



COUNTY OF ERIE

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Questions and Answers Guidance for P-12 Schools and Higher Education

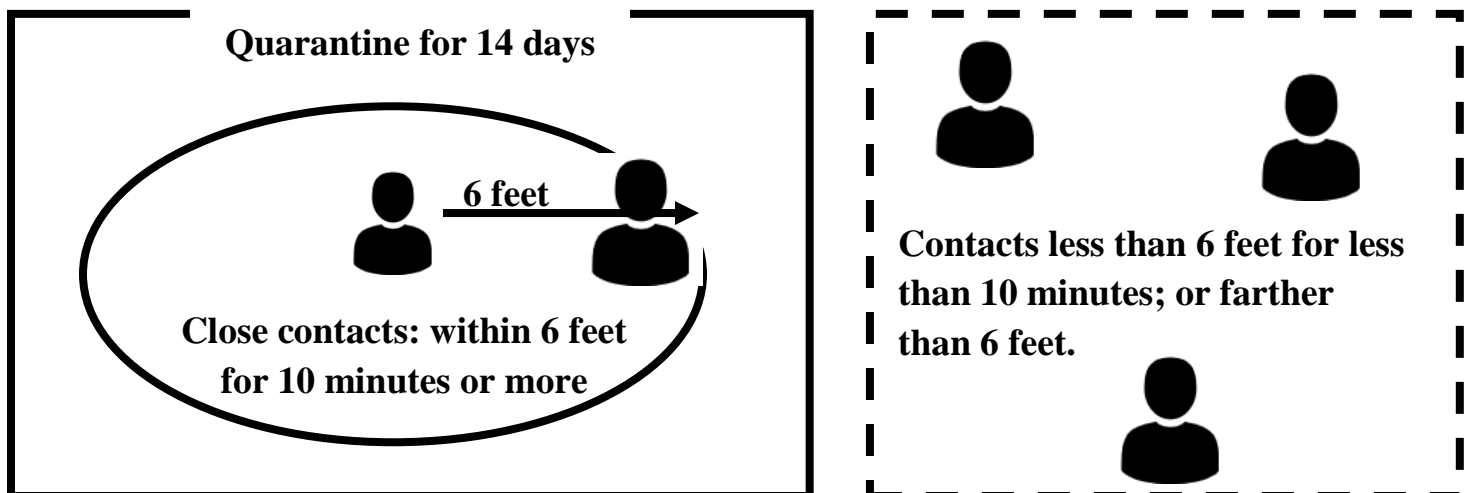
The Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) developed its guidance for p-12 schools and higher education with two goals in mind:

1. keeping students and staff in these environments safe and healthy;
2. keeping schools and colleges open for learning.

The physical measures and operational changes that schools and colleges put in place – masks, distancing, scheduling, physical barriers – are all designed to **reduce risk**. **That risk is not eliminated.**

New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Close Contacts are defined as individuals who are **within 6 feet** of a COVID case for **at least 10 consecutive minutes** during a time the case was infectious – able to transmit an infection to others. NYSDOH allows local health departments to **use duration of exposure, proximity, and presence of symptoms** to determine who is an exposed contact from a school setting that should be placed in quarantine.

Graphic: School Setting Guidance



Contact tracers may make quarantine recommendations based on other factors, including duration, proximity and presence of symptoms.

If there is a COVID case at my school, who has to be quarantined, and for how long?

ECDOH contact tracers conduct a case investigation for every positive COVID test result among Erie County residents. That investigation determines who has been exposed to an individual with COVID-19 during a time when they were infectious. Those exposed contacts are notified and placed in quarantine for 14 days past the last date of exposure.

Will parents or staff be notified if there was a case in a classroom even if the exposure?

Schools and districts may decide to notify parents of a positive case in their child's classroom. ECDOH will notify parents of students who are considered to be contacts exposed to a COVID case. Visit <https://schoolcovidreportcard.health.ny.gov> for data about COVID cases in a school or district.

My child has/I have been placed in quarantine. Do I need a COVID-19 test?

For those placed in quarantine after a COVID-19 exposure, a test is strongly recommended 5-7 days after exposure, but is not required. ECDOH free diagnostic test sites are a testing option and results may take 3-5 days to be available. Call (716) 858-2929 to schedule a diagnostic test through ECDOH sites. For other COVID testing options in the community, visit www.erie.gov/covidtestsites.

If my child is/I am placed in quarantine, and have a negative COVID test, why can't I return to school immediately?

COVID-19 incubation period is 14 days. People exposed to COVID 19 could develop a positive test anytime during that 14 days after exposure. For example, a negative COVID-19 test result on day #5 after exposure does not assure that the contact will remain negative during the remainder of those 14 days. The 14-day quarantine period is designed to break the chain of community transmission and limit the number of people exposed to illness.

continued

If one child has to quarantine due to an exposure, can his/her siblings remain in school?

Siblings and other household members of an individual who has been placed in quarantine may continue their normal activities, including school and work. Individuals in quarantine should remain alone in one room of the house with the door closed, with a separate bathroom if possible, along with following recommendations that a contact tracer will provide.

What happens if my child/I cannot safely isolate or quarantine in our home?

When an individual is placed in isolation or quarantine, ECDOH contact tracers will interview them to ask about their ability to safely isolate or quarantine. If circumstances make that impossible, contact tracers can offer resources to assist.

ECDOH school guidance and this Question and Answer document may be updated as we receive new directives from NYSDOH. Visit www.erie.gov/covid19/schools.

Questions about your school's policies related to physical distancing, masks, or scheduling policies should be directed to your school principal or superintendent.

Questions about your child's health should be directed to your child's physician.

If you have been contacted by ECDOH to be placed in isolation or quarantine, please call the number that the contact tracer provided to you.