COVID-19 FAQ for parents of children in school

How can my family help protect ourselves and our community?

- **Wear a mask** when out in public places or when spending time with people you don't live with.
- **Social distance** by keeping at least six feet between yourself and people who aren't members of your household.
- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water, especially when you get home after being in public.
- **Stay home if you are sick** – even if your illness is mild. Do not send your child to school if they are sick.
- **Get tested** for COVID-19, especially if you have symptoms. COVID-19 diagnostic testing is available to all New Yorkers. To find testing locations, visit: https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you. Check with your insurance provider and the testing site as some locations may charge a fee for testing.

What happens when someone tests positive for COVID-19?

When someone tests positive for COVID-19, the local health department (LHD) where they live is notified of the results. The LHD calls the individual, informs them of their results, and conducts contact tracing to identify people who may have been exposed. The person who tested positive is also put in "isolation" to separate them from healthy people until they are no longer contagious. Isolation is almost always done at the person's home and helps keep additional people from being exposed to the virus. People with mild illness are typically no longer contagious 10 days after their symptoms started. People with more severe illness could be contagious longer than 10 days.

What is contact tracing?

For contact tracing, the LHD works with the individual who tested positive to identify where they went and who they interacted with while they were contagious – this time frame includes the time while they had symptoms and the 48 hours before their symptoms started. For individuals without symptoms, contact tracing goes back 48 hours before they were tested. "Contacts" are people who were likely exposed to the virus by the person who tested positive. People who are identified as contacts are put in "quarantine". Quarantine is almost always done in the person's home.

What happens if someone was at a school while they were contagious?

If someone who tests positive for COVID-19 visited a school while they were contagious, the LHD where the person lives will work closely with the school to figure out what days and times the individual was at the school and which people they may have exposed to the virus. If the person was a student, this would likely include other students and teachers in class with them. The school will notify parents and staff.

Health Department

How will I know if my child has been identified as a contact?

If your child is at school, you will be notified that your child needs to be picked up from school and quarantined. You will receive a call from your local health department or the New York State Contact Tracers. Schuyler County Public Health's number is 607-535-8140, Yates County Public Health's number is 315-536-5160, and the New York State Contact Tracers call from 518-387-9993. Contact tracers will never ask for banking information or social security numbers.

What is quarantine?

Quarantine separates people who were exposed to the virus from people who weren't. People who are in quarantine should not attend school or work and need to stay home for the duration of their quarantine. If possible, they should stay in a separate bedroom and use a separate bathroom from other people in the home. People are released from quarantine once it has been 14 days since they were last exposed to the virus, unless they develop symptoms or test positive. This is because it can take anywhere from 2 to 14 days for someone to get COVID-19 after they are exposed to the virus. Contact tracing and quarantine are some of the most important tools we currently have to contain the spread of the virus. If someone who is already in quarantine does end up getting COVID-19, no one else will have been exposed and the virus can be stopped from spreading further.

What should I expect if my child is in quarantine?

Your local health department or the New York State Contact Tracers will check in with you daily to make sure your child is still feeling well and to ensure your family has any food, prescriptions, or other supplies or assistance needed for your child to stay home the duration of the quarantine. This daily check in can be done by phone call or text message - whichever you prefer. If your child was the only person in the house identified as a contact and officially put in quarantine, no one else in the home is quarantined. This would change if your child did develop COVID-19.