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Research and Varying Quarantine Policies of different states of healthy students who are deemed close contacts

Research showing K-12 classroom quarantines rarely turn into COVID positive cases. 97%-99.8% of close contacts never develop COVID during the quarantine period.

1. October-December 2020, NYC. Of 36 423 school-based close contacts, 191 (0.5%) subsequently tested positive for COVID-19; the likely index case was an adult for 78.0% of secondary cases
<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/147/5/e2021050605>
2. Quarantine CDC study, Utah, December 2020 to January 2021. Only 0.7% close contacts quarantined developed COVID despite high community transmission
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7012e3.htm?s_cid=mm7012e3_w
3. Quarantine CDC study, Missouri, December 2020 to January 2021. Only 2% of quarantine close contacts tested positive for COVID
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7012e4.htm>
4. Test to stay CDC study, Utah, Nov 2020 to March 2021. Test to stay saved 109,000 in-person days.
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7021e2.htm>
5. Ohio study found 3% of close contacts and 3% of students not close contacts tested positive for COVID.
https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/OSCE_evaluation.pdf
6. UK studied schools April to June 2021 during their Delta surge and found less than 2% of close contacts developed COVID. Schools using Test to Stay had similar case rates to those using standard quarantine protocols.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140673621019085>
7. In LA, September 2021, among the almost 30,000 students quarantined, only 63 tested positive. This amounts to an overall secondary attack rate of 0.2%.
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/phcommon/public/media/mediapubdetail.cfm?unit=media&ou=ph&prog=media&cur=cur&prid=3385&row=25&start=1>

Given the science, are we quarantining too many students?

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/are-schools-quarantining-too-many-students/2021/08>

All states have vaccination close contact exemptions and 3 or 6 ft definitions for close contact and quarantine. These 30 states are not automatically quarantining unvaccinated students.

31 states not automatically quarantining students from close contact classroom exposure

If COVID positive and close contact both masked, no school quarantine:

Tennessee

Colorado

Idaho (but must quarantine from community)

Indiana (no extracurriculars or athletics and must quarantine from community)

Missouri (no extracurriculars or athletics and must quarantine from community)

North Carolina (no extracurriculars or athletics)

Oklahoma (does not include many extracurriculars)

Wyoming

If county school system has mask mandate, no quarantine:

West Virginia

If COVID positive and contact both masked or only close contact masked in a N95 or KN95, no school quarantine:

Utah

No quarantines regardless of masks:

Florida

Iowa

Louisiana

Montana

Nebraska (could change if cluster)

New Hampshire

Texas-parent decision

Avoid quarantine by some type of testing policy:

California (not extracurricular)

Kansas

Kentucky

Illinois

Maine (just a pooled testing)

Massachusetts

Michigan

North Dakota (masked or testing if unmasked)

Ohio (students and staff)

Vermont

Washington

Districts can develop their own policy:

Georgia

South Dakota-schools can allow close contacts to attend

If both wearing a mask or 70% of staff and students vaccinated and/or test to stay:

Arkansas

Specific policy references of 30 states

1. Tennessee

(6 counties have their own health dept that may not follow the state)

No quarantines of close contacts if COVID positive student and close contact were masked.

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/cedep/novel-coronavirus/Isolation-QuarantineRelease.pdf>

2. Arkansas

If both COVID positive student and close contacts are both masked, no quarantine. Also no quarantine if 70% or more of staff and students are vaccinated. And test to stay as long as tests are available.

<https://www.5newsonline.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/arkansas-changes-covid-19-quarantine-guidelines-schools/527-4d3b01a3-3bf8-4289-9854-82b0e7b04f6a>

[https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/admin/Files/FINAL_2021-22_Guidance_for_Schools-October_18_\(2\)_20211020132935.pdf](https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/admin/Files/FINAL_2021-22_Guidance_for_Schools-October_18_(2)_20211020132935.pdf)

3. California

If COVID positive student and close contacts are masked, quarantine not required for routine classroom exposures if contact gets twice weekly testing and must quarantine extracurricular activities.

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/K-12-Guidance-2021-22-School-Year.aspx>

4. Colorado

If COVID positive student and close contacts are masked, quarantine is not required for routine classroom exposures.

<https://covid19.colorado.gov/practical-guide-for-operationalizing-cdc-school-guidance>

5. Florida

Students who have been exposed are able to come to school as long as there are no symptoms.

<https://www.flgov.com/2021/09/22/governor-ron-desantis-announces-new-department-of-health-rule-to-protect-healthy-students-from-forced-quarantining/>

6. Georgia

School districts are permitted to make their own policy. Many are choosing no mask mandates and no quarantines for close contacts and requiring close contacts to wear a mask and monitor symptoms for 10 days.

