



## COVID-19 Prevention in Nonpublic and Charter Prekindergarten (Pre-K) to Grade 12 Schools

Schools play an important role in helping New York City (NYC) slow the spread of COVID-19 by quickly addressing cases of COVID-19 in their communities. Please refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#) and New York State Education Department (NYSED) [Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-2022 School Year](#) for recommendations on a layered approach to mitigation strategies in schools. This document provides additional guidance and best practices to NYC nonpublic and charter schools not co-located in an NYC Department of Education school.

**For information, guidance, and resources on COVID-19, visit [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/health/coronavirus).**

All administrators, teachers, staff, students and visitors should be reminded to continue to follow key COVID-19 prevention measures:

- **Vaccination:** Vaccination is the best way to prevent COVID-19. Vaccination is recommended for all people ages 12 and older.
- **Stay home if sick:** Often mild symptoms such as a runny nose or backache are mistaken for other illnesses and have turned out to be COVID-19. Encourage students, parents and guardians, faculty, and other staff to do the following:
  - Monitor both your own and students' health and stay home if sick (even if your symptoms are mild), or have recently tested positive for COVID-19.
  - Call the school to report any illness or positive test results for COVID-19.
  - Isolate for at least 10 days after they first begin to have illness. Children cannot have contact with other children during this period (no play dates!).
- **Physical distancing:** Maintain at least 3 feet of distance between students in classrooms and at least 6 feet between students and staff and between staff who are not fully vaccinated. Maximize physical distance between individuals as much as possible when moving through the food service line and when masks are removed for eating and drinking (especially indoors). Use additional spaces outside of the cafeteria for mealtime seating to help facilitate distancing.
- **Wear a face mask:** Per New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) [Commissioner's Determination](#), any person over the age of 2 (including all students, personnel, teachers, administrators, contractors and visitors) must wear a well-fitting mask over their nose and mouth at all times indoors in P-12 school buildings, regardless of vaccination status, except while actively eating or drinking.
- **Practice healthy hand hygiene:** Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available; clean frequently touched surfaces regularly; avoid touching your face with unwashed hands; and cover your cough or sneeze with your arm, not your hands.

- **Increase ventilation**, wherever possible by opening windows and doors, using child-safe fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows, and making changes to the HVAC or air filtration systems.

The following mitigation strategies are discussed in this document. For all others not included here (such as physical distancing, sports and extracurricular activities, ventilation), refer to CDC guidance, NYSED requirements and NYS DOH Commissioner's Determination:

- [Vaccination](#)
- [Face masks](#)
- [Daily health screening](#)
- [Testing](#)
- [Handling a case in your school community \(isolation, quarantine, contact tracing\)](#)

### **Vaccination**

Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to reduce the spread of COVID-19. People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are at low risk of getting COVID-19 and are much less likely to get severely ill or die if they do get it.

Everyone 12 years and older is eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. Schools can promote vaccinations among teachers, staff, families, and eligible students by providing information about COVID-19 vaccination, encouraging vaccine trust and confidence, and establishing supportive policies and practices that make getting vaccinated as easy and convenient as possible.

For information on COVID-19 vaccines, visit [nyc.gov/covidvaccine](https://nyc.gov/covidvaccine). To find a vaccination site, visit [vaccinefinder.nyc.gov](https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov). Assistance finding or making an appointment at a City-run vaccination site is available by calling 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692). Many sites, including all City-run sites, no longer require an appointment.

### **Face Masks**

Per NYS DOH Commissioner's Determination, any person over the age of 2 (including all students, personnel, teachers, administrators, contractors and visitors) must wear masks at all times indoors in P-12 school buildings, regardless of vaccination status. People with medical or developmental conditions that prevent them from wearing a mask may be exempted from mask requirements, as documented by a medical provider. People do not need to wear masks when eating, drinking, singing, or playing a wind instrument; when masks are removed for these purposes, maximize physical distance as much as possible and in combination with ventilation and other mitigation strategies. All mask requirements must be applied consistently with any state and federal law (for example, the Americans with Disabilities Act).

Per [CDC Order](#), face masks are required at all times, regardless of vaccination status, on school buses and on any school-sponsored transportation.

A mask is any well-secured cloth or disposable mask that covers a person's nose and mouth. A mask with an exhalation valve or vent cannot be used on school property as exhalation valves allow unfiltered exhaled air to escape to others. Face shields are not appropriate substitutes for masks but may be worn in addition to a face mask. Please see [FAQ About Face Masks](#) for more information.

