

Manlius Pebble Hill School

COVID-19 Testing and Contact Tracing (DRAFT updated 10/28/20)

Definition of Terms

MPH defines the following terms according to the latest definitions from the NYDOH. Since precise communication will help ensure everyone's health and well-being during the course of the pandemic, MPH employees, students, and families are asked to use these definitions consistently.

Quarantine and Isolation are often used interchangeably, but they are quite different:

- **Quarantine** keeps someone who *might have been exposed to the virus* away from others.
- **Isolation** keeps someone who *is infected with the virus* away from others, even in their home.

Close Contact – being within 6 ft. of a person displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Proximate Contact – being in the same enclosed environment – such as a classroom, office, or gatherings – but greater than 6 ft. from a person displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Mandatory Quarantine – 14-day quarantine required for a person who has been in close contact (6 ft) with someone who is confirmed positive for COVID-19.

Precautionary Quarantine – 14-day quarantine required for a person who has had a proximate exposure to a COVID-19 positive person but has had no direct contact with a COVID-19 positive person and is not displaying symptoms.

Travel Quarantine – 14-day quarantine required for anyone traveling to New York from any of the states or territories listed on the [COVID-19 Travel Advisory List](#).

For specific instructions regarding how to quarantine in the home, please refer to [Requirements for Quarantine](#).

How do I know if I am required to quarantine? Please refer to NYDOH's [Guidance on the Contacts of a Close or Proximate Contact of a Confirmed or Suspected Case of COVID-19](#).

- **Person A** – A person with a confirmed case of COVID-19
- **Person B** – A person who has had contact (close or proximate) with a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19
- **Person C** – Any person who has had contact with a Person B; a “contact of a contact”

MPH's Waiting Area: In order to reopen in September, all schools were required by the state of New York to designate an “isolation room” separate from the Health Office as a waiting area in which students who develop a fever or symptoms of COVID-19 while at school can wait – with adult supervision -- to be picked up by their parent/guardian. MPH's isolation room is located in the Campus Store. Because the word “isolation” refers to those who are definitely infected with the virus, and because most students who wait to be picked up will not test positive for COVID-19, MPH will no longer refer to this room as the isolation room. It will be referred to simply as the Waiting Area.

Q & A

Q: Does MPH conduct COVID-19 testing onsite?

No. In the event that large-scale testing is needed, MPH will refer community members to the appropriate testing site, physicians' offices, hospital systems, etc., to obtain tests and provide follow-up instructions. For additional details, see [Onondaga County Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information](#). Nurse Christine Civello keeps a list of current testing sites in Central New York.

Q: How does the Onondaga County Health Department (OCHD) handle positive cases of COVID-19?

“Cases” are individuals who have a positive laboratory test for COVID-19. Once the OCHD is notified of a positive case, the individual is contacted and asked a series of questions designed to help the OCHD understand how the virus is spreading in our community. Cases are asked to identify anyone they have had close contact with up to 48 hours before becoming sick; or 48 hours from their test date if they are asymptomatic. These contacts will be followed up with by contact tracers. Based on the investigation, the OCHD will place a case under isolation for 10 days from the date they started feeling sick, or 10 days from the date of their test if they are asymptomatic. Each case will receive an [official isolation order](#).

Q: Do schools need parental permission to send COVID-19 related medical information to OCHD?

No. COVID-19 is a reportable communicable disease mandated under the New York State Sanitary Code (10NYCRR 2.10, 2.14), including reporting by school nurses (10NYCRR 2.12). See <https://regs.health.ny.gov/volume-title-10/content/reporting-cases-records> and https://www.health.ny.gov/forms/instructions/doh-389_instructions.pdf.

Q: If an MPH student or employee tests positive for COVID-19, the OCHD will be informed. Will the OCHD then inform the School?

Yes. The [OCHD has primary responsibility for contact tracing](#) for any positive test in the county and will inform MPH as soon as possible if any student, employee, or visitor has tested positive. The OCHD will provide guidance to MPH to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to mitigate the risk of the virus spreading in the school community.

