

# COVID-19 Decision Trees for K-12 Schools

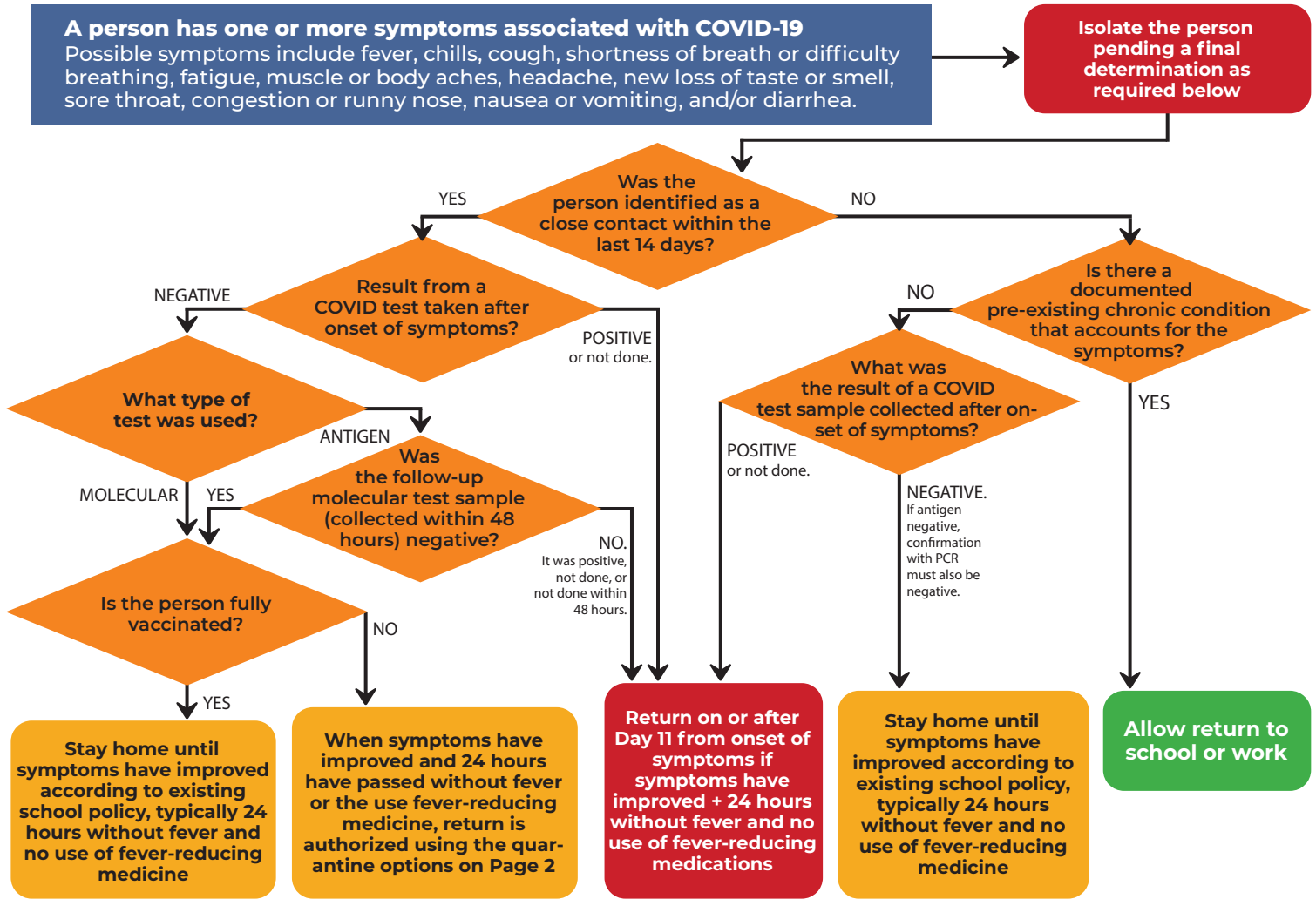
November 5, 2021



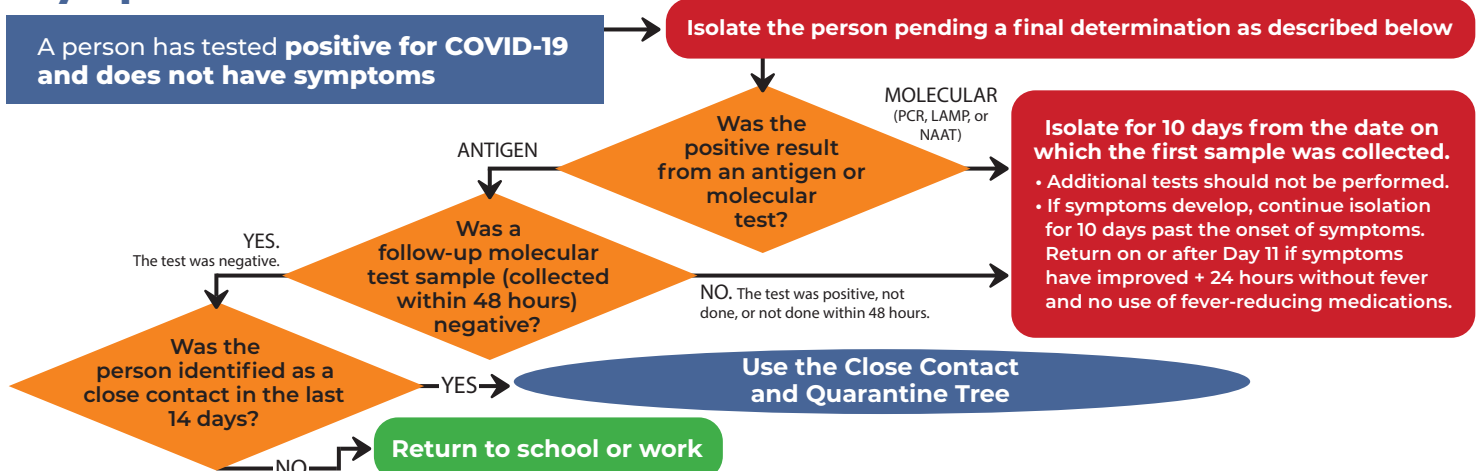
## If the person...

- Has **symptoms**, use the **Symptom and Isolation Tree**
- Has **tested positive** and **does not have symptoms**, use the **Asymptomatic Positive Tree**
- Is identified as a **close contact** and **does not have symptoms**, use the **Close Contact and Quarantine Tree**

