

## Important reminder re: isolation and quarantine guidance for school settings

ECPH has received several calls from parents asking for clarification of **CDC's revised guidance for COVID-19 prevention, including isolation and quarantine in school settings**. Specifically, there is confusion surrounding when, and under what conditions a child (or faculty or staff member) can return to school after COVID-19 infection or exposure. It is important to recognize that **the revised guidance is contingent upon the presence of multiple layers of strategies within the learning environment aimed at mitigating transmission of the COVID-19 virus**. Per CDC, this includes the following recommendations:

- universal indoor masking by all students (ages 2 years and older), staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status
- maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to reduce transmission risk
- symptom screening
- testing for COVID-19 infection
- enhanced ventilation
- handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- staying home when sick
- contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation
- regular cleaning and disinfection of learning environments.

The revised guidance emphasizes implementing layered prevention strategies to protect students, teachers, staff, visitors, and other members of their households and support in-person learning. **In the absence of these layers of protection, or adherence to them at levels sufficient to mitigate disease transmission, it is not recommended that students return to in-person learning prior to completion of the 10-day isolation or quarantine.** Similarly, it is not recommended that faculty or staff return to work prior to completion of the 10-day isolation or quarantine. Should either choose to do so, **appropriate precautions should be taken until Day 10. This includes wearing a well-fitted mask** any time you are around others inside your school or in public, avoiding travel, and avoiding being around people who are at high risk for infection.

It is also important to note that the **guidance provided by the CDC is just that - guidance**. While ECPH defers to these recommendations and will continue to communicate the specifics and intent of the guidance, we also understand and appreciate that in many instances, there is no clear-cut or easy resolution to a student's specific situation. ECPH further recognizes that all schools are currently experiencing myriad staffing and instructional challenges, and fully supports maintaining in-person learning. We are therefore deferring to the respective school districts to implement and apply the recommendations in a manner that is consistent with promoting and maintaining a safe learning and work environment for all. We are here to support schools and communities with COVID-19 testing and vaccination resources, and communication of timely, accurate information.