



Public Health
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Butler County General Health District

Summary:

Governor DeWine and the Ohio Department of Health have issued some new guidance based on recently acquired data regarding quarantining school contacts. However, there has been a high degree of confusion regarding how it's been communicated out. This document is intended to summarize how the new guidance has changed, how it has stayed the same, and provide a FAQ for both the new guidance as some other school related questions.

The new guidance only pertains to busses and classrooms. So school districts and their respective communities should not interpret these guidelines as a complete overhaul to how schools should manage COVID-19. **Instead it is the introduction of ONE specific change. That change is that classrooms can change their distance requirement from quarantine from within 6 feet, to within 3 feet so long as other conditions are met.**

Basically the 6 feet is now 3 feet with very specific conditions. **This new guidance applies to all K-12 schools that can meet the following conditions.**

The conditions are as follows:

- All students in question must be PROPERLY wearing their mask. They cannot be wearing them below their nose or as a chin strap. If the student who was contagious was not properly wearing a mask, then all contacts regardless of setting must quarantine.
- Social distancing of at least 3 feet in the same classroom or bus. Students who are within three feet and properly wearing a mask must quarantine.
- Schools must keep track and continue to notify students' families of an exposure.
- Students who are within 3-6 feet in a classroom or on a bus and properly wearing mask may attend school, but would be considered in quarantine for all other purposes including athletics. This is what we would do for critical infrastructure, they may go to work but are in quarantine at all other times.
- Schools who cannot or will not abide by these conditions do not apply to the new guidelines.
- Schools must have documented COVID-19 prevention policies.
- Exposure can only have occurred on a classroom or school transport.

FAQ

1. What if my school can't separate by 3 feet?

- A. Your school does not meet the conditions for this guidance and must continue the standard quarantine guidelines.*

- 2. The student doesn't know whether they were properly wearing their mask the whole day in the classroom.**

A. All students within 6 feet must quarantine.

- 3. A student took off their mask for over 15 minutes and they were within 6 feet but over 3 feet from a positive case, do they have to quarantine?**

A. Yes.

- 4. A student tested positive and wore their mask under their nose for more than 15 minutes, do all their contacts have to quarantine?**

A. Yes.

- 5. A student ate lunch with their friends less than 6 feet but greater than 3 feet away and tested positive within 48 hours, do their friends have to quarantine?**

A. Yes.

- 6. A student is using the 7-day with a negative test after day 5 method, can they return to extracurricular activities including sports?**

No. They must wait the full 14 days.

- 7. A student is using the 10 days with no symptoms method, can they return to extracurricular activities including sports?**

No. They must wait the full 14 days.

- 8. A student was within 6 feet but further than 3 feet and everyone was properly wearing a mask, can they return to extracurricular activities including sports?**

No. They must wait the full 14 days.

- 9. If a parent totally isolates in a home with zero contact with their children is it still necessary to wait until that isolation ends for the children to begin their countdown?**

A: No, it is not necessary so long as strict isolation is honestly maintained.

- 10. Are measures on school busses the same as classrooms?**

A: Yes, the governor's guidelines specifically say that school transport can use the same standards.

11. If a student lives with someone and cannot completely isolate from them, do they have to wait until the end of a positive person's isolation? As in the 10th day?

A: Yes, the student's quarantine countdown cannot begin until they are no longer being exposed to the virus. In this case it means when their housemate/family is no longer contagious. As long as someone is contagious, they are exposing their housemate to the virus.

12. If a classroom meets the standards for the new guidelines, do we still need to list those students as "contacts" on the line list?

A. Yes. We have previously told schools no to this, but that would not fit the governor's guidelines. Students must still be identified and notified of their exposure so the system must stay in place.

13. If an athletic team decides to wear masks while practicing and playing would close contacts be required to quarantine since the governor's new order only applies to "classroom and transport" settings?

A. Yes, that is correct.

14. If a staff member or student receive the vaccine for COVID-19 are they still required to quarantine?

A. Yes, the vaccine has been tested in preventing illness, but the data about whether it prevents limited transmission is still being studied and until data becomes available or enough vaccinations have been administered all individuals who receive the vaccine must follow current protocol.

