

Guidance from the Wyoming Department of Health: Test to Stay Protocols for K-12 Schools and Early Childhood Education Centers

January 1, 2022

Background

The Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) has prioritized safe in-person education during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of January 2022, all K-12 staff and students aged 5 years and older have had the opportunity to become fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Data collected during the fall of 2021 in several locations in the United States have indicated that daily testing of close contacts (test to stay) is a strategy that allows students to remain in educational settings while also helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This document provides WDH recommendations and guidance for K-12 schools and early childhood education centers on implementing a test to stay protocol for close contacts. WDH recommends this protocol as an alternative to quarantine protocols that require students to remain at home. This protocol may change as additional guidance is issued from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and as additional data are gathered.

Individuals for Whom this Protocol Applies

This protocol applies to students who have been identified as close contacts to an individual who is infectious with COVID-19 and would otherwise be recommended to stay home from school. As a reminder, the following individuals are not recommended to stay home from school after an exposure to COVID-19 and can return to school after an exposure without daily testing:

- Individuals who are fully vaccinated
- Individuals who are exposed to COVID-19 in a situation where both the person exposed and the infectious person are wearing masks appropriately
- Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the previous 90 days

Individuals who are identified as close contacts and who are not in one of the above categories should follow the protocol below as an alternative to staying home from school. If a student or parent chooses not to follow the test to stay protocol, they should stay home from school as recommended in the contact tracing guidance from WDH dated October 1, 2021, and found here: <https://health.wyo.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/K-12-Contact-Tracing-Guidance-10.2021.pdf>.

Test to Stay Protocol

Students identified as close contacts, as defined above, to a person infectious with COVID-19 and who would otherwise be recommended to stay home from school may remain in school under the following protocol:

- The close contact remains asymptomatic
- Any close contact 2 years of age and older wears a mask in school at all times, other than when eating, drinking, sleeping, or participating in artistic or athletic activities that cannot be done while wearing a mask. When not wearing a mask, distancing of six feet should be maintained to the extent possible
- Tests negative on a rapid COVID-19 test (molecular or antigen) on each school day
- If school events occur on weekends, the close contact should receive a negative test on that weekend day prior to participation in the event
- On weekend days or holidays without school events, the close contact does not need to be tested. WDH recommends that the close contact stay home on these days.
- If the close contact develops symptoms or tests positive, he or she should stay home from school and refrain from participating in extracurricular events
- This protocol is in effect for 7 days after the exposure. This protocol can be discontinued at day 8 after the exposure

Testing

Any FDA-authorized rapid COVID-19 viral test may be used for daily testing. This includes both molecular and antigen tests. Antibody tests cannot be used for test to stay purposes.

Testing may be performed by the school or obtained by the parent outside of the school setting. Schools performing testing must obtain a CLIA waiver to perform point of care testing. WDH can reimburse schools for the cost of the CLIA waiver for COVID-19 testing. More information about CLIA waivers can be found here:

<https://health.wyo.gov/aging/hls/cli-clinical-laboratory-improvement-amendments/>.

If tests are obtained outside the school setting, parents should provide documentation of the negative test to the school.

Schools conducting testing must report test results to WDH. Further information on testing resources available for schools, including information about reporting results can be found here: <https://health.wyo.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/WDH-Testing-Resources-and-Guidance-for-K-12-Schools-December-16-2021.pdf>

Close Contacts Who Develop Symptoms or Test Positive

Close contacts participating in the test to stay protocol who develop symptoms compatible with COVID-19 but are not tested for COVID-19 should remain home from school for 10 days after the onset of symptoms.

Close contacts participating in the test to stay protocol who develop symptoms and test negative on a rapid COVID-19 test should remain home from school. They can return to school once they have received a negative laboratory-based molecular COVID-19 test and symptoms have resolved for 24 hours.

Close contacts participating in the test to stay protocol who test positive on a COVID-19 test, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, should stay home from school until 10 days after the onset of symptoms or, if asymptomatic, 10 days after the positive test.

WDH does not recommend that close contacts obtain subsequent tests after they have tested positive on a COVID-19 test. However, if a student tests positive on a rapid test and obtains subsequent testing, they may return to school after they have received two negative laboratory-based molecular test results taken at least 24 hours apart and symptoms, if any, have resolved for at least 24 hours.

Contact Tracing after a Close Contact Develops Symptoms or Tests Positive

If a close contact participating in the test to stay protocol develops symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and/or tests positive for COVID-19, the close contact should be considered infectious on the day that symptoms developed or the date of positive test, whichever is earlier. For example, if the close contact attends school on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and tests negative on Monday and Tuesday but positive on Wednesday, contact tracing should be done beginning on Wednesday. Contact tracing does not need to be done on days where the student tested negative.