

# Procedures for Responding to a Confirmed Positive Case: Contact Tracing and Communication

## What is Contact Tracing?

Contact tracing is a strategy used by health departments to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Close contacts of an infected individual with COVID-19 are identified and contacted by the Public Health Department, and asked to quarantine for 14 days in their home while monitoring their health for the development of symptoms.

**Purpose of Contact Tracing:** The purpose of contact tracing is to reduce or stop the spread of infectious illnesses by notifying close contacts of their exposure, and providing them with quarantine requirements so there is a reduction in community spread.

**Definition of Close Contact:** Close contacts are those individuals who were within 6 feet of an infected individual for a period of greater than 15 minutes from 2 days before illness onset, or within 2 days of a positive COVID-19 test (in people without symptoms). Close contact can occur while caring for and/or living with an infected individual, and/or having direct contact with infectious secretions of a person diagnosed with COVID-19.

## Process for Contact Tracing in Wayland Public Schools

If a Wayland Public Schools staff member and/or student is diagnosed with COVID-19, the following steps will be taken:

- The Wayland Public Health Department will be notified of positive COVID-19 cases through the state epidemiological system and/or directly from an individual.
- The Wayland Public Health Department Nurse will contact the school nurse at the COVID positive individual's school as soon as results are known; the Public Health Nurse will notify the Superintendent and principal.
- The nurse and the administrator will provide a list of close contacts to the Health Department and/or those individuals trained to assist with contact tracing.
- Those students/staff considered to be close contacts will receive a phone call from the Wayland Health Department and will be required to quarantine for 14 days and be referred for a COVID-19 test.
- The Wayland Health Department will provide guidance and ongoing communication throughout the isolation/quarantine process for confirmed positive cases and those identified as close contacts.
- The school nurse and the Wayland Health Department will release those individuals from isolation or quarantine according to public health guidelines.
- The Superintendent and building principal will be updated on clearance for return to school.

## Communication with Families and Staff When There is A Confirmed Case

- The Health Department will work with Administration and staff to identify close contacts . The Health Department will contact those identified close contacts by phone. The Superintendent or his designee will send a letter to families and staff who share a classroom with a confirmed case and will also inform the school that there is a confirmed case.

**If there is a confirmed case** and the District is unable to identify close contacts in a timely manner, such as after a large social gathering, the District may need to close a building for a period of time to identify those close contacts.

**If there are multiple cases in the school or district, the following steps will be taken:**

If there is suspected in-school transmission beyond one cohort or a small number of cohorts, next steps will be determined which could include: closing part of the school or the entire school for a short period of time for extensive cleaning, or closing the school partially or fully for the duration of a 14-day quarantine.

If there are multiple cases in multiple schools, district leaders and the Superintendent will consult with the Wayland Public Health Department, the Board of Health and the School Committee for next steps. These steps could include: shutting down the district for a short time (i.e. 1-3 days) for extensive cleaning or shutting down the district for the longer duration of a 14-day quarantine.

If the decision is made to close a school or schools for a number of days, the district will send clear information to families and staff that will include:

- Informing them it is possible that COVID-19 is being transmitted in the school and/or district;
- Noting there may be more potential cases that are not yet symptomatic;
- Recommending students/staff monitor their health and not have contact with others;
- Reminding families of the importance of not having contact with higher-risk individuals;
- Reminding families/staff of symptoms to monitor for and to call their healthcare provider for evaluation/testing if experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

Upon return to school:

- Reinforce hand hygiene, need for physical distancing, face mask requirements;
- Ensure adequate supplies are available; i.e., PPE, face masks, soap, hand sanitizer, cleaning products.

**Reference**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#Contact-Tracing>

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Revised, August 20,2020) Protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in the school, on the bus, or in community settings

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