

Message sent Monroe County Schools from MCDPH on January 5, 2022

Dear School Leader,

As you are well aware, we are experiencing many changes related to COVID-19 and our schools. That is causing a lot of confusion as we enter the New Year. At this time, MCDPH is not formally updating any of our algorithms, but this email summarizes several key changes and takes precedence over all earlier documents and correspondence on the specific matters outlined in this email. **Please be aware that things are changing almost daily, so stay tuned!**

MANDATORY QUARANTINE AND ISOLATION REPORTS

Due to an overwhelming increase in cases across Monroe County, schools may be receiving incomplete daily reports identifying students/staff who are required to quarantine or isolate. During this period, families may present a positive test result or an online mandatory quarantine order to use for return-to-school and Test-to-Stay purposes. In the absence of official MCDPH notification, parents may attest to the location (in school or out-of-school) where they believe their child contacted COVID. The online mandatory quarantine order can be found here: <https://healthcalls.monroecounty.gov/quarantine>. Anyone needing assistance with the online mandatory quarantine order should contact the COVID-19 hotline at 585-753-5555.

ISOLATION/QUARANTINE

Monroe County will follow the [Interim Updated Isolation & Quarantine Guidance](#) issued Jan. 4, 2022 by the New York State Department of Public Health, which shortens Isolation and Quarantine to 5 days in most instances. **We understand there are many questions related to these changes, and we will be adapting our protocols and providing clarity over the next several days.** Of particular note, the CDC has also issued [updated recommendations](#) for Isolation and Quarantine. These are recommendations *only*, and are not the same as the NYSDOH guidance that Monroe County will adhere to.

TEST TO STAY ELIGIBILITY

Monroe County is modifying its Test to Stay policy to align with new [NYSDOH guidance](#) that narrows the pool of students who are eligible for TTS. Effective immediately, TTS only applies to asymptomatic, unvaccinated students exposed to an infectious individual while *in school* (for example, while eating lunch in the cafeteria). Students exposed to COVID-19 outside of school are no longer eligible.

ANTIGEN TESTS PERMITTED FOR ALL RETURN-TO-SCHOOL PURPOSES

This changes the MCDPH algorithm entitled *PreK-12 student, teacher or staff member with proof of full vaccination is exposed to COVID-19*, dated Dec. 13, 2021. NYSDOH has modified its guidance to allow the use of a negative, laboratory-confirmed Rapid Antigen test for return-to-school purposes. NAAT/PCR tests are no longer required as a final step for these individuals to return to school.

HOME TESTS ARE STILL NOT PERMITTED FOR RETURN-TO-SCHOOL PURPOSES

A negative home Rapid Antigen test result is still not permitted for return-to-school purposes. If an individual with no known exposure has symptoms OR if a vaccinated student has been exposed to COVID-19, a negative, *laboratory-confirmed* test result is necessary (in addition to any other requirements on the algorithms).

If you have any questions, please email Julie Philipp at juliephilipp@monroecounty.gov. Please be patient as we are receiving a large volume of inquiries.

Best, Dr. Michael Mendoza