

# Basics of Contact Tracing in Schools & School Staff Response

NN HCOC Community Mitigation Team

August 2021



# Key Questions (and outline)

1. What to do if an individual comes to school with symptoms
2. What to do if you learn that an individual who tests positive was in school
3. What to do if an individual has an exposure
4. How do these scenarios differ by vaccinated vs unvaccinated
5. What are the testing options



# Social Distancing in Schools

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- **School and Classroom Physical Distancing**
  - Promote at least 3-6 feet apart from one another
  - Maintain 6 feet and/or do activities outdoors if increased exertion/breathing
- **Eating and Lunch Breaks**
  - Masks off, so maintain 6 feet and/or do activities outdoors
- **Buses**
  - Masks on!
- **Cohorting**
  - Groups of students and staff who interact mostly only with each other to prevent potential COVID-19 spread.



Note: School guidelines change frequently; please check the most recent Navajo Nation school guidelines

**What to do if an  
individual comes to  
school with symptoms**

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# What to do if an individual comes to school with symptoms



## Immediately Isolate student

- Notify parents to pick them up and take them home



## Advise parent / guardian

- ASAP: Get tested for COVID-19 and notify school of result
- Get clearance letter from health care professional – must provide before returning to school.
- Confirm best phone number to be reached



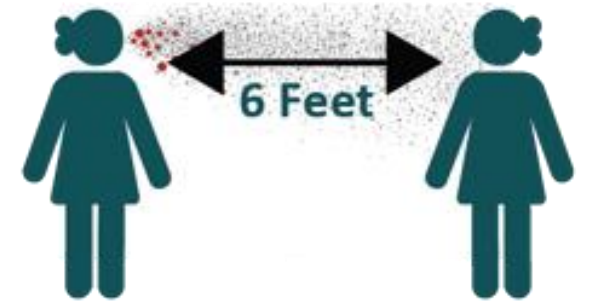
## Return to school

- Communicate internally to staff that student cannot attend school without clearance letter
- Allow student to return once clearance letter received

What to do if you learn that  
an individual who tests  
positive was in school



# REMINDER



## What's a "Close Contact"?

- Someone who was within 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes).
- Remember: people can spread COVID-19 **starting 2 days before they have any symptoms** (or, if no symptoms, 2 days before positive test collected) until they finish isolation. Ask about close contacts during that entire infectious period.

### Exception to Close Contact Definition – for Schools:

- Students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student where **both students were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitting masks**; and other K–12 school prevention strategies (such as universal and correct mask use, physical distancing, and increased ventilation) were in place in the K–12 school setting.
- This exception only applies to students, not adults

# What to do if an individual who tested positive was in school



## Investigate

- Gather Key info from student, school staff, and parent
- When did symptoms start?
- Last day at school/work?
- Vaccination status
- Past positive (COVID positive in the last 90 days)?
- Identify all close contacts (work site/classroom, staff & students)



## Notify Close Contacts

- If unvaccinated: pick up, take home, and get tested ASAP
- If vaccinated and no symptoms: ok to stay in school; get tested 3-5 days after exposure.
- If vaccinated and symptoms: pick up, take home, and get tested ASAP
- If "past positive": ok to stay in school



## Isolate and Quarantine

- Positive case and any close contacts who are sent home
- Communicate internally that student cannot attend school without clearance letter
  - Student can return once clearance letter received



## Reporting

- Local public health authority: provide information on Case and Close Contacts
- Navajo Nation Health Exposure Portal within 24 hours
- Weekly public notification





What to do if an individual  
has an exposure (inside or  
outside of school)



# What to do if an individual has an exposure (inside or outside of school)



## Advise parent / guardian

- ASAP: Take student home, get tested for COVID-19 and notify school of result
- Get clearance letter from health care professional – must provide before returning to school.
- Confirm best phone number to be reached



## If positive test result

- Complete steps in previous slide




## Return to school

- Communicate internally to staff that student cannot attend school without clearance letter
- Allow student to return once clearance letter received



How do these scenarios differ by vaccinated vs unvaccinated?

