work/School Excusal Letter NOTE: Healthcare provider can also provide this letter			

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is it the school's job to find out about close contacts in the student's after-school activities?

- The school should be aware of close contacts in any school-sponsored activity. However, any after-school activities, athletics, or extra-curricular activities not associated with the school will be discussed with the positive student's parents by the ICCTP or the local health department.
- If the activity is school-sponsored, such as football, then the coach should be notified to help identify close contacts on the team.

If the school is aware of a student believed to have COVID-19 but the test results are not back or the student is not getting tested, should the school do contact tracing on that student and recommend those students quarantine?

- At this time, it is not recommended that those close contacts quarantine without a positive result. However, exceptions may be made while working with the local health department if there are significant concerns.

Do close contacts' siblings also need to quarantine?

- No, unless the sibling is also a close contact by definition.
- If the close contact becomes positive, then the sibling would then be considered a close contact of their positive sibling. This assumes the siblings live in the same household and the positive sibling was unable to fully quarantine.

What cleaning needs to be done when there is a positive case?

- Routine cleaning should be a part of daily infection prevention procedures. All hard and frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned as recommended in the IN-CLASS document.

When we are calling close contacts, should we release the students name?

- The student's name should not be released to anyone unless absolutely necessary. For example, close contact students do not need to know the positive student's name. However, you may need to let a teacher or a coach know the student's name to assist in identifying close contacts in the classroom and on the team.

Do we or should we let a class know of a positive case?

- This is up to the individual school. People will likely be aware. Schools may choose to send notification to the class that there has been a positive case in the classroom and that all students who were considered close contacts have been notified and will quarantine for 14 days. The positive student should not be named. It is acceptable for other students and families to self-monitor (see definition above) for 14 days, but the risk is very low.



COVID-19 POSITIVE STUDENT SCENARIO

Kathryn is in the seventh grade. Her school has done an excellent job of wearing masks, spacing desks, assigning seats, and developing cleaning protocols. Additionally, Kathryn has been assigned to a “pod” of 12 other seventh-grade students, several of whom sit close to her in class. This pod play at recess in addition to doing other activities together. Here is Kathryn’s day:

Period 1 Homeroom:

- Assigned seating
- Desks facing forward

Period 2 Math:

- Math teacher comes to Kathryn’s homeroom classroom so students do not move
- Students stay in assigned homeroom seats and remain facing forward
- At end of the class, the students clean their desks

Period 3 Change Classes:

- One-way directions in halls, no use of lockers, staggered dismissal of students

Period 3 History:

- Assigned seating. Two of the students who sit next to Kathryn in homeroom and are in her pod are seated close to her in History as well.
- At the end of class, the students clean their desks.

Period 4 Change Classes:

- All students return to their homeroom and assigned seats for lunch
- Eat in homeroom
- Clean desks after lunch

Period 5 Recess:

- Kathryn’s pod of 12 students is assigned to the soccer field for recess
- They only play with each other. Other student pods are assigned to other parts of the recess area.

Period 6 Science:

- Kathryn is at an experiment table with three other students. They wear their masks the entire class since they work together on the experiment.
- Two of those students are in Kathryn’s recess pod.
- Clean table before they leave.

Period 7 English



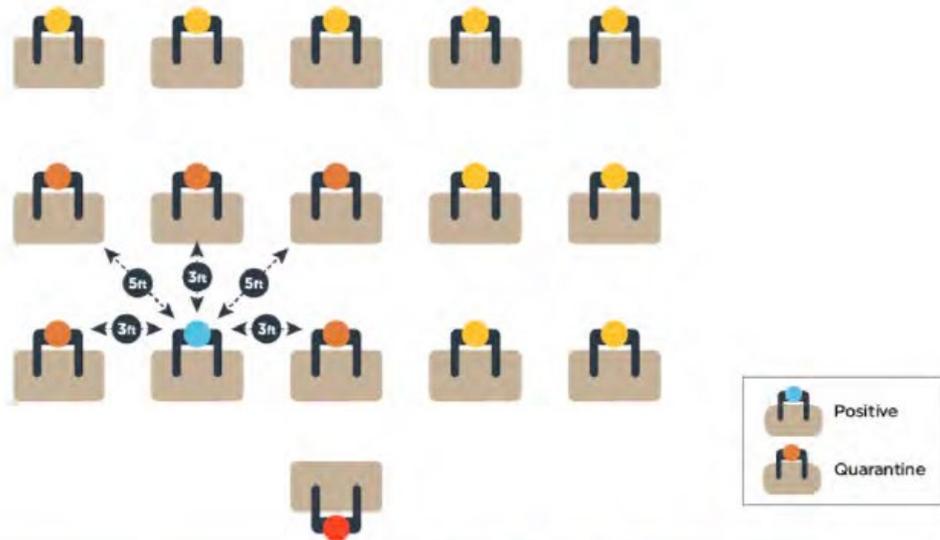
- Kathryn returns to her History classroom and her assigned seating from that class.

