Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
Frequently Asked Questions – Week of 4/26/21

1. My school has an individual who tests positive for COVID-19 and other students or staff members were within 3-6 feet of that individual for at least fifteen minutes while both parties were masked in a classroom or on the bus. Does my school need to notify the family or staff member that the student or staff member was a close contact?

Yes, the school should notify the family or staff member that they were a close contact; however, they should also clarify that the student or staff member does not have to quarantine. Although the close contact does not have to quarantine, they should get tested, actively monitor for symptoms, and implement the other key health and safety practices.

Please see sample language below that schools could use in providing these notifications to families. For all other close contacts, please continue to use the standard quarantine protocols found in DESE's Protocols for COVID-19 Scenarios.

Sample language if close contact was 3 to 6 feet from confirmed case in class or bus:

Dear parents, caregivers, and guardians,

I am writing to inform you that a person in our school community has tested positive for COVID-19 and your child was a close contact of this individual. A close contact is defined as only those who have been within 6 feet of distance of the individual for at least fifteen minutes.

Your child was within 3 to 6 feet of the individual who tested positive in either the classroom or on the bus, while both individuals were wearing masks. They were exposed to this individual on [date]. Based on guidance from the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, developed in collaboration with the Department of Public Health and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, this means your child does not have to quarantine and can return to school, as long as they do not have symptoms of COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19. We encourage you to have your child tested. As always, COVID-19 test results should be reported to the school nurse. We are also following all Department of Health protocols, including collaborating with our local board of health to complete contact tracing.

We are committed to continuous communication with and support of our families. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact [INSERT STAFF NAME] at [EMAIL/PHONE].

Spanish translation/ Traducción Española

Estimados padres, cuidadores y tutores:

Le escribo para informarle que una persona de nuestra comunidad escolar ha dado positivo en la prueba de COVID-19 y que su hijo/a se considera un contacto cercano del miembro de la comunidad. Se entiende por contacto cercano sólo aquellas personas que han estado a menos de 6 pies de distancia del individuo durante al menos quince minutos.

Su hijo/a estuvo a una distancia de entre 3 y 6 pies del individuo que dio positivo en el aula o en el autobús, mientras ambos individuos llevaban máscaras. Estuvo expuesto/a a este individuo el [date]. Tomando como base las orientaciones del Departamento de Educación Primaria y Secundaria, desarrolladas en colaboración con el Departamento de Salud Pública y la Oficina Ejecutiva de Salud y Servicios Humanos, esto significa que su hijo/a no tiene que someterse a cuarentena y puede regresar a la escuela, siempre que no presente síntomas de COVID-19 o haya dado positivo en una prueba de detección de COVID-19. Le aconsejamos firmemente que haga la prueba a su hijo/a y que, por favor, informe de los resultados a la enfermera de la escuela. También estamos siguiendo todos los protocolos del Departamento de Salud, incluyendo la colaboración con nuestra junta local de salud para completar el rastreo de contactos.

Estamos comprometidos con la comunicación continua y el apoyo a nuestras familias. Si tiene alguna pregunta o preocupación adicional, por favor, póngase en contacto con [INSERT STAFF NAME] llamando a [PHONE] o escribiendo a [EMAIL].