

Modified Quarantine Requirements

Thomas County

September 29, 2020

This guide specifically addresses requirements around maintaining continuity of learning in the situation where school age children students educated in Thomas County and staff are exposed to COVID-19; namely the modified quarantine requirements for non-household close contacts of a case. What this modified quarantine allows is the ability for all school age students and staff who are exposed continue to physically attend school during their quarantine period. Thomas County realizes extracurricular activities are important to the overall health of our students so we are also allowing for participation in those activities. This guide will be updated to reflect the current activity of the virus in our county and are subject to change at any time to protect the health of Thomas County.

Background:

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by a coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) which spreads primarily through droplets generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose. Studies show that asymptomatic people and people in the pre-symptomatic phase (2-3 days before symptoms begin) can also be a source of infection.

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever and lower respiratory symptoms including coughing, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. However, there are many other symptoms that may be associated with COVID-19 including chills, fatigue, muscle aches or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. The elderly and people with underlying medical problems such as high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, or chronic respiratory conditions, are at a greater risk of serious illness from COVID-19.

Schools are an important part of the infrastructure of communities, as they provide safe, supportive learning environments for students, employ teachers and other staff, and enable parents, guardians, and caregivers to work. The unique and critical role that schools play makes them a priority for opening and remaining open, enabling students to receive both academic instruction and support as well as critical services.

Current Isolation and Quarantine Requirements:

A Person Under Investigation (PUI) is suspected of having COVID-19 disease. A person who is being tested for COVID-19 is required to be in isolation until test results are received. Possible outcomes of the test result include:

- 1) If the test result is positive, then the person becomes a case or
- 2) If the test result is negative and the person has a known exposure, then the person must finish their 14- day quarantine, or

3) If the test result is negative and there was no known exposure, then the person is released from isolation.

Symptomatic cases are released from isolation 10 days after symptom onset or 72 hours fever free without the use of medication and significant improvement in symptoms, whichever is longer. Meaning, symptomatic cases are in isolation for a minimum of 10 days. Asymptomatic cases are released from isolation 10 days after their positive sample was collected, as long as they remain asymptomatic. If they become symptomatic during the 10 days, then they would begin a new isolation period using the criteria for symptomatic cases.

Close contacts of a confirmed case are in quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with a case while the case was infectious. A symptomatic case is considered infectious starting two days before the onset of their first symptom until they are released from isolation. An asymptomatic case is considered infectious starting two days before the date their positive sample was collected until they are released from isolation.

Defining A Close Contact:

A close contact is someone who has been within 6 feet of a case for 10 minutes or more or had direct contact with bodily secretions (for example, being coughed or sneezed on). Any students or staff that maintained a 6- foot distance from the positive case would not be considered close contacts and would therefore not be subject to the 14-day quarantine period.

Any person playing on a field / court / mat in an activity designated as medium/high risk with a positive, infectious player during a period of more exertion and close proximity instances will be considered a contact regardless of the infectious player's position or the short duration the person may have been in a close proximity with the infectious player.

If the positive case, or close contacts, or both, always wore cloth facemasks this reduces the risk of developing COVID-19 disease. However, the use of cloth facemasks does not eliminate the risk completely; therefore, close contacts would still be subject to a 14-day quarantine. Any close contacts that wore appropriate PPE, either a fit-tested N95 mask with protective eyewear or a surgical mask with a face shield, would not be considered close contacts.

The time for close contact tracing includes any day(s) the positive student or staff attended school or extracurricular activities and the preceding 48 hours prior to symptom onset (symptomatic cases) or the preceding 48 hours prior to sample collection (asymptomatic cases).

Modified Quarantine Requirements:

Household contacts of a case are required to complete quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with a case while the case was infectious and do not qualify for modified quarantine.

These modified quarantine requirements are contingent on the close contacts of a case remaining asymptomatic. Students and staff who have had an exposure but remain asymptomatic should adhere to the following practices prior to and during the school day:

- **Transportation:** Transportation will be provided by parents or guardians unless other arrangements are made with the school. If commuting with others a facemask/face covering is required.
- **Arrival and dismissal times:** Students and staff on modified quarantine may arrive at and leave school among the other students and staff but are required to wear a mask.
- **Pre-screen:** Modified quarantine students and staff will undergo pre-screening by the school. We also ask that parents/guardians also monitor for symptoms at home. Please refer to the symptom checklist. Notify the school nurse of any symptoms that develop and stay home.
- **Medical check-in:** Modified quarantine students and staff may be checked on periodically by school medical staff. If the quarantined student or staff becomes sick during the day, they should be sent home immediately. Surfaces in their workspace should be cleaned and disinfected. Anyone who develops illness compatible with COVID-19 during the quarantine period should notify the school nurse or school administration who will work with the local health department to arrange for testing.
- **Wear a mask:** Modified quarantine students and staff should always wear a facemask/face covering while in the school.
- **Physical separation:** When able, modified quarantine students and staff should be physically separated from the general school population through groupings, classroom arrangements, and assigned seating as directed by school administration.
- **Meals:** Modified quarantine students/staff will be directed to a designated lunch location/area separate from non-quarantined individuals
- **Bathrooms:** Modified quarantine students and staff may be directed to a designated bathroom by staff. As this is often not feasible, school staff will be increasing cleaning times and all students and staff are encouraged to continue good hand washing and appropriate hygiene.
- **School activities:** Modified quarantine students and staff may participate in activities but will be required to wear a mask. They will not be required to wear a mask during vigorous physical activity or if able to maintain 6 feet of distance from others and are outdoors. School personnel will notify the opposing team's school that the team is on modified quarantine on the scheduled date to play.
- **Outside of school:** Modified quarantine students and staff may still participate in outside activities at this time. It is advised that those in modified quarantine respect that they may be asymptomatic carriers and to wear masks whenever they are unable to maintain 6 feet distance or are indoors. It would also be advised to avoid contact with family members or others who are vulnerable to serious disease such as the elderly or immunocompromised.