

# Protocols to Respond to Students and Staff with Symptom(s) of COVID-19

Child Cares, Camps, PK-12 Schools,  
and Institutes of Higher Education

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For healthcare providers and staff  
overseeing student/employee health

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**RHODE  
ISLAND**

# A probable case of COVID-19 is defined by presence of symptoms

Any ONE of these symptoms present:  
**PROBABLE CASE**

- Cough (new)
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste
- New loss of smell

Any TWO of these symptoms present:  
**PROBABLE CASE**

- Fever or chills
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Sore throat
- Fatigue
- Congestion or runny nose (new)
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

# A COVID-19 diagnostic test is required for all probable cases

Symptoms	COVID-19 diagnostic test required?*
Cough	YES
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	YES
New loss of taste	YES
New loss of smell	YES
Fever (temperature greater than 100.4° or felt feverish to the touch)	<p>YES, if <u>two or more</u> of these symptoms are present</p> <p>NO, if <u>only one</u> of these symptoms is present</p>
Chills	
Muscle or body aches	
Headache	
Sore throat	
Fatigue	
Congestion or runny nose	
Nausea or vomiting	
Diarrhea	

\* If the test is negative, the person can return to work/school/child care when they have been fever free for 24 hours without fever medication and symptoms improved (back to usual health). If the test is positive, person must isolate and can return when CDC/RIDOH symptom-based criteria for ending isolation have been met. The test-based strategy for ending isolation is not recommended.

# Protocol- Symptomatic individual but not a probable case

Situation	Isolation and quarantine protocol	Recommended testing protocol	Requirement to return to school or program
<p><b>Staff or student has symptom(s) of COVID-19 but <u>does not meet</u> the CDC definition of probable case</b></p>	<p>Symptomatic individual is isolated and sent home (or to isolation housing for college students).</p> <p>No quarantine recommended for close contacts.</p>	<p>Advise symptomatic individual to seek medical advice and test if recommended by healthcare provider</p> <p>Some patients with COVID-19 have presented with only one mild symptom or atypical symptoms and patients or providers may prefer to test even when probable case definition is not met</p> <p><i>RIDOH may recommend testing for others in certain situations</i></p>	<p>Attestation that confirms one of the following (parent/guardian attests if a minor):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not tested, has been fever free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medication and symptoms improved (back to usual health).</li> <li>• Tested negative for COVID-19, has been fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and symptoms improved (back to usual health).</li> <li>• Tested positive for COVID-19 and has since met RIDOH guidelines for ending isolation.</li> </ul>

# Protocol- Probable case

Situation	Isolation and quarantine protocol	Recommended testing protocol	Requirement to return to school or program
<p><b>Staff or student is a probable case</b></p>	<p>Symptomatic individual is isolated and sent home (or to isolation housing for college students).</p> <p>Household contacts and roommates must quarantine pending the probable case COVID-19 test result.</p> <p>Quarantine of additional close contacts pending probable case test results may be advised by RIDOH when one or more confirmed cases have occurred in the school or program within the past 14 days.</p>	<p>Advise symptomatic individual to seek medical advice and obtain a COVID-19 diagnostic test.</p> <p><i>RIDOH may recommend testing for others in certain situations.</i></p>	<p>Attestation that confirms one of the following (parent/guardian attests if a minor):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tested negative for COVID-19, has been fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and symptoms improved (back to usual health)</li> <li>• Tested positive for COVID-19 and has since met CDC/RIDOH criteria for ending isolation</li> </ul>

# Protocol- Confirmed case tested positive

Situation	Isolation and quarantine protocol	Recommended testing protocol	Requirement to return
<p><b>Staff or student tests positive</b></p>	<p>Person testing positive is isolated per CDC/RIDOH guidelines</p> <p>Close contacts are quarantined for 14 days since last day of COVID-19 exposure</p>	<p>Close contacts in quarantine should self-monitor for symptoms and seek medical advice and test if recommended by RIDOH or healthcare provider.</p> <p>Close contacts who have tested positive in the past 90 days do not have to quarantine.</p> <p><i>RIDOH may recommend testing of close contacts in certain situations.</i></p>	<p><b>Positive</b> individuals must meet the CDC/RIDOH guidelines for ending isolation: <b>RIDOH recommends the symptom-based strategy for ending isolation. Isolate until:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication <b>and</b></li> <li>• Symptoms have improved <b>and</b></li> <li>• 10 days since symptoms first appeared (20 days if severely immunocompromised)</li> </ul> <p><b>OR time-based approach if asymptomatic when tested positive. Isolate until:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 days since date of specimen collection (20 days if severely immunocompromised)</li> </ul> <p>RIDOH can provide a note for absence</p>

