

September 1, 2020

Parents, Caregivers, and Staff,

As we begin the new school year, we wanted to share the efforts we will take to respond to potential COVID-19 cases and the process for contact tracing in our schools. In partnership with our local health department and the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), our goal is to maintain a consistent system of response in dealing with individuals who show signs of COVID-19, test positive for the infection, or who may have been in close contact to a positive COVID-19 case. Through our collaborative efforts and the implementation of health safety protocols and mitigation strategies, including social distancing and the use of masks, we will minimize risks to our students and staff.

In an earlier communication, Addendum 5 was shared with you and provided a guideline for districts to address issues when students or staff developed potential signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The document outlined the actions districts should take on a case-by-case basis for removing individuals from the school setting and returning them safely back to school. Addendum 5, posted on our website, will serve as an important guide to be used in consult with our health experts, including school nurses and our Director of Health, Donna Culbert.

As parents, we want you to understand the expectations related to our response and disclosure when COVID-19 cases occur within our district. It is important that you understand how we intend to keep you informed while maintaining the privacy and confidentiality for our students, families, and staff.

The following outlines critical steps in the process of investigation, response, and communication:

- The first step is to verify the information that we receive regarding a potential COVID-19 case.
- If it is determined that a student or staff member is symptomatic, has had exposure, or is a positive case, the local health director will be notified.
- Following the initial identification of a potential or valid case, an investigation will occur to determine the exposure through contact tracing.
- Contact tracing includes identification, investigation, monitoring and notification. This will be conducted through the local health director and in conjunction with the Department of Public Health (DPH). Students placed in cohorts and assigned seating on buses will help to identify contacts.
- A direct contact is defined as someone who has been less than 6 feet away for 15 minutes or more. Individuals wearing masks will help to reduce spread of infection.
- Only those individuals who have had direct exposure to a potential or validated COVID-19 case will be appropriately notified. Staff and students who may have had direct exposure will be asked to quarantine for 14 days.
- If there is a positive case in the home, then family members would need to quarantine.

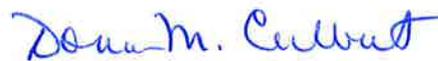
- If a family member in the home is quarantining due to exposure to a positive case, family members do not have to quarantine since those members are contacts of a contact.
- Individuals who are symptomatic or asymptomatic (but have had exposure) will be asked to contact their primary care physician. If this occurs at school, the school nurse will isolate the individual and contact the parents.
- Working in consult with our Health Director, a determination will be made regarding next steps. Individual or group isolation, quarantine, or temporary school closure may be warranted depending on a given situation and the spread of infection. If a positive case is identified in the school, this does not mean the entire building needs to close. This will be determined based on the exposure through contact tracing.
- Students and staff on a bus, in a classroom, or in a building may be asked to move to distance learning should the situation warrant. Deep cleaning of a bus, classroom, or building will occur in the event positive cases or potential cases are determined.
- Communication will be sent to staff and families if there is a positive case in our schools. No names of individuals will be released to protect an individual's privacy and to maintain confidentiality.
- Depending on the number of cases and in accordance with the public health indicators in Addendum 5, the decision for continuing on hybrid, moving to all-in, or even to full remote learning for the entire district will be made in conjunction with our health director and DPH.

We know this raises anxiety for members of our school community, but we want to assure you that we will be closely monitoring the health status of our schools on a regular basis. Implementing preventative measures, including social distancing, sanitization and wearing masks, will continue to support the health and safety conditions across the district.

We appreciate your ongoing support and understanding as we enter the 2020-21 school year.



Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue  
Superintendent



Donna Culbert  
Newtown Director of Health

# Addendum 5

## Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together

Connecticut State Department of Education



## Interim Guidance for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios in Connecticut School Districts

August 6, 2020



The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and State Department of Public Health (DPH) have collaborated to provide school districts with guidance and protocols for responding to specific COVID-19 scenarios that may occur with school reopening for the 2020–21 school year. This guidance complements the Containment Plan (p. 23) requirement of [Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together](#), which instructs school districts to develop written protocols for containment and immediate response related to symptoms of, diagnosis of, or exposure to the virus. Information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) informs the specific scenarios and actions that follow. CDC guidance and public health data are evolving and therefore, this guidance may be updated accordingly.

This document addresses issues when a student or staff person has or develops: possible signs and symptoms of COVID-19; a diagnosis of COVID-19; or exposure to a person diagnosed with COVID-19. It describes immediate actions for removing an individual from the school setting and when to safely return them to school. School district leaders are encouraged to use this as a guide, in consultation with public health experts, including school nurses, school medical advisors, local health directors and in consideration of all specific circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

