



TARRANT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
A nationally accredited public health department

COVID-19 is a **disease requiring exclusion from school and daycares** under [25 Texas Administrative Code § 97.7](#). The Texas Education Agency (TEA) references this and provides additional guidance regarding COVID-19 in K-12 schools.

[TEA guidelines](#), published August 1, 2022, state:

Public school systems are to operate in compliance with existing state laws and regulations, including all executive orders issued by the governor of Texas in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that are currently in effect.

- If an individual who has been in a school is test-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must notify its local health department, in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
- Per GA-38, school systems cannot require students or staff to wear a mask.
- As provided in this [Department of State Health Services \(DSHS\) Rule](#), school systems **must exclude students** from attending school in person who have or are suspected of having COVID-19, and must immediately notify parents if this is determined while on campus. As noted in the rule, exclusion shall continue under the conditions for re-entry are met:
 - For children with symptoms, at least 5 days have passed since symptom onset, and fever free*, and other symptoms have improved.
 - Children who test positive for COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms must stay home until at least 5 days after the day they were tested.

*Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications. Fever is a temperature of 100° Fahrenheit (37.8° Celsius) or higher.

For a complete list of all diseases requiring exclusion from school and the readmission criteria, please visit [DSHS School Health Recommendations for the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases in a Group-Care Setting](#).” The exclusions chart can be found here: [Communicable Disease Exclusion Chart](#).

In line with previous and current CDC guidance, Tarrant County Public Health will continue to recommend a 10-day isolation period for individuals infected with COVID-19 who cannot or will not wear a mask at school.

On August 11, 2022, the CDC released new [Operational Guidance for K-12 School and Early Care and Education Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning](#). The CDC recommends layered [mitigation strategies](#) they expect schools to follow when they give their isolation and quarantine guidance. Among those:

- [Staying up to date on vaccinations](#)
- [Staying home when sick](#)
- [Consistent and correct mask use](#)
- [Ventilation](#)

Tarrant County Public Health

Accountability. Quality. Innovation.



A healthier community through leadership in health strategy

The CDC states:

*“Preliminary data suggest that the Omicron variant is up to **three times more infectious** than the Delta variant ^[14]. With the recommended shorter isolation and quarantine periods, it is **critical that people continue to wear well-fitting masks and take additional precautions for 5 days after leaving isolation or quarantine** ^[15]. In addition, isolation should only end if a person has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms have resolved. Modeling data from the United Kingdom reinforce the importance of mask use; **after the 5th day after a positive test, an estimated 31% of persons remain infectious** ^[16].”*

CDC Isolation Guidelines:

When you have COVID-19, isolation is counted in days, as follows:

If you have no symptoms:

- **Day 0 is the day you were tested** (not the day you received a positive test result)
- **Day 1 is the first full day** following the day you were tested
- If you develop symptoms within 10 days of when you were tested, the **clock restarts at day 0 on the day of symptom onset**

If you have symptoms:

- **Day 0 of isolation is the day of symptom onset**, regardless of when you tested positive
- **Day 1 is the first full day** after the day your symptoms started

If you test positive for COVID-19, stay home for at least 5 days, and isolate from others in your home. You are likely most infectious during the first 5 days.

- **Wear a high-quality mask** if you must be around others at home and in public.
- Do not go places where you are unable to wear a mask.
- Do not travel.
- Stay home and separate from others as much as possible.
- Use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Don't share personal household items like cups, towels, and utensils.

Ending Isolation

End isolation based on how serious your COVID-19 symptoms were.

- **If you had no symptoms:**
 - You may end isolation after day 5.
- **If you had symptoms:**
 - You may end isolation after day 5 if:
 - You are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication)
 - Your symptoms are improving.

If you still have fever or your other symptoms have not improved, continue to isolate until they improve.

Tarrant County Public Health

Accountability. Quality. Innovation.



A healthier community through leadership in health strategy

Per CDC Guidance, if you had [moderate illness](#) (if you experienced shortness of breath or had difficulty breathing), or [severe illness](#) (you were hospitalized) due to COVID-19, or you have a weakened immune system, you need to *isolate through day 10*.

Regardless of when you end isolation, avoid being around people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19 until at least day 11. Remember to wear a high-quality mask when indoors, around others at home, and in public. Do not go places where you are unable to wear a mask until you are able to discontinue masking, including public transportation and travel settings.

[What to Do If You Were Exposed to COVID-19](#)

The CDC no longer recommends quarantine for K-12 schools *if the exposed person wears a mask*.

- **Wear a mask as soon as you find out you were exposed;** Start counting from Day 1.
 - Day 0 is the day of your *last* exposure to someone with COVID-19.
 - **Day 1 is the first full day** after your last exposure.
- Continue precautions for 10 full days. You can still develop COVID-19 up to 10 days after you have been exposed.
 - Wear a mask any time you are around others inside your home or indoors in public.
 - Do not go places where you are unable to wear a mask, including travel and public transportation settings.
 - Watch for symptoms
 - Fever, cough, shortness of breath, etc.
 - If you develop symptoms:
 - Isolate immediately.
 - Get tested; If your result is positive, follow the isolation guidelines.
 - Get tested on Day 6 (even if you do not have symptoms), or sooner if you develop symptoms.
 - If your test is negative, continue with precautions through day 10.
 - If you test positive, isolate immediately.

[Community Level Guidance](#)

On August 11, 2022, the CDC updated their [Community Level Guidance](#). Community Level guidance is based on hospitalization admission data and the percentage of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients and is not based on transmission of COVID-19.

[Community Level Guidance](#) addresses individual and household-level prevention behaviors (such as masking, ventilation, being up to date on vaccinations), as well as community-level prevention strategies (such as vaccination, testing, and treatment access). **When the COVID-19 Community Level is HIGH, the CDC recommends universal masking indoors, for everyone, regardless of vaccination status.**

Please also see [Frequently Asked Questions for K-12 and Early Case and Education \(ECE\) Settings: Information for School and ECE Administrators, Teachers, Staff, and Parents](#).

Tarrant County Public Health

Accountability. Quality. Innovation.



A healthier community through leadership in health strategy