



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
*Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary*

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
*Mohammed Choudhury, Superintendent*

Memorandum

To: Local School Systems  
Nonpublic Schools  
Licensed Child Care Providers

From: Mohammed Choudhury, State Superintendent of Schools, MSDE  
Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary, MDH  
Jinlene Chan, MD, MPH, Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services, MDH

CC: Local Health Officers

Subject: Interim K-12 School and Child Care COVID-19 Isolation and Quarantine Guidance

Date: January 2022

In response to the recent changes in COVID-19 isolation and quarantine recommendations for the general public put forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) are providing the following interim guidance for local school systems, nonpublic schools, and child care programs. For issues not addressed in this memo, CDC [recommendations](#) should be followed.

This interim guidance temporarily replaces the isolation and quarantine guidance in the [K-12 School and Child Care COVID-19 Guidance](#) document dated October 27, 2021. As the CDC is expected to issue specific updates to its recommendations for K-12 schools and child care programs in the near future, it should be noted that this interim guidance is subject to change.

### ***Persons Who Have Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 (Isolation)***

All persons who test positive for COVID-19 or have suspected COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, should complete isolation as follows:

- Stay home for at least 5 full days from the date of symptom onset if symptomatic or the date of the positive test if no symptoms

- Day 1 is considered the first full day after symptoms started in symptomatic persons or the first full day after the person tested positive if asymptomatic.
- After Day 5, if the person has no symptoms or if symptoms are improved and they have had no fever for at least 24 hours without medication, they may return to school or child care **IF** they wear a well-fitting mask when around others\* for an additional 5 days.
- If the person is unable to wear a mask around others, they should remain at home for a full 10 days.

***Persons Who Are Exposed to Someone with COVID-19 (Quarantine)***

1. The following recommendations apply to:

- Adults 18 years and older who have been boosted OR completed the primary series of Pfizer within the last 5 months or Moderna vaccine within the last 6 months OR completed the primary series of J&J vaccine within the last 2 months AND they have no symptoms;
- Children 5-17 years old who have completed the Pfizer vaccine series as recommended AND they have no symptoms; and
- Persons who had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (i.e. tested positive using a viral test).

These persons do not need to quarantine after exposure but should:

- Wear a well-fitting mask around others\* for 10 days after the last close contact with the person with COVID-19 (Day 1 is considered the first full day after the date of last close contact)
- Get tested at least 5 days after the last close contact (persons who had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days do not need to test).
  - If the person tests positive or develops symptoms they should stay home and follow recommendations for isolation above.
  - If the person tests negative or is unable to get a test, they should continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others\* for 10 days after the last close contact.

2. The following recommendations apply to:

- Persons of all ages who are unvaccinated; and
- Adults 18 years and older who have completed the primary series of Pfizer vaccine over 5 months ago or Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago and are not boosted OR completed the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and are not boosted.

- These persons should quarantine after exposure as follows:
- Stay home for at least 5 days after the last close contact with the person with COVID-19 (Day 1 is considered the first full day after the date of last close contact)
- If no symptoms, get tested at least 5 days after the last close contact.
  - If the person tests negative, they may return to school or child care **IF** they wear a well-fitting mask when around others\* until 10 days after their last close contact;
  - If the person tests positive, they should follow the recommendations for isolation above;
  - If the person is unable to get a test, they may return to school or child care after Day 5 **IF** they wear a well-fitting mask when around others\* until 10 days after their last close contact.
- If the person develops symptoms they should get tested immediately and remain at home; if the test is positive, they should follow the recommendations for isolation above.
- If the person is unable to mask around others, they should remain at home for 10 days from the date of last close contact.

\*NOTE: For people who are returning either from isolation (after a positive COVID-19 test) or quarantine (after exposure), the recommendation is that masks may be removed only when eating and during naptime. Unmasked time should be minimized and physical distancing and ventilation maximized during these times. People should not be participating in any other activities unmasked.

Please note that schools and child care programs may still use the MDH modified quarantine options in the [K-12 School and Child Care COVID-19 Guidance](#) dated October 27, 2021 if they meet all of the requirements that are outlined. MDH and MSDE will provide additional updates to this guidance document and its attachments as soon as possible.

Questions about the interim guidance contained in this memo may be directed to Rachel Nurse-Baker at [rachel.nurse-baker@maryland.gov](mailto:rachel.nurse-baker@maryland.gov).