



## COUNTY OF ERIE

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### **Guidance for P-12 Schools and Higher Education when a student or staff member has COVID-19 symptoms or a positive COVID-19 test**

#### **What to do when a student or staff member develops COVID-19 symptoms**

If the student/staff is at school when symptoms begin, the student/staff should immediately be sent home or to their school residence. The student/staff should be placed in isolation at home or at their school residence in their own room with their own bathroom.

One of the three following criteria must be met before the student/staff can return to school:

1. A note from the student/staff's medical care provider with an alternative diagnosis is provided OR
2. The result of a negative diagnostic COVID-19 test is provided OR
3. There have been at least ten days since the onset of COVID-19 symptoms.

The symptomatic student or staff member along with their household members that attend or work at a school will be offered a free point-of-care diagnostic COVID-19 test through the Erie County Department of Health.

#### **What to do when a student tests positive for COVID-19**

The student/staff should be placed in isolation in their own room with their own bathroom. All the following criteria must be met before the student/staff can return to school:

1. At least ten days after COVID-19 symptom onset or ten days from their first positive test if asymptomatic AND
2. Fever-free for at least 72 consecutive hours without the use of fever-reducing medication AND
3. Respiratory symptoms are improving.

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## **What to do with classmates or staff members in contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case**

It is important to understand that protective measures such as maintaining six feet of physical distance and masking while in the classroom are practices aimed at **reducing the risk of infection**. However, having these practices in place does **not** mean that a classroom is exempt from quarantine in the event of a positive COVID-19 case. Duration of exposure impacts risk. Even with protective practices, the following quarantine rules apply:

1. Household contacts and close contacts are placed in quarantine for 14 days. A close contact is defined by NYSDOH as an individual who has been within 6 feet of a positive COVID-19 case for 10 consecutive minutes or more during a time the case was infectious.
2. Any student or staff member exposed to a COVID-19 case in a standard classroom setting or in other enclosed common school settings, such as a breakroom or office, for **60 minutes or more** will be instructed to quarantine in their own room with their own bathroom for 14 days from the last day of exposure to the COVID-19 case.
3. Any student or staff member exposed to a COVID-19 case in a large classroom setting (e.g., lecture halls with more than 50 students present) for **60 minutes or more**, and within a space consisting of **two seated rows** behind, in front of, and to both sides of the case, will be instructed to quarantine in their own room with their own bathroom for 14 days from the last day of exposure to the COVID-19 case. If seats are not assigned and individual proximity to the case cannot be determined, the entire classroom will be instructed to quarantine in their own room with their own bathroom for 14 days from the last day of exposure to the COVID-19 case.
4. If the exposure time was **less than 60 minutes**, no quarantine instruction will be given, **so long as** six feet of physical distancing was in place. However, those in the class should monitor for symptoms.
5. Persons under quarantine who develop symptoms should be tested for COVID-19. If the test result is positive, the student or staff member will be placed in isolation. If test result is negative, the student or staff member will continue in quarantine for the full 14 days.

**Questions regarding this guidance can be direct to the Erie County Department of Health, Office of Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance, School Program at (716) 858-7697 during normal business hours.**

Rev. 9/18/2020 to include department letterhead, no changes to text

Rev. 9/21/2020 to clarify that NYSDOH guidance for placing household contacts and close contacts under quarantine applies to cases in the school environment.