BOARD OF HEALTH

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Responding to Positive Cases of COVID-19 and Contact Tracing – FAQ
October 6, 2020
October 26, 2020 – Updated
November 22, 2020 - Updated

Will the names of positive COVID-19 cases in the school community be released?
No

Will personal health information be released on COVID-19 positive cases?
No.

Will the identification of individual classrooms occupied by positive cases be released?
At this time, no.

If it is determined that my child is not a close contact, will I be informed that a child/teacher in my child's class has tested positive?
At this time, no.

How will I know if there is a case of COVID-19 in my child's classroom/school?
The school nurses strive to monitor illness and potential COVID-19 cases as well as identify any possible positive cases in the school community. Recognizing the importance of protecting confidentiality and following the MA DPH guidelines for close contact management, at this time you will be only notified if your child is considered a close contact.

If my child is diagnosed with COVID-19, will his/her/their privacy be maintained?
Your child's name will not be revealed if diagnosed with COVID-19. Close contacts will be notified and told that they have been exposed to someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, and will be provided with information about quarantine and given further instructions. No personal identification will be given to others.

How is the Board of Health notified of a positive COVID-19 case?
Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network (MAVEN), a division of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH), electronically notifies the Bedford Board of Health (BOH) Staff of all Bedford residents who tested positive for COVID-19. Additionally, the BOH Staff receive verbal notifications from residents, school nurses who are in communication with parents and school staff, community members and area businesses. Although MAVEN is our official notification portal, we will initiate case communication and determination of close contacts based on verbal notifications.

Once the notification comes into the BOH office, the BOH Staff, School Nurses or our Contact Tracing Collaborative (CTC) colleagues:
- conduct a lengthy interview with the positive case/guardian/caregiver to determine any close contacts over the defined infectious period. This includes contacts both in and out of school.

- determine isolation period for the case.
- monitor case over isolation period for symptom development and severity.
- provide protocols for cleaning and sanitizing the living/work environment.
- connect case to support and wrap around services as needed.
- give clearance for them to return to daily activities, once it is determined to be safe to do so.

When is Contact Tracing done and how far back do you gather information?
Once close contacts are identified and the case is reported as positive for COVID-19 in MAVEN, the identified close contacts are contacted by the BOH Staff, School Nurses or the CTC and instructed to quarantine for 14 days with day 1 of the quarantine period starting the day after their last contact with the positive case and are instructed to get tested for COVID-19. Alternatively, as of November 18, 2020, a close contact can have a negative molecular (PCR) COVID-19 test collected on day eight (8) of initial quarantine for a shorter quarantine period (10 or more days vs 14) with no symptoms al all during quarantine period and symptom monitoring through day 14 of quarantine period. To view updated quarantine protocols, please navigate to: https://www.mass.gov/guidance/information-and-guidance-for-persons-in-quarantine-due-to-covid-19. Answering your phone and cooperating is key to contact notification and minimizing the spread of COVID-19.

What is the definition of a Close Contact?
In accordance with MA DPH, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): a close contact is defined as those who have been within 6 feet of distance from a confirmed positive COVID-19 case for at least 15 minutes (cumulatively) while the case was infectious. The infectious period begins 2 days prior to symptom onset. If someone is asymptomatic, the infectious period is considered to begin 2 days prior the date the COVID-19 positive individual submitted their positive test sample. The infectious period continues for approximately 10 days after the date of onset of symptoms, or if the individual was asymptomatic, 10 days after the date of the positive test sample. For updated Infectious Period Guidance for Confirmed COVID-19 Cases, please view: http://www.maventrainingsite.com/maven-help/pdf/Updated%20Infectious%20Period%20Guidance%20for%20Confirmed%20COVID19%20Cases%20Ver1.pdf

Within the schools:
In all circumstances where strict adherence to mask wearing, social distancing, hand washing and disinfecting are affirmed by the case (self-reporting), their parent/guardian/caregiver, teachers/proctors in the school environment and/or school administration, there will not be considered to be close contacts in the classroom or school environment and no notifications will be made to teachers/staff or parents/caregivers of other students in the classroom.

This definition of close contact supersedes previous DESE guidance that stated that all students in a classroom would be defined as close contacts, and is detailed in an October 5, 2020 Joint Memo Clarifying Key Health and Safety Requirements released by DESE and DPH found here: http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2020-0819dese-dph-joint-memo.docx.

When a student or teacher/staff is a close contact of a positive case inside or outside of the school environment (typically in their household), they are required to quarantine at home, not attend school and get tested.

In circumstances where adherence to safety protocols cannot be confirmed/maintained, either inadvertently (i.e. young children having to be repeatedly reminded to keep distance or students unable to remember if they had contact with others) or necessarily (i.e. special needs students needing close care as part of their daily education), close contacts do occur.

Within the community:
In the conduct of contact tracing, if the case or their parent/guardian/caregiver reports to the BOH Staff or CTC that they had contact with another individual, outside the household, and it is determined that person is a close contact

in accordance with the definition above, then that close contact would be notified by the BOH Staff or CTC of their contact with a positive case and be instructed to quarantine for 14 days and get tested.

The BOH Staff will review individual circumstances for school and non-school related cases to determine potential exposure based on age, behavior and type of activity that took place.

What is the infectious period for COVID-19?
The infectious period begins 2 days prior to symptom onset. If someone is asymptomatic, the infectious period is considered to begin 2 days prior to the collection of their positive test.

