



COVID-19 Technical Assistance for Schools FAQ Session

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Webinar housekeeping

- All participants will be muted throughout the webinar
- Please type questions into the chat box for the Q & A portion of the webinar
 - Questions should be directed to “everyone” in the chat
- The webinar will be recorded and available at the following link:

<https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/school-resources>

Webinar Agenda

- Review of Key Tools in updated MSDE/MDH School Guidance
- Overview of Frequently Asked Questions
- Q and A

Next webinar will be held on: **12/9/21**

Modified Quarantine Options

- Three options:
 - Test to Stay
 - Weekly Screening Testing
 - Correct and Consistent Use of Well-fitting Masks

Modified Quarantine Options Criteria

- Asymptomatic unvaccinated students who are a close contact of a student with COVID-19 in K-12 indoor or outdoor settings or school transportation AND both the infected student and exposed student(s) were correctly and consistently wearing well-fitting masks for all exposures
- Modified quarantine options do not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the school setting.
- Exposures that are higher risk or occur where masks are not being worn also do not qualify for modified quarantine (e.g. lunch, indoor or high contact athletics, indoor forced exhalation activities such as singing, exercising, or playing a wind or brass instrument).
- **All of the modified quarantine options potentially poses some level of risk for in-school COVID-19 transmission**



Table 1

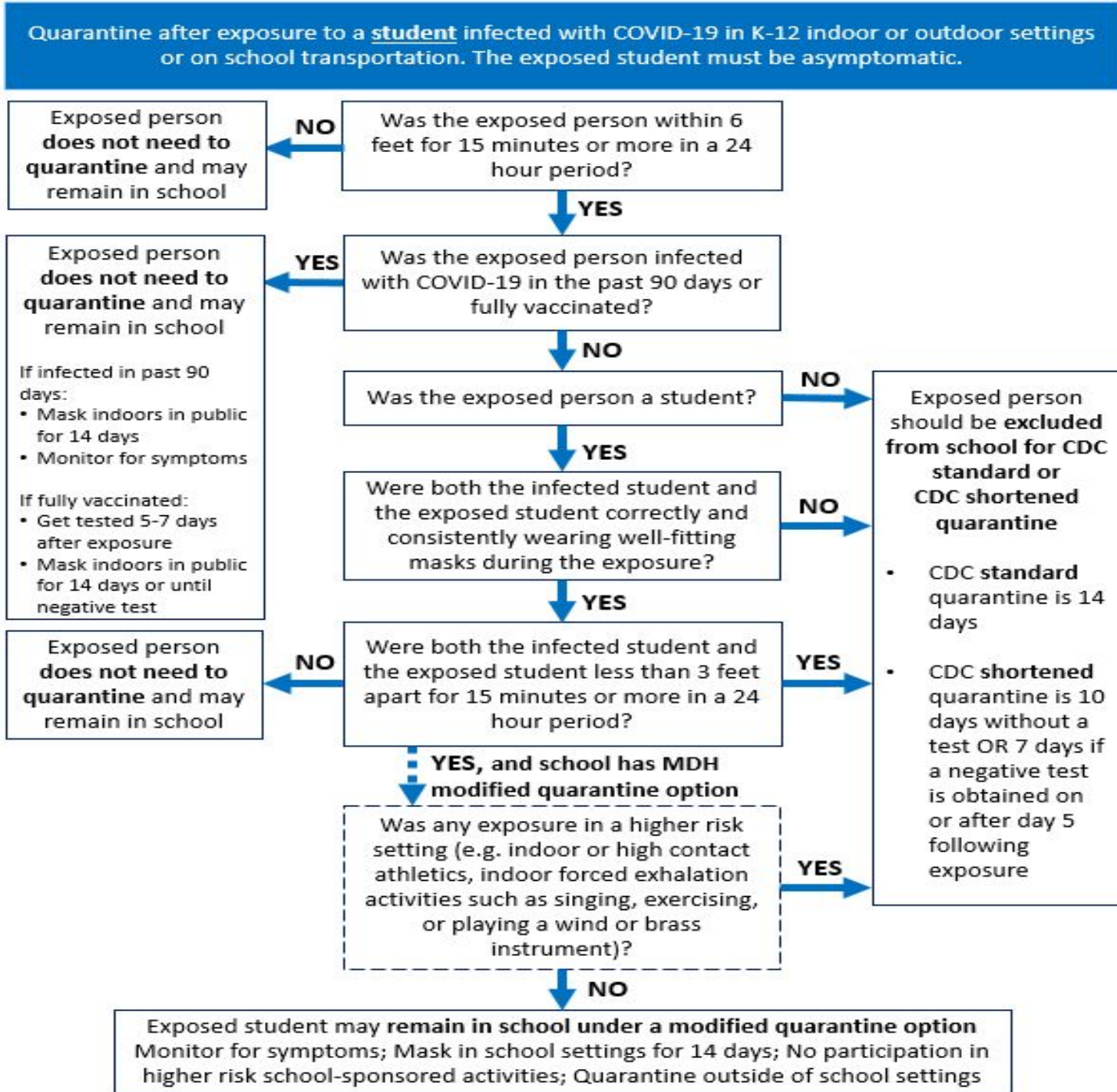
	Approaches to Quarantine* for Asymptomatic Unvaccinated Persons Who are Close Contacts of a Person with COVID-19 in K-12 Indoor and Outdoor Settings and on School Transportation				
	CDC Standard Quarantine	CDC Shortened Quarantine	MDH Modified Quarantine Options		
			Test to Stay	Weekly Screening Testing	Correct and Consistent Use of Well-Fitting Masks
Eligible Persons	Teachers, staff, and students, regardless of whether masks were worn		Students exposed to students, both correctly and consistently wearing well-fitting masks for all exposures		
Applicable for Higher Risk Exposures**	Yes		No		
Length of Exclusion from School	14 days	10 days OR 7 days with a negative test on or after day 5 after exposure	No exclusion if the exposed students are tested daily for at least 5 days (or a reasonable alternative) following exposure	No exclusion if the exposed students are participating in at least weekly school screening testing	No exclusion if the infected student and exposed students were correctly and consistently wearing well-fitting masks for all exposures
Additional Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor for symptoms 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor for symptoms Mask in school settings for 14 days No participation in higher risk school-sponsored activities** Quarantine outside of school settings 		

