San Francisco Department of Public Health

Guidance

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): COVID-19 Contact Tracing at Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth
Updated November 29, 2020

This FAQ was developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) for local use. It will be posted at www.sfcdcp.org/CovidSchoolChildcare. Information may change.

AUDIENCE: Administrators and COVID-19 liaisons at schools, childcare programs, day camps, out-of-school time (OST) programs, and other programs for children and youth.

Summary of Changes from the 10/16/2020 Version
• "Close contact" now includes people who were within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for <u>a total of 15 minutes</u> or more in a 24 hour period • All children and staff under <u>18</u> in a pod/cohort are considered close contacts. • Gender and ethnicity added to "Sample Template" for listing close contacts

BACKGROUND: When someone at a school, childcare or other program for children and youth tests positive for COVID-19, SFDPH works in partnership with the school, childcare or program to identify people who had close contact with the individual with COVID-19. This is called contact tracing. **Contact tracing can prevent COVID-19 transmission by identifying people who may be infected and helping them quarantine so they don't inadvertently spread the disease**. People with COVID-19 can transmit the virus to others for 48 hours before they develop symptoms. Some people never develop symptoms but can still transmit the virus. SFDPH also does contact tracing for other infectious diseases like measles and tuberculosis, to protect the community's health.

Helpful Definitions

Contagious	Infected and able to spread the infection to other people. People with COVID-19 are considered contagious starting 48 hours before their symptoms began until • At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms began AND • They haven't had a fever for at least 24 hours AND • Their symptoms have improved. If the person with COVID-19 never had symptoms, they are considered contagious starting 48 hours before their positive COVID-19 test was collected until 10 days after they were tested.
Exposed	Had close contact with a person with COVID-19 while the person was contagious, and may have been infected from that contact.
Close Contact	Any of the following types of contact with a person with COVID-19 while they were contagious, even if both people were wearing facemasks. • Were within 6 feet of them for a total of 15 minutes or more in a 24 hour period • Lived or stayed overnight with them

	• Took care of them or were taken care of by them • For pods/cohorts of children under 18, SFDPH considers all children and staff in a cohort to be close contacts. The term "close contact" can also refer to someone who has had close contact with a person with COVID-19.
Isolation	Isolation is used to keep people with COVID-19 away from others while they are contagious.
Quarantine	Quarantine is used to keep people who have been exposed to COVID-19, also called "close contacts," away from others while they may be infected. After someone has been exposed to COVID-19, they must stay home and away from other people for a recommended period, usually 14 days after their last exposure.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is contact tracing and why is it important?
- Contact tracing is a process of
    - Finding out everyone who was in close contact with someone with COVID-19,
    - Letting them know they *may* have been infected with COVID-19, and
    - Telling them to quarantine and get tested, and giving them resources to help them with testing and quarantine.
- Contact tracing is important because COVID-19 spreads easily between people. The spread can be slowed down or prevented by separating the people who may be infected from other people.
- Contact tracing usually starts by talking to the person with COVID-19 to find out everyone that they were in close contact with during the time that they were infectious.
- Sometimes it is helpful to talk to other people in addition to the infected person, in order to get information about who they were in close contact with.

What is the contact tracing process if there is a case of COVID-19 at school, childcare, camp or other program for children and youth?
- SFDPH and the site administrator or COVID-19 liaison at the program will discuss who may have been exposed.
- SFDPH interviews the person with COVID-19, or their family in the case of a child, to find out who they might have exposed to COVID-19.
- Site administration at the program contacts people at the program who may have been exposed, as directed by SFDPH, to tell them that a Contact Tracer from SFDPH will be calling them soon. This way, nobody is surprised or suspicious when they get a call shortly thereafter.
- Site administration at the program gives the names, phones numbers and other contact information of people who may have been exposed to the SFDPH Contact Tracing Team. See sample form attached below.

- The SFDPH Contact Tracing Team calls the people who may have been exposed (i.e. staff, children, or their parents). The team helps people understand what to expect and what to do next. They refer people for testing for COVID-19 and to resources to help them quarantine.

How does Contact Tracing protect the identity of the person who tests positive for COVID-19?

- Contact Tracing must protect confidentiality of the person with COVID-19. This is required by Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

- The program's site administration is required to know the identity of the person with COVID-19 in order to take action to protect everyone else.

