



A Union of Professionals

# Summary of Updated **CDC COVID-19 Guidance** on **Quarantine and Isolation** for **K-12 Personnel and Students, Healthcare Personnel and the General Population**

January 6, 2022

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently updated guidance on quarantine and isolation, but the guidance for K-12 staff and students and for healthcare workers differs from the recommendations for the general public. The CDC has not updated guidance for staff in congregate settings. These employers may refer to the healthcare guidance. (The CDC guidance is subject to change, and we will update this summary as needed.)

The AFT strongly believes that it's important to test negative for COVID-19 before ending isolation. For people who go to work, it is important to wear an **N95** or **KN95** respirator—a tightly fitting, scientifically certified mask. They are now plentiful.

CDC Isolation Guidance: General Population		
If you have been <b>EXPOSED</b>	<p><b>If you are vaccinated AND boosted OR had the primary vaccine series within the past six months:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days; AND</li> <li>• Optional to test on Day 5 (if available)</li> </ul>	<p><b>If you are vaccinated but NOT boosted OR you are unvaccinated:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay home for five days AND wear a well-fitting mask around others for five more days, OR</li> <li>• Wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days (this is less preferable)</li> <li>• Optional to test on Day 5 (if available)</li> </ul>
If you have been <b>INFECTED</b> (with or without symptoms)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolate at home for five days; avoid contact with household members and pets. Mask if you are around others.</li> <li>• Optional to test on Day 5 if fever-free without medications for at least 24 hours and symptoms have improved.</li> <li>• If you have no symptoms or symptoms are resolving, and you have no fever, you can leave your home, mask around others for five <i>more</i> days.</li> </ul> <p>Guidance applies to all regardless of vaccination status.</p>	
<a href="#">COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation   CDC</a>		

Find these resources and more at [www.aft.org/coronavirus](http://www.aft.org/coronavirus)

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of 1.7 million professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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## CDC Isolation Guidance: K-12 School Staff and Students

<p>If you have been <b>INFECTED</b></p>	<p><b>If you have no symptoms:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolate for at least five days.</li> <li>• If no symptoms develop by Day 5, you can end isolation. Wear a mask and avoid immunocompromised people until Day 10.</li> <li>• If you develop symptoms, isolate for another five days.</li> </ul>	<p><b>If you have symptoms:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolation can end on Day 5 if fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and symptoms are improving.</li> <li>• Wear a well-fitting mask and avoid immunocompromised people for 10 days.</li> </ul>
<p>If you have been <b>EXPOSED</b></p>	<p><b>Quarantine if you are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 or older and vaccinated, BUT NOT boosted, or</li> <li>• NOT vaccinated</li> </ul>	<p><b>You do not have to quarantine if you:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are 18 or older and vaccinated AND boosted</li> <li>• Are ages 5 to 17 and have had two vaccines</li> <li>• Tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days</li> </ul>
	<p>Stay home and away from others for five days. Wear a well-fitting mask around others.</p> <p>Monitor for symptoms for 10 days. Get tested if symptoms develop.</p> <p>Test on Day 5 if possible.</p> <p>If symptom-free on Day 5, but no test is available, quarantine can end, but only with masking and avoiding immunocompromised people.</p> <p>If people cannot quarantine, they must mask for 10 days. If they cannot mask, they must quarantine for 10 days.</p> <p>Some students and staff who are not boosted or fully vaccinated may avoid quarantine if the school implements <b>Test to Stay</b>, which includes rigorous contact tracing and testing at least twice in a seven-day period (on the day of notification and between Day 5 and 7, if not daily).</p>	<p>Wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days.</p> <p>Get tested on Day 5 unless you had tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days.</p> <p>Monitor for symptoms for 10 days.</p>

- The CDC recommends universal masking for all staff, visitors and all students age 2 and above.
- Schools should ensure people ending isolation or quarantine on Day 5 have a place to eat while unmasked during Days 6 through 10.
- The CDC encourages schools to use screening testing and testing people who develop symptoms. Staff, students, and parents/guardians must provide consent.
- Schools that implement test-to-stay protocols must be able to conduct rigorous contact tracing and have the staff and resources to conduct additional testing. Testing must be done at least when exposure is determined and on Day 5 through Day 7. Testing can be done more frequently, such as daily.

[Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools | CDC](#)  
[What You Should Know About COVID-19 Testing in Schools | CDC](#)  
[Overview of COVID-19 Quarantine for K-12 Schools | CDC](#)  
[Overview of COVID-19 Isolation for K-12 Schools | COVID-19 | CDC](#)

## CDC Guidance: Healthcare Personnel (HCP)

### Work Restrictions for HCP With SARS-CoV-2 Infection and Exposures

HCP are considered “boosted” if they have received all COVID-19 vaccine doses, including a booster dose, as recommended by CDC. HCP are considered “vaccinated” or “unvaccinated” if they have NOT received all COVID-19 vaccine doses, including a booster dose, as recommended by CDC.

For more details, including recommendations for healthcare personnel who are immunocompromised, refer to Interim Guidance for Managing Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure to SARS-CoV-2 (conventional standards) and Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages (contingency and crisis standards).

#### Work Restrictions for HCP With SARS-CoV-2 Infection

Vaccination Status	Conventional	Contingency	Crisis
Boosted, Vaccinated, or Unvaccinated	10 days OR 7 days with negative test <sup>†</sup> , if asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic (with improving symptoms)	5 days with/without negative test, if asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic (with improving symptoms)	No work restriction, with prioritization considerations (e.g., asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic)

#### Work Restrictions for Asymptomatic HCP with Exposures

Vaccination Status	Conventional	Contingency	Crisis
Boosted	No work restrictions, with negative test on days 2 <sup>‡</sup> and 5-7	No work restrictions	No work restrictions
Vaccinated or Unvaccinated, even if within 90 days of prior infection	10 days OR 7 days with negative test	No work restriction with negative tests on days 1 <sup>‡</sup> , 2, 3, & 5-7	No work restrictions (test if possible)

[Interim Guidance for Managing Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure to SARS-CoV-2 | CDC](#)

**†Negative test result within 48 hours before returning to work**

**‡For calculating day of test: 1) for those with infection consider day of symptom onset (or first positive test if asymptomatic) as day 0; 2) for those with exposure consider day of exposure as day 0**

- The CDC continues to use a descending scale (conventional, contingency and crisis) to describe conditions within healthcare facilities and to allow employers to recall exposed and infected workers if employers determine these workers are needed for staffing. Even symptomatic healthcare workers can be required to work in crisis situations.
- Healthcare workers with severe to critical illness who are not moderately to severely immunocompromised can return in 20 days if symptoms have improved and they have been free of fever without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours. Workers who are moderately to severely immunocompromised may be infectious past 20 days. Testing and consulting with an infectious disease specialist is recommended for them.
- The CDC advises no work restrictions for exposed asymptomatic workers who have been vaccinated and boosted. Testing is recommended a day after exposure and if negative, again five to seven days after exposure, but testing is not advised during contingency and crisis situations.
- Exposed workers who are not vaccinated and boosted can be excluded for seven days during conventional care situations but can be recalled in times of contingency and crisis care.
- The CDC now says that a respirator is needed to prevent higher-risk exposures. An exposure is higher risk if the patient was not wearing source control and the worker was not protected by a respirator and eye protection when in prolonged close contact. The exposure is not considered high risk if the patient was wearing a face mask or cloth covering and the worker was wearing a mask instead of a respirator.