A yellow right-angled triangle is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, pointing towards the top left.

# If You are Exposed to Someone with COVID-19



Unvaccinated  
(or partially  
vaccinated)

Quarantine for full 14 days  
after last exposure

Testing recommended



Fully  
Vaccinated  
(2 weeks after 2<sup>nd</sup> dose  
Pfizer/Moderna, or 2  
weeks after J&J)

May be allowed to return  
to school if they do not  
have any symptoms

Testing recommended 3-5  
days after exposure, or  
ASAP if symptoms

- Individual recommendations depend on healthcare provider / contact tracing team
- Always require a letter from a health care professional to return to work or school



# What To Do If...

...you are exposed to someone with symptoms of or confirmed COVID-19.

Do you have symptoms?

NO

Yes

You need a PCR test 3-5 days after exposure regardless of vaccine status.

AND

If fully vaccinated:\*

Wear mask indoors in public for 14 days after exposure or until test result is negative.

If not fully vaccinated:

Quarantine for 14 days\*\* and watch for symptoms.

- You need a PCR test regardless of vaccine status.
- Contact your healthcare provider.
- Isolate from others in your home - use a separate bedroom, bathroom, utensils, and avoid common areas of the home as much as possible.

\*Contact your local health provider on whether you can return to school\*

# Communication tips

## Need-to-know

- Reassure all staff / parents that anyone who has been exposed will be notified and oriented on what do to
- For any COVID-19 case, don't need to notify those who were not exposed

## Protect confidentiality

- Don't use names
- For internal communication about clearance letter, don't need to specify if the individuals was a close contact or case
- If someone is diagnosed through school, let them know that school is required to share information with public health authorities; this is in order to make sure that person and people close to them get the resources they need to stay safe



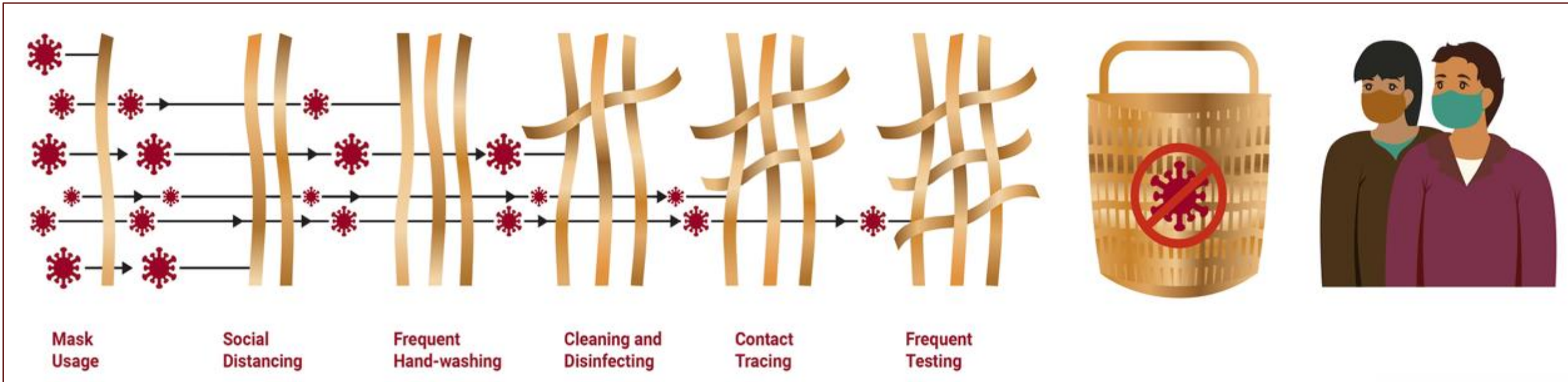
<https://keepcalms.com/p/don-t-panic-keep-calm-and-carry-on-learning/>

**What are the testing  
options**

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# Testing: Another layer we weave into the basket to keep our schools safe