### **Daily Health Screening**

- All individuals (students, staff and visitors) are recommended to complete a daily health screening, ideally at home, prior to entering school facilities to make sure that they do not report to school if they have or may have COVID-19. In addition, they should be reminded to go home (following appropriate protocols) if they start to feel unwell during the day.
  - Train staff, parents and guardians to use the daily health screening tool in the morning before leaving home and inform them how to notify the school if they do not pass the screening.
  - Provide clear instructions to those who do not pass the screening, including directions not to come to school that day and steps to take before returning to school.
  - Assure staff and families that personal health information will be kept confidential.
  - Call parents and guardians if a student is absent to learn whether the child has COVID-19 symptoms and if anyone in the household has COVID-19.
  - Inform parents and guardians about your COVID-19 protocols so they know what to expect.
  - Designate a staff person to review the incoming reports of COVID-19 health screenings and to attest that they are completed.
- Schools should not keep records of student, staff, and visitor health data (e.g., the specific temperature data of an individual), but may maintain records that confirm individuals were screened and the result of such screening (e.g., pass/fail, cleared/not cleared). Any paper questionnaires that are collected for purposes of completing the daily screening attestation requirement must be immediately shredded to protect people's health information.

A sample daily health screening tool and instructions for use are found in [Appendices B](#) and [C](#).

### **Testing**

- Schools are encouraged to conduct screening testing to identify infected people, including those with or without symptoms (or before development of symptoms) who may be contagious, so that measures can be taken to prevent further transmission.
  - Nonpublic schools interested in testing services should contact [onpscovidtesting@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:onpscovidtesting@schools.nyc.gov).

- Charter schools interested in testing services should submit a ticket through the [NYC DOE Charter Office Help Desk](#).
- To facilitate safe participation in sports, extracurricular activities and other activities with elevated risk (such as activities that could result in releasing more air, such as singing, shouting, playing musical instruments and exercise), schools should consider implementing screening testing for participants who are not fully vaccinated.
  - Schools should follow [CDC screening testing recommendations for K-12 schools by level of community transmission](#). When [levels of community transmission](#) are high, cancel or hold high-risk sports and extracurricular activities virtually, unless all participants are fully vaccinated.
  - High risk sports and extracurricular activities include football, rugby, basketball, wrestling, volleyball, martial arts, contact lacrosse, competitive cheer and group dance, and other sports and recreational activities where it is difficult to maintain physical distance or limit exposure to shared equipment prior to such equipment being cleaned and disinfected.
- A positive or negative antibody test result should **not** be used to make any decisions about whether someone can work or attend school or should isolate or quarantine. Antibody tests for COVID-19 cannot be used to detect whether someone is currently sick or infected or whether someone is immune to the virus.
- People can find a testing site by visiting [nyc.gov/covidtest](https://nyc.gov/covidtest). Many sites have no-cost testing, regardless of immigration or insurance status. Remind staff and parents and guardians to let you know right away if they (for staff) or their children (for parents and guardians) receive a positive diagnostic test result.

### Handling a Case of COVID-19 in Your School Community

- The infectious period is when someone with COVID-19 may potentially spread the virus to others (when they are contagious).
  - The **start date** of the infectious period is two days before the person had their first symptom or two days before their COVID-19 test date if they did not have symptoms.
  - The **end date** of the infectious period is 10 days after the person had their first symptom or 10 days after their COVID-19 test date if they did not have symptoms.
  - The test date is the date when the sample for the test was taken, not the date when the test results were reported to the provider or patient.
- In school settings, a close contact is someone who has been within 6 feet for 10 or more minutes over a 24-hour period of someone who has COVID-19 during their infectious period, regardless of face mask use or the presence of plexiglass or other barriers.
 

**Exception:** [Per CDC guidance](#), in the classroom setting, students sitting 3 to 6 feet from a student with COVID-19 do not need to quarantine if they and the student with COVID-19 wore masks correctly and consistently. This exception applies only to students and not to staff.

  - Other people may be considered close contacts in certain situations, such as when physical distancing cannot be consistently monitored or maintained (such as on the

school bus, younger children who are unable to remain 6 feet apart and wear masks, and during some sports and recreational activities).