# Protocol- Close contact of a case

Situation	Isolation and quarantine protocol	Recommended testing protocol	Requirement to return
<p><b>Staff or student is a close contact of a confirmed case</b></p> <p>Close contacts who have tested positive in the past 90 days do not have to quarantine</p>	<p>A close contact is quarantined for 14 days after last day of exposure to the confirmed case.</p> <p>If feasible, it is ideal for each close contact to quarantine in a location separate from the symptomatic person and separate from other close contacts.</p> <p>If the close contact remains in the same household, the contact must quarantine throughout the case's isolation period (10 days) and for an additional 14 days. A household contact who has ongoing exposure to the confirmed case is usually quarantined for at least 24 days.</p>	<p>Close contacts in quarantine should self-monitor for symptoms and seek medical advice and test if recommended by RIDOH or healthcare provider.</p> <p>RIDOH may recommend testing of close contacts in certain situations to identify asymptomatic cases.</p> <p>Testing negative is not an alternative to completing the quarantine.</p>	<p>A close contact must meet the CDC/RIDOH guidelines for ending quarantine before returning to school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarantine for 14 days after the <b>last day of exposure</b> to the confirmed case</li> <li>• Remain asymptomatic</li> </ul> <p>RIDOH can provide a note for absence.</p>

# Protocols summary

	Any symptom (not probable case)	Probable Case	Person Tests Positive	Person Tests Negative
Symptomatic Person	Isolate Medical advice Test encouraged If rapid test negative, confirmatory lab-processed test is recommended If not tested/test negative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fever free for 24 hours and</li> <li>Symptoms improved (back to usual health)</li> </ul>	Isolate Medical advice Test required If rapid test negative, confirmatory lab-processed test is recommended	Isolate for 10+ days Symptom-based strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fever free for 24 hours and</li> <li>Symptoms have improved and</li> <li>10 days since symptoms first appeared</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fever free 24 hours and</li> <li>Symptoms improved (back to usual health)</li> </ul>
Return to school/program	Parent/guardian attestation	Parent/guardian attestation <b>with</b> test result	Parent/guardian attestation	Parent/guardian attestation
Close Contacts	No action	No action while waiting for test result Quarantine pending probable case test result may be advised by RIDOH if one or more cases in the school or program within the past 14 days	Quarantine for 14 days from last day of exposure	No action

# When can a student or staff member return after travel?

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- Anyone returning to Rhode Island from a hotspot (state with a COVID-19 positivity rate of higher than 5%) must:
  - Quarantine for 14 days and self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms; **or**
  - Provide proof of a negative result of a COVID-19 test that was taken within 72 hours **before arriving** in Rhode Island and self-monitors for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days after arrival, wear a mask in public, and follow physical distancing guidelines.
- Anyone who gets a test **while quarantining** in Rhode Island and gets a negative test result, can stop quarantining. However, they still need to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days, wear a mask in public, and follow physical distancing guidelines.

# Challenging scenarios

- A symptomatic person not meeting probable case definition is tested. Can the person return to school/program before test results are known?
  - Testing is not required but should be considered for a symptomatic person who does not meet the probable case definition.
  - If tested: when a rapid test is performed and is negative, a confirmatory lab-processed PCR test is recommended.
  - RIDOH recommends that the symptomatic person who is tested not return to school/program until all test results are final.
  - If not tested or tests negative on a lab-processed test, the person may return to class when fever free for 24 hours and symptoms improved (back to usual health)

# Challenging scenarios

- Person meeting the probable case definition will not be tested
  - It is important to notify RIDOH as soon as possible of this situation. RIDOH will counsel the symptomatic person and can facilitate testing.
  - If testing will not occur, RIDOH recommends following the symptom-based strategy for isolation: isolate until fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication, **and** symptoms have improved **and** it is at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared.
  - Implications for quarantine of close contacts will depend on the specific case circumstances. RIDOH will advise.

# Challenging scenarios

- Person meeting the probable case definition is also a close contact of a confirmed case (so, has a high risk for having COVID-19) yet tests negative by rapid test and lab-processed test.
  - When there is a strong clinical suspicion for COVID-19 due to presence of symptoms and known exposure/close contact with a confirmed case without an alternative diagnosis, RIDOH may recommend to treat this as a confirmed case and isolate the case for at least 10 days from symptom onset and quarantine close contacts.
  - RIDOH has experienced such cases and collaborates closes with the impacted program or school to ensure that the plan and rationale is clear to all involved.

# Challenging scenarios

- Person tested positive within the past 90 days and presents with new symptoms
  - There have been no confirmed COVID-19 reinfections within 90 days to date.
  - Persons infected with related coronaviruses appear to become susceptible again at around 90 days after onset of infection.
  - There is a working assumption that those infected with COVID-19 (test positive) are not susceptible to reinfection for 90 days after a positive test.
  - However, for persons who develop new symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the 90 days after the date of initial symptom onset, if an alternative etiology cannot be identified by a provider, then the person may warrant retesting.

# Challenging scenarios

- The information to determine who in a classroom, on a bus, or in a group activity is a close contact of a confirmed case is not available or is unclear
  - A close contact is defined as:
    - Being within six feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes, or
    - Having unprotected direct contact with secretions or excretions of a person with confirmed COVID-19 during the infectious period.
    - Irrespective of use of cloth face coverings (non-HCWs) or plexiglass shields
  - If there is not assigned seating or it is not possible from the case interviews to determine close contact on an individual level, RIDOH will classify all members of the classroom/bus/group as close contacts and recommend quarantine for all.