What is the difference between Isolation and Quarantine?
Isolation separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick. Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.

What is Isolation?
A process used to separate people infected with the virus, whether exhibiting symptoms or not, from people who are not infected. People that test positive for COVID-19 will be required by the BOH Staff to remain at home, away from others, including separating from household members and wearing a mask when not possible. This includes, staying in a specific "sick room" or area and using a separate bathroom (if available). People who are in isolation must stay home until it's safe for them to be around others and cleared by the BOH Staff or CTC.

What is Quarantine?
A process used to keep someone who might have been exposed to or was exposed to COVID-19, away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine must stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department.

What if the Close Contact exhibits symptoms or tests positive?
If a close contact exhibits symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, then they become a case, will have to isolate and their close contacts are traced per the above protocol.

When can a person return to school or work after COVID-19 symptoms?
If someone has COVID-19-like symptoms, they may return to work or school after they have:
- tested negative for COVID-19 (PCR test) - (or waited to return to work/school 10 days from start of symptoms);
- have improvement in symptoms; and,
- have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.

If a provider makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may return to school based on the recommendations for that alternative diagnosis (e.g., influenza or strep pharyngitis). In all cases, a note of medical clearance must be obtained and given to your student's school nurse or in the case of a staff member, submit the medical note to your supervisor.

When can a Close Contact return to work/school?
All close contacts should be tested approximately 4-5 days after exposure to a COVID-19 positive case, but must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive, regardless of test result. Alternatively, as of November 18, 2020, a close contact can have a negative molecular (PCR) COVID-19 test collected on day eight (8) of initial quarantine for a shorter quarantine period (10 or more days vs 14) with no symptoms al all during quarantine period and symptom monitoring through day 14 of quarantine period. To view updated quarantine protocols, please navigate to: https://www.mass.gov/guidance/information-and-guidance-for-persons-in-quarantine-due-to-covid-19.

When will a person with COVID-19 be released from Isolation/Quarantine?
Once a Bedford Resident is identified as a confirmed positive case and is in isolation, the BOH Staff or CTC will work with them on symptom review to help determine when the case can be released from isolation and return to school/work. If the case is not a Bedford resident, yet a member of the school community, the school nurses and BOH Staff will assist with the return to school determination.

When the school community is informed a COVID-19 positive school community member (student/staff) was not in school during their infectious period, how is that determined?
The BOH Staff, school nurses or CTC conduct interviews with reported positive cases, and determine the date when they were first symptomatic or tested. They are then asked their whereabouts for the 2 days prior to that date (whether in school, at events, socializing, playing outside, hanging out with friends, playing basketball, etc.) and if they were in close contact with anyone for greater than 15 minutes (cumulatively). The infectious period is considered to begin 2 days prior the date the COVID-19 positive individual submitted their positive test sample or became symptomatic. The infectious period continues for approximately 10 days after the date of onset of symptoms, or if the individual was asymptomatic, 10 days after the date of the positive test sample.

When positive cases are young children, we rely on the ability to confirm self-reports provided by young children with information received from parents/caregivers and teachers/proctors in an attempt to gather a full understanding of the potential for exposure to others. The BOH Staff will review individual circumstances for school and non-school related cases to determine potential exposure based on age, behavior and type of activity that took place.

Why use the term "school community member" instead of reporting a student or staff member is positive?
At this time, to preserve confidentiality and unnecessarily narrow the pool of school community members which could lead to positive cases being identified, we will not be breaking out positive cases in any more detail.

How are close contacts to a COVID-19 positive person determined?
The BOH Staff, school nurses and/or CTC will work with the individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19 to identify their close contacts, and will do contact tracing and notify individuals or the families of those children who were exposed.

If my child becomes sick at school, why do I have to pick him/her/them up as soon as possible?
If a student is assessed and found to have symptoms that are suspicious of COVID-19, it is very important to have your child picked up as soon as possible so that other students and staff aren't exposed, and potential spread can be contained. In addition, ill students will be monitored in a designated Medical Waiting Room, and that room will need to be cleaned thoroughly and made available for other students.

Why is it important for me to call my child's school nurse when they are home sick?
Communication with your child's school nurse about illness is very important so that nurses can track illnesses in the school and community, maximize the health and safety of all students and staff, and provide you with updated information.

My child was identified by BOH Staff, School Nurse or CTC as a close contact to someone with COVID-19 while at school and now has symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Should I and other people in my household quarantine?
YES. We strongly recommend and urge you and the other members of your household to quarantine, like your child is doing, until the result of your child's COVID-19 test are known.

My child has symptoms that might be due to COVID-19 and is undergoing testing but has not had any known exposure to someone with COVID-19. Can I continue to work while awaiting my child's test result?
Because your child is exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19, we recommend you and others in your household also quarantine until the COVID-19 test results of your child are known.

My child was exposed to another child with confirmed COVID-19 and is undergoing testing. My child has no symptoms. Can I continue to work while awaiting the test result.
Yes. However, you may consider quarantining like your child until you get their test result.

My child was with another child who was a close contact to someone with COVID-19. Does anyone in our household need to quarantine?
No. Only close contacts are required to be quarantined (not contacts of close contacts). However, if the close contact is determined to be COVID-19 positive, your child would need to quarantine and would be contacted by the BOH Staff.

Where can I get a COVID-19 test?
https://memamaps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=eba3f0395451430b9f631cb095febf13.