- Specific step-by-step protocols are provided for different situations:

### **Student Shows Symptoms of COVID-19 While at School**

All schools should have an area designated to hold students who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, but this room can be used for other purposes when not holding an ill student. Schools should decide on space that can be used; this designated area may be the nurse's examination room or medical room. Regardless of the designated area, the space must be thoroughly cleaned after holding a student who showed signs of COVID-19. No additional staffing is needed for this designated space, as the nurse will assess potentially ill students. Should a school have the space, the school may designate a room to be solely used for holding students who show symptoms of COVID-19.

Schools should follow the steps below when a student has symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day:

1. A student showing one or more symptoms of COVID-19 (including fever of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, chills, new cough, new loss of taste or smell, and/or new shortness of breath) should go to or be escorted by a staff member wearing a well-fitting mask over their nose and mouth to the designated area.
2. The area or classroom where the student was showing symptoms must be cleaned and disinfected as soon as possible.
3. The school calls the student's parent or guardian for pick up.
4. Upon arrival of the student's parent or guardian, a staff member escorts the student to the entrance for pick-up, advises the student to visit a health care provider and get tested for COVID-19, and [provides information on the closest testing site](#).
5. The student can return to school when they fulfill the criteria for returning to school (see [table below](#)).

### **School-Based Staff Member Shows Symptoms of COVID-19 While at School**

Schools should follow the steps below when a staff member shows symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day:

1. The staff member immediately notifies the principal that they are not feeling well and are experiencing COVID-like symptoms.
2. The school will advise the staff member to get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible and [provides information of the closest testing site](#). The staff member must go home.
  - a. If the staff member needs to wait for transportation assistance, the staff member should leave the building, stay somewhere away from others and wear a face mask.
  - b. The area or classroom where the staff member was showing symptoms must be cleaned and disinfected as soon as possible.
  - c. The staff member can return to school when they fulfill one of the criteria for returning to school (see [table below](#)).

- If the staff member was vaccinated against COVID-19 within the past three days, the staff member may be experiencing post-vaccine symptoms such as fatigue, fever, headache and/or chills. The staff member must go home and can return to work if symptoms resolve within two days (see [table below](#)).

**Student or School-Based Staff Member Calls Out Sick With COVID-Like Symptoms or Because Someone in Their Household Has COVID-19 or Symptoms of COVID-19**

Should a student or staff member call out sick because they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or because someone in their household has COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19, the person should remain at home until they fulfill the [criteria for returning to school](#) after showing symptoms. Individuals who were vaccinated against COVID-19 within the past three days may experience post-vaccine symptoms such as fatigue, fever, headache and/or chills. The staff member should stay home and can return to school when they fulfill the [criteria for returning to school](#).

**Criteria for Returning to School After Showing Symptoms (Not for Close Contacts)**

The table below outlines the criteria for returning to school for any individual not identified as a close contact (student or staff) showing symptoms of COVID-19:

If the individual received a <b>positive COVID-19 diagnostic test*</b>	If the individual received a <b>negative COVID-19 diagnostic test*</b>	If the individual was <b>not tested for COVID-19</b>	If the individual was <b>vaccinated against COVID-19 within the past three days</b>
They can return to school when they have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Isolated for 10 days</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Overall symptoms are improving</li> </ul>	They can return to school when they have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medicine and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Overall symptoms are improving</li> </ul>	They can return to school when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms started</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medicine and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Overall symptoms are improving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If the <b>only</b> symptoms are fatigue, headache, chills, or muscle or joint pain, people may return to work if symptoms resolve within two days. If symptoms persist beyond this time frame, manage as potential COVID-19 infection (exclude them from school).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If symptoms include cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, fever, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, manage as potential COVID-19 infection (exclude them from school).</li> </ul>

\*A lab-based molecular test (PCR) is required to rule out COVID-19 if a person is symptomatic.

**Self-Reported Positive Case**

Any student or staff member who reports that they have tested positive for COVID-19 while at

school will be asked to leave the school, or in the case of a student, a guardian will be called to pick up the student. Should a student or staff member report having tested positive for COVID-19, the principal or designee should:

1. Report the case to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department) via the online [COVID-19 Facility Exposures form](#).
2. If the NYC Health Department determines that additional follow-up is needed, you will be contacted with instructions.

