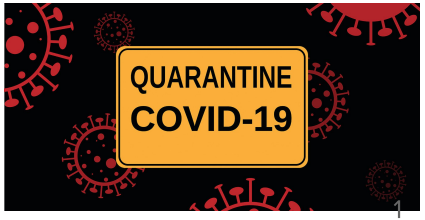
Close Contacts, Quarantine, HIPAA, Baseline Health: What does it all mean in an era of COVID-19?

Jonathan Hart, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools



What will we review?

Review precautions being taken in schools

What are the risk factors? Close contacts and household contacts

What does a 14-day quarantine look like? Under what circumstances can it end?

HIPAA and when information can be shared

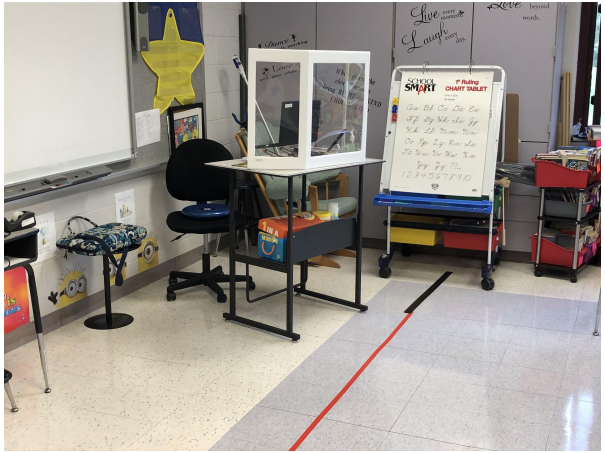
Contact tracing

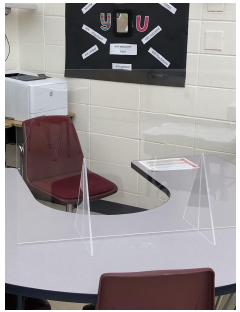
Reporting to work/school

FFCRA

Safety Measures - Main Offices

Safety Measures - Classrooms





Safety Measures - The Bus

Am I at risk?

Guidelines on who should quarantine or isolate for COVID-19

Close contact - any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes.
Quarantine – keeping someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others
Isolation- keeps someone with COVID-19 away from others, even in their own home

Person A – Case

- Person A tested positive for COVID-19
- While infectious, Person A was in close contact with Person B
- Person A must **isolate** from others until no longer infectious

Person B - Contact of a Case

- Person B is considered a **close contact** of an infectious COVID-19 person A
- Person B should **quarantine** (stay at home, practice social distancing and monitor for symptoms) for 14 days

Person C - Contact of a Contact

- Person C was NOT in **close contact** with infectious Person A
- Unless Person B develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, Person C is not at increased risk
- No special precautions are necessary

HUNTERDON COUNTY · NEW JERSEY ·

PublicHealth
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
HUNTERDON COUNTY

NJ Health

CDC

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Close Contact & Quarantine

What do I do now?

Rules and guidelines:

- Stay home
- Social distance
- Monitor symptoms
- Testing: That's up to you and your doctor

You were in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. Okay, so NOW WHAT?

You must quarantine for 14 days:
Stay at home, practice social distancing and monitor for symptoms.

During the 14 days :

- **If you develop symptoms or test positive – contact your healthcare provider and your local health department.**
- **If you do not develop symptoms - you can come out of quarantine.**

Can I get tested while I'm in quarantine?

Yes but only if you want to or otherwise recommended by your healthcare provider.

Public health officials recommend waiting at least 3-5 days after exposure to be tested for COVID-19.

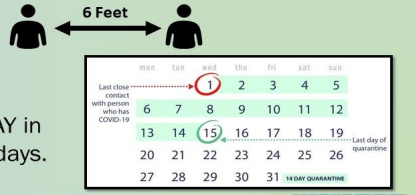
While in quarantine, I tested negative for COVID-19. Does that mean I can end my quarantine sooner than 14 days?

NO! COVID-19 virus takes an average of 5 days for symptoms to appear but can take up to 14 days so you may get a false negative test result.

The 14 days of quarantine is crucial because even though you may not be experiencing symptoms and have a negative test result, you can still be COVID-19 infected and therefore infectious to others.