Q. Who is responsible for contact tracing for MPH students, faculty, and staff?

As with case investigation, the [OCHD has primary responsibility for contact tracing](#); however, effective contact tracing is a collaborative effort between MPH and the OCHD. MPH will assist the OCHD by providing staff and student rosters, schedules, and other information to identify exposed individuals, arrange for testing, and so on. The contact tracer will also identify people outside of the school setting who may have been exposed to the case and complete the appropriate follow-up.

Q: When and how will MPH report positive COVID-19 cases to the Onondaga County Health Department (OCHD)?

If MPH is notified first (before OCHD) of a student's or staff member's positive test result, MPH will immediately notify the OCHD. Case investigations and contact tracing continue over the weekend.

Q: What is the timeframe for contact tracing? Will the OCHD work with MPH immediately?

Yes. The OCHD aims to contact positive individuals within 24 hours of receiving a positive lab report. MPH conducts daily health screenings via its Daily Health Assessment (DHA). All students, employees, and visitors are asked not only about their own health status, but also whether they have been in contact with a person who has tested positive. If so, they are not allowed on campus.

Q: What qualifies as an exposure to COVID-19?

An exposure is defined as being within 6 feet of a person displaying symptoms of, or testing positive for, COVID-19, for 15 minutes or longer. Close contacts will be required to quarantine. Proximate contact is defined as being in the same enclosed environment such as a classroom or office, but greater than 6 feet from a person displaying symptoms of or testing positive for COVID-19. OCHD will determine if a proximate contact should be under quarantine.

Q: Will contact tracers release the name of the positive individual to their contacts?

No. Contact tracers will tell potentially infected persons that they were exposed, and they **will not disclose the identity of the person to whom they were exposed**. In some situations, the positive case will have already reached out to their contacts and notified them of their positive status.

Q. Will MPH notify parents/guardians if someone in the MPH community tests positive for COVID-19?

Yes. MPH will notify parents/guardians via email if someone in the MPH community tests positive for COVID-19 and will provide instructions to community members based upon the specific circumstances of the positive case. MPH will not share the name of the positive individual but will inform any individuals who may have been exposed with facts about where and when they may have been exposed. All MPH community members are asked to adhere to our [Core Values](#) of **respect** and **kindness** by not speculating or sharing specific names of those in our community who may have tested positive. Parents and teachers are urged to talk with students to explain why no one should share the names of positive individuals via social media or in conversations with others.

Q. What is the difference between “quarantine” and “isolation?”

Quarantine keeps someone who *might have been exposed to the virus* away from others. Isolation keeps someone who *is infected with the virus* away from others, even in their home.

Q: How long will contacts of positive COVID-19 cases be required to quarantine? Individuals who are exposed to someone with COVID-19 will be required to quarantine for 14 days from the date they were last exposed. Every contact will receive an [official quarantine order](#).

Q: If a contact is tested during the 14-day quarantine period and is found to be negative, does the quarantine end early?

No. A negative test does not release an individual from quarantine. The test measures if someone is currently infected with the virus, and it can take up to 14 days for an infection to develop after being exposed. For this reason, quarantine needs to last the full 14 days, even if you have a negative test result after being exposed.

Q: What resources will a person in isolation or quarantine require?

A person in isolation or quarantine will need access to a private room and a private bathroom. If a private bathroom is not available, cleaning and disinfecting must be done after each use. Individuals will also need access to food, medications, and other essential items that will allow them to remain in isolation or quarantine. People who need assistance during quarantine or isolation can call the OCHD at 315.435.3280. Parents of MPH students in isolation or quarantine will work with MPH personnel to ensure that their child(ren) have the information they need to continue to learn via simulcast access.

Q: When should an exposed individual get tested for COVID-19?

