

## Lake County Health Department School Guidance FAQ

9/16/21

### School Bus

**1. Who is considered a close contact on a school bus?**

A person who is seated within 6 feet of a positive case of COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more cumulatively is considered a close contact on a school bus.

**2. Is the time on the bus to and from school considered an 'exposure at school' or a 'school-based activity', which would potentially qualify it for the Test to Stay program?**

Yes. School bus exposures may qualify for Test to Stay. This is on a case by case basis, and dependent on consistent and correct mask wearing.

**3. If a student is in the Test to Stay program, are they allowed to ride the bus?**

Yes.

### Lunch

**4. If a student is in the Test to Stay program, are they allowed to eat lunch with other students in the cafeteria?**

Yes.

### School Exclusions

**5. Are household contacts to a confirmed case of COVID-19 required to quarantine if they are fully vaccinated and asymptomatic?**

No. Household contacts to a confirmed case of COVID-19 are not required to quarantine if they are fully vaccinated and asymptomatic. They should get tested 3 to 5 days after their last date of exposure to the positive household member and should wear a mask until they receive a negative result.

The household member that tested positive must isolate (which includes separate bedroom and bathroom, masking and distancing from family members, and separate meals for the infected person) even if everyone in the household is vaccinated.

Any unvaccinated household members must quarantine if there is a positive case in the household

**6. Are symptomatic students who are unvaccinated allowed to return from quarantine early if they are seen by a doctor, obtain an alternate diagnosis, and have a negative COVID test?**

## Lake County Health Department School Guidance FAQ

No. Students who have been asked to quarantine cannot return from quarantine early with a negative test or a doctor's note. They have been asked to quarantine because of their exposure to COVID-19. An individual exposed to COVID-19 can go on to become infected with COVID-19 in the 14 days after exposure. The student must remain in quarantine for 10 or 14 days, monitor for symptoms for 14 days, and get tested 5 to 7 days after exposure. Symptomatic students that have been exposed but received a negative test result may be recommended to get a confirmatory test due to suspicion of a false negative result.

### **7. For siblings of a symptomatic student who is sent home—will siblings be able to stay at school if they are asymptomatic? Are the siblings eligible for Test to Stay?**

Siblings of students sent home for symptoms may remain at school as long as the symptomatic sibling gets tested for COVID-19 within 24 hours, and the result is negative. If the symptomatic student does not get tested, then the siblings must also be sent home.

If the student tests positive, siblings must go home to quarantine if they are unvaccinated.  
Household exposures are not eligible for Test to Stay.

## School Activities and Events

### **8. Is there any guidance regarding in-person audiences at plays, music shows, etc.?**

Mask wearing is required for all attendees over age 2 per the Governor's executive order when in indoor public settings. For events, spectators and attendees should maintain social distancing of 6 feet. If a school chooses to maintain distance of 3–6 feet, it is advised to keep an attendance record and seating chart of attendees to identify close contacts in the event of an exposure. Please also review IDPH Music Guidance -

<https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/music-guidance>

## Testing

### **9. How do we implement Test to Stay if close contacts are not identified for 3–4 days after an exposure due to lags in getting test results?**

For Test to Stay, test the student at the first available opportunity, the day they are identified as a close contact if possible, then continue to test on days 5 and 7.

### **10. For individuals who have had COVID-19 within the last 90 days and were only tested with an at-home test kit, can they still be exempt from quarantine?**

Home test kits will not be accepted as proof that someone has had COVID-19 within the past 90 days. If someone tests positive on a home test, they should get a lab-based test if they want to avoid needing to quarantine in the 90 days following their test. Home test kits are not allowable because there is not a way to verify results, when it was taken, who took the test, or if it was administered properly.

## Lake County Health Department School Guidance FAQ

### Social Distancing

**11. Minimum desk/seating is 3 feet. Is this center to center or shoulder to shoulder?**

This is center to center.

