



Summary of State K-12 School Guidance for Masking, Isolation, and Quarantining *(as of January 17, 2022)*

*This factsheet summarizes **state** guidance to date regarding these issues. Because local health jurisdictions and collective bargaining agreements may have additional safety requirements, be sure to review your local health guidelines and negotiated safety language in addition to this Summary.*

Masking in Schools

[CDPH Schools Guidance, Paragraph 1](#) and [Face Mask Guidance](#)

- **The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) recommends surgical masks or higher-level respirators** (e.g., N95, KN95, KF94). We should advocate for use of these higher quality masks and for their broadest availability for our members, students, and others in our schools.
- [Public health officials](#) note that “an effective mask has both good fit and good filtration. A well fitted mask has no gaps between the face and mask, such as above the nose or at the sides. With gaps, air that has virus particles can easily leak in or out around the sides of the mask. Good filtration blocks the virus particles from going through the mask itself. You can get good filtration with the right materials and by using more layers. Good fit and filtration improve protection for others if you are infected and protection for you if you are exposed to an infected person.”
- [Cal/OSHA updated](#) the definition of “face coverings” on December 16 to include more specific detail, and stricter requirements, regarding the different types of acceptable face coverings in the workplace (p. 3, §3205(b)(8)).
- [CDPH requires](#) masks be worn in all indoor public settings, regardless of vaccination status, between December 15, 2021 **through February 15, 2022**. The [CDPH Face Covering Q&A](#) lists the following limited exceptions relevant to school settings:
 - o These individuals are exempt from wearing masks at all times:
 - Persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a mask. This includes persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a mask could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a mask without assistance.
 - Persons who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
 - Persons for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.
 - o Exceptions to the universal masking requirement also apply in these circumstances:
 - Masks may be removed while actively eating or drinking.
 - Persons who are working alone in a closed office or room.
 - Workers who wear respiratory protection, per Cal/OSHA requirements.
 - Persons who are specifically exempt from wearing masks by [other CDPH guidance](#).
 - o Additionally, according to the [CDPH K-12 Guidance](#), in limited situations where a face covering cannot be used for pedagogical or developmental reasons, a face shield with a drape can be used instead of a face covering while in the classroom as long as the wearer maintains physical distance from others.



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- Cal/OSHA requires employers provide face coverings and ensure they are worn by employees when required by orders from the CDPH (Cal/OSHA Emergency Temporary Standards (“ETS”), [Section 3205\(c\)\(6\)\(B\)](#)).
- The requirement that schools have procedures enforcing mask requirements has not changed: LEAs *must* have protocols for providing a face covering to any student who inadvertently fails to bring one to school. Procedures for enforcing mask requirements should include independent study for students who refuse to wear masks ([CDPH K-12 Guidance, updated 01/12/22](#)).

All Positive COVID-19 Cases Must Isolate

Anyone who has contracted COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, must stay home from school and isolate per [public health guidelines](#).

- *Isolation* (not quarantine) is the term used when describing that a person has tested positive for COVID-19 and must stay home from school and away from others.
- Isolation is for *at least* five to ten days, depending on symptoms and a negative test result collected on Day 5 or later.
 - o Isolation can end after Day 5 **if** symptoms are not present or are resolving **and** a diagnostic specimen collected on Day 5 or later is negative (with an antigen test preferred).
 - o If unable to test or choosing not to test, and symptoms are not present or are resolving, isolation can end after Day 10.
 - o If fever is present, isolation should be continued until the fever resolves. If other symptoms are not resolving, one should continue to isolate until symptoms are resolving or until after Day 10.
 - o If isolation ends prior to Day 10 for any reason, individuals must continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others for a full 10 days, ideally through use of a surgical mask or respirator.
- NOTE: Anyone excluded from work due to a close contact with a positive COVID-19 individual continues to be entitled to exclusion pay under the Cal/OSHA ETS ([Section 3205\(c\)\(9\)\(D\)](#)), as those Standards were recently extended from January 14 **through April 14, 2022**. Workers excluded from work due to a positive COVID test are entitled to *either* workers’ compensation or exclusion pay. If an employer refuses exclusion pay or requires exhaustion of sick leave benefits before access to exclusion pay, a COVID positive employee may consider filing a workers’ compensation claim, particularly if the infection resulted from a worksite outbreak of three or more employees, which creates a legal presumption in workers’ compensation law that the employee’s infection occurred at work.

School Quarantine for Close Contacts Differs Depending on Many Factors

Quarantine is the public health term used when describing the limitations in activities for a person who has been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19. *Close contact* is the term for an individual who has been within six feet of someone with COVID-19 for more than a cumulative total of 15 minutes over a 24-hour period.

