

# School Law Update: CDC Adjusts Direction on Exposure Quarantine Requirements for Employees

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## CDC Adjusts Direction on Exposure Quarantine Requirements for Employees

On August 11, 2022, the CDC updated its COVID-19 guidance as the risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID exposure has significantly declined. More specific guidance for school districts was issued by the CDC, which can be found [here](#).

In addition, the Department of Public Instruction has published guidance entitled "COVID-19 Infection Control and Mitigation Measures for Wisconsin Schools 2022/2023," which can be found [here](#).

While we published a *Legal Update* on the recent CDC guidance changes last week, that *Update* primarily focused on the private sector. This *Update* is primarily focused on the impact the new CDC guidance will have on school districts and identifies some of the key changes.

The more significant mask guidance has been reduced. Guidance now indicates that if COVID-19 is at a high Community Level, universal indoor masking in schools is recommended. The CDC also recommends masking in health care settings such as the school nurse's office. The updated CDC guidance makes significant changes to quarantine and isolation protocols. Asymptomatic (exposed) children and staff, regardless of where the exposure occurred or vaccination status, no longer need to quarantine. Students or staff who self-identify as close contacts may continue to attend school/work if they remain asymptomatic.

Students or staff who come to school with symptoms or develop symptoms while at school should be asked to wear a well-fitting mask or respirator while in the building and be sent home. If testing is unavailable at school, students and staff should also be encouraged to get tested. Symptomatic people who cannot wear a mask should be separated from others as much as possible; children should be supervised by a designated caregiver who is wearing a well-fitting mask or respirator until they leave school grounds but masking with a high quality mask is suggested for 10 days from exposure.

If the school provides COVID-19 testing, a symptomatic student or staff member may remain in school if they are tested immediately onsite, and that test is negative. Best practice would include wearing a mask, if possible, until symptoms are fully resolved. If the student is "too ill" to be in school (fever, severe cough, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.), they should be sent home regardless of COVID-19 test results. If the symptomatic student or staff cannot be tested immediately, they should be sent home and encouraged to use an at-home-test-kit or be referred to a testing site.

Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 should isolate for at least 5 days. If they are asymptomatic, they may end isolation after Day 5 (return Day 6). If they had symptoms, they may return to school/work after Day 5 if:

- they are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication)
- their symptoms are improving

If the individual still has a fever or other symptoms have not improved, they should continue to isolate until the symptoms improve. Once isolation has ended, people should wear a well-fitting mask or respirator around others through Day 10. Testing is not required to determine the end of isolation or mask use following COVID-19 infection.

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