

## MI Safer Schools Guidance for Managing Students Exposed to COVID-19

Michigan.gov/Coronavirus

**Updated: September 10, 2021**

The state is committed to ensuring Michigan students and educators are as safe as possible in the classroom. This guidance will help K-12 schools maintain in-person learning by outlining mitigation strategies when students are exposed to another student infected with COVID-19. When layered prevention strategies such as masking, distancing, testing, isolation and quarantine are applied consistently, school-associated transmission of COVID-19 is significantly reduced.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recommends local health departments and schools work together to quickly **isolate COVID-19 cases** among students and staff, identify close contacts of those cases, and adopt quarantine policies that reduce the risk of transmission in schools while allowing in-person learning. When evidence-based prevention measures, including **universal masking**, are in place, modifications may be made to the 10- to 14-day at-home quarantine.

Quarantine and isolation are determined by the local health department and are used as important tools to prevent the spread of disease.

- You **isolate** when you are already infected with COVID-19 and have tested positive, even if you do not have symptoms. Isolation is used to separate people who are infected with COVID-19 from those who are not infected.
- You **quarantine** when you might have been exposed to COVID-19. This is because you might become infected with COVID-19 and could spread COVID-19 to others.

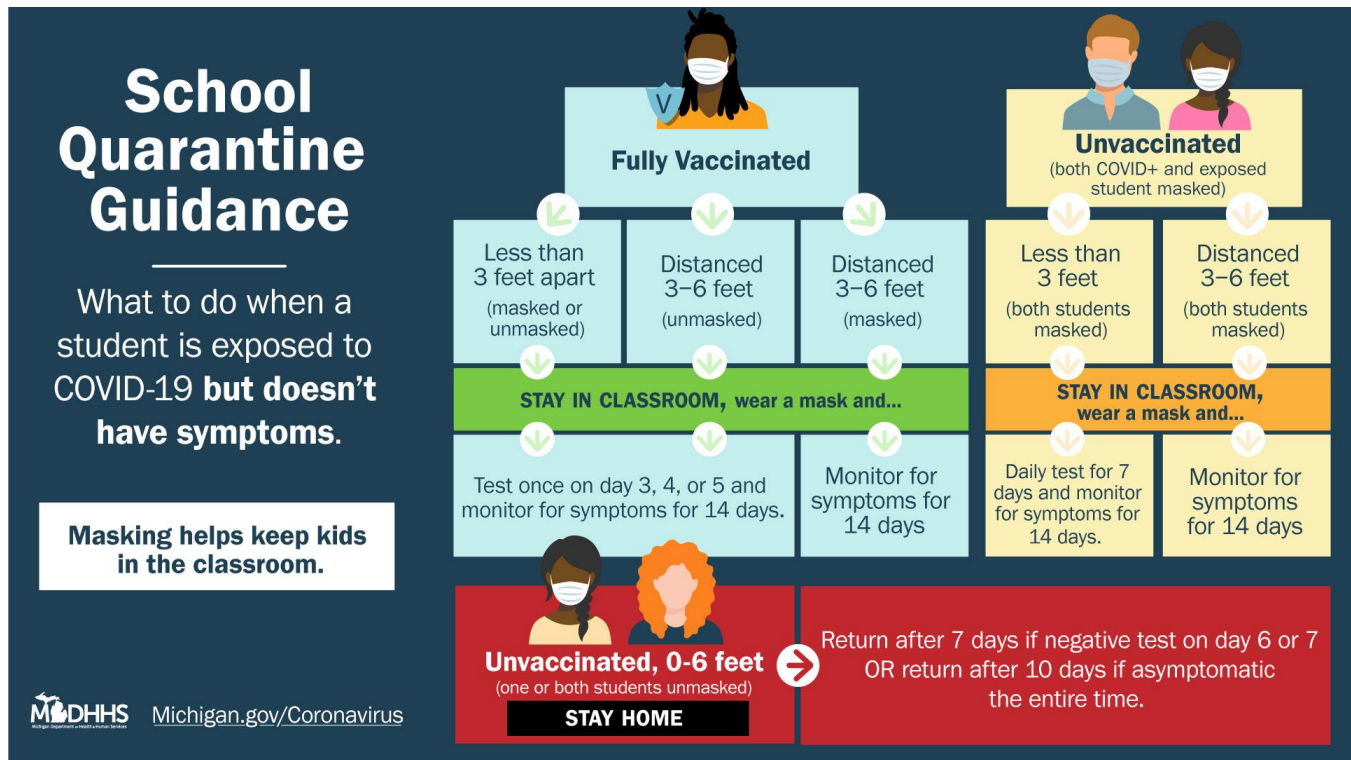
The local health department may modify quarantine policies based on different factors, including how close the contact is, the duration and intensity of the contact, if the students were wearing masks, and what is happening in the local community. Schools and local health departments should work together to decide what quarantine policies work best in their community. While designed for K-12 settings, this guidance may be appropriate in preschool settings.

