

COVID-19 Information and Communication

On July 19, 2021, the Carbondale Area Board of School Directors approved the ARP ESSER Health and Safety Plan 2021-2022. While the face mask order has expired and the attestation order is not applicable anymore, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has given school districts more autonomy in establishing district restrictions.

Carbondale Area School District is committed to informing our families timely and with meaningful information related to COVID-19.

Case Report: Families, staff, and/or the Department of Health (DOH) should notify the District of any confirmed/presumed positive COVID-19 test results of any individual who was present in our schools/facilities. When a positive case is reported from anyone other than the DOH, the District will contact the DOH to confirm/share that information.

Contact Tracing: Our school nurses serve in the capacity of contract tracers. The District will assist the DOH in contacting those identified who have been in close contact to provide advice and guidance on how to quarantine and monitor symptoms.

- Our staff will provide a list of individuals who were considered to be in close contact and may have been exposed to the confirmed/presumed positive case.
- Per the CDC, close contact is determined by time (at least 15 minutes) and distance (within three-six feet) with OR without wearing a face mask.

Notifications: The District will notify families and staff of those attending the impacted building or activity.

- A phone call will be made from school staff to families of those determined to be close contacts. Families and staff may also be notified by the DOH.
- The school will notify all parents and staff of a confirmed/presumed positive case by email, text, and post to the school's website under "CASD COVID-19 REPORT". School-wide communication of positive cases have been limited to those that have had a direct impact on building staff and students.
- Correspondence to families and staff will include additional health/safety information that is relevant to the situation and/or recommended by the DOH.

Strict confidentiality will be maintained for individuals who have tested positive. The District WILL NOT release the name or any identifying information associated with the confirmed positive COVID-19 case in compliance with state and federal laws related to privacy of healthcare information and privacy of student and employee records/information.

FAQ

Q: What information is available regarding vaccinations for students?

The Vaccine for Children Program (VFC) provides vaccinations to children who do not have health insurance or children who are insured but the insurance does not cover immunizations (underinsured). Information regarding the program can be found [here](#).

Q: What does quarantine mean?

Quarantine means separating people who were exposed to a sick person away from others. Because someone can spread COVID-19 before they have symptoms, quarantine stops them from accidentally spreading the virus to other healthy people; however, it is important to note that not all who are quarantined have or will have COVID-19.

Q: How will my child complete school work if they are quarantined?

Students who are quarantined as a result of COVID-19 and feel well enough to complete school work, should contact their teacher for assignments.

Q: What does a quarantine involve?

Per the CDC, “Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department.”

Below is the most up-to-date information on Quarantine Guidelines for fully vaccinated and not fully vaccinated individuals. *Please note that the most protective recommended quarantine period remains at 14-days after the date of last exposure (Day 0) to a person who is infectious with SARS-CoV-2.* However, the CDC has provided options for reduced quarantine which balances the reduced burden to the individual under quarantine against a small possibility of increasing the spread of the virus.

The following are options to reduce the 14-day quarantine:

- Quarantine can end after Day 10 without testing and if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring. However, it is recommended that symptom monitoring continue through Day 14.
- If diagnostic testing resources are sufficient and available, quarantine can end after Day 7 if a diagnostic specimen (i.e., RT-PCR or antigen) tests negative and if no symptoms were reported during daily monitoring. The specimen must be collected and tested within 48 hours before the time of planned.

In order to discontinue quarantine after Day 7, specimens must be collected on or after Day 5. Specimens collected prior to this date will not be sufficient to allow quarantine to end early. Either RT-PCR or antigen tests would be acceptable testing methods for discontinuation of quarantine.

Persons can discontinue quarantine at these time points only if the following criteria are also met:

- No clinical evidence of COVID-19 has been elicited by daily symptom monitoring during the entirety of quarantine up to the time at which quarantine is discontinued; and,
- Daily symptom monitoring continues through quarantine Day 14; and,
- Persons need to adhere strictly through Day 14 after exposure to all recommended nonpharmaceutical interventions (e.g., masking, physical distancing). o If any symptoms develop, they should immediately self-isolate and contact the DOH at 1-877-PA-HEALTH, their local health department, or their healthcare provider to report this change in clinical status.

Q: What activities should my child avoid during quarantine?

Your child should remain home during quarantine. Your child will not be permitted to attend in-person school/vo-tech, sports or extra-curricular activities. In addition, your child should not engage in activities with friends and family, attend youth sporting activities, community events, social activities, or report to work.

Q: Does a quarantine mean my child needs tested for COVID-19?

Per the Department of Health, “regardless of age, if a patient is identified as being a close contact of a COVID-19 case, it is strongly recommended that they be tested for SARS-CoV-2 at least 2-3 days after the exposure, regardless of the presence of symptoms.”

Q: Can we shorten my child's quarantine from 14 days to 10 days if they are not showing and have not shown any symptoms?

The CDC and DOH now provide guidance on shortening quarantine periods to 7-10 days. It is important to note that although periods of quarantine may be reduced, the CDC and PA DOH recommend individuals who have been exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual monitor their symptoms for the full 14 days after their last exposure. See “What does quarantine involve?” listed above.

Q: What should I do if my child develops symptoms?

Monitor your child for COVID symptoms throughout their quarantine period. If your child begins to develop symptoms, contact their health care provider for guidance. At this point the DOH would consider your child a probable case of COVID-19. Please contact your child’s school nurse if your child develops symptoms. The nurse will provide directions on important next steps.

Q: Does the rest of my family have to quarantine because my child has to quarantine?

No, unless additional family members have been identified as a close contact, they are not required to quarantine. Please continue to use the COVID-19 screening tool to assess other family members for signs of illness.