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.ajc.com/education/kemp-touts-his-education-policies-local-control-during-chokeeb-school-visit/FTGYOX5SKFFGNGH6FBUNYO6MHI/%3foutputType=amp>

7. Idaho

In instructional Areas (e.g. standard classroom-like environment with teacher in front of the room and students are seated): If both the case and the contact were wearing masks 1) that cover the nose and mouth and 2) were worn consistently during the exposure period, then:

- The case must isolate at home as recommended by public health.
- The contact does not need to quarantine*, but should continue to wear a mask and monitor for symptoms. *These students do not need to quarantine from school or extracurricular activities, but do need to quarantine from the community.

<https://www.cdh.idaho.gov/pdfs/cd/Coronavirus/Resource%20Docs/schools/2021/School-Quarantine-CDH-Position-FINAL.pdf>

8. Illinois

To protect in-person learning, close contacts in circumstances where both the case and the contact were consistently and correctly masked, as required by Executive Order 2021-18, may remain in school through Test to Stay protocols, as has been documented by the CDC.[1] IDPH requires that schools test close contacts on days one, three, five, and seven from date of exposure

<https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/school-guidance/rapid-point-care-testing-covid-19.html>

9. Indiana

Updated 9.1.21

(6) For K-12 schools that have and consistently enforce a face covering requirement for children, students, teachers, staff and others present, close contacts are not required to quarantine and may continue to attend school as long as they are asymptomatic. The close contacts should monitor daily for symptoms of COVID-19. Any symptoms of COVID-19 must prompt immediate removal of the symptomatic individual from the school environment. The individual should seek testing and isolate. This exception to quarantine only applies in the classroom setting and does not apply to extracurriculars, athletics, etc. For non-classroom settings, follow the exclusion requirements in (5).

https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/files/COVID-19%20Control%20Measures%20under%20410%20IAC%201_9-1-21.pdf

10. Iowa

No close contact quarantines, no masks

<https://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/61/covid19/resources/School%20Update%20Fall%202021.pdf>

11. Kansas

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment sent out new guidance that would allow even unvaccinated students and staff members at schools to avoid going into quarantine — if they submit to and pass daily COVID-19 tests that show they don't have the virus.

<https://www2.lijworld.com/news/schools/2021/aug/04/even-the-unvaccinated-may-not-have-to-quarantine-when-coming-into-contact-with-covid-this-school-year-state-releases-new-guidance/>

12. Kentucky

Test to stay program passed by lawmakers. Schools can opt in or not and make their own guidelines.

<https://education.ky.gov/comm/Documents/SB1%20Guidance%20MC3%20FINAL.pdf>

13. Louisiana

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) today announced the creation of a new parent choice option for school systems to include in their quarantine determination process. If a school system decides to implement the parent choice option, mandatory quarantines for students defined as "close contact" will no longer be required. Instead, the parent or legal guardian will be immediately notified of the exposure

and given the option to quarantine their child or allow them to remain in school. Additionally, at that time, parents will be given an opportunity for a no-cost COVID screening for their child.

<https://www.louisianabelieves.com/newsroom/news-releases/2021/09/29/louisiana-department-of-education-creates-parent-choice-quarantine-option>

14. Maine

No quarantine of close contact (staff or student) if participates in weekly school pooled testing and the exposure was a school exposure; or

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/2021-08/SOP%20Updated%208.12.21.pdf>

15. Massachusetts

Schools and districts can offer “test to stay” to avoid close contact quarantines. Daily testing for 5 days with parental permission to avoid quarantine.

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/testing/>

16. Michigan

If both COVID positive student and close contact were both masked and close contact participates in testing daily, then close contact can avoid quarantine.

<https://www.michiganradio.org/health/2021-09-08/the-state-just-issued-new-school-quarantine-guidance-its-complicated>

17. Missouri

Quarantine required, though contacts can continue to attend school: Students, teachers and staff identified as close contacts can continue to attend school, but quarantine at home while not in school if:

-The exposure happened in the school setting (does not include exposures occurring during extracurricular activities such as sports); AND

-Both the case and the potentially exposed close contacts correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time; AND remains without COVID-19 symptoms for the full 14 days past the last date of exposure to the case.

Note: All close contacts in this category should continue to consistently and correctly wear masks in the school setting.

<https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/pdf/guidance-assessing-exposures-contacts-school.pdf>

18. Montana

Most districts are dropping quarantine of close contacts because new law doesn't allow discrimination or different treatment of unvaccinated for quarantine purposes.

