

Close contact definitions and testing and isolation protocols

Very high caseload for public schools

Background

Keeping schools open and safe is important for students, staff, parents/carers and the broader Western Australian economy.

The school based very high caseload protocols are critical as part of the overall strategy to:

- maximise face-to-face learning and student attendance at school; and
- facilitate a quick return to school for asymptomatic close contacts, school staff and students following exposure to COVID-19, under the critical worker protocols.

In a very high caseload environment, a **close contact** includes:

- **A household close contact:** a household member or intimate partner of a person with COVID-19 who has had contact with them during their infectious period.
- **Non-household close contact:** Someone who has had close contact with a person in their infectious period, including:
 - At least 15 minutes face-to-face contact where *a mask was not worn by both the person with COVID-19 and the exposed person.*
 - Greater than two hours within a small room or classroom environment, *where masks have been removed* for this period by both the person with COVID-19 and the exposed person (note: others wearing masks in this scenario would not be a contact).

**NOTE: the contact can occur either inside or outside school.*

- Someone who is directed by WA Health that they are a close contact.

Testing and isolation protocols

Under very high caseload, specific settings apply to schools.

	Protocol
Confirmed COVID-19 case	<p>Isolate for a minimum of 7 full days from date of positive test (Day 0).</p> <p>If symptoms still present after 7 days, continue isolating until symptoms clear; or if no symptoms after Day 7, leave isolation.</p> <p>No further testing or clearance by WA Health is required.</p>
Close contact who develops symptoms	<p>Quarantine for a full 7 days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For household contacts: from the date of the case's positive test (Day 0).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For other close contacts: from the last day of contact with the positive case (Day 0). <p>Take a PCR test or RAT on Day 1 or as soon as possible of becoming a close contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> if positive – follow confirmed COVID-19 case guideline. if negative PCR, continue to isolate until symptoms resolve and for a minimum of 7 days. if negative RAT and symptomatic, continue to isolate and take a repeat RAT in 24 hours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> if RAT positive – follow confirmed COVID-19 case guideline. if RAT negative – continue to isolate until symptoms resolve and for a minimum of 7 days. <p>If new symptoms develop during the quarantine period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> take a PCR or RAT as soon as possible. if RAT is used instead of PCR and the first RAT returns a negative result, get a PCR or repeat a RAT 24 hours after the first. Continue to isolate until negative PCR result returned, or second RAT is negative. if positive – follow confirmed COVID-19 case guideline. <p>Take a PCR test on Day 6 or a RAT on Day 7 at the end of the quarantine period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> if positive – follow confirmed COVID-19 case guideline. Note: all positive RATs must be reported to WA Health via www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/ratregister. if negative – quarantine ends after Day 7 provided symptoms have resolved.
<p>Student and staff (without a critical worker exemption) - household close contact who is asymptomatic</p>	<p>Quarantine for a full 7 days – do not attend school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For household contacts: from the date of the case’s positive test (Day 0), regardless if new household members become positive. For other close contacts: from the last day of contact with the positive case (Day 0). <p>Take a PCR test or a RAT on Day 1 or as soon as possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> if test positive – follow confirmed COVID-19 case guideline. All positive RATs must be reported to WA Health via www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/ratregister. if test negative, continue to quarantine. <p>Take a PCR test on Day 6 or a RAT on Day 7:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> if positive – follow confirmed positive case guideline. All positive RATs must be reported to WA Health via www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/ratregister. if negative – quarantine ends after Day 7. <p>If symptoms develop in the 7 days after quarantine ends, get tested by PCR or RAT as soon as possible and isolate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If RAT negative, take another RAT 24 hours later.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolate until negative PCR result returned or second RAT is negative. <p>When students return to school, principals are not required to confirm any evidence of testing and/or a negative test result.</p>
<p>Student – non-household close contact who is asymptomatic</p>	<p>During the 7 day quarantine period students who are a non-household close contacts, and have no symptoms may continue to attend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> school; out of school care; and sporting or cultural training, practice or events organised by the school and held at the school immediately before or after school. <p>During the 7 day period students must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> quarantine for all other times other than listed above; Test on Day 1 (PCR or RAT) and Day 6 (PCR) or Day 7 (RAT); wear a mask when not at their quarantine premises except when exempt (not for children in Year 2 and below); and actively monitor for symptoms. If symptoms develop, immediately isolate, get tested and follow close contact who develops symptoms guidelines. <p>When students return to school, principals are not required to confirm any evidence of testing and/or a negative test.</p>
<p>Critical worker – who is a close contact and is asymptomatic</p>	<p>May continue to attend work if approved by senior management and if workers agree with their employer*, with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> daily RAT for 7 days prior to attending or on arrival at work; quarantine in suitable premises when not working; attend work in a surgical (preferred) or cloth mask (or another mask required by workplace); travel to and from work avoiding use of public transport, if possible; and actively monitor for symptoms. If symptoms develop, immediately isolate, get tested and follow close contact who develops symptoms guidelines. <p>Critical workers who are close contacts should only continue to work if they are crucial to the ongoing functioning of the school, noting that returning close contacts to work early is not without risk of introducing further spread of COVID-19 into the workplace.</p> <p>*Critical workers who are close contacts should only continue to work if the school is unable to identify relief staff and in mutual agreement with the critical worker.</p>

For current Test, Trace, Isolate and Quarantine (TTIQ) information, please refer to: https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus/COVID19-information-for-business-and-industry/TTIQ-Plan.

Applying close contact rules in school settings

	Household close contact	Non-household close contact	Symptomatic close contact
Student	<p>Quarantine for a full 7 days.</p> <p>Do not attend school.</p> <p>Follow - <i>Students and staff (without a critical worker exemption) - household close contact who is asymptomatic.</i></p>	<p>During the 7 day quarantine period students who are a non-household close contact, and have no symptoms may continue to attend.</p> <p>Follow - <i>Student – non-household close contacts who is asymptomatic.</i></p>	<p>Quarantine for a full 7 days.</p> <p>Do not attend school.</p> <p>Follow - <i>Close contact who develops symptoms.</i></p>
Critical worker	<p>Continue to attend work.</p> <p>Follow - <i>Critical worker – who is a close contact and is asymptomatic.</i></p>	<p>Continue to attend work.</p> <p>Follow - <i>Critical worker – who is a close contact and is asymptomatic.</i></p>	<p>Quarantine for a full 7 days.</p> <p>Follow - <i>Close contact who develops symptoms.</i></p>
Staff without a critical worker exemption	<p>Quarantine for a full 7 days.</p> <p>Do not go to work.</p> <p>Follow - <i>Student and staff (without a critical worker exemption) - household close contact who is asymptomatic.</i></p>	<p>Quarantine for a full 7 days.</p> <p>Do not go to work.</p> <p>Follow - <i>Student and staff (without a critical worker exemption) - household close contact who is asymptomatic.</i></p>	<p>Quarantine for a full 7 days.</p> <p>Do not go to work.</p> <p>Follow - <i>Close contact who develops symptoms.</i></p>