



State of New York County of Broome Government Offices

Broome County Health Department

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CONTACT TRACING FAQ

Valid as of August 14, 2020. As updates and changes occur we will continue to update this document.

Definitions:

1. Close Contact – Being within six (6) feet for 10 or more minutes of the positive individual. Wearing a mask is not a mitigating factor in exposure.
2. Proximate Contact – Someone who has shared an enclosed space such as a classroom, office, or bus with a positive individual. Wearing a mask is not a mitigating factor in exposure.
3. Self-Quarantine – A preventative quarantine pending COVID-19 testing or results.
4. Isolation Order – A legal order made by the Broome County Health Department to a person with a lab confirmed positive test result for COVID-19. Isolation is required for at least 10 days from onset of symptoms or sample collection date. The person also needs to be fever free for 72 hours and generally feeling better.
5. Quarantine Order - A legal order made by the Broome County Health Department to a person with exposure to another person who is lab confirmed positive for COVID-19. A quarantine order will be valid for 14 days regardless of symptoms. A negative COVID-19 test will not excuse a person from a Quarantine Order
6. Contact Tracing – A fundamental public health activity to identify people (contacts) who may be infected from an exposure to a communicable disease. The health department works with patients (symptomatic and asymptomatic) who have a communicable disease to determine other people that may be exposed. This process prevents further transmission of the communicable disease by separating exposed people from the general public.
7. Infectious Period –Used specifically with COVID-19, the infectious period begins 2 days prior to the start of COVID-19 symptoms, or 2 days prior to the collection of the test. The period goes until the person’s isolation is complete.
8. School District Liaison – An employee specifically assigned by the Director of the Health Department to work with a school district as their main point of contact.

The Broome County Health Department (hereinafter “Health Department”) recognizes the unique challenges that school districts face when reopening schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Health Department will work very closely with school districts to mitigate,

monitor, case investigate, contact trace, and reduce the spread of COVID-19 among our school community.

Notification

The school district may be notified of a positive COVID-19 case from a variety of sources. Depending on the healthcare evaluation and testing option chosen by the family it is possible that the family may notify the school district of a positive result before this result has been verified by the Health Department. If a school district is notified of a positive COVID-19 result, notification must be made to the School District Liaison immediately. If the Health Department knows of a verified case of COVID-19 they will contact the School District for further follow-up. School Districts should consider “after-hours” contact phone numbers and staff assignments as a positive test result could be received by a patient or family 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Contact Tracing

Every school district will play an important role in the contact tracing program. Period, meeting or daily attendance is crucial in the actual determination of close and proximate contact of a COVID-19 positive student or staff member. It is imperative that school districts maintain accurate attendance records so we can accurately quarantine only those students or staff members who had an actual close and/or proximate contact. While doing contact tracing we will need the following information regarding all close and proximate contacts: Legal Name, DOB, address, Parent/Guardian Name (if contact was a student), and contact phone number. Your School District Liaison will notify you the best way to provide this information to the Health Department. School Districts are also urged to use classrooms for breakfast and lunch. Where large room settings are used for breakfast and lunch it is recommended that students are assigned to the same table with the same students every day, if you cannot assign seating. Opportunities for students to be outside in fresh air should be maximized whenever possible. Contact Tracing in large room situations will vary depending on square footage of the area, number of students present, distance between students, and exposure time.

Quarantine Classroom/Cohort

The Health Department recognizes that there are many variables when talking about quarantining students. During contact tracing we will make every effort to determine any person that has come in close or proximate contact to the COVID-19 positive person. Listed below are some situations we anticipate.

Single Classroom / Cohort (Single Teacher / Multiple Teachers)

All students and staff members in proximate contact with the COVID-19 positive person are considered a contact for quarantine. This includes teachers who may have pushed in for specials, special education, or supervision. Everyone is considered a quarantined contact even if they maintained six feet of social distancing and were wearing a mask. The Health Department will also work to identify any student or staff member who was within six feet of the COVID-19

positive person for 10 or more minutes as a close contact. The close contacts will also be placed on a mandatory 14-day quarantine.