## Symptom and Isolation Tree

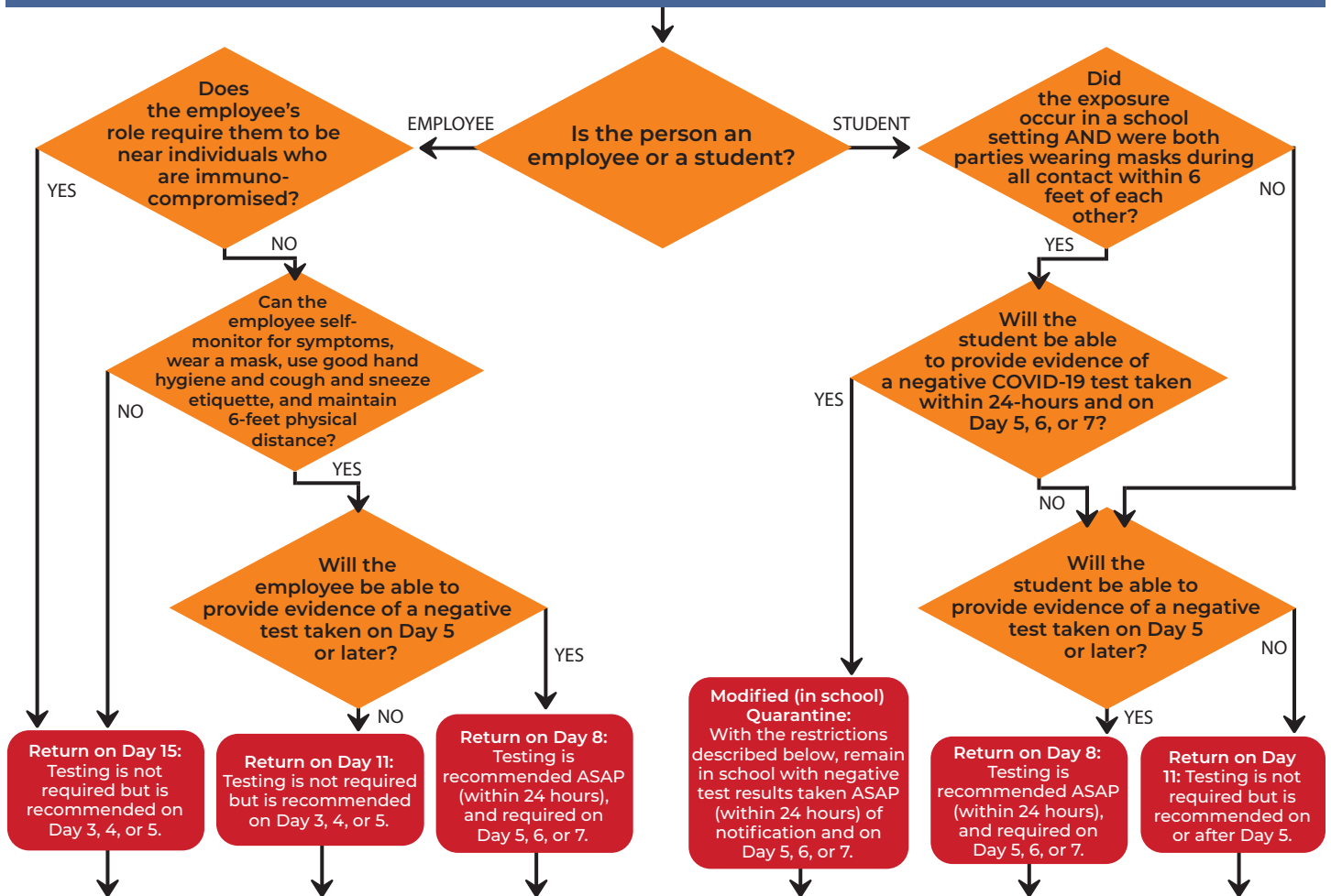


## Asymptomatic Positive Tree



# Close Contact and Quarantine Tree

A person who is not fully vaccinated or is not within 90 days of a lab-confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, has been identified as having been in close contact with a person who is known to have COVID-19



**If the person cannot or will not follow the requirements listed below, quarantine for 14 days (return Day 15) is required.**

## Quarantine Requirements

- **Modified (in-school) Quarantine:** This option may only be used by student close contacts exposed in a setting supervised by school staff, when the COVID-19-positive person and student close contact were both wearing masks during all contacts with each other within 6 feet. To remain in school the student must test within 24 hours of notification, and on day 5, 6, or 7. Rapid result (antigen) testing is recommended. The student may continue to participate in expanded learning or child care programs offered on the school campus, but must quarantine at home from all other before-school, after-school, and weekend activities. Activities may resume on or after Day 8 with evidence of a negative test sample collected on or after Day 5. (See FAQ answer #7).
- **Return on Day 8:** It is recommended that the student or employee close contact test ASAP. Return on Day 8 is authorized with evidence that a diagnostic specimen collected on or after Day 5 is negative.
- **Return on Day 11:** Allows a student or employee to return on Day 11. Testing is recommended on Day 3, 4, or 5, but not required.
- **If symptoms develop or a positive test result occurs** during quarantine, require isolation at home and consult the Symptom and Isolation or Asymptomatic Positive tree.

