

# NJDOH Guidance Update Brief summary

2/25/2022



# Masks

As of March 7, 2022, the state mandate requiring in school universal masking expire. Individual school districts and school boards will be able to make the determination as to whether universal masking is appropriate for their schools.

Factors that should be considered in the decision to maintain a universal masking policy:

- Ability to maintain **physical distancing**
- Ability to perform **effective contact tracing of cases** and ensure appropriate exclusion of students and staff with COVID-19
- **Vaccination rates** of students and staff
- Consultation with the **local health department** and school district medical personnel

For schools which choose not to have a universal masking policy, NJDOH recommends mask wearing in the following circumstances:

– **During periods of elevated community transmission**

- CALI score of **high (orange)** – strongly consider universal masking for all students and staff, especially if there is difficulty incorporating other layered prevention strategies
- CALI score of **very high (red)** – schools should *require* universal masking for all students and staff

## For schools which choose not to institute a universal masking policy, NJDOH recommends mask wearing in the following circumstances:

### – **During an active outbreak**

- Schools should consult with their local health department as to whether short-term universal masking or masking in affected classrooms should be required to control the outbreak/increase in cases.

### – **After returning from isolation or quarantine**

- Students and staff who return to school during days 6-10 of isolation or quarantine should be *required* to mask.
- If an individual is unable to wear a mask during days 6-10, they should remain at home for the full 10 days.

### – **When illness occurs in school**

- Students or staff who become ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while in school should wear a mask until they leave the premises.

### – **During Test to Stay**

- Students participating in Test to Stay should be *required* to mask.

### – **Masks must be worn by all passengers on buses, including school buses, regardless of vaccination status per CDC's Federal Order.**

## Additional circumstances where mask wearing may be considered:

- Students or staff who are immunocompromised or live with persons at high risk for severe COVID-19 illness should be encouraged to mask
- Students or staff who, for whatever reason, are concerned about disease transmission should be encouraged to mask.
- During moderate (yellow) or higher CALI levels schools may consider implementing masking policies for activities or settings where there is increased risk of transmission.
  - E.g., activities where increased exhalation occurs

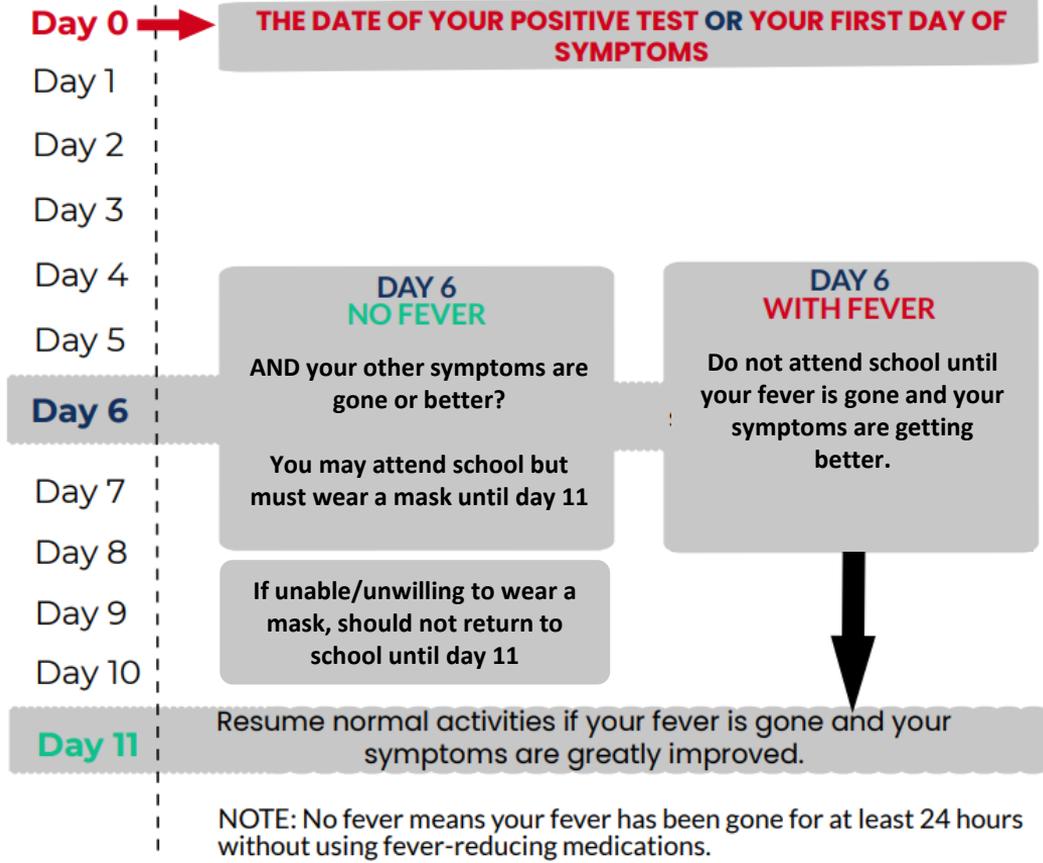
**Reminder:** In general, students or staff do not need to wear masks outdoors, including during outdoor physical education classes or school sports except during days 6-10 after completing a 5-day isolation or quarantine when mask wearing is imperative.