Multiple Classrooms / Cohorts (Multiple Teachers)

All students and staff members in proximate contact with a COVID-19 positive person are considered a contact for quarantine. Every case will be a little different and the Health Department recommends that school districts use large square foot areas and outside areas whenever possible. Large square foot areas may have different exposure risks as students can be more separated more. Consideration is also given to the type of activity that occurs in these large square areas. For instance, physical education, music ensembles, and cafeterias may have different thresholds for quarantines. The Health Department contact tracing team will need any special situations that occurred throughout the student's day. The Health Department will also work to identify any student or staff member who was within six feet of the COVID-19 positive person for 10 or more minutes as a close contact. The close contacts will also be placed on a mandatory 14-day quarantine.

Tardy / Late Arrival / Early Departure

If the student was tardy to school or was excused early, please also indicate the arrival and dismissal time if it did not fall within the normal school schedule.

Off-Site Education / Learning Experiences / Work Experiences

During contact tracing, please indicate any student who is scheduled to attend an Off-Site Education Program / Learning Experience / Work Experience. The Health Department acknowledges that not all students attend their home school district all day every day. It is important for our contact tracing team to identify all persons that the COVID-19 positive person may have had contact with. These programs include but are not limited to: All day BOCES programs, BOCES CTE, PTECH, New Visions, Work Study Internship Programs, Greater Binghamton ADT, Binghamton University, Children's Home Day Treatment Program etc.

Afterschool activities / School Sports Programs

Every attempt will be made during the contact tracing process to determine afterschool activities and school sports programs that the school district may hold during the COVID-19 Pandemic. If an afterschool activity or school sports program is identified, the Health Department will need assistance in identifying students and staff members involved in these programs who were present during the infectious period.

Community Contacts

During contact tracing the Health Department may identify persons who had close or proximate exposure to the COVID-19 positive person. The Health Department may ask the school district to assist in identifying these individuals that have ties to an individual school district even if the school district does not identify them as someone who may have had close or proximate contact

to the COVID-19 person.

Exclusion Lists

The Health Department is currently working with our legal team to develop a protocol to notify individual school districts of individuals who are quarantined.

Transportation

We strongly recommend that school districts use assigned seating on a school bus to limit the total number of students that could be considered close and/or proximate contacts. School districts must only include students who were assigned and actually rode the bus on the day(s) in question in their contact tracing information. Attendance verification sheets will be necessary in identification of those students who were present during the infectious period. It is also helpful to know the exposure time that individual students had to the COVID-19 positive person. For example, if a student was on the bus only 5 minutes they would not be included in the contact tracing as a close or proximate contact. If the student did not social distance and shared the same seat on the bus for over 10 minutes that student would be considered a close contact and would have to quarantine for 14 days. The Health Department also recommends that transportation staff report to their supervisor upon their arrival and departure at work and spend the rest of the time on their bus to limit any possible congregation of transportation staff in common areas to reduce the exposure risk if a transportation staff member tests positive for COVID-19. If a bus driver or monitor tests positive for COVID-19 the Health Department will need the contact information of all students and staff members that person has had close or proximate contact with within the infectious period.

Visitors / Vendors / Non-regular Staff

A log should be kept of all visitors / vendors / and non-regular staff who are on your campus or in your buildings during the day. The log should include their name, reason for visiting, company they represent, their location in the building, and the reason they were in the building. The Health Department strongly urges that all school districts keep visitors / vendors / non-regular staff to a minimum. If possible, schedule any work for times when students and staff are not present. The contact tracing team will need this information as well as the time they arrived, and the time they departed.

Staff Interaction

The Health Department recommends that whenever possible staff members interact with students at a distance greater than 6 feet. We do realize that some interactions are necessary during the school day and fully understand that there is a significant Social-Emotional Component to the COVID-19 Pandemic. If staff members need to interact with students, the Health Department recommends that a staff member's first interaction is at a distance of greater than 6 feet and the student is assessed for COVID-19 symptoms. If possible, a temperature is also obtained to verify that the student's or staff member's temperature is under 100F. Any student who is experiencing symptoms should directly go to the screening area at the nurse's office.