Symptom and Quarantine Decision Pathways in Early Care and Education Centers and TK-12 Schools

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Updated: 1/5/2022
Symptom Decision Pathways for Children
Symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 infection in children include:
- fever ≥ 100.4°F; new cough (different from baseline); diarrhea or vomiting.

If the child's symptoms are not consistent with possible COVID-19 but there is still concern, evaluation of the child by a medical provider is recommended.

Decision Pathways for Children with Symptoms Prior to Entry* into an Educational Institution, Regardless of Vaccination or Booster Status

*If child becomes unwell at the facility, place child in an isolation area (physically distant from attendant, ideally outdoors) and follow decision pathways described below.

Screening identifies child with 1 or more symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19.
- Child is sent home. Parent/guardian instructed to consult Medical Provider for further evaluation and possible COVID-19 testing.

Screening identifies child with symptoms not consistent with possible COVID-19.
- Institution determines if the child should be excused per illness management policy. If the child’s symptoms make it difficult to comply with the facility’s COVID-19 safety protocols, the child should be sent home.

Medical provider confirms child does not have symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- Medical provider not consulted or medical provider confirms child has symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- Medical provider confirms child does not have symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- Child has negative COVID-19 diagnostic viral test.
- Child has positive COVID-19 diagnostic viral test.
- Child tested
- Child not tested
- Child follows Home Isolation Guidance.
- Child stays home per Medical provider guidance.
- Child stays home until fever free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours and improved symptoms.
- Child tested

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1Symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 infection in children include: fever ≥ 100.4°F; new cough (different from baseline); diarrhea or vomiting. If the child’s symptoms are not consistent with possible COVID-19 but there is still concern, evaluation of the child by a medical provider is recommended. 2Testing: A COVID-19 diagnostic viral test, including a Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT, such as PCR) or an Antigen test, that is collected and performed in a healthcare setting or certified testing site, or an FDA-authorized Over-the-Counter test may be used. If an Over-the-Counter test is used and is positive, the individual should be presumed to have COVID-19 and should follow Home Isolation Guidance.
Decision Pathways for Non-Quarantine Exempt* Close Contacts of a Potentially Infected Child with Symptoms Consistent with Possible COVID-19**

*Non-quarantine exempt persons* are (1) close contacts who are not Full Vaccinated OR (2) close contacts who are Full Vaccinated and booster-eligible but have NOT yet received their booster dose.

** Close contacts of a potentially infected child with symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 are persons at the facility who were within 6 feet with a child with ≥ 1 symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 for ≥ 15 minutes over a 24-hour period OR had direct contact with bodily fluids/secretions with a child with ≥ 1 symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19.

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** Non-quarantine exempt close contacts to a potentially infected child are notified that they may have had an exposure. Contacts may remain at the facility while waiting for confirmation of exposure.

Institution confirms that the contact was exposed to COVID-19.

Institution confirms that the contact was not exposed OR no confirmation of exposure is provided. No action required.

Contact must quarantine at home unless approved for modified quarantine at school. Contacts under home quarantine may be released from quarantine after Day 5 if a negative test is collected on Day 5; else contact remains under home quarantine until Day 10.

Contact has positive COVID-19 diagnostic viral test.

Contact follows Home Quarantine Guidance.

Contact is now a case and should follow Home Isolation Guidance.

Contact does not test or has negative COVID-19 diagnostic viral test.

Contact follows Home Quarantine Guidance.

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1 Symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 in children include: fever ≥ 100.4°F; new cough (different from baseline); diarrhea or vomiting. If the child's symptoms are not consistent with possible COVID-19 but there is still concern, evaluation of the child by a medical provider is recommended.

2 Exposure is confirmed for a close contact to a potentially infected child if the site receives notification that the potentially infected child had a positive COVID-19 diagnostic viral test OR received a COVID-19 diagnosis from a medical provider.