- SFDPH will not reveal the identity or personal details of the person with COVID-19 to any other staff or families who are contacted. The families will be told that their child was exposed to someone with COVID-19, but no name will be given.

As a site administrator, what is my responsibility?

- Refer to the SFDPH guidance *"For Non-Healthcare Businesses & Community Organizations: What to do if Someone at the Workplace Has COVID-19"* at www.sfcdcp.org/businesses

- Work with SFDPH to identify close contacts. SFDPH will ask site administration to submit a list of names and contact information for all close contacts. Please refer to the sample template for a list of close contacts at www.sfcdcp.org/CovidSchoolsChildcare. For assistance, please contact Schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org.

- Once close contacts are identified in partnership with SFDPH, send all close contacts the *"Close Contacts Advisory" www.sfcdcp.org/COVIDSchoolsChildcare* and *"Isolation and Quarantine Packet"* at www.sfcdcp.org/i&q

- Refer to the following scenario grid for an overview of needed actions: *"What to do when someone has suspected or confirmed COVID-19: Quick Guide for Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth"* at https://sfcdcp.org/CovidSchoolsChildcare

Who are typical close contacts in programs for children and youth?

Anyone who was within 6 feet of the person with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more in 24 hours is considered a close contact. In schools, childcares and programs for children and youth, the following groups are typically close contacts:

- For pods or cohorts of children under 18 years old, all staff and children in the same pod or cohort as the person with COVID-19

- People who live with, take care of, or are taken care of by the person with COVID 19. This includes siblings, other family members, and caregivers.

- People who carpooled, ate together, and socialized outside of the program together.

Who will need to quarantine in the event of a positive COVID-19 case?

- Generally, everyone who has been in close contact with the person with COVID-19 must quarantine for 14 days after their last exposure. SFDPH will work with the school's or program's site administration, interview the person with COVID-19, and possibly interview others to determine who is a close contact and who needs to quarantine.

- All close contacts should also get tested. The SFDPH Contact Tracing Team will connect close contacts to testing. However, getting a COVID-19 test during the quarantine period does not shorten the 14-day quarantine. This is because a person can have a negative test in the early stages of their infection.

- Note: the person with COVID-19 infection will also need to stay at home and away from others for at least 10 days after their symptoms started (or if they have no symptoms, at least 10 days from the date their positive test was collected).

What does it mean for a child or youth to quarantine?

- Children and youth under quarantine must stay home. They are not allowed to leave the home except for medical care. They can be in private outdoor spaces in their home that are not shared with other households (i.e. private backyards). They cannot go to parks, playgrounds, or other public spaces. They cannot attend schools, childcare, or other programs for children and youth. They cannot have playdates with other children at their home or interact with people outside their immediate household, such as babysitters.

Who is considered at general exposure risk?

- Being a person at general exposure risk is not the same as being a close contact of someone who is infected. People who are at general exposure risk were present at the site on the same day, but not identified by SFDPH as close contacts. These people have a much lower risk of getting infected than the close contacts.

- These people should still be told that someone at the school, childcare or program had confirmed COVID-19, but that they were not identified as a close contact.

- They should watch for COVID-19 symptoms, but do not need to quarantine or get tested if they do not have symptoms.

Additional Resources

San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH)

- **SFDPH Schools and Childcare Hub** for COVID-19 consultation and guidance
  (628) 217-7499.
  Schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org

- COVID-19 guidance for the public
  https://www.sfcdcp.org/covid19

- COVID-19 guidance for schools, childcares and programs for children and youth
  https://sfcdcp.org/CovidSchoolsChildcare

  - *Parent and Caregiver Handout: COVID-19 Health Checks/If Your Child has Symptoms*. Instructions for parents on health screenings and return to school guidelines if their child has COVID-19 symptoms

  - *"What to do when someone has suspected or confirmed COVID-19: Quick Guide for Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth"*

- *"What to do if Someone at the Workplace Tested Positive for COVID-19"*
  https:// www.sfcdcp.org/covid19 under Businesses and Employers.

- *"Leaving Isolation or Returning to Work for Those Who Have Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19"*
  https://www.sfcdcp.org/covid19/rtw

California Department of Public Health (CDPH)

- https://covid19.ca.gov/contact-tracing