

## Supplemental Guidance for a “Test to Stay” Modified Quarantine Plan

January 10, 2022

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on an *optional* modified quarantine strategy for managing COVID-19 exposures in the school setting. [CDC](#) and [KDPH guidelines](#) emphasize the implementation of layered prevention strategies to protect students, teachers, and staff, which includes isolation of persons who test positive for COVID-19 and quarantine of unvaccinated contacts. This document outlines considerations for a “test to stay” modified quarantine to allow unvaccinated individuals who are exposed to COVID-19 at school to continue with in-person instruction with repeated negative COVID-19 testing.

### **School requirements of a Test to Stay modified quarantine strategy**

- 1) **Collaboration with the Local Health Department (LHD).** A decision about implementation of modified quarantine should be made with LHD consultation, and data should be shared with the LHD weekly about the number of individuals participating in the program and the number who tested positive while participating. If an increase in positive cases occurs in the school setting, the school district should consult with the LHD to determine if the Test to Stay modified quarantine should be discontinued and exposed unvaccinated individuals quarantined away from school.
- 2) **Implementation of a universal masking program** in the school for all students, teachers, and staff.
- 3) **Implementation of a [testing](#) program** at the school or in the school district that provides access to SARS-CoV-2 testing for students, faculty, and staff at no cost to the individual.
- 4) **Ensure testing is conducted with voluntary informed consent** from the appropriate person, parent, or guardian. If consent is withheld or cannot be obtained, exposed individuals are not candidates for this voluntary program and should quarantine per standard protocol.

### **Eligibility requirements of a Test to Stay modified quarantine**

To be eligible for the Test to Stay modified quarantine, the individual must:

- **Be entirely asymptomatic**, without any signs or [symptoms of COVID-19](#);
- **Wear a mask indoors** when at school for the entirety of the program, even if all test results are negative. The mask should fit securely over the nose and mouth;

### **Exposure assessment with a Test to Stay modified quarantine option**

- **Schools should identify individuals** who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 in the school setting. A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of an infectious person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes in a 24-hour period.
  - **Exception:** In the K-12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were at least 3 feet away from an infected student if both students correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time and other K-12 COVID-19 prevention strategies were in place. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.
- **Close contacts should be notified of their possible exposure** and provided with [educational materials](#) about COVID-19.



- The following persons **do not need to quarantine** following an exposure to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 if they are not experiencing symptoms, but are recommended to be tested 5 days or more after an exposure and to wear a well-fitting mask indoors for 10 full days:
  - Students 5-17 years of age who have completed their primary COVID-19 vaccine series >14 days prior to the exposure.
  - Persons 18 years of age and older who are up-to-date with their recommended COVID-19 vaccinations.
  - Persons who have documented COVID-19 illness in the 3 months prior to their exposure (with a positive COVID-19 PCR or antigen test). Antibody testing should not be used for determining need to quarantine; per the [FDA](#), results from currently-authorized SARS-CoV-2 antibody tests should not be used to evaluate a person's level of immunity or protection from COVID-19.
- **Quarantine may be discontinued:**
  - After day 5 if the individual is 1) symptom-free and; 2) receives a negative COVID-19 test on day 5 or later after the last date of exposure to the case and; 3) is able to wear a well-fitting mask indoors and in public settings for 10 full days from the last exposure; or
  - After day 10 if the individual is symptom-free and does not receive COVID-19 testing. Individuals who cannot wear a well-fitting mask consistently and properly should quarantine for the full 10 days.
- The last day of exposure to the case is considered day 0. If the individual is continually exposed to COVID-19 (i.e., a household member that they are unable to isolate away from) then the last day of exposure is the last day that the case is considered infectious (day 5-10, determined by the individual's last day of symptoms).
- **Modified quarantine using a “Test to Stay” strategy** may be an option available in schools to individuals who are otherwise instructed to quarantine who 1) are asymptomatic; and 2) receive negative COVID-19 testing using the protocol outlined below.

#### **Test to Stay Protocol**

- Testing should occur at the school or at an offsite location accessible to students, teachers, and staff at no cost.
- The test should be an FDA-approved rapid antigen or PCR (NAAT) test to identify current SARS-CoV-2 infection and be performed by a licensed healthcare provider or trained personnel under a CLIA-waiver. The type of test should be selected based on the availability of testing supplies and the anticipated turnaround time for results.
- Testing frequency should be determined by the sensitivity of the type of test selected. The sensitivity of rapid antigen tests varies but is generally lower than most PCR tests, therefore rapid antigen tests may be less likely to detect a small amount of virus before the onset of symptoms, leading to more false-negative results. More frequent testing is recommended when using a less sensitive rapid antigen test.
  - **PCR testing option:** PCR (NAAT) testing should occur at minimum every-other day that the student is in-person at the school, starting as soon as possible from the last day of exposure (day 0) through day 5. If testing does not occur over the weekend, testing should occur on both Fridays and Mondays.
    - Example 1: Exposures occurred 1/5 and 1/6 and reported to school on 1/7. Modified quarantine for exposed students starts 1/7 (day 1). Testing should occur on 1/7 (Friday, if possible), 1/10 (Monday), and 1/12 (Wednesday). Students may discontinue



modified quarantine on 1/12 (Wednesday) if all tests are negative and student remains asymptomatic.

- Example 2: Exposure occurred 1/10 and reported to school on 1/11. Modified quarantine for exposed students starts 1/11 (day 1). Testing should occur on:
  - 1/11 (Tuesday), 1/13 (Thursday), 1/14 (Friday), and 1/17 (Monday; if no test is obtained over the weekend). Students may discontinue modified quarantine on 1/17 (Monday) if all tests are negative and student remains asymptomatic. OR
  - 1/12 (Wednesday), 1/14 (Friday), ), and 1/17 (Monday; if no test is obtained over the weekend). Students may discontinue modified quarantine on 1/17 (Monday) if all tests are negative and student remains asymptomatic.
- **Rapid antigen testing option:** It is optimal for rapid antigen testing to be performed each day that the student is in-person at the school, starting as soon as possible after the last day of exposure (day 0) through day 5. If possible, testing should occur at the start of the day and negative results should be received before the individual participates in school activities.
- If a test result is positive, the individual must be sent home to isolate immediately.
- Where possible, exposed students should refrain from riding a school bus or riding with other non-household members to school while in modified quarantine.
- Symptom screening of students on modified quarantine should occur daily.
- Individuals who refuse to receive their scheduled SARS-CoV-2 testing should be immediately sent home from school to quarantine and follow the standard quarantine procedures.

#### **Additional considerations**

- The Test to Stay modified quarantine strategy may be most appropriate for school settings where students are cohorted in a single classroom or grade and are not mixing with other students.
- The Test to Stay modified quarantine may not be appropriate for all in-school exposures. It is reasonable to consider additional factors to determine whether the exposure presents higher risk, such as:
  - Inconsistent use of masks or other layered prevention strategies in the setting.
  - Total number of cumulative days of exposure (e.g., infectious individual only present in school 1-2 days during infectious period vs. an entire week).
  - Participation in activities that are high risk for disease transmission (e.g., singing, shouting, playing wind instruments).