

[Spanish](#) | [Russian](#) | [Chinese](#)

SUBJECT: Revised COVID-19 Quarantine Guidelines

January 12, 2021

Dear Douglas County School District Families and Staff,

Welcome to the second week of our second semester. We are thrilled to have our preschool and elementary students back in-person, and are continuing with plans to get our middle and high school students back for hybrid or full in-person learning in the near future.

Even though we are just a few days into the second semester, we are already seeing some positive COVID-19 cases impacting our schools. Thank you for everything you are doing to help keep our students and staff healthy such as continuing to social distance, wear face coverings, avoid large gatherings, and staying home (or keeping students home) when they are showing symptoms of illness. The following are updates to quarantine guidelines being implemented by the Douglas County School District (DCSD) for our students and staff. These protocols are in alignment with state and local health orders and guidelines.

Whenever a student or staff member tests positive for or shows symptoms commonly associated with, COVID-19, that person will go into isolation. School administrators and DCSD nursing staff work together to identify close contacts of that person. Close contacts are people who have been potentially exposed to COVID-19 and will be asked to enter into quarantine.

### **Quarantine guidelines have changed**

When we learn of a positive or symptomatic case involving our schools, we immediately begin the contact tracing process and send communication to impacted families and staff. This work takes place during the day, in the evenings and on the weekends, as we want to alert you as soon as we receive the case information. Parents of students identified as close contacts are notified via email, phone and text (information about how to update your contact information is listed later in this email). Staff are notified by their supervisor or DCSD nurses. Students and staff who are quarantined should stay home and not go to other schools or any activities around other people for the duration of the quarantine period.

Per revised Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment guidelines, the quarantine period is now 10 days, versus the previous 14 days, if the exposed person remains asymptomatic during that time.

Parents may choose to have their child tested for COVID-19 during the quarantine period, in alignment with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) protocol:

- Testing must occur on or after Day 5 from exposure
- A negative test will lift the quarantine for your child after Day 7, if your child remains asymptomatic during that time
  - **Students and staff may use this option to end their quarantine outside of school, however in-person learning may not resume immediately**
  - The date in-person learning resumes will be dependent on when the class, teacher, and others quarantined are also able to return
- The negative test result must be shared with the school nurse or principal before your child returns to school

The revised guidelines also apply to staff who wish to be tested due to a quarantine. **Students and staff may use this option to end their quarantine outside of school, however in-person learning may not resume immediately.** The date in-person learning resumes will be dependent on when the class, teacher, and others quarantined are also able to return.

Communication shared with you about a quarantine situation will include all applicable dates specific to the situation in which the student or staff member was identified as a close contact, so you know when testing can take place, when the quarantine ends, etc.

### **Monitoring symptoms**

The quarantine period has been shortened from 14 days to 10 days. **However, the CDC encourages monitoring for symptoms for 14 days after the day of exposure, even if the exposed person is no longer quarantined.** The most common symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough and/or shortness of breath. Other symptoms can include sore throat, congestion/runny nose, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache/body aches and new loss of taste or smell. If you have a concern, please contact your healthcare provider for guidance.

### **What happens with learning during a quarantine?**

While students are quarantined, learning continues remotely. School staff will provide information as soon as possible to the impacted families about how to access remote

learning. If you have other children, they can still go to school, daycare, etc. unless their sibling gets sick or test positive for COVID-19.

Staff members who are quarantined and able to do so will continue teaching remotely. In cases where an entire class was not quarantined (generally at the middle and high school levels) a substitute teacher may remain in the classroom with students who are not impacted by the quarantine.

### **How do you identify close contacts?**

The [CDPHE guidance for determining who is a close contact](#) is used to determine who is and who is not subject to quarantine in DCSD schools when they are exposed to someone who tests positive or is symptomatic for COVID-19.

When all criteria in the middle box in the [CDPHE document](#) (targeted contact identification criteria) are met, **targeted** contact identification will be used, and only those determined a close contact will be subject to quarantine. This may be more common in secondary schools and specials classes in elementary schools where classes meet for a single class period. Close contacts are defined as:

- Persons within six feet of someone diagnosed with COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes cumulative in one day.
- Persons within 12 feet for 15 minutes cumulative in one day if either person was not wearing a mask.

When any one of the criteria in the middle box in the [CDPHE document](#) are not met, **enhanced** contact tracing will be used. Those subject to quarantine will include close contacts as identified above and will include all people in the classroom if the class lasted longer than one class period (approximately 40 minutes). If a teacher wears a KN95 or surgical mask AND a face shield or goggles, AND remains six feet away from the masked positive person or 12 feet away from an unmasked positive person, then the teacher will not be required to quarantine.

Since preschool and elementary school students are more likely to frequently move around in the classroom and they are typically together for longer than a single class period, enhanced contact identification will be used more frequently in those settings, increasing the number of close contacts. Middle and high school students are more likely to adhere to seating charts for the duration of a class period which enables targeted contact tracing to be utilized, and fewer individuals identified as close contacts. In all schools, close contacts may also be identified from areas outside the classroom such as cafeterias, school buses, etc.

### **Tips for limiting exposure and reducing chances of being a close contact**

## STUDENTS

- Wear face coverings at all times (except while outdoors or during meals)
- Stay at least six feet away from others when possible
- Wash hands (or use hand sanitizer) often
- Stay at home when sick, or exhibiting any symptoms that are considered common COVID symptoms (i.e. fever above 100 degrees, cough, loss of taste or smell, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing)
  - [Click here to view an At-Home Symptom Screening Tool](#)

## TEACHERS/STAFF

- Wear a KN95 or surgical mask AND clear face shield or goggles
- Stay at least six feet away from others when possible
- Wash hands (or use hand sanitizer) often
- Stay at home when sick, or exhibiting any symptoms that are considered common COVID symptoms (i.e. fever above 100 degrees, cough, loss of taste or smell, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing)
  - [Click here to view an At-Home Symptom Screening Tool](#)

### Where can I access COVID testing?

There are a variety of free testing sites in Douglas County. In addition, through a partnership with COVIDCheck Colorado, DCSD offers no-cost COVID testing to its staff. Community members may also access no-cost testing via COVIDCheck Colorado.

- [COVID Testing in Douglas County](#)
- COVIDCheck Colorado
  - [Community Link](#)
  - [DCSD Staff Link](#)

### How do I update my contact information for quarantine notifications?

Parents can log into the [Infinite Campus Parent Portal](#) and click on “More” in the left-hand column. Navigate to “Family Information” and review your contact information. If you see an incorrect phone number or email, please update it in Infinite Campus, or contact the registrar at your child’s school to request an update.

Staff can update their contact information in [Workday](#).

Together, we can open all of our schools and keep them open. Thank you for continuing to follow health protocols and guidance, and keeping your child home when they are showing any symptoms of illness.

Douglas County School District