

### **TCHD contact tracing protocol for a student in preK-12 who tests positive for COVID-19**

The Health Department recognizes that there are many variables when making the decision to quarantine students and staff following potential COVID-19 exposures in school settings. During contact tracing we will make every effort to determine any person that has come in close contact to the COVID-19 positive person, following NYS DOH guidance here: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/09/school-guidance.pdf> which states:

In general, a “close contact” is anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes). However, in the P-12 indoor classroom setting, the CDC specifies that students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) where both students were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitting masks are not considered close contacts. This exception to the close contact definition does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

#### Classroom settings

- In classrooms, students will be considered a contact for quarantine if and only if:
  - They are unmasked (or if mask is not consistently and correctly worn) and spent 15 minutes or more within 3 to 6 feet of a case during that time (close contact),
- Note: Following NYS DOH guidance, if a COVID-19 positive student in the K-12 classroom during infectious period and masks were consistently and correctly worn by all the students, TCHD will not be placing any other students in quarantine.
- Vaccinated individuals who are assessed and determined to be asymptomatic will be considered exempt from quarantine.
- Any situation where information about mask wearing is unavailable, then everyone in the space may be considered for quarantine. It is expected that all individuals will be wearing masks, except for when eating or during mask breaks. If guidance is not followed, individuals may be considered for quarantine. These time limits are cumulative, over a period of 24hrs.

#### Non-classroom indoor settings

- Everyone within 6 feet for over 15 minutes is considered a close contact (regardless of mask wearing).
- In school settings outside of a classroom (eg. cafeteria, gym class) there are other factors at play (masks off for eating, small, enclosed space, heavy breathing, etc.) so identification of proximate contacts in these settings will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Further information on shared enclosed space (such as precise distance, space dimensions, ventilation, time exposed, other barriers) and mask wearing is required to identify close contacts in this setting.
  - *Lunch in cafeteria settings:* All students and staff members in close contact (within 6 feet for 15 min or more, assuming that masks were not consistently worn during mealtime) of the COVID-19 positive person are considered a contact for quarantine in a lunch cafeteria setting.
  - *Gymnasium:* All students and staff members in close contact (within 6 feet for 15 min or more if masks not correctly and consistently worn) with the COVID-19 positive person are considered a contact, unless they are vaccinated and asymptomatic. Changing rooms will also need to be considered.
  - *Transport:* All staff and students who were within 6 feet of the COVID-19 positive case for more than 15 minutes on the bus are considered close contacts and will be quarantined. Any situation where

information about mask wearing is unavailable, then everyone in the space may be considered for quarantine.

Outdoor sports and recess

- These activities are done outdoors which greatly minimizes exposure risk, close contacts are rare, identified on a case-by-case basis, and proximate contacts may not be applicable.

Contact Tracing Procedure:

- TCHD Case Investigator will request lists from school focal point (principal or superintendent in coordination with the school nurse) with the following information regarding all close contacts: Legal Name, DOB, address, Parent/Guardian Name (if contact was a student) and contact phone number. Vaccine status if known and eligible. The Case Investigator will enter contact information and send contact to the Virtual Call Center who will place them in quarantine within 24 hours, usually within the same day.
- The above guidelines are consistent with NYS DOH guidance.