**12. We see fully vaccinated people test positive for COVID-19 in my district. What are the recommendations for vaccinated staff and students that are allowed back after a positive case in their household?**

Only fully vaccinated staff and students are permitted back to school after a positive case in their household. Unvaccinated staff or students need to quarantine after being exposed to COVID-19. Vaccinated individuals exposed to COVID-19 are recommended to wear a mask for 14 days, or until they get a negative test result and get tested 3 to 5 days after exposure. They should also monitor symptoms for 14 days and stay home from school if any symptoms develop.

**13. What are the email addresses and phone numbers of the new Community Liaisons?**

**Patricia Brady:** [pbrady2@lakecountyiil.gov](mailto:pbrady2@lakecountyiil.gov); (224) 688-7630

**Leia Mueller:** [lmueeller@lakecountyiil.gov](mailto:lmueeller@lakecountyiil.gov); 224-383-2471

**Michael Atlas (daycares):** [matlas@lakecountyiil.gov](mailto:matlas@lakecountyiil.gov) (224) 688-8745

**Adriano Yashar:** [ayashar3@lakecountyiil.gov](mailto:ayashar3@lakecountyiil.gov) (847) 984-5134

**14. Can we share with families what grade a COVID-19 positive student is in(not the specific class)?**

You can send a notice to families in your school that someone has tested positive for COVID-19 in a grade, or class, like band. When sending out these notices, please make sure they do not directly or indirectly identify who the positive case is so that their privacy is protected. Sending a notice to the school community is not required and can be decided and at the discretion of your school/school board. The minimum and required notification is to inform close contacts and their parent/guardian.

**15. Guidance says to report positive and negative cases to the Lake County Health Department (LCHD) and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) within 24 hours, but Test to Stay protocol also says to report at the end of 7 days of Test to Stay. Please clarify.**

Positive cases of COVID-19 should be reported to LCHD within 24 hours. As part of testing requirements for the school, positive or negative test results should be reported to IDPH for those participating in Test to Stay. At the end of the 7 days, please fill out

## Lake County Health Department School Guidance FAQ

the school Data Collection template which will help to track if school exposures where Test to Stay was implemented resulted in additional spread of the virus.

**16. How do I report Test to Stay results? Where can I find the data collection template for Test to Stay**

You will report Test to Stay results using the Data Collection Template. If you did not receive this, please contact a school liaison.

**17. What if a test day falls on a weekend or holiday and a parent does not submit a child's test result for the Test to Stay program?**

As in the IDPH FAQ, please test the student at school on the next available date for Test to Stay. So, if test day 3 falls on Sunday, test the student on Monday when they return, and then continue to test on days 5, and 7.

**18. What if I do not find out about close contacts until day 6 after contact, but they qualify for Test to Stay? Do I do test (with a rapid antigen test or PCR) immediately and then on Day 7?**

Yes.

**19. Is there a minimum number of days or tests that need to be done before someone is excluded from Test to Stay?**

If parents or a student refuse testing on more than one date, then they should be asked to quarantine and be excluded from Test to Stay.

**20. If a student was approved for a 7-day quarantine, 10-day quarantine, or Test to Stay, do they need to mask and maintain at least 3 feet apart through day 14 at school? Can these students participate in school-related activities, sports, and extracurriculars through day 14? Do they have to quarantine at home while attending school days 7-14?**

If a student is approved for a 7-day quarantine, 10-day quarantine, or Test to Stay, they should not participate in any activities outside of school. This includes shopping, out of school sports, parties, or seeing friends socially. Only students who are in Test to Stay may participate in school and school activities. Students in quarantine may not participate in school or school activities. It is only appropriate to leave home for emergency medical care or to get COVID-19 testing or treatment. If a student is on a reduced quarantine (7 or 10 days), they should continue to social distance and mask in all settings, in and out of school through day 14.

## Lake County Health Department School Guidance FAQ

**21. Does a school nurse need approval from LCHD to allow Test to Stay for a student or staff? Can we make a decision as long as we answer each question on decision tree and meet the eligibility requirements?**

The school nurse does not need LCHD approval for preliminary recommendations and should use the decision tree to identify if a student meets eligibility requirements for Test to Stay. However, if the contact tracing investigation by LCHD reveals that a student is ineligible for Test to Stay, the student should be asked to quarantine at home if they were a close contact.