### **Confirmed Cases**

In the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case, the principal or designee should:

1. Confirm the person had a positive diagnostic test for COVID-19 (molecular or antigen test) and not an antibody test (see [COVID-19 Testing: Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information). Ask the parents and guardians and staff to send a copy of their test result through a secure method to the appropriate school administrator.
2. Determine whether the person was in the school during their infectious period, potentially exposing others to COVID-19.
3. If the persons attended school during their infectious period, identify everyone who was a close contact of the person with COVID-19 during the person's infectious period (see [Appendix A: Identifying Close Contacts and Submitting Information to the NYC Health Department](#)).
4. Report all new COVID-19 cases and information on close contacts to the NYC Health Department via the online [COVID-19 Facility Exposures form](#), which will also enroll them in the NYC Test & Trace Corps assistance and monitoring program. If the NYC Health Department determines that additional follow-up is needed, you will be contacted with instructions.
  - a. Fully vaccinated individuals who are considered close contacts should be included in the close contacts spreadsheet.
5. Provide information to the individual about how to isolate safely at home and when they may return to school (see [What to Do If You Have COVID-19](#) and [COVID-19: Understanding Quarantine and Isolation](#)).
  - a. The person needs to isolate if they test positive for COVID-19, whether or not they have symptoms or are fully vaccinated.
6. Exclude all unvaccinated close contacts from school, **except** those who have fully recovered from laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 in the past three months. Inform them that they must stay home and quarantine ([separate from others](#), including household members) for 10 days from the date of their last close contact. See "[Quarantine for Students Identified as Close Contacts to Someone with COVID-19](#)" section below for further instructions.
7. Communicate to families, students and staff about the confirmed case.
  - a. Do not reveal the name of the person with COVID-19 or share other identifying information, such as personal information (age, address, phone number), grade or classroom, or information about the symptoms the person may have had. Likewise, you should not reveal the name or any identifying information about the people identified as close contacts. This information is confidential and

should only be shared with the NYC Health Department staff assisting in the investigation. Maintaining confidentiality will help encourage other people to disclose when they have COVID-19.

- b. The NYC Health Department has template letters that schools can adapt to notify parents and guardians of students about possible exposures to COVID-19 and quarantine requirements for their children. Schools may wish to inform parents and guardians whose children were not close contacts that there was someone with COVID-19 in school. Template letters for both scenarios are available in [Appendix D](#).

### **Quarantine for Students and Staff Identified as Close Contacts to Someone with COVID-19**

In the event there is a positive case in a classroom, students or staff may be asked to quarantine due to exposure to COVID-19. Students or staff who are:

- **At least 12 years old, fully vaccinated\* and not showing symptoms** may continue to attend school in person. Out of an abundance of caution, these students are encouraged to take a COVID-19 test three to five days after exposure.
- **At least 12 years old, fully vaccinated\* and showing symptoms** will be directed to quarantine for 10 calendar days.
- **Unvaccinated** will be directed to quarantine for 10 calendar days. On Day 5 of their quarantine, students or staff may take a lab-based molecular COVID-19 test (PCR test), and with a negative result, return to attending school in person **after** Day 7. Schools should verify negative test results.
- **Fully recovered from laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 in the past three months and show no symptoms of COVID-19 since the current exposure** may continue to attend school in person. Three months is measured from the date a person first had COVID-19 symptoms or, if they had no symptoms, the date of their first positive diagnostic test.

\*An individual is fully vaccinated two weeks after a single-dose vaccine or second dose of a two-dose vaccine, where the vaccine has received emergency approval from the FDA or World Health Organization.

All individuals identified as close contacts to someone with COVID-19 must continue daily symptom monitoring through Day 14. If symptoms occur, they should isolate themselves, contact their health care provider, get tested for COVID-19 and must not attend school.

It is recommended that schools require proof of vaccination or previous (recent) positive test from individuals who are exposed but exempt from quarantine. Schools that plan to request voluntary submission of documentation of COVID-19 vaccination status should use the same standard protocols that are used to collect and secure other immunization or health status information from students.

Keeping in mind the burden imposed on children and their families, schools may choose to enforce a more restrictive quarantine policy (for example, excluding an entire classroom or pod

from school for 10 days).