Testing should be done approximately 5-7 days after being exposed to someone with COVID-19. Exposed individuals must remain in quarantine after being tested. If a person tests positive, they will be placed in isolation for a period determined by the OCHD. Even if the test is negative, the individual must continue to quarantine for the full 14 days. Isolation and quarantine guidance will be clearly addressed with each exposed person.

Q: Where can MPH students, faculty and staff get tested for COVID-19?

A list of testing sites can be found on the [OCHD website](#). Students, faculty, and staff can also call the NYS COVID-19 hotline at 1.888.364.3065 for assistance locating a testing site or contact their primary care providers.

Q: Is there a charge for COVID-19 tests conducted at state-run facilities?

No, there is no out-of-pocket charge for COVID-19 tests conducted at state-run facilities, though insurance information may be requested. For other testing sites, please check with the site or your insurance provider to confirm any costs that may be associated with the test. You may also contact your primary care provider to ask about testing.

Q: When can a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 return to school?

If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 [the release from isolation protocol is as follows](#):

If an individual **is experiencing symptoms** (fever, cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell), the following criteria must be met before they can be released from isolation:

- It has been at least 10 days since the person *first started experiencing symptoms*; AND
- The person has not had a *fever in at least 3 days* without taking a fever-reducing medication (such as Tylenol); AND
- Symptoms associated with COVID-19 have improved.
- The person has been released from isolation as stated in the Commissioner's Standing Order for Isolation.

If an individual **has not experienced symptoms**, the following criteria must be met before they can be released from isolation:

- It has been at least 10 days since the person's first positive COVID-19 test was collected, AND
- The person hasn't had any subsequent illness.
- The person has been released from isolation as stated in the Commissioner's Standing Order for Isolation.

Q: Can we assume that students with antibodies are safe from contracting COVID-19?

No. We currently do not have enough information about the significance of antibody tests. Antibody tests also CANNOT diagnose if an individual has active infectious COVID-19.

Q: Are rapid COVID-19 tests (Antigen or Molecular) reliable?

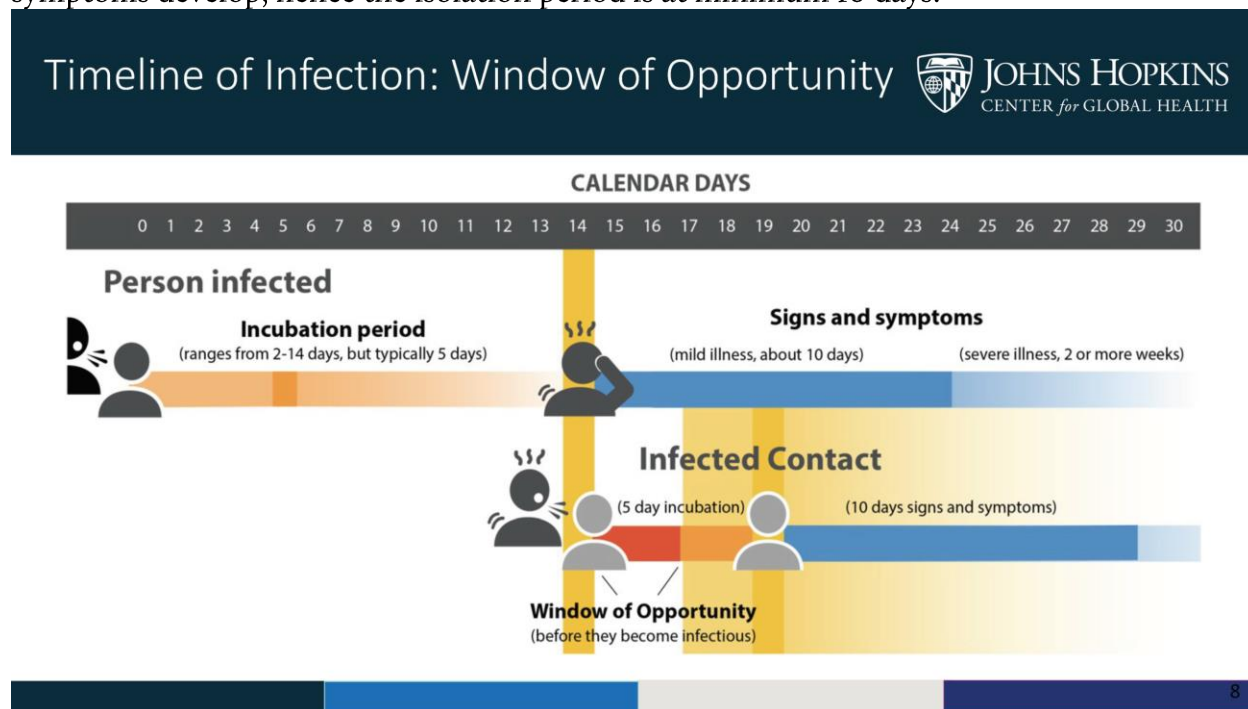
Rapid tests are useful because they provide results in under an hour. The test result must be interpreted in the context of clinical signs and symptoms. For more information please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/resources/antigen-tests-guidelines.html>

