

# RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED COVID-19 CASES

**School** notified of a suspected case

**School** contacts **Local Health Department**

**Local Health Department** determines if there is a positive case

**Local Health Department** works with **School** to do contact tracing

**Local Health Department & County Superintendent** make one of the following determinations

**School** goes into remote learning while contact tracing is occurring and building is being cleaned

**Specific individuals** are required to quarantine by the Local Health Department

Local Health Department, with county office, determines a **Classroom** needs to quarantine

Local Health Department, with county office, determines a **School** needs to go into remote learning for 14 days because of outbreak



# RESPONDING TO COVID-19 CASES AND OUTBREAKS IN SCHOOLS

Single cases	Response
<p><b>One student/staff member with confirmed COVID-19</b> within a school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Student/staff member stays home until released from isolation (usually 10 days after symptom onset, 24 hours fever-free, and improving symptoms).</li> <li>» School works with local health department to identify close contacts (including providing class schedules and class rosters), exclude contacts until released from quarantine.</li> <li>» WVDHHR will determine when testing is appropriate for close contacts.</li> </ul>
Confirmed outbreak	
<p><b>Two</b> or more <b>people</b> from separate households with <b>confirmed COVID-19</b>, with onset within 14 days <b>in a single classroom or core group</b> (<i>classroom/core group outbreak</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» All students and staff with COVID-19 stay home until released from isolation (usually 10 days after symptom onset, 24 hours fever free and improving symptoms).</li> <li>» School works with local health department to identify close contacts (including providing class schedules and class rosters), exclude contacts until released from quarantine.</li> <li>» WVDHHR recommends testing close contacts (about 5 days after exposure or earlier if contact develops symptoms).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Two</b> or more <b>outbreak classrooms</b> (<i>school outbreak</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» All students and staff with COVID-19 stay home until released from isolation (usually 10 days after symptom onset, 24 hours fever free and improving symptoms).</li> <li>» School works with local health department to identify close contacts (including providing class schedules and class rosters), exclude contacts until released from quarantine.</li> <li>» WVDHHR recommends testing of close contacts (about 5 days after exposure or earlier if contact develops symptoms).</li> <li>» Consider suspension of in-person learning for the school, especially if evidence of transmission between classrooms/ core groups within the school (as opposed to two distinct classroom outbreaks both starting with known household exposures).</li> </ul>



## **CRITERIA FOR SUSPENDING IN-PERSON LEARNING**

### **Suspending In-Person Learning for a Classroom:**

In-person learning for a single class/core group should be suspended when:

- » There is a student or staff member with confirmed case of COVID-19 and it is determined by the Local Health Department that all members will be quarantined for 14 days.

### **Suspending In-Person Learning for a School:**

In-person learning for a school should be suspended when:

- » Local Health Department and County Superintendent determines a 14-day quarantine is required based on positive cases and numbers of individuals required to quarantine.

### **District-wide Suspension of In-Person Learning:**

In-person learning for an entire county will be suspended anytime a county turns red on the DHHR daily map or when a county turns orange or red on the School Alert System map released on Saturdays. Visit [wvde.us/reentrymetrics](http://wvde.us/reentrymetrics) for details.

## **BEST PRACTICES TO ADDRESS SYMPTOMS**

- » Symptoms of COVID-19 include: new onset cough or shortness of breath by themselves OR at least 2 of the following: fever (100.4°F or higher), chills, muscle pain, sore throat, fatigue, congestion, loss of sense of smell or taste, or gastrointestinal symptoms of diarrhea, vomiting, or nausea.
- » If a person has a new symptom (for example, new loss of smell only) with no other diagnosis to explain it, they should stay home and talk to their health care provider about testing for COVID-19, even if it is the only symptom they are experiencing.
- » If a person is given an alternative diagnosis (e.g. strep throat, influenza, etc.) they should be stay home from school following the standard exclusion criteria for communicable diseases in schools.

## **CONSIDERATIONS FOR SIBLINGS**

The siblings of people with COVID-19 will likely be considered close contacts because they often live in the same house as the person who has COVID-19. They will stay home for a 14-day quarantine.

The siblings of people who are home for quarantine because they were exposed to COVID-19 do not need to stay home or be tested unless the sibling in quarantine develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19. Parents should closely monitor all of their children for symptoms.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR COVID-19 TESTING IN SCHOOLS

It is important that people who are sick get tested for COVID-19. People who are not sick, but were a close contact of someone with COVID-19 should get tested for COVID-19 about five days after they were in contact with a sick person. Students and staff should work with their health care provider to get tested. Public health can help with testing if a person does not have a health care provider.

Testing everyone in a school (either before school starts or during school) is not recommended. Testing everyone has not been well-studied. Social distancing and wearing masks are more important ways to prevent COVID-19. A negative test means that the person did not have COVID-19 when they were tested. A negative test does not mean they are “safe” or “cleared” to be at school.

## DEFINING COVID-19 OUTBREAKS IN SCHOOLS

### Definitions

**Confirmed case:** A person who has tested positive for the COVID-19 virus using a laboratory test.

**COVID-like symptoms:** Temperature of 100.4 or higher, fever or chills, new cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting and/or diarrhea.

**School outbreak-associated case:** A confirmed case among students/staff should be classified as outbreak-associated. Family members or others outside the school who get sick should not be classified as a school outbreak-associated case.

**Isolation:** Staying home from work, school, and/or activities when a person has a confirmed case of COVID-19. Isolation lasts for at least 10 days after the onset of symptoms, 24 hours fever-free without fever reducing medication, and an improvement of symptoms. For people who have not had symptoms, isolation lasts 10 days from the day they had their first positive test. In some instances, as determined by an individual’s medical provider, isolation may last in excess of days.

**Quarantine:** Staying home from work, school, and/or activities when a person is a close contact of someone with COVID-19. Quarantine lasts for 14 days (unless the person develops symptoms, then they will be put in isolation).

**Close contact:** A close contact is someone identified as:

- » A person having unprotected direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on, touching used paper tissues with a bare hand, etc.).
- » A person having had face-to-face contact with a COVID-19 case within 6 feet and for longer than 15 minutes.
- » A person who was in a closed environment (meeting room, activity room, classroom, etc.) with a COVID-19 case for 15 minutes or more and at a distance of less than 6 feet.
- » A person having had direct physical contact with a COVID-19 case (e.g., shaking hands).

**Core Grouping:** The practice of keeping the same individuals in the same group at all times during the school day. Changes in core groups are timed to align with school breaks. Core grouping helps limit the number of contacts each individual has. As a result, quarantines, dismissals, or suspension of in-person learning in the event of a student or staff member with COVID-19 affect fewer people. Students may be in multiple core groups (for example, bus ride to school, after-school sports, classroom).

**Confirmed outbreak:** Two or more confirmed COVID-19 cases among students/staff from separate households, with onset within 14 days in a single classroom or core group.

