

Frequently Asked Questions

The single most important thing to do if any of the following symptoms are present is to STAY HOME. Our collective health relies, in part, on individual attention and responsibility. Note that some symptoms of COVID-19 are the same as the flu or a bad cold; please do not assume it is another condition. When in doubt, stay home.

Please STAY HOME if indicated to do so after completing the health screening checklist.

Q: If my family member or other household contact tests positive for COVID-19, can I go to school? If a family member or household contact tests positive for COVID-19, all persons living in the same household are required to quarantine for 14 days from the date of positive test result. During this time, the positive household contact is asked to self-isolate within the home to prevent infecting other household members. All other members of the household should monitor for symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and contact their healthcare provider if symptoms develop.

Q: Can I send my child to school with a cough or runny nose, but no fever? Kids with mild respiratory symptoms, such as a minor cough and/or runny nose, can go to school if they feel well enough and do not have a fever. Caregivers should encourage frequent handwashing and teach kids how to cover their coughs and sneezes to avoid getting others sick.

Q: If my child goes home ill, when can they return to school? It will depend on the situation.

At a minimum for less common symptoms, children will be required to stay home until 24 hours

after symptoms have resolved. The school nurse can be contacted for guidance based on symptoms.

Q: Can my child wear a face shield? Shields are acceptable for children. A mask will provide better protection, but especially in the classroom setting a shield may be more comfortable for some students. The shield must extend out to the ears and from the forehead to below the chin.

Q: If my child starts running a fever at school, what will happen? And what about my child's siblings? Your child will be sent to the nurse's office and you will be contacted to pick up your child as soon as possible. Any child with a fever of 100.4 or above will guide us to also send siblings home. We will use the Minnesota Department of Health Decision tree to guide us.

Q: A student has fever, diarrhea and vomiting for 24 hours at home. They have had no fever or vomiting for the last 24 hours but continues to have diarrhea. Can they come to school?

This student needs to be evaluated by a health care provider and provide a note if an alternative diagnosis is made and they can return to school. If they are not evaluated, they should isolate at home for 10 days from the start of the symptoms. If positive for COVID-19 or not diagnosed, close contacts may be asked to quarantine at home for 14 days.

Q: When will someone be sent home or told to stay home for displaying COVID symptoms?

Refer to the list of symptoms on the Minnesota Department of Health decision tree that will require someone to be sent home or prevent someone from coming to school. Symptoms are

divided into two categories- more common and less common. Notice that the guidance talks about "new" onset of cough or shortness of breath and/or at least 2 other symptoms related to COVID. In other words, someone simply with a runny nose or sore throat may not be considered symptomatic of COVID. That would likely be considered something else such as a common cold or allergies. Be aware that the department of health is continuing to evaluate advice and will be updating recommendations as they learn more about the risks.

Q: How will decisions be made if someone is symptomatic or tests positive?

Refer to a set decision tree for guidance. Any student or staff who either fails to pass screening or becomes symptomatic during the screening must immediately be escorted by a staff member wearing PPE to an isolation room. A staff member will stay in the room six feet away from the individual until they are able to go home. This student or staff member cannot return to the building until they meet the requirements outlined by the decision tree created to use with people with COVID-19 symptoms. Each building will utilize a COVID-19 space, should a student or staff member need to be isolated until they can leave the building if they are showing symptoms of COVID-19.

For suspected or confirmed cases:

- The person will be separated and held in the designated isolation area until they are able to be picked up by a parent or guardian
- While waiting they will be under visual supervision of a staff member
- The staff member and person waiting will be required to wear a face mask when able to do so safely.

- Cleaning steps outlined in the cleaning section will be followed, ensuring that communal spaces such as restrooms and classrooms are cleaned.
- MDH will be notified of confirmed COVID-19 cases of students or staff. It will be reported by the school COVID coordinator.
- A notification email will be sent to teachers and parents of students informing them of a positive case, but no information about identity will be included, per federal privacy laws.
- In the case that a child is affected through close contact, they will be notified by the school or county and state health officials.

Q: If there is a case in a classroom, will everybody have to quarantine for two weeks?

The department of health will look at each situation on a case-by-case basis and instructions will be given on whether quarantine is needed and for how long.

Q: If I hear about a family or a staff member who has COVID-19 or has been in close contact with somebody who has, whom should I notify?

Contact the County Department of Health with any concerns.

Q: What happens if a student refuses to wear a mask? The student will be sent to the office where school administration will determine the next steps which may include contacting parents and directing the student to a remote learning option.

Q: Can I visit my child during school? How will visitors be handled? Non-essential visitors will be restricted from accessing school buildings. If a visitor must enter, they must call before entering, be screened by staff and be required to use a mask or face covering.

Q: What will we do for a positive case with a student or staff member? First, Fillmore County Department of Health will be contacted or they may contact the school. A regional support team that will be in charge of investigating the situation to see who may be a "close contact" of the positive case. This is called "contact tracing". A close contact would be anyone who spent 15 cumulative minutes within 6 feet of the positive case. This is why it will be important to maintain strict seating charts and mix kids as little as possible between cohorts (classrooms, grade levels, etc). It will be determined by the department of health if testing is appropriate. If so, they will facilitate that with public schools being a priority. Names of positive COVID cases are private, but general locations may be able to be disclosed as the contact tracing commences. The rooms/spaces occupied by positive COVID cases will be put out of use pending a thorough cleaning.

****Special note...** a "contact" of a "close contact" is not considered a "close contact" and subject to quarantine or testing. This may be a little confusing. In other words, if you spent 15 cumulative minutes within 6 feet of someone identified as a "close contact" you are not considered a "close contact" and subject to quarantine or testing. However, if that "close contact" you were associated with tests positive, you are then considered a "close contact" and subject to quarantine and testing.

*It is conceivable that if there is a cluster of positive cases in a classroom or grade level that group may get quarantined and move to distance learning during the quarantine period.

Q: How will I be informed if a coworker or student I have been in contact with tests positive for COVID-19?

When a confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified at a school, MDH will work with the school to identify anyone who has had close contact with the confirmed case while they were infectious. All close contacts will be notified and provided instructions about what to do next. Public health and the school will ensure notifications are sent to everyone who was in close contact.