

Students, teachers, and employees who test positive for COVID-19 should isolate.

Students, teachers, or employees should isolate right away if they test positive for COVID-19. This means to stay home except to get medical care. You should not go to school or work.

If you've tested positive, you should isolate until you have been:

- Fever-free for 24 hours, and
- Your respiratory symptoms have improved for 24 hours, and
- It has been at least 10 days since you first got sick.
- If you did not have symptoms, you should isolate for 10 days from the day you were tested.

Anyone who was in close contact with a person who has COVID-19 up to 2 days before he or she had symptoms is considered exposed and should quarantine. Even if the person who has COVID-19 did not have any symptoms, he or she is infectious up to 2 days before they were tested. Close contact means someone was closer than 6 feet or 2 meters (about 2 arm lengths) to a person who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or longer in a 24-hour period.

The health department will call, text, or email the person who tested positive to conduct a [case investigation and contact tracing](#). A case investigation helps public health workers figure out how a person may have been exposed to the virus. It can also help public health workers find out who else may be at risk of COVID-19. The health department will ask the employee who they may have been in close contact with while they were infectious. The health department may ask the person to tell their close contacts to quarantine or the health department may contact these individuals directly.



Your school needs to be prepared for times when students or teachers need to isolate or quarantine at home.

Being prepared to respond to COVID-19 in your school may require lesson planning in advance. You should also have a plan to provide another learning option for students who need to isolate or quarantine at home. School policies should allow students to make up any missed classwork without penalty if they are sick or need to quarantine.¹⁹ This will be a critical aspect of schools being able to stay open for in-person learning. With an increase in the spread of COVID-19 in Utah, it is likely some students and teachers will need to stay at home.

The time period for isolation is the amount of time someone is infectious and can pass the virus to other people. A student or teacher who tests positive for COVID-19 will be required to isolate at home for at least 10 days. This does not mean someone will only be sick for that amount of time. Some people who get COVID-19 are sick for a long time. The time period for quarantine may also be longer than 10 days if the person has ongoing exposures to COVID-19. You need to be prepared in advance to continue student instruction without disruption. This can only happen if schools are well prepared.



Will the health department notify the school if a student, teacher, or employee tests positive?

Yes. The health department will notify the point of contact (POC) at the school if a student, teacher, or employee at the school tested positive for COVID-19. A school may learn about a student, teacher, or employee testing positive before the health department. In these cases, the school POC should contact the health department. The POC will work closely with the health department on contact tracing.

¹⁹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>

School quarantine guidance changes as we learn more about COVID-19.

The school quarantine guidance has changed, effective January 4, 2021. While a 14-day quarantine is still the best and most effective way to protect other people from being exposed to the virus, this change is based on the evidence that face masks greatly reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This change will also further incentivize mask wearing. The updated guidance will also provide more opportunities for students and staff to participate in in-person learning. It is contingent on compliance with the state mask requirements in schools.²⁰

The guidance is ONLY for K-12 public, private, and charter schools. It is not intended for use by institutions of higher education or child care settings. Worksites and private businesses should follow the quarantine protocols in the [COVID-19 Business Manual](#).



Wearing face masks will reduce the spread of COVID-19 in schools and the number of students and teachers on quarantine.

There is clear scientific evidence that wearing a face mask prevents the spread of COVID-19. One of the simplest ways to protect lives and livelihoods is by wearing a face mask.²¹ Nearly all reputable medical and scientific organizations agree that masks are an effective way to stop the spread of COVID-19.^{22,23,24,25,26,27} A study by

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed not only do masks protect other people from getting infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, but that masks can also be protective for the person wearing a mask.²⁸

A recent study found children who tested positive for COVID-19 were NOT more likely to have attended school in the 2 weeks before their positive test as compared to children who tested negative.²⁹ Children who tested positive were more likely to have attended a family gathering (wedding, funeral, parties, or playdates) in the 2 weeks before their positive test result. Children who tested positive were also less likely to report consistent wearing of face masks in the school by both students and staff.

The convincing evidence that masks are effective gives Utah schools and public health officials the opportunity to change quarantine protocols to balance the need for in-person learning with reducing the risk of spreading the virus.

²⁰ <https://coronavirus.utah.gov/utah-health-guidance-levels/> <https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/Governor/State-Public-Health-Order-UPHO-2020-11-v.2.pdf>

²¹ <https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/marriner-wpmedia/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/SeegertGaulinYangNavarroSanchez2020-web.pdf>

²² <https://pws.byu.edu/covid-19-and-masks>

²³ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)31142-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)31142-9/fulltext)

²⁴ <https://msphere.asm.org/content/5/5/e00637-20/article-info>

²⁵ <https://msphere.asm.org/content/5/5/e00637-20/article-info>

²⁶ https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6928e2.htm?s_cid=mm6928e2_w

²⁷ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2768532>

²⁸ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/masking-science-sars-cov2.html>

²⁹ https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6950e3.htm?s_cid=mm6950e3_w

When can students, teachers, or employees who are exposed to COVID-19 end quarantine?



If both people wore masks at the time of exposure

Students, teachers, or employees who were exposed to someone with COVID-19 at school do not have to quarantine if:

- The school can verify that both people were wearing face masks (the person who was exposed and the person who tested positive) as defined by [state public health order](#), and
- The person who was exposed does not have any symptoms of COVID-19.

If at any time during the 14 days after their exposure a student, teacher, or employee develops symptoms of COVID-19, he or she should isolate and get tested right away. If the person does not have symptoms, he or she should wait 7 days after they were exposed to get tested.

If either person was not wearing a mask at the time of exposure

Students, teachers, or employees who were not wearing a mask at the time of exposure or who were exposed to someone who was not wearing a mask may end quarantine:

- **On day 10 without testing.** If you don't have symptoms of COVID-19, you can end quarantine 10 days after the last time you had close contact with the person who tested positive.
- **On day 7 with a negative test result.** You can get tested on day 7 of your quarantine. You can end quarantine if your test is negative and you do not have any symptoms of COVID-19. You must wait at least 7 days after the exposure to be tested. The test can be a PCR or rapid antigen test. You must continue to quarantine until you get your test results back.



Students, teachers, or employees who live with someone who tests positive for COVID-19 must quarantine for 10 days from the last day of exposure to the person who tested positive. You must finish the entire 10-day quarantine, even if you don't have symptoms or test negative.