### **VACCINATION IS THE BEST WAY TO PROTECT AGAINST COVID-19:**

A higher rate of vaccination is the most effective way to prevent severe disease, reduce the risk of transmission and allows students and staff to engage in more activities more safely. MDHHS highly encourages all eligible individuals to get vaccinated.

## COVID-19 School Quarantine Guidelines for Asymptomatic Students

School quarantine guidance for asymptomatic students who were exposed to a student infected with COVID-19 varies depending on a variety of circumstances, many of which are detailed below. In all scenarios, the student who has tested positive for COVID-19 should isolate and follow directions from their local health department.



### When a student exposed to a COVID-positive student can remain in school:

1. A **fully vaccinated** student (regardless of whether they wore a mask) who came in **close contact** with a COVID-positive student.
  - The exposed student can remain in school if they wear a mask and monitor symptoms for 14 days after their exposure. Students who were not wearing a mask, or if they were within 3 feet when they were exposed, should test for COVID-19 once on day 3, 4, or 5 after their last exposure to the COVID-positive student. If the exposed student tests positive, then the student should isolate and follow directions from their local health department.
2. A student who was masked and exposed to a COVID-positive student who was also masked in an indoor school setting, so long as the students remained at least 3 – 6 feet apart.

- The exposed student can remain in school if they continue to wear a mask, but they should monitor symptoms for 14 days following the exposure.

**3. A student who was masked and exposed to a COVID-positive student who was also masked in an indoor school setting, but the students were less than 3 feet apart and the student tests daily.**

- The exposed student can remain in school if they wear a mask. They should monitor symptoms for 14 days and test daily before coming into the school building for the 7 days following the exposure. They should continue to monitor for symptoms for a total of 14 days following the exposure.
- The exposed student should work with their school district and local health department to determine options available for daily testing. If the student cannot complete daily testing for 7 days following the exposure, the student should not remain in school and should follow the guidance below.

Even though the students in the three scenarios above can attend school, they are still a close contact with an exposure to COVID-19. The family should consider this before having the student visit family members and friends who may be at risk of severe outcomes for COVID-19 infection. The student's social activities outside of school should be limited for at least 10 days.

**When an unvaccinated student exposed to a COVID-positive student should not remain in school:**

**1. If the exposed or infected student, or both were not wearing a mask.**

Unvaccinated students who are unmasked are more likely to become ill because they are more likely to have been exposed to larger amounts of virus.

- The exposed student should not remain in school, and instead the student should quarantine at home for 10 days following the exposure.
  - They may return after day 10 if they have not had any symptoms during those 10 days. They should continue to monitor for symptoms for a total of 14 days following the exposure.
  - They may after day 7 if they test negative that day and do not have symptoms. They should continue to monitor for symptoms for a total of 14 days following the exposure.

**2. A student who was masked and exposed to a COVID-positive student who was also masked in an indoor school setting, but the students were less than 3 feet apart and the student does not test daily.**

**Any individual that displays [COVID-19 symptoms](#)**, regardless of vaccination status, should isolate and be tested for COVID-19. Individuals can return from isolation as directed by their local health department.

## **School Testing Opportunities and State Support**

### **MI Safer Schools Testing Program**

MDHHS is providing schools antigen testing supplies free of charge through the [MI Safe Schools Testing program](#). Schools and individual school districts can request antigen test kits through the Mi Safer Schools: [School Antigen COVID Test Ordering form](#). MDHHS will be leveraging our partnership with Intermediate School Districts to help distribute COVID-19 antigen tests based on the orders placed in the School Antigen COVID Test Ordering Form. Questions about test supply orders can be sent to your Intermediate School District and any other school testing related questions can be sent directly to MDHHS at [MDHHS-COVIDtestingsupport@michigan.gov](mailto:MDHHS-COVIDtestingsupport@michigan.gov)

### **Community Testing Locations**

- Free community based pop-up rapid antigen testing  
[Coronavirus - Community Based Pop-Up Rapid Antigen Testing](#)
- Find a COVID-19 testing location  
[Coronavirus - Test](#)

### **Home Tests**

At-home rapid COVID-19 antigen tests such as Ellume and BinaxNow are now available and can be purchased over-the-counter in grocery stores and pharmacies. MDHHS has some at-home tests that will be available to schools through their ISDs. ISDs should contact the [MDHHS-COVIDtestingsupport@michigan.gov](mailto:MDHHS-COVIDtestingsupport@michigan.gov) team to order tests.

## **Additional Resources**

- [MDHHS Recommendations for Safer School Operations during COVID-19](#)
- [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools | CDC](#)
- [Parents and Caregivers | CDC](#)
- [CDC Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools \(American Academy of Pediatrics\)](#)

For the latest information on Michigan's response to COVID-19, please visit [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://Michigan.gov/Coronavirus). You may also call the COVID-19 Hotline at 888-535-6136 or email [COVID19@michigan.gov](mailto:COVID19@michigan.gov).