

For Families: Saint Louis County Department of Public Health (DPH) K-12 School Isolation and Quarantine Requirements Explained

Our primary goal for the upcoming school year is to keep children in the classroom as much as possible while maintaining a safe environment for all students and staff.

DPH recommends a layered COVID prevention and mitigation strategy that includes both individual/family and school/institutional components:

- Vaccination of eligible individuals
- Face coverings indoors
- Physical distancing
- Exclusion of symptomatic students and staff from school
- Contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine
- Frequent hand hygiene
- Appropriate ventilation
- Routine cleaning

When proper mitigation practices are in place, quarantine of students after a school-related exposure is often not required.

All K-12 public and private schools in Saint Louis County are required to follow the Saint Louis County Department of Public Health's (DPH's) quarantine requirements. DPH works closely with schools to ensure that they understand and implement these quarantine requirements.

Whether a student is required to quarantine following a school-related COVID-19 exposure is determined by:

- Whether the exposed student is fully vaccinated;
 - Fully vaccinated people are not required to quarantine as long as they remain asymptomatic.
- Whether the *school* has implemented proper mitigation practices, including universal masking while indoors;
- Whether the case and the exposed student were properly masked at the time of the exposure;
- Whether the case and the exposed student were at least 3 feet apart at the time of the exposure;
- Whether the case was exhibiting respiratory symptoms (coughing, sneezing, runny nose) at the time of the exposure;
- The cumulative time that the exposed student was exposed to the case; and
- Whether any additional (secondary) cases have occurred as a result of this exposure.

Additionally, in some situations where quarantine *is* required, schools with universal masking policies are able to implement a modified quarantine, which helps to maintain continuity of classroom learning. If an exposure meets certain criteria, students in modified quarantine are allowed to attend essential classroom activities during their quarantine period. If a school has not implemented a universal masking policy, modified quarantine is not permitted.

Anyone (vaccinated or unvaccinated) who has been exposed to a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 and develops any symptoms at all, should immediately isolate at home and seek testing.

You play an important role in keeping your children safe at school and preventing the need for quarantine!

- Get yourself and all eligible children vaccinated. Vaccination is the best way to keep your family safe and in the classroom.
- Ensure that your child wears a mask while indoors.
- Keep your children home from school when they have symptoms.
- If you are exposed – even if quarantine is not required – get a COVID-19 test 3 to 5 days after the exposure or if any symptoms develop.
- Ask your school to implement a universal masking policy and other important mitigation practices.