

Albany County Department of Health (ACDOH)

School Reopening FAQs

FAQs

Reopening Guidance

- Q1.** What guidance is available for school reopening?
- A.** Please see the school reopening guidance document from the New York State Department of Education and their responses to frequently asked questions related to this guidance.

Health Screening & Testing

- Q2.** Are parents required to ensure that their child or children do not show symptoms of COVID-19 or a fever before boarding the bus or entering school each day?
- A.** School districts are required to have a protocol in place to perform temperature and health screenings for COVID symptoms. Screening by the parent/guardian prior to school is preferred. (See page 22 and 62 of NYSED Reopening Guidance).
- Q3.** Is a COVID-19 test required if symptomatic?
- A.** COVID-19 testing is essential to appropriate identification and containment of cases in Albany County. ACDOH **strongly** recommends testing and medical evaluation if a student or staff member is symptomatic. For a list of symptoms, visit the [CDC Symptoms of Coronavirus](#) webpage. If you need assistance with finding a medical provider, please contact the Albany County Department of Health at 518.447.4659.
- Q4.** Where can students and staff members get tested for COVID-19?
- A.** For a list of area testing sites, visit the [NYS COVID-19 Test Finder](#) webpage. There is no out-of-pocket charge for COVID-19 tests conducted at state-run facilities, though insurance information may be requested. For other testing sites, please check with the site or your insurance provider to confirm any costs that may be associated with the test. You may also contact your primary care provider to ask about testing.

Frequently Used COVID-19 Terms

Potential Exposure: Being in the same household or having come into close contact with an individual who is confirmed or suspected to have a COVID-19 infection.

Close Contact: Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 10-15 minutes, during the period starting 48 hours before symptoms appear and until the time the infected person is isolated.

Proximate Contact: Being in the same enclosed environment such as a classroom, office or gathering, but greater than 6 feet from a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Contact Tracing: The identification and follow-up of individuals who may have come into contact with a person infected with COVID-19.

Case: An individual with a lab-confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis.

Isolation: The process of separating an individual who has a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 from others for 10 days or more following the onset of symptoms.

Quarantine: The process of separating an individual who has been in close (or in certain instances proximate) contact with someone who is positive from others in an effort to reduce further spread. The quarantine period is for the incubation period; 14 days for COVID-19.

COVID-19 Screening: Screening for COVID-19 includes a series of questions to evaluate symptoms and risk factors for COVID-19.

Diagnostic Test: This type of test detects COVID-19 infection. Examples include PCR - based and antigen based.



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Q5. What if a symptomatic student or staff member is not tested for COVID-19?

A. Student or staff cannot return to school until it has been 10 days since onset of symptoms AND 3 days since last fever without use of fever-reducing medication AND documentation of a completed evaluation by a health care provider is submitted.

Q6. What if a medical note is provided citing an alternate diagnosis?

A. If a student or staff member has a negative COVID-19 test, they may return to school with a note from their medical provider clearing them to return. Without a COVID-19 test, they must follow the recommendations in the above question (Q5). Health care provider documentation of long-standing alternative diagnosis such as migraine headaches or allergies is valid until or unless symptoms change from usual pattern.

Positive Cases & Contact Tracing

Q7. When and how should the school report positive COVID-19 cases to ACDOH?

A. If the school is notified first (before ACDOH) of a student's or staff member's positive test result, immediately notify ACDOH by calling (518) 447.4640. Case investigation and contact tracing continues after normal business hours and over the weekend.

Q8. Will contact tracers release the name of positive individual to their contacts?

A. No. Contact tracers will tell potentially infected persons that they were exposed and they will not disclose the identity of the person to whom they were exposed. In some situations, the positive case has already reached out to their contacts and notified them of their positive status.

Travel Quarantine

Q9: Do students coming back from vacation from a state identified on Governor Cuomo's travel advisory or other countries need to quarantine?

A. Yes, students who are coming to New York from any of the restricted states or international travel need to quarantine for 14 days. Please complete the [New York State Traveler Health Form](#).

Reference:

Interim Guidance For In-Person Instruction At Pre-K To Grade 12 Schools During The Covid-19 Public Health Emergency. (2020, August 26). https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Pre-K_to_Grade_12_Schools_MasterGuidance.pdf



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