*Risk of in-school transmission increases from left to right across quarantine options.

**E.g. Indoor or high contact athletics, indoor forced exhalation activities such as singing, exercising, or playing a wind or brass instrument.

Located on page 12 of the MDH/MSDE K-12 School and Child Care COVID-19 guidance

Figure 1



Current CDC K-12 Exception: In the K-12 indoor classroom setting or a structured outdoor setting where mask use can be observed (i.e., holding class outdoors with educator supervision), the close contact definition excludes students who were between 3 to 6 feet of an infected student if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.

This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

NOTE: MDH has expanded this exception to K-12 indoor or outdoor settings or on school transportation

Located on page 8 of the MDH/MSDE K-12 School and Child Care COVID-19 guidance

Frequently Asked Questions

- ❖ **Do children who are exposed to a person with COVID-19 outside of school qualify for the modified quarantine options?**

No. The modified quarantine options are for school-based exposures between students who are unvaccinated and asymptomatic, who were wearing well-fitted masks correctly and consistently during the exposure period.
- ❖ **If an unvaccinated student is a close contact of a staff member with COVID-19, will the student need to quarantine?**

Yes, if a student is a close contact of a staff member they will need to follow the [CDC standard](#) (14 days) or [CDC shortened](#) (10 days or 7 days with a negative test on day 5 or after) quarantine guidance. Schools have the flexibility to choose which of these options to implement.
- ❖ **Can fully vaccinated students participate in the weekly screening programs?**

As per the CDC, screening tests are intended to identify unvaccinated people with COVID-19 who are asymptomatic and do not have known, suspected, or reported exposure to SARS-CoV-2. However, anyone can participate in the screening testing programs according to the school system/school discretion.

Frequently Asked Questions cont.

