

COVID-19 in Philomath Schools

A Guide for Families and Staff

This guide has been updated to reflect the guidance issued by the Oregon Department of Education January 10, 2022. The most notable updates have been highlighted.

When should students/staff stay home from school?

- If they are sick, even if they do not have COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19
- If they are showing symptoms of COVID-19
- If they test positive for COVID-19, even if they show no symptoms
- If they have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 and the school and Benton County Health Department recommend quarantine
- If a household member tests positive for COVID-19

What does “close contact” mean?

Close contact is when a person has come within about 6 feet of anyone who has COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more, cumulatively, within a 24-hour period.

There is an exception to the “close contact” definition for the **K–12 indoor classroom setting**: Students who were at least 3 feet away from another student with COVID19, where both students correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks and other K–12 school prevention strategies (physical distancing, increased ventilation) were in place, are not considered “close contacts”.

- This exception does not apply to staff or to students who are exposed to infected teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting, even if both parties are masked. Nor does it exempt adults in the classroom who are exposed to an infected student, even if both parties are masked.
- This exception does not apply to exposures that take place in extra-curricular settings.

Who can get vaccinated?

Anyone 5 years or older can be vaccinated against Covid-19. The Pfizer BioNtech vaccine is the only one approved for people younger than 18. For more information on each vaccine and where to get them in Benton County:

<https://www.co.benton.or.us/covid19/page/covid-19-vaccine>

For information on where to find vaccines throughout Oregon:

<https://getvaccinated.oregon.gov/#/locator?lang=en>

Who can get a booster dose?

Anyone 12 or older is eligible for a booster.

What does it mean to be “up to date” with vaccination?

For individuals 18 or older who received Pfizer or Moderna: If the primary series of vaccinations was completed more than 5 months ago, a booster dose is necessary to be “up to date”.

For individuals 18 or older who received Johnson & Johnson: If the single dose was completed more than two months ago, a booster dose is necessary to be “up to date”.

For individuals, ages 5-17: A two-dose series of Pfizer completed for more than 14 days is sufficient to be “up to date”.

How do I know if my student was in close contact with someone at school who has COVID-19?

The school will notify you if your student comes in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. In this case, your student will be asked to quarantine or “Test-to-stay”. The school that your student attends will send you a letter detailing

quarantine dates and how to access distance learning.

In some instances, exposure is minimal and does not meet the criteria for “close contact”. When this happens, the school may send a notification of possible exposure. There is no requirement to quarantine or test in these cases; however, it is still wise to monitor for symptoms.

What do isolation and quarantine mean?

Isolation and quarantine are actions that help stop the spread of COVID-19 and keep people safe.

Isolation

Isolation means that someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 stays home and stays away from other people in their home as much as possible. Generally, isolation will involve:

- Staying at home for 5 days after symptoms appeared, AND remaining home until fever-free for 24 hours (without using fever-reducing medications). If symptoms have not improved after the 5-day isolation period, your student should continue to stay at home.
- Wearing a well-fitting mask on Days 6-10 for all activities, both indoor and outdoor. If the student/staff is unable to wear a mask, they should isolate for 10 days.

Quarantine

Quarantine means keeping “close contacts” of Covid-infected persons away from others outside of their home. A person can spread COVID-19 before they have symptoms. Quarantine reduces the risk of accidentally spreading the virus to other people.

A 10-day quarantine is the safest option to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to others.

However, in accordance with recent CDC recommendations, quarantines for the general

public and those in k-12 settings have been reduced to 5 days.

During quarantine, please monitor your student for cold-like symptoms and gastrointestinal symptoms. If either of these were to develop, please keep your student home. Testing is recommended for anyone in quarantine.

A note regarding household close contacts: the quarantine period starts after the last day of exposure to a Covid + person. If a student/staff has a household member with COVID-19 and that person cannot stay isolated, quarantine for the student/staff will last 10 days. This is because the positive person is most infectious up to the 5th day after their symptoms began. Their 5th day, then, is the last day of exposure for their household members. The 5-day quarantine for “close contact” begins on the following day.