<https://montanafreepress.org/2021/08/26/montana-law-creates-covid-quarantine-confusion/>

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/HB702Guidance09012021.pdf>

19. Nebraska

No quarantine of first school close contacts, even unmasked. If it turns into a cluster it may change.

https://journalstar.com/news/local/education/nebraska-kids-may-be-allowed-to-stay-in-school-after-covid-exposure-this-year-at/article_6194ee7b-3449-57be-8e5d-4bd1b1754bc9.html

20. New Hampshire, page 10

Masks optional, close contacts do not have to quarantine.

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/school-childcare-toolkit-2021-2022.pdf>

21. North Carolina

No quarantine if close contact and COVID positive are masked.

This applies to exposures in classrooms, other in- school settings, and school transportation but does not apply to exposures during extracurricular, including athletic activities. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the classroom. Page 15-16

<https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/media/164/open>

22. North Dakota

Masks optional, close contacts where COVID positive and close contact masked-no quarantine for close contact. Close contact unmasked can opt out of quarantine by testing every other day during the quarantine period. This is dependent on schools having resources of staff and testing to implement.

https://www.health.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/Files/MSS/coronavirus/School%20Resources/K-12_School_Q_A.pdf

23. Ohio

The new post-exposure guidance for unmasked and unvaccinated students and staff differs in a few ways: They can remain at school if they wear a mask for 14 days or only seven days with a negative proctored test, antigen or PCR, taken between five and seven days after exposure.

Students can participate in extracurricular activities if they wear a mask, with exceptions for activities where distancing and masking are difficult, and test negative on two proctored tests: the first on the day of exposure and a second taken between five and seven days after exposure.

<https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/2021/10/25/ohio-department-health-revise-covid-19-school-quarantine-rules/6172994001/>

24. Oklahoma

If both COVID positive individual and close contact were masked, no quarantine is needed. Only for classrooms, not for many extracurriculars. This includes teachers.

<https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/covid19/documents/resources-and-recommendations/New%20quarantine%20guidance%20for%20schools%20.pdf>

25. South Dakota

Some school boards have implemented policies that seek to balance public health concerns with the academic, social-emotional, and mental health needs of students. These policies may draw from the guidance available regarding critical infrastructure (or essential) workers and provide an approach that combines mitigation strategies and common sense. These policies are for asymptomatic close contacts only.

<https://doe.sd.gov/strongschools/documents/B2S-FAQ-081221.pdf>

26. Texas

Parents of students who are determined to be close contacts of an individual with COVID-19 may opt to keep their students at home during the recommended stay-at-home period.

For staff who are close contacts, it is a local employment policy decision.

For staff who meet the close contact threshold with a COVID-19 positive individual, if these staff continue to work on campus, rapid testing must be performed periodically for 10 days postexposure.

<https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/SY-20-21-Public-Health-Guidance.pdf>

27. Utah

If a student is exposed to another person at school who tests positive for COVID-19, the student can continue to come to school if:

The exposed student and the COVID positive person were both wearing masks or

The exposed student was wearing a N95 or KN95 mask, even if the person who tested positive was not wearing a mask.

<https://coronavirus.utah.gov/education/>

28. Vermont

Test to Stay — allows unvaccinated students who are close contacts of a positive COVID-19 case to take a daily antigen test at the beginning of the school day, rather than remaining at home. Students who test negative go to class and in-school extracurricular activities as normal, as long as they have no symptoms. Students test until seven days have passed since they were last exposed to the case.

<https://governor.vermont.gov/press-release/state-vermont-strengthens-school-testing-program-makes-covid-19-response-testing>

29. Washington

If a close contact is neither fully vaccinated nor recovered from confirmed COVID-19 in the past three months and does not have symptoms, the close contact must quarantine unless the school has chosen to adopt a “test to stay” protocol with approval from local public health.

Close contacts following a test to stay protocol must still quarantine at home away from others except for attending school (e.g., the person may not participate in extra-curricular or after school activities and should not attend social gatherings, etc.).

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/820-105-K12Schools2021-2022.pdf>

30. West Virginia

County schools with mask mandates, including fully vaccinated students, can avoid any quarantines unless exposed without a mask, such as cafeteria or sports.

https://www.wvgazette.com/news/education/wv-ed-leaders-if-schools-universally-mandate-masks-no-covid-19-contact-quarantines-required/article_aa456fe9-8781-5456-bc09-c8885b3d8bb1.html

31. Wyoming

Close contacts do not have to quarantine regardless of distance if close contact and COVID positive were both masked

https://health.wyo.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Isolation-Quarantine-Graphic-Aug-2021-Update_FINAL.pdf

More resources

https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.washingtonpost.com/education/school-quarantine-changes/2021/05/02/681cdb4a-668e-11eb-886d-5264d4ceb46d_story.html%3foutputType=amp

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01826-x>