Q: Do students coming back from vacation from a state identified on Governor Cuomo's travel advisory need to quarantine?

Yes, students who are coming to New York from any of the [states on the travel advisory](#) need to be quarantined for 14 days. Please complete the [New York State Traveler Health Form](#).

Q: Why is the isolation period for an infected person shorter than the quarantine period of a contact?

The time period for incubation is different from the time period of illness and infectiousness. When a person is exposed to COVID-19, it can take up to 14 days for the person to develop the disease (incubation), hence the quarantine period is 14 days. Once the disease develops, a person is infectious from two days prior to symptoms appearing to 10 days after the symptoms develop, hence the isolation period is at minimum 10 days.



Q: Can you leave quarantine to get a COVID-19 test or does your quarantine start all over after you went out to get that test?

Yes, you can leave quarantine to get a COVID-19 swab test. However, during travel to and from testing you should minimize contact with others, wear a mask/face covering, observe distancing, and utilize private means for transportation. While your quarantine period does not re-start, you must continue to quarantine for the full 14 days from the last exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual, even if your test is negative.

Q: If a child tests positive and has a sibling in the school, will MPH keep the sibling out of school?

Yes. Unless the siblings reside in separate households, the sibling(s) must be placed on quarantine, too.

Q: If a student/staff member is home in quarantine and then develops symptoms, what should they do?

Students or staff who are home in quarantine and develop symptoms should get tested. If a student or staff tests positive, their household members will likely be considered close contacts and will need to be quarantined. The individual testing positive will require isolation for 10 days.

Q: If someone must quarantine and has a family member in isolation is it 10 days + 14 for the quarantine. Or would it be 4 more days?

The quarantine period is 14 days from the last date of contact with an individual who is positive for COVID-19.

Q: If a person travels to a state with a mandatory quarantine upon return to NY, but their child who lives with them did not travel, does the child also have to quarantine, or can they attend school?

The child may attend school as long as the traveler in the household remains asymptomatic and does not test positive for COVID-19.

Q: Does the student have to quarantine if the parent had contact and is quarantining, but does not have symptoms?

If a member of the household is quarantining because of either a known exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual or because of traveling, other members of the household can leave the home if that person can quarantine properly from the household members. A quarantined person should:

- Separate themselves from other members of the household.
- Use a separate bedroom and bathroom.
- Not share linens, towels, eating utensils, cups, and plates.
- Limit time in common household areas, such as kitchens.

Q: Is there a threshold of infections or absentee rates that would indicate a school should close?

The OCHD does not make the decision as to whether a school or classroom should be closed because of COVID-19. The OCHD may be consulted on a case-by-case basis, but **the decision rests solely with the school and school district.** *The Onondaga County Commissioner of Health has the legal authority to determine who needs to isolate and quarantine due to COVID-19 positive cases and/or exposure to a COVID-19 case.*

Q: What parameters/conditions/metrics will MPH use as an early warning sign that positive cases or absenteeism are increasing beyond an acceptable rate?