### **Additional Guidance on Identifying Close Contacts, Quarantine and Isolation**

- Call the NYC Health Department at 866-692-3641 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday for consultation with an epidemiologist if you have questions about test results or quarantine. If you are having trouble using the COVID-19 Facility Exposure form, please contact [facilities@health.nyc.gov](mailto:facilities@health.nyc.gov) for assistance.
- A person who has completed isolation or quarantine does not need a doctor's note, a note from the NYC Health Department or a negative laboratory test result to return to school. It is strongly recommended **not** to require negative COVID-19 test results after isolation, as a person may test positive for COVID-19 for many weeks or months after infection even though they are no longer contagious.
- Contacts of someone in quarantine do not need to stay home unless the quarantined person develops symptoms of COVID-19 or tests positive for COVID-19 (becomes a case).
- Quarantine is not required following domestic or international travel. All travelers, [domestic](#) and [international](#), should follow all CDC travel requirements and recommendations. While quarantine is not required, schools can implement more restrictive requirements (for example, mandate that staff not return to work for a defined period of time after travel).
- Schools should work with bus companies to arrange for assigned seating on buses, to facilitate identifying close contacts. If a person with confirmed COVID-19 rode in or drove a school bus during their infectious period, all children and staff who were close contacts on the bus with that person will need to quarantine for 10 days. If it is not possible to identify close contacts, everyone must quarantine even if they were following physical distancing, wearing masks and taking other precautions.
- If there are multiple confirmed cases of COVID-19 in different classrooms, you should follow the above guidance about excluding any students or staff who are close contacts. The cases are likely to be independent introductions of COVID-19 to the school from the community, rather than due to COVID-19 transmission within the school. Schools considering whether to close should first discuss options with the NYC Health Department, which will work with the school to keep schools open, whenever possible.
- The decision to close a school is based on various factors including the number of cases over time and their distribution across grades and classrooms, the size of the school, the ability of the school to exclude people who need to be isolated and quarantined in a timely manner, adherence to NYC Health Department guidance, and cooperation with the NYC Health Department.

**The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.**

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## Appendix A: Identifying Close Contacts and Submitting Information to the Health Department

### Checklist:

- Confirm that the person with COVID-19 was on site during their infectious period (see the example below).
- Identify the people who had close contact with the person with COVID-19 during their infectious period.
- Notify the close contacts of their exposure **without disclosing the identity of the person who has COVID-19 or other identified contacts.**
  - Close contacts who fall into one of the quarantine exception categories (fully vaccinated or having had COVID-19 in the last three months) do not need to quarantine and can come to school.
  - Close contacts who do not fall into one of the exception categories must quarantine for 10 days after the date they last had contact with the person who has COVID-19 **or** on Day 5 of their quarantine, the person may take a lab-based molecular COVID-19 test (PCR test), and with a negative result, return to attending school in person **after** Day 7.
- Submit information on close contact information to the NYC Health Department and [NYC Test & Trace Corps](#) using the [COVID-19 Facility Exposures form](#).
  - The contact list for the individual who has COVID-19 should include people’s first and last names, phone numbers, and date of last contact with the person. Dates of birth and addresses may be helpful but not necessary to include.
  - If you have trouble submitting the contact list using the COVID-19 Facility Exposure form, contact the NYC Health Department for help at [facilities@health.nyc.gov](mailto:facilities@health.nyc.gov).

### Example - Calculating the infectious period:

A student first experienced symptoms on April 21. This means, the start of their infectious period is **April 19** (two days before their symptoms started) and the end of their infectious period is **May 1** (10 days after their symptoms started.)

April 19	April 20	April 21	April 22	April 23	April 24	April 25	April 26	April 27	April 28	April 29	April 30	May 1
<b>Start of infectious period</b>		Student first had symptoms										<b>End of infectious period</b>

## Appendix B: Sample Daily Health Screening Questions

1. Have you experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a fever of 100.0 degrees F or greater, a new cough, new loss of taste or smell or shortness of breath that started in the past 10 days?\*\*\*
  - No. *Go to the next question.*
  - Yes, and I have received a lab-confirmed negative result from a COVID-19 diagnostic test (not a blood test) since the onset of symptoms **and** have not had symptoms for at least 24 hours. *Go to the next question.*
  - Yes, and I am not in the category above. *No further screening is needed. The person may not enter the building.*
  
2. In the past 10 days, have you gotten a lab-confirmed positive result from a COVID-19 diagnostic test (not a blood test) that was your first positive result **or** was after three months from your previous diagnosis date?<sup>1</sup> Please note that 10 days is measured from the day you were tested, not from the day when you got the test result.
  - No. *Go to the next question.*
  - Yes. *No further screening is needed. The person may not enter the building.*
  