## Additional Requirements for Return Before Day 15

- Students and employees must agree to self-monitor for symptoms, wear a face covering over their nose and mouth as required, use good hand hygiene practices, and use good cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Employees must also maintain physical distancing of 6 feet at all times. If these requirements cannot or will not be met, 14-day quarantine is required.
- Accommodations (like changes in the close contact's work, room, seat, or bus assignments) should be made to ensure that close contacts returning before Day 15 will not be near others who are immunocompromised (i.e. solid organ or bone marrow transplant, chemotherapy, similarly reduced ability to fight infections). If these accommodations cannot be made the close contact must quarantine for 14 days.

## Other Notes on Quarantine

- The number of days required for quarantine is counted from the day after the person's last close contact with a person who is contagious with COVID-19. Please see the Frequently Asked Question 1, on page 3, under "isolation" for information on how long people are considered to be contagious.

# COVID Test Types

## Appropriate Test Types:

### Molecular Tests

- Lab-processed PCR or NAAT

### Antigen Tests

- If symptomatic, a negative antigen test requires molecular test (PCR, NAAT) confirmation and individuals should isolate until test results are available.
- If asymptomatic, a positive test requires a confirmation with a molecular test (PCR, NAAT) and individuals should isolate until confirmatory test results are available.
- In most cases, at-home tests cannot be used to satisfy the testing required for quarantine, or for state-mandated testing of employees who have not provided evidence of full vaccination. Tests must be administered by a clinic, lab, or properly trained school employees working under agreement with an ordering physician. At-home testing may only be used for school testing purposes as part of a state-approved pilot, or National Institute of Health-funded research project.

### Onsite Rapid Tests

For people with one or more of the **symptoms** associated with COVID-19:

- A negative result from an antigen must be confirmed by a laboratory-processed test.
- A negative result from a Cue test administered on-site does not require confirmation with a lab-processed test.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the difference between **quarantine** and **isolation**?

**Quarantine:** People who have been identified as having been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 are required to quarantine away from others because they may become infected with COVID-19 from 2 to 14 days following their last contact with a person who has COVID-19.

**Isolation:** People who have one or more of the symptoms associated with COVID-19 are required to isolate away from others while they may be contagious with COVID-19. A person:

- With symptoms is considered to be contagious from 2 days before their symptoms began, to 10 days after.
- Who has tested positive and does not have symptoms is considered contagious from 2 days before the date their first positive test sample was collected until 10 days after, if they remain asymptomatic.
- Who tested positive while they were asymptomatic, and develops symptoms later, is considered contagious from 2 days before the first positive test sample was collected until 10 days after their symptoms began.

### 2. Who is **exempt from quarantine** requirements?

Close contacts who do not have symptoms are not required to quarantine if they provide evidence that they:

- Are fully vaccinated (at least 14 days past their second dose of Pfizer or Moderna, or single dose of J&J) **OR**
- Have recovered from a lab confirmed case of COVID-19 and it has been 90 days or less since the onset of symptoms.

If symptoms do occur, even people who are fully vaccinated, and those who have already had COVID-19 are required to self-isolate immediately and contact their health care provider or San Diego County Public Health Services.

### 3. What are the requirements for **quarantine when a member of a household has COVID-19**?

K-12 workers and students identified as having been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19 are required to quarantine between 7 and 14 days (depending on the option that is available) *from the date of their last contact with a person who is contagious*. (People are considered to be contagious from 2 days before their symptoms began, [or if they remain asymptomatic, the date on which their first positive test sample was collected] to 10 days after.) When a member of a household has COVID-19, all members of the household who are not otherwise exempt from quarantine are required to quarantine at home while the COVID-positive household member is contagious, plus the number of days required for the quarantine option that they're authorized to use. If another member(s) of the household develops COVID-19 during the quarantine period, quarantine for all members of the household who are not exempt must be extended based on the new exposure.

