



301 North Washington Street
Suite 2300
Herkimer, New York 13350

Tel: 315-867-1176
Fax: 315-867-1444
January 7th, 2022

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

HCPH Notes on New NYSDOH I&Q Protocols

EFFECTIVE DATE: JANUARY 10TH, 2022

Pursuant to the fact that the new variant of SARS-CoV-2 appears less dangerous to the residents of Herkimer County, and in accordance with new CDC and NYSDOH guidelines, as of January 10th, Herkimer County will no longer be conducting quarantine implementation and contact tracing for COVID-19 in the general population OR in school settings.

The procedures that schools employ to determine close contact in the school setting and parental notification should remain largely unaffected, but **all schools should be adopting the new general population [5-day quarantine and isolation protocols released by NYSDOH](#)** and should utilize the K-12 [CDC school guidelines](#), which were updated on January 6th, 2022, to resolve any discrepancies. Our staff will of course also be available as a resource, as always.

NOTE: K-12 schools (including schools with pre-school programs) will NOT be considered “congregate” settings for purposes of isolation and quarantine protocols under NYSDOH guidelines. Stand-alone preschools AND daycare facilities (due to largely unvaccinated and/or unmasked attendees) WILL fall under NYS guidance for congregate facilities. All NYS guidance documents released for COVID-19 response management may be found [here](#).

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR IN-SCHOOL CONTACT TRACING AND POSITIVE NOTIFICATION?

The largest change to procedure is that Herkimer County Public Health will no longer be the chief organizing entity in contact tracing for COVID-19 cases.

- Schools should still do contact tracing internally but should NOT supply contact lists to the county health department. Instead, close-contacts may be excluded from school based on identification of close-contact exposures and school officials’ discretion.
- Parents may access and download self-attestation of quarantine (and isolation) forms on our website as needed.
- NYSDOH School Specialists will assume coordination roles in terms of positive case notification to the schools; HCPH will therefore NOT be the notifying entity when a student tests positive.
- 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 system and school specialists will be able to notify the school districts.
- The state contact tracing system “CommCare” will still be utilized for case investigation (but not contact tracing/quarantines). Therefore, parents may still receive phone calls and isolation notices as before for their positive child when these cases are investigated by the school specialists/state case investigators.



GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

5-Day Isolation & Quarantine: Considerations & Examples

ISOLATION

- **Isolation is now 5-days** where day 0 is the first date of symptoms OR date of positive test sample collection (if asymptomatic), whichever came first
- **Criteria** for isolation have not changed
 - Any individual who has a positive test (even if asymptomatic)
 - Any individual who had a known close-contact exposure in the past 14 days AND has symptoms
- **May return on the 6th day IF** symptoms are mostly resolved AND no fever for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications (e.g. acetaminophen; ibuprofen)
 - Likely-infectious symptoms are fever; constantly-running nose; productive cough; cough that prevents masks from being worn effectively
- After release well-fitting mask should be worn & distancing protocols strictly observed days 6-10
- Individuals who can NOT wear a well-fitting mask should follow a traditional 10-day isolation
- Isolated individuals should receive a call from state case investigators if they tested positive at a facility that reports results to NYS, or if they reported a positive home test to Herkimer County Public Health

QUARANTINE/SCHOOL EXCLUSION

- **Quarantine should last for 5 days** where day 0 is the last date of close contact
- **Criteria** for quarantine and definition of close contact remain the same as before
 - Any individual who has had close contact with a positive case should be excluded from school unless EXEMPT per next section guidance
- A quarantine order/release attestation (one form) may be downloaded/printed on our website
- A well-fitting mask should be worn and distancing protocols strictly observed days 6-10
- **If symptoms develop** during quarantine period or during days 6-10, student should begin isolation

EXEMPTION & VACCINATION

- **Adults must be fully vaccinated AND boosted OR ineligible for a booster to be EXEMPT**
 - Boosted individuals must be at least 2 weeks beyond their required booster date to qualify
- **Children who are ages 5-17 are EXEMPT if they have completed their primary series**
 - They do NOT require a booster at this time per CDC to be exempt from quarantine
 - Note: awaiting NYSDOH updates to school protocols. Boosters are recommended & may eventually be required for ages 12-17, but currently are not. (Ages 5-11 are ineligible).
- **Individuals who are fully vaccinated but NOT ELIGIBLE for a booster are EXEMPT**
 - Completed primary series and too soon to receive a booster or age group ineligible (i.e. 5-11)
 - Pfizer booster eligible 5 months from primary series (2nd) dose completion
 - Moderna booster eligible 6 months from primary series (2nd) dose completion
 - J&J booster eligible 2 months from primary series (1st) dose completion



GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS **INTERIM “TEST-TO-STAY” (TTS) GUIDELINES**

Test-to-stay’s (TTS) general principles remain a viable and safe option to minimize the negative effects of exclusion and Herkimer County Public Health continues to endorse the principles of NYSDOH “Test-To-Stay” Guidance located [here](#).

Note that NYSDOH TTS guidance HAS NOT yet been updated to take the new 5-day period into account; please follow the below in the interim and reach out to our office if you have questions

- If your district intends to continue or implement TTS to allow students who would otherwise qualify for quarantine, and subsequently would be excluded from school to “test-to-stay”, **please use the following guidance in addition to the NYS TTS document when implementing TTS testing regimens**, until updated guidance is available from the state specifically taking into account the new 5-day quarantine and isolation period changes, at which point the updated NYSDOH guidance should supersede the below.
- The “test-out-of-quarantine” option (Section III of the NYS TTS document) is now no longer possible due to the shortened quarantine period, and will not be supported by our department
- Remember to report positive school tests to BOCES for entry into the state reporting system so that students have a record of their test and parents are contacted by the NYS case investigators for isolation evaluation and paperwork. If the test is done at home, parents should report it to HCPH.
- Depending on when the quarantine period starts, if a student is to attend school, **testing must continue to be conducted at least 3 times IF they are in school for all 5 days of their quarantine period**. If they are in school for less than the full 5 days, less tests may be required; see table.
- **Note: if a student has continuous household exposure, because they cannot distance from a case in their home, then every day they are in contact with that positive case, the testing schedule should reset to “Day 0”, until the household case is no longer in isolation.**
- If the student is NOT in school for all 5 days, conduct the testing regimen according to the table below on whichever days they are actually in attendance (i.e. they do NOT need to test 3x if one of the testing days is a day in which they are NOT in school OR if the screening starts on a later day of the “quarantine period” due to not being aware of exposure for the first testing day(s).

TEST-TO-STAY SCREENING TEST CADENCE INTERIM GUIDANCE

QUARANTINE DAY OF FIRST TEST	DAY OF SECOND TEST	DAY OF THIRD TEST
0	2 or 3	5
1	3	5
2	4	5
3	5	NA
4	5	NA
5	n/a	NA