3. Are you considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by CDC guidelines **or** were you recently (within the past three months) diagnosed with COVID-19 and finished isolation in the past three months?<sup>1</sup> Please note that to be considered fully vaccinated by CDC guidelines, two weeks must have passed since you received the second dose in a two-dose series or two weeks must have passed since you received a single-dose vaccine.
  - No, I am not considered fully vaccinated or was not diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past three months. *Go to the next question.*
  - Yes, I am considered fully vaccinated or was diagnosed with COVID-19 and finished isolation in the past three months. *The person should skip question 4 and may enter the building.*
  
4. To the best of your knowledge, in the past 10 days, have you been in close contact (within 6 feet for at least 10 minutes over a 24 hour period) with anyone who is currently diagnosed with COVID-19 or who has been told they have symptoms of COVID-19? Clinical staff who were in appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) are not considered close contacts in these scenarios.
  - No. *The person may enter the building.*
  - Yes. *No further screening is needed. The person may not enter the building.*

\*\*\*New onset of symptoms not attributable to a known chronic condition

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<sup>1</sup> The 90-day count should start from your symptom onset date or, if you had no symptoms, the three months should start from your positive test date.

## **Appendix C: How to Operationalize Daily Health Screenings**

### **Remote Health Screening Questionnaire:**

Encourage all individuals (students, staff, and visitors) to pre-screen themselves remotely before entering a school building. For example, create an auto-generated email or survey that enables a response or set up an automated phone line that allows staff and families to indicate “yes” or “no.” Individuals can then be asked to provide the results of their screening by showing an email on their smartphone, providing a printout of results or by monitoring phone responses. Families should support students as needed and make sure students have proper documentation for morning entry.

For students who travel via school bus, families should complete the screening, including checking their child’s temperature, prior to the child boarding the school bus. Bus personnel will not be conducting screenings of children prior to boarding the bus. School site designated staff should check for completion of student health screening at entry. Students who lack the screening clearance will need to be supported in completing this screening process at the school, particularly young children.

For morning student drop off, every effort should be made to ensure that student health screenings are completed prior to families dropping off their children to school, especially for younger students. The screening results are valid until midnight of the same day.

### **Paper Copy of Health Screening Questionnaire:**

If individuals are not able to pre-screen using the online tool, they should print and complete the health screening questionnaire at home. Schools can provide copies of the health screening questionnaire, as necessary.

### **In-Person Health Screening at School:**

Any individual who needs to complete the health screening in-person should answer the health screening tool prior to entry. Schools should determine the best way to implement on-site screening for students using either the online health screening tool or paper copies of the screening questionnaire.

The following are best practices for in-person screening at school:

- Maintain physical distance.
  - People awaiting screening must maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others.
  - Incorporate physical distancing (maintaining at least 6 feet between screeners and others) or physical barriers to minimize the screener’s and screened person’s exposure to each other during the screening.
  - Staff should stay at least 6 feet from each other and students.
- Screeners and screened people (except for children under 2 years old) must wear a face mask if they can medically tolerate one. If the person being screened cannot medically

tolerate a mask, consider a reasonable accommodation, such as having the person complete a written screening survey rather than an in-person screening.

- Screen in a location that is not a confined space (for example, do not use a small office with a closed door). If possible, perform screenings outdoors.
- Design a way to screen that prevents others from hearing what is being said and to minimize others from observing screenings.

### **Supporting Students With In-Person Health Screenings**

For students who arrive at school without a completed screening and are unable to respond to the health screening questions, the school should make an effort to contact a family member for support with screening. However, if a parent or guardian is unable to be contacted, the school should ask the student about their well-being (for example, “How are you feeling today?”).

In the event that contact with the family was not possible prior to the student's entry, once the student is in class the school should conduct outreach to the family to complete the screener and remind the family that the screening must be conducted at home before the student leaves for school.

### **Student Pick Up**

If the student has symptoms of COVID-19, the guardian of the student must be immediately contacted and advised to pick up the child. If the guardian cannot be reached, the school must contact the emergency contacts.

### **Failing a Health Screening: Students**

Any student who fails their health screening (for example, answers yes to any of the [health screening questions above](#)) should be escorted to the school’s designated area and must be picked up by a family member, or, for students being dropped off, sent home with a family member prior to entering the building, if possible.