- ❖ **Do students still need to remain masked while outdoors?**
[MDH and MSDE](#), in alignment with CDC guidance, strongly recommend the following: Outdoor masking for people who are not fully vaccinated when they are in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people.
- ❖ **Can at-home testing be used with the test to stay modified quarantine guidance?**
No. In order to implement the test to stay modified quarantine option, schools should ensure that testing can be done on site. MDH has resources to support schools that would like to implement a test to stay modified quarantine option. Schools can contact MDH.K12Testing@maryland.gov for more information.
- ❖ **Does a vaccinated teacher that is exposed have to quarantine if they are asymptomatic?**
Based on [CDC guidance](#), asymptomatic fully vaccinated persons are not currently required to quarantine following an exposure to someone with COVID-19. If you've had close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you should get tested 5-7 days after your exposure, even if you don't have symptoms. You should also wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until your test result is negative. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should get tested and stay home and away from others. If your test result is positive, isolate at home for 10 days.

Frequently Asked Questions cont.

- ❖ **If a school age student is required to quarantine according to CDC guidance, can they use a school age childcare program (before/after care)?**
If a student is required to follow the CDC shorten/standard quarantine guidance they should not be attending any other childcare program, however, if the student is following a modified quarantine option that is approved by the childcare program they can attend at the childcare programs' discretion.
- ❖ **What is the guidance for travel and upcoming holidays?**
MDH recommends following CDC guidance for travel. Here is the CDC guidance on [Travel for families with unvaccinated children](#). You can also refer to this guidance regarding [safe holiday gatherings](#). The CDC recommends checking the COVID 19 status at your destination for international travel and provides recommendations for testing [here](#).

Frequently Asked Questions cont.

❖ **What is the MDH/MSDE guidance recommendation for ongoing exposures among household members?**

When a student, teacher or other school staff person needs to quarantine because they are the close contact of a household member with COVID-19, CDC guidance should be followed to prevent the spread of infection within the household. Persons who are able to have no further close contact with their household member with COVID-19 may return to school once they complete recommended quarantine. If the person is not able to avoid any close contact with the household member with COVID-19, the person must start their quarantine AFTER the household member is released from isolation. The person must undergo this additional time for quarantine because they could have been infected on the final day of the household member's isolation.

❖ **Does the unvaccinated school-age sibling of a student with symptoms of COVID-19 but no test result or alternative diagnosis need to quarantine?**

If the student with symptoms of COVID-19 has no known exposure to a person with COVID-19, their sibling does not need to quarantine as long as they remain asymptomatic. If the symptomatic student gets tested and has a positive COVID-19 test result, their sibling should quarantine.

❖ **What is the MDH/MSDE guidance recommendation for student participation in high risk in-school activities (lunch, band, PE etc) when the student is participating in a modified quarantine program?**

During lunch, physical distancing should be used to separate the student from others during unmasked periods, as feasible. Unmasked time should be minimized to the extent possible. For other classes such as band and PE, the student can attend class but should not participate in any activities where there is forced exhalation such as singing, exercising, or playing a wind or brass instrument.



Frequently Asked Questions cont.

- ◆ **If my school does not have a screening testing program in place already, how do we establish one so we can participate in the modified quarantine options?**

Schools that are interested in onsite testing operations should contact the MDH K-12 Testing Team at MDH.K12Testing@maryland.gov . Schools should refer to [CDC guidance](#) for specific testing recommendations when developing their testing plans.

- ◆ **What is required if I would like to implement diagnostic testing in my school?**

Your school is required to hold an active CLIA certification and Maryland Laboratory License and keep these on file in accordance with state and federal regulations. It is also required to have an authorized prescriber or ordering provider to authorize testing staff to administer tests. This may be a community provider or a representative from the local health department. For test administration, individuals with a high school diploma or GED may be designated to collect specimens for COVID-19 testing and perform point of care antigen tests after receiving the appropriate training. Lastly, schools must have access to Maryland's Health Information Exchange (CRISP) and have the appropriate personnel to report the rapid POC results into CRISP.

- ◆ **Does a student have to be enrolled and participating in our school's screening program prior to exposure to be included in the weekly screening modified quarantine option?**

¹² Yes. The weekly screening modified quarantine option is intended for students that are already enrolled and participating in the weekly screening program established at their school.