**22. Why are testing recommendations different days for different circumstances?**

**Sometimes recommendation is for testing 3-5 day post exposure and others 5-7 days?**

Although rare, evidence has emerged that vaccinated individuals can be infected and spread SARS-CoV2. Per CDC guidance, fully vaccinated individuals should get tested once 3 to 5 days after exposure and should wear a mask around others for 14 days or until they have received a negative test result. Unvaccinated individuals should be tested once between 5 to 7 days after exposure. There is no formal explanation provided by the CDC regarding the testing of vaccinated individuals sooner compared to unvaccinated individuals. It may be due to the higher viral loads found earlier with delta variant infections, along with, the fast and potent post-vaccine immune response that it clears out the infection quickly—before the virus can spread far in the body or serious symptoms have a chance to develop.

**23. Should someone in Test to Stay or in a 7- or 10-day quarantine wear a mask outside at recess upon return to school?**

If someone has a reduced quarantine of 7 or 10 days, they should always social distance and mask on days through day 14 when returning to school. Students enrolled in Test to Stay do not need to wear a mask outdoors but should maintain social distance as much as possible from others at recess.

**24. What if I learn more information about a situation after submitting a report through Redcap. How is the best way to communicate that with LCHD? Do a new redcap, or email liaisons?**

Please contact the school liaisons. Do not submit a new report through Redcap. Make sure to let them know that a report was already submitted through Redcap.

**25. What is considered 'consistent and proper mask wearing'? For example, if a teacher tells me a student keeps their mask on but occasionally has to remind a student to cover their nose because the mask slips down.**

## Lake County Health Department School Guidance FAQ

If the student had to be reminded to cover their nose, then proper mask wearing was not followed. In the event of an exposure, we are most concerned if this student was exposed, or a positive case that could have exposed others. Please consult with a school liaison when a case like this comes up.

### **26. How does Test to Stay eligibility apply for students at lunch time?**

Anyone within 6 feet of a positive case for 15 minutes or more cumulative over a 24 hours period would be considered a close contact. If someone is less than 6 feet of distance at lunch, they would be a close contact. Those that are more than 6 feet apart would not be close contacts and would not need to quarantine or participate in Test to Stay.

### **27. How do you apply to do Test to Stay?**

There is not an application process. A school and the individual need to meet the eligibility requirements. Please review the Test to Stay Protocol. If you do not have this protocol contact a school liaison. The [Test to Stay decision tree](#) should be reviewed to determine student eligibility.

### **28. How is the Lake County Health Department going to communicate to the school nurses when a student is eligible for a 7-day quarantine?**

The 7-day quarantine is now being allowed under specific circumstances by approval of the Health Department only. The Test to Stay protocol explains the 7-day quarantine option. The LCHD staff will communicate via email or telephone any changes to preliminary recommendations made by school nurses to the parent/guardian and to the school nurse including a 7-day quarantine approval.

### **29. Can we please have guidance on outdoor exposures? Looking specifically for outdoor sports, playground/recess time, and students eating lunch outdoors.**

According to the IDPH FAQ, people exposed outdoors should not generally be considered close contacts. If there is an exposure of concern that was outdoors, for example where a student was actively symptomatic, or two students that spend a lot of time together in and out of school, please contact our school liaisons for further guidance.

### **30. If you have someone in the Test to Stay protocol, do you need to submit test results of each test?**

## Lake County Health Department School Guidance FAQ

You will need to report test results to IDPH within 24 hours. If the close contacts continue to test negative, you can send those results to LCHD on the reporting template after Day 7. Please report as soon as possible if someone tests positive.

**31. Can non-medical staff be trained to administer the BinaxNOW test for staff qualifying for Test to Stay?**

Yes. Please contact Matthew Knight at [mknight@lakecountyil.gov](mailto:mknight@lakecountyil.gov).