Event	Location of Event	Testing Result	<b>Isolation/Quarantine</b> Isolation = when you are experiencing symptoms or have a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 Quarantine = when you have been exposed but you are not experiencing symptoms
<b>Individual has COVID-19 symptoms<sup>1</sup> but has NOT had close contact<sup>2</sup> to a person diagnosed with COVID-19</b>	<b>If at home:</b> stay home, notify the school immediately (do not wait until the beginning of the next school day), and get tested.	Individual tests <sup>3</sup> <b>negative</b>	Return to school once there are no symptoms for 24 hours.
	<b>If at school:</b> students should remain masked, adhere to strict physical distancing, be assessed by the school nurse or school medical advisor (if available), stay in the isolation room (with adult supervision), until picked up to go home, consult a healthcare provider, and get tested. If symptoms arise <b>on the bus</b> , students should remain masked and follow the remaining measures listed above upon arrival to school. They must not be sent home on the bus.	Individual tests <b>positive</b>	Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school immediately, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts <sup>4</sup> , and answer phone calls from public health officials/contact tracing staff.  Stay in self-isolation <sup>5</sup> for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever <sup>6</sup> (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other COVID-19 symptoms.
	<b>If at school:</b> staff members should remain masked, adhere to strict physical distancing, immediately contact leadership (per district protocols), go home, consult a healthcare provider, and get tested.  If a staff or student is ill enough to require transport to a healthcare facility, notify EMS that COVID-19 is a concern.	Individual <b>is not tested</b>	Stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms <b>and</b> until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other symptoms.  Can return to school earlier if obtains note from healthcare provider with alternate diagnosis.

Event	Location of Event	Testing Result	<b>Isolation/Quarantine</b> <b>Isolation</b> = when you are experiencing symptoms or have a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 <b>Quarantine</b> = when you have been exposed but you are not experiencing symptoms
<b>Individual has COVID-19 symptoms<sup>1</sup> AND had close contact<sup>2</sup> to a person diagnosed with COVID-19</b>	<p><b>If at home:</b> stay home, notify the school immediately (do not wait until the beginning of the next school day), and get tested.</p> <p><b>If at school:</b> students should remain masked, adhere to strict physical distancing, be assessed by the school nurse or school medical advisor (if available), stay in the isolation room (with adult supervision), until picked up to go home, consult a healthcare provider, and get tested. If symptoms arise <b>on the bus</b>, students should remain masked and follow the remaining measures listed above upon arrival to school. They must not be sent home on the bus.</p> <p><b>If at school:</b> staff members should remain masked, adhere to strict physical distancing, immediately contact leadership (per district protocols), go home, consult a healthcare provider, and get tested.</p> <p>If a staff or student is ill enough to require transport to a healthcare facility, notify EMS that COVID-19 is a concern.</p>	Individual tests <b>negative</b>	Stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other symptoms.
		Individual tests <b>positive</b>	Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist public health and the school in contact tracing efforts.  Stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other symptoms.
		Individual <b>is not tested</b>	Stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other symptoms.

Event	Location of Event	Testing Result	<b>Isolation/Quarantine</b> <b>Isolation</b> = when you are experiencing symptoms or have a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 <b>Quarantine</b> = when you have been exposed but you are not experiencing symptoms
<b>Individual does not have COVID-19 symptoms BUT had close contact<sup>2</sup> to someone diagnosed with COVID-19</b>	<b>If at home:</b> stay home, notify the school immediately (do not wait until the beginning of the next school day), and get tested.	Individual tests <b>negative</b>	Remain home in self-quarantine <sup>7</sup> for 14 days from last exposure to the person diagnosed with COVID-19.
	<b>If at school:</b> students should remain masked, adhere to strict physical distancing, be assessed by the school nurse or school medical advisor (if available), be picked up to go home, consult a health care provider, and get tested. Students who do not have symptoms may remain in the health room until they are picked up, they do not have to be sent to the isolation room. They must not be sent home on the bus.	Individual tests <b>positive</b>	Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist public health and the school in contact tracing efforts.  Stay home until 10 days have passed since date of the positive COVID-19 test.
	<b>If at school:</b> staff members should remain masked, adhere to strict physical distancing, immediately contact leadership (per district protocols), go home, consult a healthcare provider, and get tested.	Individual <b>is not tested</b>	Remain home in self-quarantine for 14 days from last exposure to the person diagnosed with COVID-19.

## End-notes

- 1 **Key COVID-19 signs and symptoms are:** feeling feverish, measured temp 100.4 F or more, chills, uncontrolled new cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell. There are other more nonspecific signs and symptoms. For a full list, see CDC Web page at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- 2 **Close contact:** Spending at least 15 minutes within 6 feet of a person with confirmed COVID-19, or a direct exposure to possibly infected droplets of saliva or nasal mucus (e.g., begin sneezed or coughed on in the face). See CDC web page at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>
- 3 **COVID-19 test for school/work attendance:** This is a viral test, NOT an antibody test. (see CDC information on COVID-19 tests at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html>).
- 4 **Contact tracing:** A public health intervention in which the contacts of a person with a communicable disease are identified, and possibly tested, quarantined or isolated to interrupt the transmission of the virus in a population. <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/ContaCT>
- 5 **Self- Isolation:** Individual with signs or symptoms of COVID-19, or a positive test, stays home until no longer infectious for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms **and** until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other COVID-19 symptoms. See CDC web page at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html>
- 6 **Fever:** Measured temperature of 100.4 F or higher
- 7 **Self-Quarantine:** Individual without symptoms stays home for 14 days since last exposure to someone who was diagnosed with COVID-19 (the incubation period of the virus). See CDC web page <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html> or [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fif-you-are-sick%2Fquarantine-isolation.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fif-you-are-sick%2Fquarantine-isolation.html)