3 Modified quarantine applies only to TK-12 school students who had a school exposure. Criteria for modified quarantine can be found in the TK-12 Exposure Management Plan.

4 Testing: A COVID-19 diagnostic viral test, including a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT, such as PCR) or an Antigen test for SARS-CoV-2, that is collected and performed in a healthcare setting or certified testing site, or an FDA-authorized Over-the-Counter test may be used. If the Over-the-Counter test used is positive, the individual should be presumed to have COVID-19 and should follow Home Isolation Guidance.
**Decision Pathways for Quarantine Exempt* Close Contacts to a Potentially Infected Child with Symptoms Consistent with Possible COVID-19**

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*Quarantine exempt persons* are (1) close contacts who are boosted OR (2) close contacts who are Full y Vitaminated but not yet booster-eligible.

**Close contacts of a potentially infected child with symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19** are persons at the facility who were within 6 feet with a child with ≥ 1 symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 for ≥ 15 minutes over a 24-hour period OR had direct contact with bodily fluids/secretions with a child with ≥ 1 symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19.

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1. **Quarantine exempt close contacts** to a potentially infected child are notified that they may have had an exposure. 
   - Contacts may remain at the facility while waiting for confirmation of exposure.

2. Institution confirms that the contact was exposed to COVID-19.
   - Testing is required on Day 5 in order to remain in school.
   - Contact has **positive** COVID-19 diagnostic viral test.
     - Contact is now a case and should follow Home Isolation Guidance.
   - Contact does not test or has **negative** COVID-19 diagnostic viral test.
     - Contact does NOT need to quarantine but must monitor for symptoms and upgrade mask until Day 10.

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1. Symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 in children include: fever ≥ 100.4°F; new cough (different from baseline); diarrhea or vomiting. If the child's symptoms are not consistent with possible COVID-19 but there is still concern, evaluation of the child by a medical provider is recommended.
2. Exposure is confirmed for a close contact to a potentially infected child if the site receives notification that the potentially infected child had a positive COVID-19 diagnostic viral test OR received a COVID-19 diagnosis from a medical provider.
3. Testing: A COVID-19 diagnostic viral test, including a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT, such as PCR) or an Antigen test for SARS-CoV-2, that is collected and performed in a healthcare setting or certified testing site, or an FDA-authorized Over-the-Counter test may be used. If the Over-the-Counter test used and is positive, the individual should be presumed to have COVID-19 and should follow Home Isolation Guidance. Some people should not wear a mask, such as children younger than 24 months. Children ages 2 to 8 should wear a mask only when under adult supervision. See Who should not wear a mask and Special considerations for persons with communication difficulties or certain disabilities.

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Symptom: Decision Pathways for *Employees*
Decision Pathways for Employees with Symptoms Prior to Entry* into an Educational Institution, Regardless of Vaccination or Booster Status

*If employee becomes unwell at the facility, place employee in an isolation area (ideally outdoors, physically distant from attendant) and follow decision pathways below.

Screening identifies employee with 1 or more symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19.¹

Screening identifies employee with symptoms not consistent with possible COVID-19.

Employee is sent home and instructed to consult Medical Provider for further evaluation and possible COVID-19 testing.

Institution determines if the employee should be excused per illness management policy. If the employee’s symptoms make it difficult for the to comply with the facility’s COVID-19 safety protocols, the employee should be sent home.

Medical provider confirms employee does not have symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

Medical provider not consulted or medical provider confirms employee has symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

Employee has negative COVID-19 diagnostic viral test²

Employee has positive COVID-19 diagnostic viral test²

Employee tested

Employee not tested

Employee stays home per Medical provider guidance.

Employee stays home until fever free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours and improved symptoms.

Employee follows Home Isolation Guidance.

