



## Washington Department of Health Test to Stay Program

The Washington Department of Health's Test to Stay Program provides school districts an opportunity for a **modified quarantine** for unvaccinated students identified as K-12 close contacts of COVID-19 cases. This program is designed to help reduce exclusion from in-person instruction if all required mitigation measures have been followed and testing is used as a method of screening as outlined below. Schools/Districts may elect to participate in this. In order to do so, the school must have approval from their Local Health Officer via a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).

### Eligibility

The DOH Test to Stay Program and associated **modified quarantine** apply to situations when a student is **exposed to COVID-19 in school**. Students who are exposed outside of school (e.g., household exposure, private sports league exposure, etc.) are not eligible to participate, must quarantine at home, and follow the standard quarantine protocol used by the school district in coordination with their local public health agency.

### Test to Stay Protocol

- Students may continue to attend class in a modified quarantine status for 7 days after exposure, if they:
  - Are tested at least twice\* during the 7 days of quarantine; AND
  - Are asymptomatic; AND
  - Continue to wear a mask; AND
  - Continue to quarantine from (i.e., not participate in) all extracurricular activities at school, including sports, and other activities outside their home (e.g., scouts, music lessons, etc.) for the entirety of their modified quarantine period. This includes group childcare or youth development programs provided before and after school, which should not be attended during modified quarantine.

*\*Testing intervals should be determined under advisement of the LHJ and stated in the MOA.*

- Antigen tests, given the ability to obtain results within minutes and the need to identify positive close contacts and isolate in a timely fashion, should be the preferred testing modality.
- Collection of diagnostic specimens for asymptomatic persons during quarantine may occur in schools, healthcare settings, or other locations supervised by school or healthcare personnel. Specimens may be processed at the point-of-care (POC) or in a laboratory.
- If a student does not test positive for COVID-19 during the modified quarantine, students may resume group child care/youth development attendance and extracurricular and community activities after 7 days have passed since their

exposure but should still continue to monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days after their exposure.

- If a student tests positive for COVID-19 at any time, they must isolate at home and follow DOH isolation guidance.
- Students who opt out of testing are not eligible for the modified quarantine, as described above.
- Fully vaccinated students who meet the definition of close contact and remain asymptomatic are not required to quarantine or participate in the DOH Test to Stay Program. However, they should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure date.
- Fully vaccinated students who meet the definition of close contact and develop symptoms should self-isolate and be tested for COVID-19. See the Responding to Cases or Suspected Cases of COVID-19 section of the [K-12 COVID-19 Requirements for 2021- 2022](#).
- Students who are symptomatic must be evaluated for COVID-19 infection and are not eligible for modified quarantine unless they receive a documented negative viral test after symptom onset. A molecular test is preferred; a negative antigen test or POC molecular test may need to have confirmation with a lab-based PCR test, consistent with [CDC recommendations](#).
- School districts must receive permission from parents/guardians for students to receive school-based testing.
- School districts must coordinate with their LHM and complete a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).
- Schools should work with their coordinators to determine which testing options are available.

## Modified Quarantine

A student who is a close contact of a COVID-19 case may continue to attend school if they participate in the DOH Test to Stay Program, which must be approved by their Local Health Officer. During this modified quarantine, the student must quarantine at home except for attending school classes. Participation in non-classroom school activities, such as extracurricular and community activities, is not permitted, nor is attendance to group childcare or youth development programs. A modified quarantine is not an option for teachers, staff, or other adults.

School districts that do not implement the DOH Test to Stay Program may use the K-12 close contact exception criteria, but they are required to follow the standard quarantine guidance for close contacts (see What to Do if Someone is a Close Contact of Someone with COVID-19 in the [K-12 Requirements for 2021-2022](#)).