Kathryn develops a fever, cough, and loss of smell on Wednesday. She does not come to school. Her parents notify the school and Kathryn starts virtual-learning. The school recommends that Kathryn get tested. The school also tells Kathryn's family she needs to remain home and to let them know the results of her test. On Friday, the test comes back as **positive**.

As instructed, Kathryn's parents notify the school of her positive test. The school immediately notifies the local health department of the positive case. The school CAN [release](#) the student's information to the local health department.

The school looks at Kathryn's schedule and her assigned seating positions.

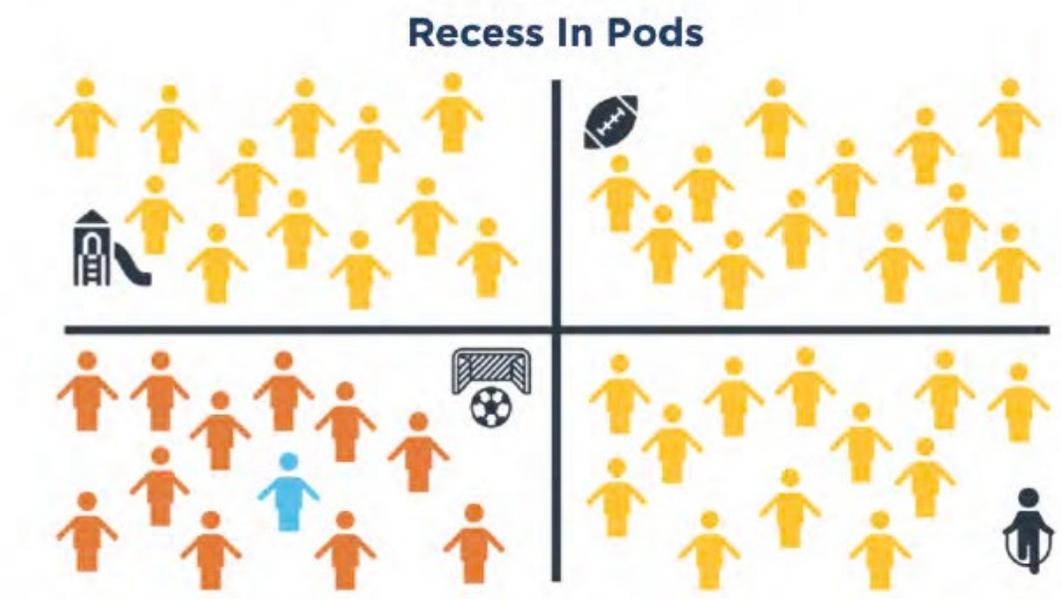
COVID-19 Positive Student Scenario:





The school also identifies everyone in Kathryn's recess "pod." Since several of those students also sit close to Kathryn in her classes, an additional five students are identified as close contacts.

COVID-19 Positive Student Scenario:



Whom to Quarantine:

- Anyone who Kathryn was within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes in the two days (48 hours) prior to Kathryn developing symptoms needs to be notified to quarantine for 14 days after the last date of exposure and start virtual learning.
 - In this case, it is all the students who sit around Kathryn during her classes and all students who play with her in her recess pod.
- In this case, all of Kathryn's teachers maintained more than 6 feet of distance from students. When answering questions, the teacher and Kathryn wore masks and the teacher spent fewer than 2 minutes at Kathryn's desk.

Recommendations for quarantine and testing:

- Please review the [ISDH recommendations for quarantine](#).
- They should also be recommended to get tested 5 days after date of exposure and carefully monitor for symptoms.
- If the test is negative, the close contact students still need to complete the quarantine, since symptoms can develop up to 14 days after exposure despite a negative test.



- If a close contact student develops symptoms, she should notify the school and get retested if already tested and negative.
- If one of Kathryn's close contacts test positive, then there are 2 positive cases in the classroom and the recommendation is that the entire classroom quarantine for 14 days.

Siblings:

- Kathryn has two siblings in other grades of the school. They are also considered close contacts and must quarantine at home for 14 days.
- The students who sit around Kathryn's siblings are NOT considered close contacts.
- UNLESS the siblings' tests are positive. In that case, the siblings' close contacts would be quarantined if the siblings were exposed to the other students in the 48 hours prior to developing symptoms through date of isolation or in the 48 hours prior to a positive test until date of isolation if asymptomatic.
 - If the siblings develop symptoms five days into their quarantine, then their close contacts at school would NOT need to be quarantined because the siblings had not been near them for five days.

After school officials identify Kathryn's close contacts, they would give the local health department the contacts' names. The local health department will input the contacts' names into the ICCTP. Contact tracers would then notify these contacts with instructions to quarantine and daily monitoring for the duration of quarantine.