If a student fails the health screening question #1 or #2:

- The student should be escorted to the school’s designated area for family pick up.
- Students in the designated area must wear a face mask and sit 6 feet away from other students and staff members.
- Family should seek medical attention and COVID-19 testing and the student should stay home for 10 days.
- The principal or designee can report the case and their close contacts to the NYC Health Department using the [COVID-19 Facility Exposures form](#).
- The student may return to school when they fulfill return to school criteria.

If a student fails the health screening question #4:

- The student should be escorted to the designated area for family pick up.

- Students in the designated area must wear a face mask and sit 6 feet away from other students and staff members.
- Family should seek medical attention as needed.
- Students must quarantine for 10 days from last exposure if deemed a close contact with anyone who tested positive for COVID-19.

**Failing a Health Screening: Staff and Visitors**

Any staff or visitor who fails their health screening must be refused entry to the school facilities. Instructions on what to do, including not coming to work that day and when they can return to work should be provided.

## Appendix D: Sample Letters

### Sample Letter for Close Contact(s) Age 12 and older

[Date]

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department) asked me to send this letter to let you know your child may be a close contact of a person diagnosed with COVID-19 at [insert name of school]. A close contact is someone who has been within 6 feet for 10 or more minutes over a 24-hour period of someone who has COVID-19 during their infectious period, regardless of face mask use or the presence of plexiglass or other barriers. You may also be contacted by the NYC Health Department or NYC Test & Trace Corps. All calls are confidential and private. Neither the NYC Health Department nor the NYC Test & Trace Corps will ask you for any private financial information or your Social Security number (SSN), or to take control of or download software to your phone, tablet or computer.

The possible exposure happened on [insert date(s)]. Your child must do one of the following:

1) Stay home for 10 days after [insert date] while they are at risk for becoming sick. Your child can leave home only to visit a health care provider, to get a COVID-19 test or in an emergency. It is important that your child stays home, even if they do not feel sick, to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. If symptoms occur, the child should isolate, visit their health care provider and get evaluated for COVID-19. **You should continue to monitor your child for fever or other COVID-19 symptoms for 14 days after their exposure.** If your child completes a full isolation or quarantine period of 10 days, they do not need a doctor's note, a note from the NYC Health Department or a negative laboratory test result to return to school.

**Or**

2) On Day 5 of their quarantine, your child may take a lab-based molecular COVID-19 test (PCR test), and with a negative result, return to attending school in person **after** Day 7. A negative molecular laboratory test result should be provided to the school. You should continue to monitor your child for fever or other COVID-19 symptoms for 14 days after their exposure. If symptoms occur, your child should isolate, visit their health care provider and get evaluated for COVID-19.

If your child meets one of the criteria below, they are not required to quarantine and may attend school:

- Your child is fully vaccinated (more than two weeks following receipt of the second dose in the two-dose series, or more than two weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine) and shows no symptoms of COVID-19 since the current exposure;
- or**

- Your child has had laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 in the past three months and recovered and shows no symptoms of COVID-19 since the current exposure. Three months is measured from the date a person first had COVID-19 symptoms or, if they had no symptoms, the date of their first positive diagnostic test.

Proof of vaccination status or previous positive test may be required. The school will provide instructions on how to submit documentation to the school, if needed.

Out of an abundance of caution, fully vaccinated individuals who are exposed to COVID-19 should still get tested for COVID-19 three to five days after exposure even if they don't have symptoms. They should also wear a face mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative, and should monitor for any [symptoms of COVID-19](#) for 14 days following exposure. If they experience symptoms, they should wear a mask at all times, isolate themselves from others, be clinically evaluated for COVID-19 (including getting tested) and inform their health care provider of their vaccination status at the time of COVID-19 evaluation and testing.

#### COVID-19 Testing

Testing is important even if your child does not feel sick because some people with the infection have no symptoms but can still spread the virus to others. For information on testing, call your child's health care provider or **311**, or visit [nyc.gov/covidtest](https://nyc.gov/covidtest). Testing is offered at no cost at many sites and available regardless of immigration status.

#### Symptoms of COVID-19

Talk to your child's provider if your child has symptoms that could be from COVID-19. If your child does not have a provider, call **311**. People with COVID-19 have reported a wide range of symptoms. Symptoms may appear two to 14 days after exposure to the virus. Common symptoms include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, and sore throat. Most people with COVID-19 have mild to moderate symptoms and recover on their own. Some people have no symptoms at all. Less commonly, COVID-19 may lead to pneumonia, other severe complications, hospitalization or death. Visit [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/health/coronavirus) for more information on symptoms and what to do when sick.

