



## **St. Lawrence County Public Health Department**

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### **COVID-19 COVID-19 FAQs for Schools Prek-12th Grade**

#### **Q1: When and how should we report positive COVID-19 cases to St. Lawrence County Public Health Department (SLCPHD)?**

**A:** Immediately notify SLCPHD if a student, faculty or staff member tests positive for COVID-19:

- 315-386-2325 (weekday hours)
- 315-454-2363 (evening and weekend hours)

#### **Q2. Are schools responsible for contact tracing for students, faculty and staff?**

**A.** While SLCPHD has the primary responsibility for contact tracing, effective contact tracing is a joint collaborative effort - SLCPHD will need the assistance of schools in providing staff and student lists and schedules and other information to identify exposed individuals, arrange for testing, etc.

#### **Q3. Will contact tracers release the name of the positive individual to their contacts?**

**A.** No. Contact tracers will tell potentially infected persons that they were exposed – they will not disclose the identity of the person to whom they were exposed.

#### **Q4. How long will contacts to positive COVID-19 cases be required to quarantine?**

**A.** Individuals who are exposed to someone with COVID-19 will be required to quarantine for 14 days *from the day they were last exposed*. Please note that a negative test does not release an individual from quarantine.

#### **Q5. What resources will an isolating or quarantined person require?**

**A.** A person in isolation or quarantine will need access to a private room and a private bathroom. Individuals will also need access to food, medications and other essential items that will allow them to remain in isolation/quarantine. People who need assistance during quarantine or isolation can call 315-229-3407.

#### **Q6. When should an exposed individual get tested for COVID-19?**

**A.** Testing should be conducted approximately 5 days after exposure. Exposed individuals must remain on quarantine until being tested and must immediately return to quarantine following such testing. If a person tests positive, they will be placed in isolation (for a period determined by the SLCPHD). Even if the test is negative, the individual must continue to quarantine for the full 14 days.

**Q7. Where can students, faculty and staff get tested for COVID-19?**

**A.** Hospitals in St. Lawrence County provide testing **by appointment only**. Please call ahead. Testing site contact information is provided below:

Claxton Hepburn Medical Center: 315-713-6655 Ogdensburg, NY 7a-3p weekdays

Clifton Fine Hospital: 315-848-8049 Star Lake, NY

St. Lawrence Health System: <https://www.stlawrencehealthsystem.org/covid-19/testing-centers>

315-261-6240 Canton, Gouverneur, Massena, and Potsdam 7a-3p weekdays

315-261-5525 CPH Potsdam Urgent Care 3p-8p weekdays, 8a-8p weekends

Students, faculty and staff can also call the NYS COVID-19 hotline at 1-888-364-3065 for assistance locating a testing site.

**Q8. Is there a charge for COVID-19 tests conducted at state-run facilities?**

**A.** Insurance is requested at all testing sites. There is a no cost option for those without insurance. For questions about coverage, please inquire when calling to make an appointment.

**Q9. When can a person who has tested positive return to school? Is it the same process for students, faculty and staff?**

**A.** If the individual who tested positive has 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 clearance criteria for release from isolation are:

- It's been at least 10 days since the individual first started experiencing symptoms; AND
- The individual hasn't had a fever in at least 3 days, without taking fever-reducing medication (such as Tylenol); AND
- Any shortness of breath/coughing/difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell has improved.

If the individual who tested positive is asymptomatic the clearance criteria are:

- It's been at least 10 days since the person's first positive COVID-19 test was collected; AND
- The individual hasn't had any subsequent illness.

**Q10. Can we assume that students with antibodies are safe from contracting COVID-19?**

**A.** No, we do not have enough information about whether antibodies protect individuals from re-infection and how long antibodies may provide protection. Antibody tests also CANNOT diagnose if an individual currently has active infectious COVID-19. A positive result can mean you had infection with COVID-19 in the past. A different test would be needed to determine active infection.

**Q11. Are rapid tests (Antigen or Molecular) reliable?**

**A.** There are 2 different types of rapid tests. **Rapid Molecular Tests** (eg., Abbott ID-now) are highly accurate AND rapid (when used as directed, no viral transport media). They do not need to be repeated if negative, though any result should be interpreted in the clinical context and a

negative test in a person with concerning symptoms should be repeated. **Rapid Antigen Tests** (Quidel, BD) are fast, cheap and have the highest rate of false negatives. They should not be used in individuals without symptoms. Negative tests should be repeated with a more accurate test, Molecular or PCR (if high clinical suspicion). Positive tests are considered to be accurate, although there are increasing reports of “false positives”. Please see the attached FDA Coronavirus Testing Basics factsheet.

**Q12. Do students coming back from vacation from states on Governor Cuomo’s travel advisory need to quarantine?**

**A.** Yes, students who are coming to New York from any of the states on the travel advisory need to quarantine for 14 days. The most up-to-date list of states is available here.

(<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-traveladvisory#restricted-states>)

**Q13. What qualifies as an exposure to COVID-19?**

**A.** Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of a person displaying symptoms of or testing positive for COVID-19 for 10 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. SLCPHD will determine if a proximate contact should be under quarantine.