15. Is the last exposure considered day 0 or day 1?

A. Last day of exposure is day 0. Another way of thinking it is in hours. 1 day is 24 hours after exposure. Since we rarely have an exact time for an exposure we must use days. Or that a 1-year-old is in between years 1-2.

16. Is a rapid COVID test acceptable to show that a student has tested positive for COVID, and therefore will not have to quarantine if exposed if it has been within 90 days?

A. Updated on January 7, a viral diagnostic test may be used. Rapid antigen test can be used but a rapid antibody may not.

17. Is a doctor's note acceptable to show that a student has had COVID and will not have to quarantine?

A. *Not by itself. This is divergence from CDC made by ODH that BCGHD is now going by to meet state standards. A doctor's note is only acceptable if there is an exposure. However, if the student was in a classroom or a house with another case, then a doctor's note is acceptable.*

18. Does the classroom setting rule apply if students eat their lunch in the classroom?

A. *No. Eating inherently means taking off a mask and they must be six feet apart.*

19. Should grade levels separated at school be separated during practices such as scrimmages?

A. *While not a requirement, it is a general recommendation that there be as few cross-contacts as possible since every interaction outside of a cohort expands the cohort.*

20. Will antibody tests count for anything?

A. *Absolutely not. The use of an antibody test as a diagnostic tool outside of extenuating circumstances for COVID-19 or to determine immunity is against CDC, FDA, Infectious Diseases Society of America, American Medical Association, American Association of Clinical Chemistry, Association of Public Health Laboratories, Ohio Department of Health, Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, and the World Health Organization recommendations.*

21. Do lunch, recess, and snack time fall under the new guidance?

A. *No.*

22. When a student is sent home for COVID symptoms, when should they be allowed back to school?

If they fit clinically compatible illness with no linkage there are 3 recommended options.

- 1) *Get a COVID test.*
- 2) *Wait 10 days.*
- 3) *Have a provider give them an alternative diagnosis.*

However, with no linkage and no test, BCGHD cannot isolate and we encourage school districts to follow recommendations, but they must use their own policies.

If they have an epidemiological linkage, then they are a probable case and will be isolated for 10 days following onset of illness.

23. Is a lab a "classroom setting"?

A. *Yes. Lab partners must be over 3 feet away and masked to be exempt like any other classroom.*

24. If someone just got the vaccine and tests positive is it because of the vaccination?

A. *No. The COVID-19 vaccine will not cause someone to test positive. The exception may be antibody tests, which shouldn't be used anyways.*

25. How do the new guidelines affect social distancing at lunch?

A. *They do not.*

26. If a positive test has completed the isolation period and is fever free w/o fever reducing medication but still has other symptoms can they return?

A. *It depends. If the "other symptoms" are respiratory, then there must be a marked improvement. If the "other symptoms" are not respiratory, they are good to go.*

27. If an individual has symptoms of COVID tests negative on both rapid and PCR, is it still necessary to isolate that person for 10 days based on onset of symptoms?

A. *There are a couple of considerations for this question. If the individual in question has no epidemiological links then that should be considered a rule-out, and the student only needs to isolate until they are symptom free as they would not be considered a COVID case. From the ODH Infectious Diseases Control Manual Chapter 3 "If the test is taken within a week of symptom onset but epidemiologic linkage and clinical criteria are met, persons should follow isolation protocols for COVID-19 unless an alternative etiology is identified. If an alternative etiology is identified persons should follow quarantine protocols for COVID-19 due to epidemiologic linkage", but not isolation.*

28. What is the quarantine protocol for busing?

A. *If the students are under 3 feet away OR within 6 feet and not wearing a mask properly, they will quarantine.*

29. Are we to quarantine siblings of the same household if another sibling is a contact of another case?

A. *No. They would only quarantine should their sibling either become symptomatic or test positive and the siblings have been in close contact within 48 hours.*