In rare cases, some children have developed multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C), a health condition associated with COVID-19 that can result in serious illness. Symptoms may include fever lasting several days, red or pink eyes, swollen hands and feet, rash, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, red cracked lips or a red bumpy tongue that looks like a strawberry. Contact your child's health care provider immediately if your child develops any of these symptoms.

Sincerely,  
[insert name of school administrator]

## Sample Letter for Close Contact(s) Under Age 12

[Date]

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department) asked me to send you this letter to let you know your child may be a close contact of a person diagnosed with COVID-19 at [insert name of school]. A close contact is someone who has been within 6 feet for 10 or more minutes over a 24-hour period of someone who has COVID-19 during their infectious period, regardless of face mask use or the presence of plexiglass or other barriers. You may also be contacted by the NYC Health Department or NYC Test & Trace Corps. All calls are confidential and private. Neither the NYC Health Department nor the NYC Test & Trace Corps will ask you for any private financial information or your Social Security number, or to take control of or download software to your phone, tablet or computer.

The possible exposure happened on [insert date(s)]. Your child must do one of the following:

1) Stay home for 10 days after [insert date] while they are at risk for becoming sick. Your child can leave home only to visit a health care provider, to get a COVID-19 test or in an emergency. It is important that your child stays home, even if they do not feel sick, to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. If symptoms occur, your child should isolate, visit their health care provider and get evaluated for COVID-19. **You should continue to monitor your child for fever or other COVID-19 symptoms for 14 days after their exposure.** If your child completes a full isolation or quarantine period of 10 days, they do not need a doctor's note, a note from the NYC Health Department or a negative laboratory test result to return to school.

**Or**

2) On Day 5 of their quarantine, your child may take a lab-based molecular COVID-19 test (PCR test), and with a negative result, return to attending school in person **after** Day 7. A negative molecular laboratory test result should be provided to the school. You should continue to monitor your child for fever or other COVID-19 symptoms for 14 days after their exposure. If symptoms occur, your child should isolate, visit their health care provider and get evaluated for COVID-19.

### COVID-19 Testing

The NYC Health Department recommends that you take your child for a COVID-19 test. Testing is important even if your child does not feel sick because some people with the infection have no symptoms but can still spread the virus to others. For information on testing, call your child's provider or **311**, or visit [nyc.gov/covidtest](https://nyc.gov/covidtest). Testing is offered at no cost at many sites and available regardless of immigration status.

### Symptoms of COVID-19

Talk to your child’s health care provider if your child has symptoms that could be from COVID-19. If your child does not have a provider, call **311**. People with COVID-19 have reported a wide range of symptoms. Symptoms may appear two to 14 days after exposure to the virus. Common symptoms include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, and sore throat. Most people with COVID-19 have mild to moderate symptoms and recover on their own. Some people have no symptoms at all. Less commonly, COVID-19 may lead to pneumonia, other severe complications, hospitalization or death. Visit [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/health/coronavirus) for more information on symptoms and what to do when sick.

In rare cases, some children have developed multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C), a health condition associated with COVID-19 that can result in serious illness. Symptoms may include fever lasting several days, red or pink eyes, swollen hands and feet, rash, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, red cracked lips or a red bumpy tongue that looks like a strawberry. Contact your child’s health care provider immediately if your child develops any of these symptoms.

Sincerely,  
[insert name of school administrator]

## Sample Letter for Child Who Was Not Exposed

[Date]

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am writing to let you know someone in [insert name of school] has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Currently, we do not think that your child was exposed because they were not a close contact of the person with COVID-19. A close contact is someone who has been within 6 feet for 10 or more minutes over a 24-hour period of someone who has COVID-19 during their infectious period, regardless of face mask use or the presence of plexiglass or other barriers. Parents and guardians of children who may be close contacts are being notified.

If your child feels well, you do not need to do anything and your child can continue their usual activities. If you are concerned or your child does not feel well, talk to your child's health care provider. If your child does not have a provider, call **311**. You can also have your child tested for COVID-19. For information about testing, call your child's health care provider or **311**, or visit [nyc.gov/covidtest](https://nyc.gov/covidtest). Testing is offered at no cost at many sites and available regardless of immigration status.

To learn more about COVID-19, visit [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/health/coronavirus).

Sincerely,  
[insert school administrator name]