

Dear West Central Families,

We would like to share that the isolation and exclusion period for students and staff members sick with COVID-19 or considered a close contact has been **reduced to five days by ISBE**. Please note, the ability to return to school after five days is dependent on being symptom free per the revised guidelines.

The Illinois Department of Public Health and Illinois State Board of Education released the [Revised Public Health Guidance for Schools](#). West Central C.U.S.D. #235 will follow this guidance to the best of our ability.

This guidance **does not** change the state of Illinois' mask requirement for anyone inside school buildings at this time. Currently, the Governor's indoor mask mandate for school is still in effect until further notice.

### Revised Exclusion Information

Students/Staff with Covid-19 or determined to be a close contact will be considered for exclusion based on the **following language from ISBE**. This information can also be found in full beginning on Page 21 of the document linked above.

If you test positive for COVID-19 (exclusion)

The guidance requires everyone, regardless of vaccination status, to do the following:

- Stay home for a minimum of five days and a maximum of 10 days after the first day of symptoms or the specimen collection date from positive viral test for asymptomatic persons.
- Continue to wear a mask around others after returning to school.

Individuals may return to school after five days if asymptomatic or if fever-free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours, diarrhea/vomiting have ceased for 24 hours, and other symptoms have improved.

Be aware that your clinical provider may determine that you need a longer period of isolation based on certain underlying clinical conditions such as a weakened immune system.

If you have COVID-19- like symptoms (exclusion)

The guidance requires everyone, regardless of vaccination status, to be excluded from school until:

- Receiving a negative test result that confirms the symptoms are not attributable to COVID-19. **Home test results are not acceptable**; or
- For a minimum of five days and a maximum of 10 days until fever free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours,

diarrhea/vomiting have ceased for 24 hours, and other symptoms have improved.

Individuals must continue to wear a mask around others after returning to school.

Those testing positive should be excluded from school and follow guidance for persons testing positive.

If you live with someone who has COVID-19 – like symptoms (exclusion)

The following people **are considered** close contacts\*, and the guidance may require them to be excluded from school:

- If the ill household member is tested within 24 hours of first notification of symptoms, household members do not need to be sent home unless there is a high suspicion the ill person has COVID-19 (e.g., they are a known close contact, they have lost sense of taste and smell).
- Pending test results, household members can remain in school with consistent use of well-fitting masks both indoors, as required, and outdoors.
- If the ill household member tests positive for COVID-19, then any household members who are unvaccinated or unboosted (if eligible) should be removed from the school immediately.
- If testing does not occur within 24 hours, unvaccinated household members must be excluded.

If you were exposed to someone with COVID-19 and have no COVID-19-like symptoms (exclusion)

The following people **are considered** close contacts\*, and the guidance requires them to be excluded from school:

- Students and staff who are not fully vaccinated (completed primary series).
- Students and staff aged 18 years and older who have received primary COVID-19 vaccine doses but have not received a booster dose when eligible (“unboosted”).

**As an alternative to exclusion for individuals both who are close contacts, schools may permit close contacts without symptoms of COVID-19 who were exposed in the school setting during the school day (excludes extracurricular activities) to remain in school through Test to Stay (page 25).**

Individuals without symptoms of COVID-19 who are **not** participating in Test to Stay:

- Must stay home for five days after the last contact with the person who has COVID-19;
- Must wear a mask around others when returning to school, and remain asymptomatic; and
- Should test for COVID-19 on day five. Those testing positive should be excluded from school and follow guidance for persons testing positive.

The following people **are not** close contacts\* who require exclusion:

- A student who was within 3 to 6 feet in a classroom setting for least 15 minutes with a confirmed or probable student case if both case and contact were consistently masked for the entire exposure period.
- Students and staff aged 18 years and older who have received all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary doses for some immunocompromised people.
- A student aged 5-17 years who completed the primary series of a COVID-19 vaccine.
- An individual on school transportation within 3 to 6 feet if both the confirmed case and the exposed individual were consistently and correctly masked during the entire exposure period and windows were opened (front, middle, and back, or overhead) to allow for good ventilation or HEPA filters were in use during transit.
- An individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days from date of exposure.
- An individual who is solely exposed to a confirmed case while outdoors; however, schools may coordinate with their local health department to determine the necessity of exclusion for higher-risk outdoor exposures.

These individuals must wear a mask around others and may consider testing for COVID-19 on day five, if possible. Those testing positive should be excluded from school and follow guidance for persons testing positive.

Thank you for your continued support of our students and staff. The last two years have been extremely tough for everyone. Please know we are doing our best to follow the guidelines and provide a safe and appropriate learning/working environment for our students and staff.

In Partnership,

Paula Markey