¹Symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 in adults: fever ≥ 100.4° or feeling feverish (chills, sweating); cough; shortness of breath; new loss of taste or smell; fatigue; runny or stuffy nose; muscle or body aches; headache; sore throat; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea. If the symptoms are not listed but there is still concern, additional evaluation by a medical provider is recommended. ²Testing: A COVID-19 diagnostic viral test, including a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT, such as PCR) or an Antigen test for SARS-CoV-2, that is collected and performed in a healthcare setting or certified testing site, or an FDA-authorized Over-the-Counter test may be used. If the Over-the-Counter test used and is positive, the individual should be presumed to have COVID-19 and should follow Home Isolation Guidance.
**Non-quarantine exempt persons** are (1) close contacts who are not *Fully Vaccinated* OR (2) close contacts who are *Fully Vaccinated* and booster-eligible but have NOT yet received their booster dose.

**Close contacts of a potentially infected employee with symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19** are persons at the facility who were within 6 feet of an employee with ≥ 1 symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 for ≥ 15 minutes over a 24-hour period with a potentially infected employee OR had direct contact with bodily fluids/secretions from an employee with ≥ 1 symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19.

### Symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 in adults:
- fever ≥ 100.4°F or feeling feverish (chills, sweating)
- cough
- shortness of breath
- new loss of taste or smell
- fatigue
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle or body aches
- headache
- sore throat
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhea

If the symptoms are not listed but there is still concern, additional evaluation by a medical provider is recommended.

### Exposure confirmation:
Exposure is confirmed for a close contact to a potentially infected employee if the site receives notification that the potentially infected employee had a positive COVID-19 diagnostic viral test OR received a COVID-19 diagnosis from a medical provider.

### Testing:
- A COVID-19 diagnostic viral test, including a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT, such as PCR) or an Antigen test for SARS-CoV-2, that is collected and performed in a healthcare setting or certified testing site, or an FDA-authorized Over-the-Counter test may be used. If the Over-the-Counter test used and is positive, the individual should be presumed to have COVID-19 and should follow Home Isolation Guidance.
**Quarantine exempt persons** are (1) close contacts who are boosted OR (2) close contacts who are Fully Vaccinated but not yet booster-eligible. **Close contacts of a potentially infected employee with symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19** are persons at the facility who were within 6 feet of an employee with ≥ 1 symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 for ≥ 15 minutes over a 24-hour period with a potentially infected employee OR had direct contact with bodily fluids/secretions from an employee with ≥ 1 symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19.

1. **Symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19** in adults: fever ≥ 100.4°F or feeling feverish (chills, sweating); cough; shortness of breath; new loss of taste or smell; fatigue; runny or stuffy nose; muscle or body aches; headache; sore throat; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea. If the symptoms are not listed but there is still concern, additional evaluation by a medical provider is recommended.

2. Exposure is confirmed for a close contact to a potentially infected employee if the site receives notification that the potentially infected employee had a positive COVID-19 diagnostic viral test OR received a COVID-19 diagnosis from a medical provider.

3. Testing: A COVID-19 diagnostic viral test, including a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT, such as PCR) or an Antigen test for SARS-CoV-2, that is collected and performed in a healthcare setting or certified testing site, or an FDA-authorized Over-the-Counter test may be used. If the Over-the-Counter test used and is positive, the individual should be presumed to have COVID-19 and should follow Home Isolation Guidance.

4. Some people should not wear a mask, such as children younger than 24 months. Children ages 2 to 8 should wear a mask only when under adult supervision. See Who should not wear a mask and Special considerations for persons with communication difficulties or certain disabilities.
Quarantine Pathways for Children and Staff with Exposures at Early Care and Education Centers and TK-12 Schools
Identifying Exposures On Campus - Close Contacts to a Confirmed Case

A close contact is a person who has been exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19 during the infectious period* if at least one of the following has occurred:

• The person was within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period;

OR

• The person had unprotected contact with body fluids and/or secretions from someone with COVID-19. For example, they were coughed or sneezed on, they shared a drinking cup or eating utensils, they kissed, or they provided care to the infected person without wearing the right protective equipment.

