

COVID-19 and School

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

COVID-19 is still spreading in Wisconsin communities—which means it is still a threat to your health. We care about you and your family’s health. We worked with our state, local, and federal partners to give you the best information we have.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- Fever (at least 100.4°F)
- Chills
- 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
- Diarrhea

It can take up to 14 days for people with COVID-19 to start showing symptoms. Some people have very mild symptoms, some people become really sick, and some people with COVID-19 don’t have any symptoms at all.

For more information visit www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/symptoms.htm.

What steps can I take to prevent my student from getting COVID-19?

- Help them wash their hands often.
- Help them avoid close contact with people who are sick, even inside your own home.
- Remind them to stay 6 feet apart from other people. **In classrooms where mask use is universal**, 3 feet of physical distance may be appropriate.
- Cover their mouth and nose with a mask when they are around others, if they are able to do so safely. Learn more at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/mask.htm>.
- Help your student monitor their health—look for symptoms and take their temperature daily.
- Get your child vaccinated against COVID-19. Children ages 12 and older are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. For more information on vaccinating your child against COVID-19, see **COVID-19 Vaccine For Ages 12 and Older: What Parents and Guardians Should Know, P-02990**.

For more detailed information about protecting your student from COVID-19 visit: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/protect.htm.

When should my student stay home?

Your student should stay home and isolate if they are symptomatic. Your student is considered symptomatic if they have one of the symptoms marked with a (*) or two of the other symptoms above baseline for them:

- Cough*
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing*
- New loss of taste or smell*
- Fever or chills
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose

Your student should stay home and quarantine if they are not fully vaccinated and they have close contact with someone with COVID-19.

How long does my student need to stay home if they tested positive for COVID-19?

If your student has symptoms they should stay at home and away from others as much as possible until all three of the following have happened:

1. At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms started and;
2. They haven't had a fever (100.4°F or greater) in at least 24 hours without using any medication to lower fever and;
3. Their symptoms improve.

If your student does not have symptoms and they tested positive, they should stay home 10 days after the day they were tested and keep away from other people as much as possible.

What if my student becomes sick but has a negative PCR* test for COVID-19?

They should stay home until they are feeling better and they have not had a fever for 24 hours without using any medication to reduce fever.

If they visit a doctor and they tell you your student has something other than COVID-19 (like the flu or hand, foot, and mouth) then you should follow the doctor's guidelines for exclusion requirements for that disease. Review the **Wisconsin Childhood Communicable Diseases Wall Chart, P-44397** for additional information.

*A negative antigen test result from a symptomatic student or staff member should be confirmed with a PCR test, collected within 48 hours of the initial test. The student or staff member should isolate and siblings and household members should quarantine while waiting for the PCR results.

What is "Close Contact"?

Close contact with someone with COVID-19 makes you at higher risk for getting sick or spreading COVID-19. Examples of close contact are being within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes, sharing a drinking glass or eating utensil, physically touching the person or things that may have their germs on them like dirty tissues, or being coughed or sneezed on.

What if my student came in "close contact" with someone who has COVID-19?

Your student, even if fully vaccinated, should be tested for COVID-19 5-7 days after close contact and monitor for symptoms. Contact your health care provider or look for a community testing site in your area. You can also contact 211 to be connected to resources.

If your student is not fully vaccinated, they should stay home to quarantine for 14 days. This period may be shortened further if certain conditions are met. Follow guidance from your school district on quarantine length.

If your student is fully vaccinated, they do not need to quarantine, but should wear a mask in public indoor spaces for 14 days, or until they receive a negative test result.

If at any time, your student develops symptoms or tests positive, they should immediately isolate from others.

If my student is a "close contact" and there are other children in our home who do not have symptoms, should they stay home too, or continue coming to school?

No, your other students may continue to go to work and school. If the child who was in close contact gets sick, then your other students should stay home.

What if we live with someone who has COVID-19?

Everyone you live with should stay home until all of the following have happened: The sick person gets better:

- At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms started and;
- They haven't had a fever (100.4°F or greater) in at least 24 hours without using any medication to lower fever and;
- Their cough or breathing problems get better.

PLUS 14 days have passed since the sick person was better. This period may be shortened further if certain conditions are met. Follow guidance from your local or tribal health department and school district on quarantine length.

What if my student had "close contact" with someone with COVID-19, gets sick, but tests negative for COVID-19?

They must quarantine for 14 days after the last contact with the COVID-19 positive person. If they visit a doctor and they tell you your student has something other than COVID-19 (like the flu or hand, foot, and mouth) then you should also follow the doctor's guidelines for exclusion requirements for that disease. Review the **Wisconsin Childhood Communicable Disease Wall Chart, P-44397** for additional information.

If they don't visit a doctor and have proof of another disease, they must quarantine for 14 days and follow guidance based on their test type:

1. If tested by PCR test, they must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
2. If tested by antigen test, they must isolate at home for at least 10 days since the first symptoms began AND be fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours AND with improvement in symptoms. Follow-up PCR testing is recommended for these individuals within 48 hours of the negative antigen test

How do I talk with my student about staying home from school and COVID-19?

Here are some tips for talking with children:

- Remain calm while talking.
- Let them know they are safe and it is okay to feel upset.
- Make yourself available to listen and to talk.
- Avoid language that might blame or stigmatize others.
- Pay attention to what children see or hear on the media.
- Provide truthful and developmental appropriate information.
- Talk about new actions that may be taken at school to help protect your students and staff.

Visit the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** and **Department of Public Instruction** for even more tips on taking with your children about COVID-19.