According to the OCHD, generally, schools in regions in Phase IV can remain open if daily infection rate remains below 5% using a 14-day average, and schools will close if the regional infection rate rises over 9%. MPH's Pandemic Response Team monitors daily positivity rates for the state of New York and for every county in which our students and employees live. MPH will exercise its agency in determining when to move from on-campus learning to distance learning for all. To safeguard the health and well-being of all members of our community, MPH will err on the side of caution in our decision-making processes.

Q: Regarding screening students and employees, should screening happen prior to entering the building or before they leave their house?

At MPH, every member of the community must complete a Daily Health Assessment (DHA) screening by 7:15 a.m. Completing a student's DHA is **the responsibility of the parent/guardian.** Students must not complete their own DHAs. Symptomatic individuals **should not** leave their households. Parents/guardians/students are encouraged to

review the importance of monitoring for symptoms and remaining at home whenever symptoms are recognized. Please see the [New York State Education Department's \(NYSED\) Reopening Guidance](#) for more information.

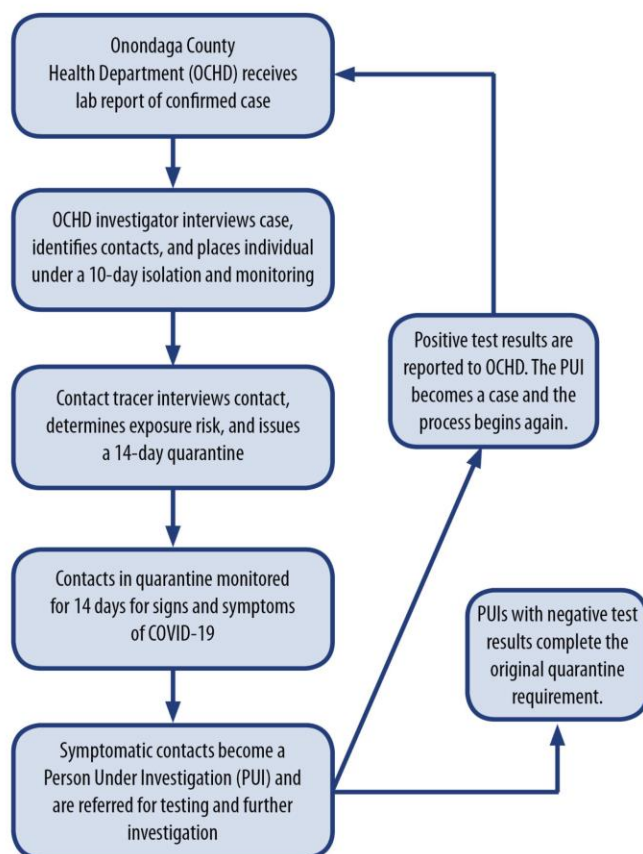
Q. If MPH has a positive case, will school close for 24 hours?

In most instances, a single case of COVID-19 would not warrant closing the school. MPH will follow the recommendations of the OCHD as well as guidance provided by the CDC and NYSDOH regarding cleaning and disinfecting, including:

- Closing off areas used by a sick person and not using these areas until after cleaning and disinfection has occurred;
- Opening outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area;
- Waiting at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfection. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible;

- Cleaning and disinfecting all areas used by the person who has tested positive for COVID-19, such as offices, classrooms, bathrooms, lockers, and common areas. See the [NYSED Reopening Guidance](#) for more information.

ONONDAGA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT/SCHOOLS COVID-19 Student Contact Monitoring Process



School administration, school health staff, and student support services provide OCHD with information and assistance with investigations upon request.

ONONDAGA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT/SCHOOLS COVID-19 Protocol: Symptomatic or Positive Student/Staff