Do your part and help reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- Wear a mask
- Maintain social distancing
- If you are in quarantine, STAY in quarantine for the ENTIRE 14 days.



Close Contact vs. Household Contact Quarantine vs. Isolation

What is the difference between a close contact and a household contact?

Close contact is when you are within 6 feet of an individual who tests positive for COVID-19 for 15 cumulative minutes over a 24 hour period (new CDC definition).

Household contact is a close contact but in the household. The positive COVID-19 case in the home should self-isolate to avoid contact with other members of the household.

What is the difference between quarantine and isolation?

Quarantine is keeping someone who may have been exposed away from others. The 14-day quarantine is necessary for **close contacts**.

Isolation is keeping a positive COVID-19 case away from others even in the home. Isolation should occur for the positive case in the home. The rest of the family members are considered **household contacts**. Resource: See this CDC page and video.

HIPAA

HIPAA stands for Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

These are national standards that protect sensitive patient health information from being disclosed without the patient's consent or knowledge.

HIPAA restricts the school district from disclosing any medical information about a staff member or student.

Therefore, letters sent out to the school community regarding positive COVID-19 cases will have limited information.

A Positive Case at School: What will I know?

Remember HIPAA first: We can only share what we're authorized to share.

If a positive case is discovered in school or on the bus:

- Staff and parents will be notified with a letter from the Superintendent's Office.
- Only the building staff and parents of the building or bus where the positive case appears will be notified.

When will you know more information:

- Teachers/staff may need to assist with contact tracing.
- If you have come in close contact with the positive case.
- If you are contacted by the Department of Health.

Staying Home: When should I stay home?

There are certain circumstances that indicate you should stay home:

- If you are a positive COVID-19 case.
- If you have come in close contact or if you are a household contact of a positive case.
- If you are experiencing symptoms listed on our assurance checklist.
- If you are advised by your physician or the Department of Health to quarantine or simply stay home while contact tracing is underway.
- If you are a close contact of someone who has developed symptoms and was identified as a close contact.
- If you have traveled to a restricted state or country of high transmission.

Staying Home: I think I should but I'm not sure

There are certain circumstances that may seem like you "should" stay home, but you actually **do not** need to:

- If you have come in contact with someone who is now quarantined. Remember there is no restriction on someone who is a close contact of a close contact unless the close contact develops symptoms/tests positive.
- If you have been in contact with someone who is asymptomatic but awaiting test results (unless your doctor or DOH tell you to).

Baseline Health

The COVID-19 Assurance Forms ask about your/your child's symptoms. Here are some guidelines in filling out the form:

- The questions are asking you to judge your health based on your personal baseline.
- A baseline is what you know about your day-to-day health. If you experience certain symptoms on a regular basis (i.e. asthma cough) this is a baseline.
- If symptoms are different than your usual baseline, this is when you stay home and follow-up with your physician.

Absences in Aesop (Staff only)

If a staff member is quarantined for 14 days and can work remotely:

- Enter the absence as “other” in Aesop, obtain sub if needed

If a staff member is quarantined for 14 days and cannot work remotely:

- Enter the absence as “other” in Aesop, obtain sub if needed. FFCRA-EPSLA days can be used (Contact Doreen)

If a staff member is ill (having symptoms) and is well enough to work remotely:

- Enter the absence as “other” in Aesop, obtain sub if needed

If a staff member is ill and unable to work:

- Enter as “sick” in Aesop, obtain sub if needed*

*at a later date if absence is COVID, we can allow staff to use FFCRA-EPSLA

What is FFCRA? (Staff only)

FFCRA stands for Families First Coronavirus Response Act and provides protections under federal law. It is actually an extension of FMLA.

When can FFCRA be used?

Caring for others: When caring for a child whose school is closed due to COVID-19 or caring for someone who has fallen ill due to COVID-19.

Personal hardships: Employee is subject to quarantine and unable to work remotely **or** if employee is experiencing symptoms, waiting for a diagnosis of COVID-19 and cannot work remotely.

See the *Readington Ready* Plan for more information.

Thank you!
Questions?

Reminder: This presentation was done in order to provide understanding and clarity for school staff and families as it relates to the COVID-19 situation. Individuals viewing this presentation should contact their physician or the Department of Health for more information.