• A person is considered to be infectious and able to spread the virus to others from 2 days before symptoms first started until 10 days have passed since symptoms first started AND no fever for at least 24 hours AND symptoms improve; OR, if symptoms never develop, from 2 days before their positive test was taken until 10 days after that test was taken.

NOTE: a person should not be considered a close contact unless the program is reasonably sure that they meet the definition above. Individuals should not be considered a close contact solely because they were present in the same classroom or school group as an infected person. If a program cannot determine who is a close contact, they should contact Public health for technical assistance.
**Quarantine Pathway For Exposed Children**

**Child has symptoms**
- Not fully vaccinated* OR fully vaccinated and booster-eligible but not yet boosted
  - *Includes persons with prior SARS-CoV-2 infection

**Child does not have symptoms**
- Boosted OR fully vaccinated but not yet booster-eligible

**Consult with medical provider for further evaluation**
- Routine quarantine
  - Testing strongly recommended*
  - NOTE: persons previously infected with SARS-CoV-2 within the past 90 days should test with an Antigen test

**Follow exclusion guidance per DPH's Decision Pathways for Children with Symptoms (see page 3)**
- If test is negative, then quarantine ends after Day 5

**Modified quarantine option for TK-12 students**
- Twice weekly testing is required**
  - (1st test immediately after exposure, 2nd test on Day 5)

**Student can attend school in-person but MUST otherwise quarantine at home. If negative test is collected on Day 5, then quarantine ends after Day 5**

**Does NOT need to quarantine**
- *For TK-12 students, testing on Day 5 is required (testing immediately after exposure is also recommended)**

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*Follows Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Home Quarantine Guidance.  
**Testing: A COVID-19 diagnostic viral test, including a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT, such as PCR) or an Antigen test for SARS-CoV-2, that is collected and performed in a healthcare setting or certified testing site, or an FDA-authorized Over-the-Counter test may be used. If the Over-the-Counter test used and is positive, the individual should be presumed to have COVID-19 and should follow Home Isolation Guidance.**  
*Modified quarantine applies only to TK-12 school students who had a school exposure. Criteria for modified quarantine can be found in the TK-12 Exposure Management Plan.  
*There are some people who should not wear a mask, such as children younger than 24 months. Children ages 2 to 8 should wear a mask only when under adult supervision. See Who should not wear a mask and Special considerations for persons with communication difficulties or certain disabilities.
Quarantine Pathway for Exposed Employees

Symptomatic

Regardless of vaccination or booster status
Consult with medical provider for further evaluation
Follow exclusion guidance per DPH’s Decision Pathways for Staff with Symptoms (see page 7)

Asymptomatic

Not fully vaccinated* OR fully vaccinated and booster-eligible but not yet boosted
*Includes persons with prior SARS-CoV-2 infection

Boosted OR Fully vaccinated but not yet booster-eligible

Testing strongly recommended
NOTE: persons previously infected with SARS-CoV-2 within the past 90 days should test with an Antigen test

If NO test, quarantine ends after Day 10

If negative test is collected on Day 5, then quarantine ends after Day 5

Does NOT need to quarantine*
*For TK-12 school employees, testing on Day 5 is required (testing immediately after exposure is also recommended)

Follows Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Home Quarantine Guidance which allows employees to return to work as soon as they have cleared quarantine, which may before they meet Cal/OSHA’s criteria for return-to-work.

*Testing: A COVID-19 diagnostic viral test, including a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT, such as PCR) or an Antigen test for SARS-CoV-2, that is collected and performed in a healthcare setting or certified testing site, or an FDA-authorized Over-the-Counter test may be used. If the Over-the-Counter test used and is positive, the individual should be presumed to have COVID-19 and should follow Home Isolation Guidance.

*There are some people who should not wear a mask. See Who should not wear a mask and Special considerations for persons with communication difficulties or certain disabilities.