

Quarantine and Class/Team Closures

How does contact tracing prevent the spread of COVID-19?

Contact tracing notifies people (close contacts) who might get sick because they were exposed to a COVID positive person. Typically, people are contacted about exposures and provided with education and precautions to take to prevent further spread of disease. Precautions include staying home, limiting contact with others, washing hands often and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces often.

When would my child have to quarantine and why?

High-Risk contact (Household, Carpool, Sleepover, etc.)

People who are identified as being associated with a high-risk transmission setting will be given different options to continue in school, **regardless of vaccination status**. Close contacts may or may not become ill.

1. Enter test to stay testing which will entail taking multiple tests during the quarantine period. **OR**
2. Wearing a mask during the quarantine period while in school (10 days after last contact with someone that tested positive from COVID). **OR**
3. Stay home and quarantine for a full 10 days.

If they become ill, quarantining will reduce the number of others exposed to COVID-19. If they do not become ill, they can likely return to normal activities after their quarantine ends (typically 10 days) after last close contact with a confirmed case while the case was infectious.

Classroom or Team closure (3+ cases in a classroom or team over 14 days)

Students may be asked to quarantine, enter the test to stay program, or wear a mask when there are 3 cases in their class or team over a 14-day period, as there is a higher risk that they may become ill than if they were just exposed to one or two cases in a classroom. It would be best to move the classroom into a test to stay program and/or resume wearing mask in the classroom to reduce transmission among staff and students. Regardless of where the positive students were exposed, that many people who were infectious while in a classroom would be enough of a risk to quarantine the remaining exposed students in that classroom.

Unable to Test-To-Stay

If a person who has been exposed to COVID-19 is unable to participate in test-to-stay because there is a shortage of available tests or because they do not wish to be tested, then they must quarantine or wear a mask at school for the duration of the quarantine period. Test to Stay allows exposed persons to continue attending class as long as they remain negative, because testing allows the school to monitor the situation and quickly remove anyone who becomes COVID-19 positive, including those who do not develop symptoms.

Why are fully vaccinated people exempt from quarantine when we are seeing cases in people who are fully vaccinated?

Vaccines are highly effective against COVID-19 infection. The majority only experience mild symptoms, if any. It is important to note that each of the COVID-19 vaccines is highly effective at preventing severe disease, hospitalization, and

death. Because breakthrough infections happen, fully vaccinated people who were exposed must be tested after an exposure and wear a well-fitting mask through day 10 after the exposure as additional precautions.

Can I use an antibody test to prove immunity to COVID-19?

Currently authorized SARS-CoV-2 antibody tests may determine if a person has had a previous COVID-19 infection. Antibody tests cannot assess the level of protection provided by an individual's immune system and cannot determine when the infection occurred. It can take a while for a COVID positive person to develop antibodies, so an antibody test cannot be used to diagnose a current infection. There are currently no tests available that can determine an individual's level of protection.

Can accommodations be made for my child so that they do not have to quarantine?

If a child is identified as being in high-risk category for transmission and is not fully vaccinated and does not have proof of a COVID infection from the past 90 days, additional accommodations cannot be made to exempt a child from quarantine or Test-to-Stay or wearing a mask to return to school. These guidelines were created by the Centers for Disease Control and the Washington Department of Health after a thorough review of studies that show how transmission and immunity work in COVID-19 infections. The quarantine guidelines prevent further transmission of COVID-19 and protect the health of the public. Applying these guidelines in a school setting prevents outbreaks and allows schools to stay open so they can provide quality in-person instruction to students.

Why is my child's class/team closed?

Classrooms and other groups close once there are at least 5 cases in a group and there is evidence of transmission occurring within those groups. Five cases in those settings are considered an outbreak which can rapidly spread without classroom closure. Closing a classroom or a team for a quarantine period prevents further transmission. It also lessens the burden on schools, who may be strained for resources when following up with multiple cases that result from an outbreak. It also allows schools to stay open and focus on providing a quality education for students.

What is "The Sibling Rule"?

In Spokane County, when a child is not feeling well or has COVID-like symptoms, their siblings are also sent home. This is only required when there is high COVID-19 transmission in the county. Since siblings are in frequent close contact with each other, if one sibling has COVID-19 it is likely that their siblings will have it as well. Keeping siblings at home reduces the risk of having COVID-19 spread to other classrooms. The siblings are free to return to school once it is determined that the sick child does not have COVID-19.

Masks

What kind of masks should my child wear to school?

To be effective at capturing respiratory droplets potentially containing the COVID-19 virus, face coverings need to have at least 2 layers of tightly woven material. Fabric material with holes, mesh, or that is so sheer that it can be seen through is not effective at capturing droplets.

Are there heavier duty masks available that my child can use to exempt them from quarantine?

Although there are varying levels of protection in masks, there are no quarantine exemptions based on mask type for a K-12 setting.

Spokane Regional Health District assures nondiscrimination in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. To file a complaint or to request more information, reasonable accommodations, or language translations, contact 509.324.1501 or visit srhd.org.