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GUIDANCE FOR DAYCARES, PRESCHOOLS & “CONGREGATE CARE SETTINGS” **HCPH Notes on New NYSDOH & CDC COVID-19 Protocols**

On January 10th, Herkimer County adopted new protocols with regards to a 5-day isolation and quarantine period in the general public, pursuant to aligning with new CDC and NYSDOH guidelines released earlier this month. As a result, NYSDOH and HCPH are no longer conducting quarantine implementation and contact tracing for COVID-19 in the general population.

However, contact tracing is still being conducted for facilities and environments that qualify as higher-risk “congregate settings” (defined below). Additionally, positive individuals and close contacts who attend programs or live in these settings WILL BE REQUIRED TO FOLLOW TRADITIONAL 10-DAY ISOLATION & QUARANTINE protocols for reasons outlined below.

According to the newest [interim NYSDOH guidance](#) released on January 4th, 2022: “*Congregate care settings include corrections, shelters, **childcare**, and group homes and other residential care settings...*”. Additionally this document states: “*...congregate care settings should follow guidance issued by the LHD*”. This document has been prepared by HCPH to provide said guidance in the interim, while we await updated “congregate care” guidance documents from the CDC and NYSDOH.

In the [newest CDC guidance](#) updated January 9th, 2022, **the CDC recommends continued 10-day isolation and quarantine periods in “congregate settings”**. Additionally, NYSDOH guidance states: “*Individuals who are unable to wear a well-fitting mask for 5 days after a 5-day isolation should also follow standard (i.e., not shortened) Isolation Guidance*”. **Therefore, daycares, pre-schools and other congregate settings where individuals cannot consistently wear well-fitting masks and maintain social distancing must continue to observe 10-day quarantine and isolation periods.**

If your facility is a preschool or other school setting that has developed and implemented NYSDOH and CDC protocols designed to provide a *traditional classroom environment*, **AND** your students are able to *consistently wear well-fitting masks*, **AND** your population consists largely of *vaccinated* individuals, you may qualify for K-12 school guidance protocols which follow the 5-day isolation and quarantine periods. If you feel your facility falls into this category, please reach out to our office for further guidance, as this Daycare/Preschool Guidance may not be appropriate for your student population.



QUICK-REFERENCE POINTS FOR DAYCARES & PRESCHOOLS

- Daycares and Preschools are “congregate care” facilities. These facilities must follow 10-day isolation and quarantine protocols for their attendees and residents per NYSDOH and CDC guidance.
- Daycares and Preschools should still do contact tracing and report close-contacts to the county health department per standing protocols. These high-risk settings will still be contact-traced by public health and/or the NYSDOH contact tracing initiative.
- NOTE: The high volume of cases in the state has resulted in an inability for state contact tracers and HCPH Nursing Service staff to contact all positive cases or their contacts. Therefore, we have developed and provided legal documentation to attest to isolation or quarantine on our website at <https://herkimercounty.org>. Parents/guardians may access these fillable-PDF forms on the COVID-19 page at the county website as needed.
- Please DO NOT require parents to reach out to our office for “release-from-quarantine” letters for return to facility activities. We **do not** have the capacity to replace the NYSDOH contact tracing initiative which is no longer operational. Instead, please accept the above-referenced forms as legally-binding documentation of isolation/quarantine upon return to your facility.
- Positive HOME tests should still be reported to Herkimer County Public Health. Currently, this is still done via phone by parents. Soon, we will publish a new website and move to an online format for reporting positive home tests. These tests are promptly uploaded to the state case investigation and reporting system by our staff.
- The state contact tracing system “CommCare” will still be utilized for case investigation and some contact tracing in high-risk settings. Therefore, parents may still receive phone calls and isolation notices as before for their child when these cases are investigated. However, as stated above, there is NO guarantee, given large volumes, that people will be called in a timely fashion, if at all. Please point parents to the aforementioned forms for isolation/quarantine paperwork (also linked below) and to the NYSDOH and CDC Isolation & Quarantine guidelines available on these agency websites; linked below.

As always, please feel free to reach out to our office with any questions or if you are in need of clarification. NOTE: Once the NYSDOH releases new guidance on “congregate care settings”, that guidance will supersede this document. Thank you for your continued support and care of some of our most vulnerable community members in this difficult time.

Interim NYSDOH guidance on isolation and quarantine may be found here:

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/node/626>

CDC guidance on isolation and quarantine may be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html>

HCPH Attestation of Quarantine and Isolation forms may be found here:

<https://www.herkimercounty.org/bulletin-information.php?id=225>