



## Wood County Health Department Companion Protocols for Implementation of Updated Guidance from the Ohio Department of Health for K-12 Exposure and Quarantine

This document is designed to be reviewed in conjunction with the **COVID-19 Fact Sheet—K-12 School Quarantine Guidelines**, created on January 5, 2021. This document will be updated to address any revisions by the Ohio Department of Health to those **Guidelines**.

Based on a [preliminary evaluation by the State of Ohio](#), schools can now choose to allow close contacts who were exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the classroom or on school transportation to attend in-person classes as long as all the following conditions were met:

1. The school has documented COVID-19 prevention policies, including universal mask wearing, social distancing, hand-washing, identification and management of students exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, and routine environmental cleaning and disinfection protocols.
2. The exposure occurred within a *classroom* environment or while on required school transport (e.g., school bus).
  - a. Individuals who are close contacts because of exposure outside of the classroom or required school transportation are **NOT** permitted to attend in-person classes. This includes exposures that happened at other school-related events (e.g., sports), regardless of masking or other protocols.
3. The person with COVID-19 and any associated contacts were wearing face masks that covered their nose and mouth **at all times**.
  - a. If meals were consumed, a distance of at least 6 feet between students must have been maintained.
4. Social distancing was maintained.
  - a. Ideally, desks should be spaced 6+ feet but no less than 3 feet in all classroom settings.
  - b. WCHD continues to recommend that maximal distancing be maintained whenever possible.
  - c. Based on experiences reported locally, at least 3 feet of separation in classrooms and on required school transportation at all grade levels provides significant protection among students, when combined with other prevention measures, namely staying home when sick, proper mask-wearing, frequent handwashing, and disinfection of surfaces.

Additionally, in order for close contacts to be able to attend in-person classes, the school must ensure the following criteria can be met:

1. Social distancing must be maintained by close contacts **at all times**.
  - a. In the classroom
    - i. **Students**. When in the classroom or on school transportation, close contacts must be at least 3 feet but ideally 6+ feet away from all other individuals, especially other close contacts, at all times. Alternate arrangements must be made for any students who cannot maintain this standard.
    - ii. **School faculty and staff**. When in the classroom or on school transportation, close contacts must be at least 6 feet but ideally as far away as feasible from all other

individuals, especially other close contacts, at all times. Alternate arrangements must be made for any faculty/staff who cannot maintain this standard.

b. Outside the classroom

- i. All close contacts, regardless of age, must be as far away as feasible—but no less than 6 feet—from all other individuals, especially other close contacts, during any activity outside the classroom or school transportation. This includes movement through the hallways and activities that happen in other locations, like the library. This is especially important for activities in which face masks cannot be safely or effectively worn, including the following:
  1. Meal or snack times;
  2. Recess or gym class;
  3. Any activity that educators have noted is often associated with the shifting of masks so that they do not cover both the nose and mouth;
  4. Any activity that requires regular reminders/instructions to students to fix their masks.
2. Close contacts must **NOT** be permitted to participate in sports or other extracurricular activities outside a classroom environment until after the 14-day quarantine period has been completed.
3. Like other individuals, close contacts must be immediately isolated from all other people if they develop signs or symptoms illness consistent with COVID-19.

Close contacts who attend in-person classes are still required to follow normal quarantine practices outside of the classroom and school transportation. This includes monitoring for symptoms for 14 days and restricting interaction with all other individuals, especially adults over the age of 65 and other [individuals at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#). All individuals, but especially close contacts, should immediately isolate if they develop any signs or symptoms of illness consistent with COVID-19.

Full quarantine continues to be advised for anyone who is exposed in the classroom or on school transportation if protocols have not been followed (e.g., students or adults in the classroom did not properly wear masks).

To date, with few exceptions, Wood County Health Department has not identified cases that were linked to in-school exposures. In proceeding with this policy, Wood County Health Department will closely monitor its implementation to ensure that there is a similar experience in the second half of the year. If transmission in the school has been identified, quarantine will be implemented for students and staff identified as close contacts, and this policy will be immediately revisited.