Staff Quarantine: The [Cal/OSHA ETS](#) apply. However, by Executive Order N-84-20, the period and conditions of quarantine in the ETS are determined by [CDPH Guidance on Isolation and Quarantine](#), or any applicable local health orders, whichever is longer. Under these regulations, there are limitations on continuing to work, based on one’s vaccination and booster status (see the following charts for details).



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Student Quarantine: For students who have had a close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID, K-12 schools may follow quarantine recommendations outlined in [the COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines for K-12 Schools in California, 2021-22 School Year \(sections 7-9\)](#) **OR** the protocol outlined in the [Group-Tracing Approach to Students Exposed to COVID-19 in a K-12 Setting](#) (released January 12, 2022). See the following charts for details.

ISOLATION for those with COVID-19 (Staff and Students)

Who has COVID-19?	Isolate?	Summary
Vaccinated staff and students	Yes	Stay home for at least 5-10 days based on symptoms and depending a negative antigen test collected on Day 5 or later. Consult the CDPH Guidance on Isolation and Quarantine of the General Public for details.
Unvaccinated staff and students	Yes	

QUARANTINE for Close Contacts (Staff)

[CDPH Guidance on Isolation and Quarantine of the General Public](#)

Who was in close contact?	Quarantine?	Summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boosted or Vaccinated, but not yet booster eligible 	No	Test on Day 5. Wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days. If symptoms develop, test and stay home.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vaccinated and booster-eligible but have not yet received a booster dose 	<i>It depends</i>	In a workplace setting, <u>asymptomatic</u> employees in this category are not required to stay home <u>if</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A negative diagnostic test is obtained within 3-5 days after their last exposure to a COVID positive person. Wears a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days. Continues to have no symptoms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unvaccinated Persons previously infected with SARS-CoV-2, including within the last 90 days 	Yes	Stay home for <i>at least</i> 5 days after last contact with a person who has COVID-19. Test on Day 5. Wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days. Quarantine can end after Day 5 <u>if</u> symptoms are not present, and a diagnostic specimen collected on Day 5 or later tests negative. If unable to test or choosing not to test, and symptoms are not present, quarantine can end after Day 10. Wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days. If symptoms develop, test, and stay home.



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QUARANTINE for Close Contacts (Students)

Option #1: [COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines for K-12 Schools in California, 2021-22 School Year \(sections 7-9\)](#)

Who was in close contact?	Quarantine?	Summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vaccinated Students (i.e., completed the full primary vaccine series) OR Prior Infection within the last 90 days 	No	If no symptoms, may remain in school and participate in all school activities. If symptoms develop, they should test and stay home. See section 7.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unvaccinated Students (i.e., have NOT completed the full primary vaccination series) <p>If each is met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mask-wearing by <u>both</u> the close contact and the infected individual Exposure occurred in school setting in which students are supervised by school staff including indoors, outdoors, and school buses At least twice weekly testing during the quarantine period Mask-wearing continues No symptoms 	Modified Quarantine	<p>See #8. No quarantine from in-person instruction. The close contact may continue to attend school for in-person instruction but must quarantine from all extracurricular activities at school, including sports, and activities within the community.</p> <p>If twice weekly testing not available, close contacts should follow standard quarantined. See #9 for more information.</p>
<p>If students were not wearing masks, if the infected individual was not wearing a mask during the exposure, or if unable to test/choosing not to test.</p>	Standard Quarantine	See #9 for more details and duration of quarantine depending on testing and symptoms.

Option #2: [Group-Tracing Approach to Students Exposed to COVID-19 in a K-12 Setting](#)

Summary of Protocol

- Notify all students who spent more than a cumulative total of 15 minutes within a 24-hour period in a shared indoor space with someone with COVID-19 during their infectious period, including classmates, teammates, and cohort members.
- Test all students in the exposed group, regardless of vaccination status or prior infection, within three to five days of last exposure.
- Exposed students who participate in the testing may continue to take part in all aspects of K-12 schooling, including sports and extracurriculars, if they remain symptom-free and don't test positive for COVID-19.
- In the event of widescale and/or repeated exposures, the school may consider broader testing (e.g., testing an entire grade or testing an entire campus) on a weekly basis until COVID-19 exposure events become less frequent.



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For recently-updated resources from Cal/OSHA regarding COVID prevention in the workplace, see the [Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards](#), readopted on January 14, 2022, as summarized in this [Cal/OSHA Factsheet](#) and explained in these [FAQs](#). Additional Cal/OSHA COVID resources are compiled [here](#).

Because these situations are complex and the related regulations have been revised frequently, please contact your Primary Contact Staff person, who may also consult with their C4OB and Legal Department colleagues, when necessary.