# Isolation: unchanged from January 2022

## STAY HOME FOR 5 DAYS

Start counting on the date of your positive test\*, OR on the first day of symptoms.

If you start out without symptoms, but get symptoms within the 10 day period, begin the 5-day count again. The first day of symptoms is your new Day 0.



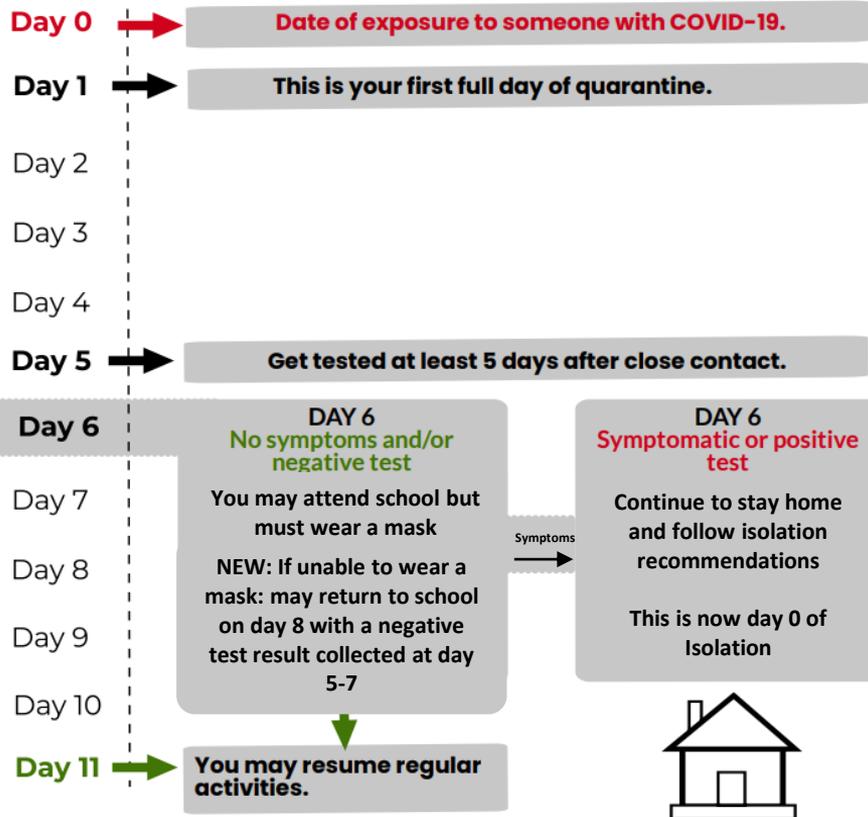
# Quarantine

## Who needs to quarantine?

- Persons  $\geq 12$  years old who completed a primary series of COVID-19 vaccine but have NOT received a booster shot when eligible.
- Persons who have not completed a primary vaccine series.

## Who does not need to quarantine?

- Persons  $\geq 12$  years old who completed a primary series of COVID-19 vaccine AND have received all *recommended* vaccine doses, including boosters.
- Children 5-11 years old who completed their primary series of a COVID-19 vaccine.
- Persons who had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days.



# Contact tracing

- Recommendations for contact tracing in schools have not changed
- School staff should continue to identify school-based contacts of positive COVID-19 cases in their school

**Current K-12 close contact exception:** *In the K–12 indoor classroom setting or a structured outdoor setting where mask use can be observed, the close contact definition **excludes students** who were within **3 to 6 feet of an infected student** if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.*

**NEW:** Without universal masking, schools must be able to identify whether both students were masked before applying the close contact exception.

# Outbreaks

New

- **Schools without a universal masking policy should consider a temporary transition to universal masking or masking in affected classrooms.**
- Schools should consider implementing testing at the classroom, grade, or school level depending on the extent of transmission and structure of the school.
  - Testing should be implemented as soon as possible, ideally within one week of detection of the suspected outbreak.
  - In consultation with the LHD, additional testing may be recommended for outbreak control.
  - Based on resources and local circumstances schools may choose to implement testing for all staff and students regardless of vaccination status.

Unchanged

- Schools may also consider a temporary transition of affected cohorts to remote learning if a high number of cases is preventing timely contact tracing and exclusion
- Decisions to implement testing programs and/or transition cohorts to remote learning should be made by schools based on their individual circumstances in conjunction with LHDs.