Please consult with Benton County Health Department or the Philomath District Nurse (541-609-6401) for determining the quarantine lengths of students. **Communication with the schools is important and necessary to excuse absences, coordinate distanced learning, and to determine if there are other close contacts who should be notified.**

Exceptions to Quarantine

- Close contacts who are up to date with their vaccinations at the time of their exposure are not required to quarantine. However, a test at 3-5 days after exposure is recommended. Fully immunized close contacts should still monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 for 10 days after exposure. If symptoms develop, they should isolate and seek testing.
- Close contacts who have had a previous confirmed (verified by a positive viral COVID-19 test and/or the Health Department) are not required to quarantine **if the new exposure happened within 90 days**

Modified Quarantine (Test-to-Stay)

This is an option for **exposures that have taken place in indoor K-12 settings** where universal masking was implemented. Unvaccinated students in these settings are able to remain in school if they are asymptomatic and if they complete 2 tests during their quarantine period: a test when the exposure is identified and a test 5 days following the exposure.

The initial test must be a BinaxNow rapid antigen test administered at the school.

This test requires parental consent for all students younger than 15. Please complete a consent form if this is an option you'd like to have available to your student.

[OHA 3560B COVID-19 Minor Testing Consent Form](#)

[OHA 3560E General consent form](#)

Students and staff participating in “test-to-stay” may attend school-related extracurricular activities but must always mask during these activities for 5 days. School-related extracurricular activities are activities affiliated with the school which occur outside of the regular school curriculum and include school-sanctioned sports (but not community or club sports), before and after-school care, clubs, meetings, tutoring, counseling, etc. School-related extracurricular activities may occur on or off the school premises.

Students and staff participating in modified quarantine should observe quarantine outside of school-related activities.

Important points. This option is:

- available for bus exposures where masks are worn correctly and consistently
- available for exposures that occurred during eating and drinking at lunch
- **not** available to students who do not wear masks consistently and correctly
- **not** available for exposures taking place during band and similar activities
- **not** available for exposures taking place during extra-curricular activities
- **not** available for extra-curricular bus exposures

Students and staff exposed outside of indoor K–12 settings are not eligible for Test-to-Stay. For more Test-to-Stay FAQs:

<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/le3898i.pdf>

Testing at schools

Philomath schools offer free on-site COVID-19 testing through OHA’s **diagnostic** testing program. These are “rapid” 15-minute Abbot BinaxNow tests and are available to those experiencing symptoms or those concerned about exposure at school. Any staff member or student (who can provide consent) can access testing through this program.

[OHA 3560B COVID-19 Minor Testing Consent Form](#)

[OHA 3560E General consent form](#)

Philomath schools have also joined a weekly **screening** program that provides free lab-analyzed PCR tests for students and staff. Those registered can self-administer tests at home each Monday--and return them to their school office the following morning. Swabs are analyzed by Willamette Valley Toxicology and results are reported through the user’s Lab Dash account. To sign up for testing, please follow this link:

<https://forms.gle/HPsAx5crSp3KwXB46> Please contact the District Nurse at laura.bryant@philomath.k12.or.us for more information.

For more information on both testing programs—and for access to forms in languages other than English: <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/covid19/Pages/K-12-COVID-19-Testing.aspx>

Testing outside of schools

Willamette Valley Toxicology is drive-up testing center located in the old Baskin Robbins building in downtown Corvallis. Appointment is required. It is necessary to create a Lab Dash account through which to receive results. Tests are simple nasal swabs and are self-administered. To learn more: <https://wvlab.com/>

Good Samaritan Walk-in Clinics: In various locations throughout the Linn/Benton region. Drive-up testing available at some locations. Signing up for MyChart will make the process easier and provide quicker results. To learn more: <https://www.samhealth.org/health-services/coronavirus-information/covid-testing-near-me-covallis-albany-lebanon-newport>

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

People with COVID-19 can have a wide range of symptoms, ranging from mild to severe. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after being exposed to the virus. Students displaying two or more Covid-19 symptoms will be asked to stay home from school.