### 4. Can a COVID-positive household member **isolate themselves in a room in their home** to reduce the overall length of quarantine of others who live in the home?

If the COVID-positive person is not able to isolate in a separate residence, the county's [home isolation instructions \(translations\)](#) describe the specific requirements for isolation in a home occupied by others. If the person is able to comply with these instructions, quarantine of close contacts can begin when the COVID-19-positive person begins isolation.

## Frequently Asked Questions, cont.

### 5. Why are some of the CDC's recommendations not included in the decision tree?

While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) makes recommendations, the requirements for California schools are established by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the school's local health jurisdiction. The decision tree is based on the CDPH [K-12 guidance](#) and [related FAQ, K-12 Testing Strategies, Cal/OSHA Emergency Temporary Standards](#), the local [public health orders](#), pertinent executive orders, and answers received directly from the CDPH.

### 6. Are schools required to make modified (in school) quarantine available for their students who meet the criteria for it?

Item 8 of the CDPH school guidance characterizes modified quarantine as a "recommendation for unvaccinated students for exposures when both parties were wearing a mask, as required in K-12 indoor settings." Schools are not required to utilize this option.

### 7. Can students in modified (in school) quarantine participate in before- and after-school expanded learning and childcare programs?

Based on recent information from the Safe Schools for All team and the Community Care Licensing Division, children who are permitted to attend school during modified quarantine may continue to participate in before- and after-school expanded learning programs and child care, as long as those programs are provided on their school campus and activities are similar to those in the regular school day. Students in modified quarantine are required to quarantine at home from all other before-school, after-school, and weekend activities, including but not limited to athletics programs, band/music, dance, cheerleading, drama, clubs, and visiting any settings where non-household members are present. Activities may resume on or after Day 8 with evidence of a negative test sample collected on or after Day 5.

### 8. Do we still need to use PCR tests to confirm discordant antigen results?

A recent revision of the CDPH testing guidance suggested that antigen test results do not need confirmation provided clinical assessment of the person's symptoms was consistent with antigen test results, or modified if there was a "high-risk" exposure. However, the criteria for schools to classify concerning symptoms or high-risk exposures were not provided. The County is attempting to clarify this situation. In the meantime, the County recommends that schools continue to follow the recommendations on testing described in the decision tree.

### 9. What are the requirements if a person tests positive but has no symptoms?

If the person remains asymptomatic, they are required to self-isolate for 10 days past the date on which the positive test was collected. (If the positive result is from an antigen test, a PCR test should be taken within 48 hours to confirm the result.)

If the person develops symptoms, isolation must be extended until 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms.

### 10. Why test on Day 3, 4, or 5 if it isn't required?

The 10-day quarantine option allows close contacts who have remained asymptomatic to return on Day 11 without testing, but a test on day 3, 4, or 5 is recommended (not required), so why do it?

- Because people can transmit the virus at least 2-days before developing symptoms, discovering that you are positive early can prevent many of your friends, classmates, and co-workers from having to quarantine. You also reduce the chance that you may pass the virus on to others.
- If you do test positive, you'll have to self-isolate for 10 days, but once you have recovered you will not be required to quarantine following close contact for 90 days from when your symptoms started.

### 11. Is contact tracing required for students in outdoor settings?

Based on new guidance from the CDPH, schools do not need to identify every encounter when contact tracing in unstructured outdoor settings. Focus on:

- Encounters in indoors and enclosed outdoor spaces (e.g., 3+ sided tents)
- Structured outdoor settings (e.g., PE, athletics, band, before- and after-school programs)
  - ▷ A structured setting is any setting in which an adult is responsible for a roster of students who are specifically assigned to them
- The people the student normally associates with, including time spent within 6 feet in unstructured outdoor settings