

GENERAL COVID-19 AND CONTACT TRACING

1Q: What is contact tracing?

A: Contact tracing is the process of identifying people who have come in direct contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and need to quarantine due to their exposure. The purpose of contact tracing is to slow the spread of COVID-19 by notifying people who have been exposed and advising them to quarantine.

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) are the agencies responsible for contact tracing, MCPS assists by doing immediate contact tracing of employees cases. MCPS internal contact tracing does not replace MDH or DHHS contact tracing.

If an employee has informed you that they have been exposed or have tested positive for COVID-19, contact Heather Dublinske immediately to begin the internal MCPS contact tracing process.

2Q: What is direct contact?

A: Direct contact, as defined by the CDC, is being 6 feet or less from a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 for 15 or more minutes during a 24 hour time period, regardless of whether a mask was worn or not. Direct contact can occur indoors or outdoors.

3Q: What is quarantine and how long is it?

A: Quarantine is a period of isolation where people have little to no contact with others, even those who live in their household. If an employee has been in direct contact with someone positive for COVID-19, they need to quarantine for 14 days from the last day they were in contact with the employee who tested positive. During the quarantine period, staff may not be on MCPS property and should remain in their homes keeping distance from family members. The Department of Health and Human Services provides Montgomery County residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 with full instructions about quarantine procedures.

4Q: A staff member in my building has tested positive for COVID-19. Does everyone in my building need to quarantine?

A: Only staff members who had direct contact with the employee who tested positive will need to quarantine. Through contact tracing we will determine which staff need to quarantine and which staff may continue working.

5Q: What if the staff member did not have direct contact with the employee positive for COVID-19, but touched some of the same surfaces (door knobs, copy machine, etc.)? Do they need to quarantine?

A: Based on contact tracing guidelines from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), people who only had surface contact do not need to quarantine. It is important to frequently clean and sanitize high touch areas in your building and remind all employees to wash their hands, or use waterless hand sanitizer, after touching common surfaces.

6Q: A staff member reported their spouse has tested positive for COVID-19, who needs to quarantine?

A: Only the employee who has direct contact with the person positive for COVID-19 needs to quarantine. Other employees may continue working and monitor for symptoms. If the employee whose spouse tested positive later tests positive themselves, after completing the contact tracing protocols, other staff may need to quarantine at that time.

7Q: A staff member reported that a family member in their house was notified to quarantine. Do my staff members need to quarantine?

A: In this scenario, no MCPS staff members need to quarantine. As long as the staff member did not have direct contact with the person who is positive for COVID-19, even if their family member is in quarantine, they may continue working and monitor for symptoms. If the employee's family member later tests positive for COVID-19, only that employee will need to quarantine.

8Q: I have notified staff who had direct contact with a co-worker that tested positive for COVID-19 that they need to quarantine for 14 days. They each had COVID-19 tests that came back negative, can they come back to work?

A: No. You cannot "test out" of quarantine. Even if someone tests negative for COVID-19, if they had direct contact with someone who has tested positive, they need to complete the full 14-day quarantine period before returning to work.

9Q: Can I require a staff member who has tested positive for COVID-19 to provide negative test results before allowing them in the building?

A: No, you may not require a staff member who has tested positive to re-test or have a negative test before returning to work. If the employee has completed the 14-day quarantine period, and has been symptom free for at least 24 hours, they may return to work after providing MCPS form 440-40M/440-40S, or a letter from a medical provider or Department of Health, clearing them to return to work.

SCHOOL AND BUILDING OPERATIONS (CLEANING, FOOD DISTRIBUTION, CHILDCARE)

10Q: A staff member working on-site has tested positive for COVID-19, do I need to close my entire school/worksite?

A: Decisions about school and building closures are made on a case-by-case basis taking a number of factors into consideration, including CDC and DHHS guidelines, how many people on-site have tested positive for COVID-19, food distribution and childcare, community and public access to the building, and other factors that determine the level of exposure. If only one employee has tested positive for COVID-19, you will not need to close the building. Building closure decisions will be made by the Office of Operations, in collaboration with school and worksite administrators and following public health guidelines.

11Q: How does the building get cleaned after an employee has tested positive for COVID-19?

A: Areas of a building used by an employee who tested positive for the virus will be left unoccupied and undisturbed for at least 24 hours before cleaning. Building service staff will then clean and sanitize all surfaces in those areas using a CDC approved disinfectant that will be applied and left on surfaces to air dry.

Cleaning procedures may vary depending on the length of time that has passed between the last date the employee was on-site and the date they first developed symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19. Building Service staff should follow all daily cleaning guidelines provided by the Department of Maintenance and Operations, and follow safety guidelines including wearing gloves and mask at all times. Additional cleaning needs are determined by the Department of Maintenance and Operations depending on the extent of COVID-19 cases at a worksite.