Common **Omicron** Covid-19 symptoms include:

Fever or chills	Sore throat
Cough	Congestion or runny nose
Fatigue	Nausea or vomiting
Muscle or body aches	Diarrhea
Headache	

If a student/staff has been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, how is quarantine determined?

Quarantine should last for 5 days. A quarantine period happens as follows:

- **Day 0**: Date of exposure, and quarantine period begins
- **Day 1**: First day of quarantine period
- **Day 1-5**: Monitor for symptoms, testing recommended
- **Day 6**: Return to school if symptom-free.

If individuals develop symptoms of COVID-19 during quarantine, we ask that they begin isolating within the home for 10 days, starting from the day they first showed symptoms.

If a student/staff tests positive for COVID-19 and is going to isolate, how is isolation determined?

Isolation should last for 5 days after symptoms started OR for 5 days following a positive test if asymptomatic. Isolation should continue beyond 5 days if fever is still present or if symptoms have not improved. If fever-free for a full 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication), it is OK to return to school. A negative test is not required. An isolation period happens as follows:

- **Day 0:** Symptoms start or positive test, and isolation period begins
- **Day 1:** First day of isolation period
- **Days 2-10:** Continue isolation
- **Day 11 or later:** Return to school if they have been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and other symptoms have improved. A negative test is not required.

My student has been fully vaccinated, do they still need to quarantine?

If your student has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 and is fully vaccinated, they do not need to quarantine. Testing at days 3-5 after exposure is recommended. Vaccinated people who've been exposed should monitor for symptoms for 10 days following exposure. If symptoms develop, please isolate and seek testing.

Should I quarantine if my student is going to quarantine?

If you, or other household members, were not exposed to the person with COVID-19, quarantine is not needed as long as your student remains healthy. If anyone in your household gets sick during the quarantine period, we ask that other household members follow regular quarantine guidance, starting from the day the person who is sick first shows symptoms.

What if my student tests positive for COVID-19 but does not show symptoms?

Since it is possible for someone without symptoms to still spread the virus, we ask that all Covid + student/staff isolate at home and stay away from others in the home for 5 days. Everyone else who lives in the house is considered a “close contact” and should quarantine for 5 days unless vaccinated (or unless they have tested positive for Covid in the previous 90 days).

If my student came into close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but receives a negative test, can they go back to school?

If your student is fully **vaccinated** or has had Covid-19 in the previous 90 days, quarantine is not necessary. If your student is **unvaccinated**, they can either quarantine for 5 days OR Test-to-stay if the contact occurred in school.

What is an example of how quarantine and isolation might go?

- **Day 0:** You are notified that your student is exposed to someone who has COVID-19.
- **Day 1:** Your student begins the quarantine period, staying home for 5 days
- **Days 2 through 4:** Your student is quarantining at home and remains healthy.
- **Day 5:** Your student gets symptoms of COVID-19. Since your student has symptoms, they now switch to isolation and stay away from other people for 5 more days. Testing is strongly advised at this point.
- **Day 10:** Your student is feeling better but continues to isolate at home through this day.
- **Day 11:** If your student’s symptoms are improving and your student no longer has fever, student can return to school and extra-curricular activities. A negative test is not required.

OR...

- **Day 0:** You are notified that your student is exposed to someone who has COVID-19.
- **Day 1:** Your student begins the quarantine period, staying home for 5 days and not leaving the house.
- **Days 2 through 4:** Your student is quarantining at home and remains healthy.
- **Day 6:** Your student returns to school. A negative test is not required, but it is recommended.

For more information on how to talk with your children, visit:

[Oregon Department of Education – How to Talk with Children About the Coronavirus](#)

For more information about school guidance and protocols, visit
Oregon Department of Education's website:

[Ready Schools, Safe Learners Resiliency Framework for the 2021-22 School Year](#)

For more information on current Benton County Covid statistics, visit:

[Benton County COVID-19 Information](#)

*This document has been adapted from **COVID-19 in Schools - Guide for Caregivers, Parents and Families**, produced by Oregon Department of Education and Oregon Health Authority on 8/11/21 and found on Oregon.gov*