



**Quarantine and isolation** are key strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19. This is especially important in the preschool setting where many students are not yet vaccinated. If your child tests positive for COVID-19, has symptoms, or is identified as a close contact of someone who has COVID-19, they should quarantine or isolate as appropriate. This page outlines the difference between quarantine and isolation and provides specific guidelines for each.\*

## **WHAT IS QUARANTINE?**

Quarantine describes when someone who has been exposed to COVID-19 stays home and away from others for the recommended period of time in case they were infected and are contagious. Quarantine becomes isolation if the person later tests positive for COVID-19 or develops symptoms.

### **How long does quarantine last?**

Regardless of vaccination status, students who come in close contact with someone with COVID-19 are required to:

Quarantine at home for at least **5 days after the last date of exposure**,

**AND**

Get tested 3-5 days after the last date of exposure (molecular [PCR/NAAT], antigen, and at-home tests are acceptable; **if the test is positive, the student must isolate – see below**),

**AND**

Wear a well-fitted K95 mask (or equivalent) to preschool for 10 days after the last date of exposure,

**AND**

Continue to watch for symptoms for 10 days after the last date of exposure.

## **WHAT IS ISOLATION?**

Isolation means you stay home and away from others (including household members) for the recommended period of time (see below) to avoid spreading illness. Isolation is for those who have tested positive for COVID-19, or who have symptoms of COVID-19, or who are awaiting test results.

### **How long does isolation last?**

A student who tests positive for COVID-19 is required to isolate at home, regardless of vaccination status. The isolation period is **10 full days from the start of symptoms or the date of positive test**. See “Calculating Your Isolation Period” on the next page for additional information.

The student may return to preschool after 10 full days of isolation if:

They test negative with an antigen or at-home test by day 10,

**AND**

Their symptoms have significantly improved or they are asymptomatic,

**AND**

They have been without a fever for the past 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications,

**AND**

They wear a well-fitted K95 mask (or equivalent) for 5 additional days after returning to preschool.

## Calculating Your Isolation Period

- If you have symptoms, day 0 is your first day of symptoms. Day 1 is the first full day after your symptoms developed.
- If you have not had any symptoms, day 0 is your positive viral test date (the date you were tested). Day 1 is the first full day after the specimen was collected for your positive test.

For further assistance, please see the WA State Department of Health "Isolation and Quarantine Calculator": <https://doh.wa.gov/emergencies/covid-19/isolation-and-quarantine-covid-19/isolation-and-quarantine-calculator>

\*Guidelines have been adapted for the preschool/early childhood setting based on recommendations from:

- Bellevue School District: <https://bsd405.org/services/health/covid-19-health-and-safety/closure-protocols-and-reporting/>
- Washington State Department of Health: <https://doh.wa.gov/emergencies/covid-19/isolation-and-quarantine-covid-19>