For more information about cleaning procedures please visit: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/facilities/schoolplantops/Section%2013a-03%20H1N1%20Daily%20Cleaning%20Guidelines.pdf>

12Q: My school is a food distribution site and one of my food service workers has tested positive for COVID-19, do I need to stop food distribution?

A: Knowing the importance of providing meals to our students and families, we take many measures to ensure health and safety so food distribution to your communities is not impacted. If a food service employee has tested positive for COVID-19, a number of factors will determine how food distribution will continue. If food is not prepared on-site, and only distributed, after contact tracing we will determine if we can proceed with normal distribution. If food is prepared and distributed on-site, or if many of your food services team needs to quarantine, the Department of Food and Nutrition Services will be consulted to bring mobile delivery to your location.

13Q: My building has a child/daycare using classrooms. A student and daycare staff member both tested positive for COVID-19. Do MCPS staff working in the building need to quarantine, and do I close the building?

A: MCPS and Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) worked closely together to ensure child and daycares could safely operate independently in MCPS buildings. If a staff member or student at the child/daycare has tested positive you will be informed, typically by the site director. If there has been no direct contact between MCPS staff and child/daycare staff, no MCPS staff members will need to quarantine. Even staff who cleaned the child/daycare rooms may continue working. The building may remain and based on contact tracing and additional information, child/daycare closures are decided in collaboration with the Office of Operations and Montgomery County Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF). If the child/daycare closes their program, MCPS employees may continue working and the school may remain open for other use.

COMMUNICATION

14Q: What information can I share about a staff member that has tested positive for COVID-19 in order to find out who had direct contact?

A: Medical and personal information should remain confidential to protect the employees medical privacy. The employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 should be your primary source for determining who they were in contact with. If you are unable to gather sufficient information from the employee who has tested positive for COVID-19, you may ask other staff members to list all people they had direct contact with and see if they name the COVID-19 positive employee. Even if staff members are aware of the employee who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, you should take all measures to not share their identifying information with other staff.

15Q: A staff member went home sick and got tested for COVID-19 and is waiting for the results. Shouldn't I tell other staff working on-site so they can get tested?

A: You should only notify staff once there is a confirmed diagnosis for COVID-19 at your worksite. Staff should not be asked to quarantine, or advised to get tested, unless they had direct contact with an employee who has a confirmed positive COVID-19 test.

16Q: A teacher who is currently teaching remotely notified me they tested positive for COVID-19. The employee has not been on-site since July. Do I need to inform my staff?

A: Please inform Heather Dublinske if any staff members, on or off-site, inform you that they have tested positive for COVID-19. If an employee has not been on-site for over 14 days, and has not had contact with any staff or students, no further communication is needed.

17Q: After working with Heather Dublinske to complete contact tracing, only a few staff members had direct contact with a COVID-19 positive employee and need to quarantine. What do I tell other staff members who worked on-site but did not have direct contact?

A: Please use the language in Notification to Staff- No Contact (Template Letter B) to inform employees who worked on-site with the COVID-19 positive employee, but did not have direct contact.

18Q: Do I need to tell my entire staff and community when an employee working on-site has tested positive for COVID-19?

A: At this time, based on guidance provided by the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, we are notifying staff members who had direct contact and need to quarantine, and providing notification to staff who worked on-site that are not at risk of exposure. You do not need to notify staff that are working remotely and have not worked on-site.

If communication to your entire staff or community is needed, the Office of Operations in collaboration with The Office of Engagement, Innovation and Operations, will support broad communication depending on the situation (site closure, multiple staff members testing positive, etc.)

19Q: A student attending a school approved event (senior pictures, SAT testing, etc.) tested positive for COVID-19, what are my next steps?

A: If a student, or parent, informs you of a positive COVID-19 test, please contact the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) at 240-777-1755. As advised by DDHS, MCPS only provides limited contact tracing involving staff who have tested positive for COVID-19.

20Q: One of my staff members tested positive for COVID-19. My school has a daycare using two classrooms, do I need to inform the daycare and close the classrooms?

A: If there was no direct contact between the MCPS employee and daycare staff or students, please inform the daycare site director using the same language in Notification to Staff- No Contact (Template Letter B). Any closure of classrooms used for child/daycare will be made by the child/daycare program in collaboration with the Office of Operations and Community Use of Public Facilities.

OTHER QUESTIONS

21Q: A reporter from a local news source has contacted me and is asking questions about COVID-19 cases at my school. What should I tell them?

A: Please direct all inquiries from media outlets to the Office of Communications.

22Q: I have a question not listed in the FAQ's

A: Please contact Heather Dublinske at Heather_Dublinske@mcpsdmd.org if you have any additional questions regarding COVID-19 contact tracing procedures.