



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

UPDATE ON MODIFIED QUARANTINE OPTION FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS OF SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in TK-12 Schools

This document provides an update for parents and guardians concerning the new modified quarantine option available to TK-12 Schools in Los Angeles County (LAC). This option makes it possible for children who have been exposed to COVID-19 in the classroom or another school setting to continue attending school as long as certain conditions are met. For information on other policies and steps to protect children from getting COVID-19 at school, see the LAC Department of Public Health [Parent Update: TK-12 Schools](#).

Here is what parents need to know about the new modified quarantine option.

Usually, if an unvaccinated person was identified as a “close contact” of someone who has COVID-19, that person must quarantine at home. A close contact is a person who either:

- Has been within 6 feet of an infected person for 15 minutes or more during a 24 hour period, or
- Has been in direct contact with the infected person’s body fluids (for example, coughed or sneezed on, shared a drink or eating utensils, kissed).

Now schools have a new option, called “modified quarantine” which would allow children to continue in-person instruction during regular school hours, while under the Health Officer Quarantine orders. This new option is based on a review of information collected by Public Health during the first month of school which showed that very few children in quarantine end up having COVID-19.

There are strict rules that schools must follow if they choose the modified quarantine option.

1. Modified quarantine can only be considered if the exposure to infection occurred in a school setting where students are supervised by school staff (classroom, school grounds with school staff present, school bus).
2. Modified quarantine is only allowed if the exposed child does not have symptoms. They must monitor for symptoms daily, and if symptoms develop, the child cannot do modified quarantine. They must stay home and follow instructions for close contacts who develop [symptoms while in quarantine](#).
3. The school must be able to state positively that both the infected child and the child identified as a close contact were correctly wearing masks the entire time of the close contact exposure.
4. The exposed student is not part of a school outbreak. An outbreak is when spread has occurred between a group of 3 persons or more at a school within a 14-day period. The risk of spread is much greater in an outbreak so modified quarantine for exposed students is not as safe.
5. The school must not allow close contacts to participate in extra curricular activities. The modified quarantine is meant to let children continue learning but does not cover other activities outside of the regular school curriculum.
6. Children who are covered by a modified quarantine order must wear a mask at all times on school grounds except when they are eating or drinking. At those times they must be at least 6 feet from any other person and preferably outdoors.



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7. Children who are covered by a modified quarantine order must be tested at least twice a week using an appropriate test in a health care setting or approved testing site (a home test is not acceptable for this purpose). One of the tests should be as soon as possible after the exposure (Day 1 or Day 2 in quarantine); the second should be at least 3 days later, ideally on or after Day 5 so that your child can be released from quarantine after Day 7 (on Day 8) if they test negative.

Because COVID-19 virus can sometimes spread outside the 6-foot range it is also strongly recommended that unvaccinated children who were NOT close contacts but who were in a classroom or other school group with someone who is infected be tested weekly for two weeks after the date of last exposure. If the school has the capacity to test even vaccinated people, it is suggested that fully vaccinated individuals who are NOT close contacts but who were present in the same classroom or group as the infected person also be tested weekly for two weeks.

How can parents help make modified quarantine an option for their child's school.

- Remember that modified quarantine is an option that a school can choose to allow. Your child's school can only choose to allow that option if all of the conditions listed above are met.
- Teach your child about the importance of wearing a mask and about the right way to use a mask. Visit ph.lacounty.gov/masks for information on effective use of masks to prevent spread.
- If your child is allowed to follow the modified quarantine option, remember that they are still under a [Public Health Emergency Quarantine Order](#). Your child must stay home at all times when not receiving in-person instruction.
- Cooperate with testing requirements if your child is identified as a close contact or has been exposed to an infected person in a school setting.

And if you want to do more, you can sign up for the **DPH Parent Ambassador Program!** We provide training and a certificate to parents who want to be educated about COVID-19, how it spreads, its impact on child health, and the ways we can all work to avoid spread. You will be joining a wonderful group of parent leaders who help share the facts about COVID-19 with the whole school community.

To learn more, email: TK12Ambassador@ph.lacounty.gov

Visit the **COVID-19 Resources for Parents and Guardians** [webpage](#) for more information.