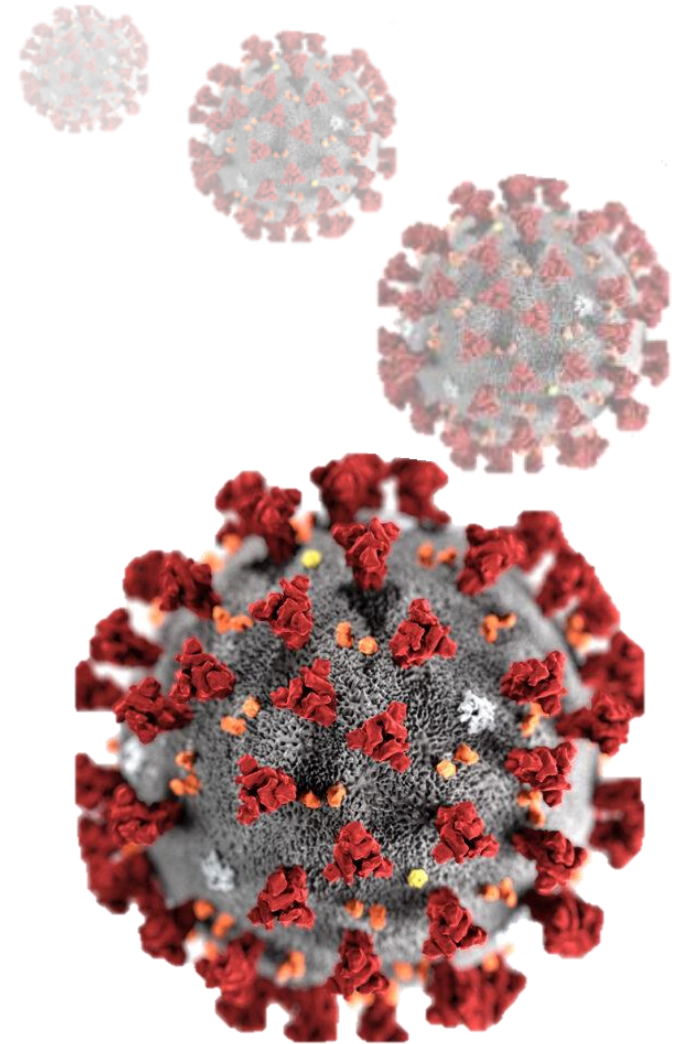


# Navajo Nation COVID-19 Safe Schools Framework

Strategy	Setting & Description		Frequency based on transmission level				
			Critical/Very High	High	Substantial	Moderate	Low
<b>Screening Testing</b> (Options are in the Additional Information section)	<b>Classroom</b>	Regular testing of teachers, staff, and students	Recommended 1-2x per week for teachers/staff/students		Optional 1x per week for teachers/staff		
		<b>Sports</b>	Low and Intermediate Risk	Recommended 1x per week		Optional 1x per week	
	High Risk		Recommended 2x per week		Optional 1x per week		

# COVID Testing

- Testing can help determine if a person has COVID, but testing is not perfect
  - Positive results: **very** accurate
  - Negative results: less accurate, may be **false negative**
- The virus must develop enough in the respiratory system to be detected
- Who should be tested?
  - Anyone with possible COVID symptoms
  - Anyone around someone with COVID
  - Anyone who would like a test



# Viral Testing Options

## PCR

- Most accurate
- Results in 1-3 days
  - Sometimes can be done in hours depending on lab

## Antigen

- Less accurate; more accurate if patient has symptoms
- Results in <1 hour
- May have home testing option in the near future





# REMINDER

What's the best way to prevent COVID?

Get **VACCINATED!**



# Resources

Navajo HCOC Safe Schools Community of Practice – Wednesdays 3pm

- Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://jh.zoom.us/j/92172260922?pwd=ZWVFSzE1QVN2WmJna0d1WGVtMmloZz09>

Navajo Department of Health Safe Schools Framework

- <https://www.navajoreopening.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19-Safe-Schools-Framework>
- <https://www.navajoreopening.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19-Safe-Schools-Framework/School-Exposures>

Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health

- <https://caih.jhu.edu/schoolresources/>

Center for Disease Control School Guidance

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>