



**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): COVID-19 Contact Tracing
At Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth**

Updated August 4, 2020

This FAQ was developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) for use by local facilities and will be posted at <http://www.sfdcp.org>. Information may change.

AUDIENCE: Administrators and COVID-19 liaisons at schools, child care programs, day camps, schools and other programs for children and youth.

Summary of Changes from the 6/29/2020 Version

- Updated definition of close contacts
- Addition of “Close Contacts” form template

BACKGROUND: When a case of COVID-19 occurs at a school, child care program, or another program for children and youth, SFDPH works with the program to identify those people who may have been infected by the person with COVID-19. SFDPH then helps those people get tested and quarantine at home so that they do not infect others. This process, called contact tracing, is crucial to prevent spread of COVID-19 infection

Helpful Definitions	
Infectious	<p>A person who is able to give the virus that causes COVID-19 to other people.</p> <p>People with COVID-19 are considered infectious from 2 days before their symptoms first start until 10 days after their symptoms started, assuming they are recovered after 10 days.</p> <p>If a person with COVID-19 has no symptoms, they are considered infectious from 2 days before their positive test was collected until 10 days after the positive test.</p>
Exposed	<p>A person who has been in close enough contact with someone who was infectious with COVID-19, that they could also get infected.</p>
Close Contact	<p>Someone who was within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes, during the time that the person with COVID-19 was infectious.</p> <p>For pods/cohorts of children under 12, SFDPH considers all children and staff in a cohort to be close contacts.</p>
Quarantine	<p>Quarantine is used to keep people who have been exposed to COVID-19 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, to see if they become sick or infectious.</p>
Isolation	<p>Isolation is used to keep people with COVID-19 away from others while they are infectious.</p>



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 helping provide them with resources, including how to get tested.
- 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.
- San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) has a Case Investigation and Contact Tracing team. When someone in San Francisco has a positive COVID-19 test, the team reaches out to that person, and others if needed, to find out who they were in contact with. Then team reaches out to each close contact to make sure they are safely quarantining and can get tested.

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 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, phone 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 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 <https://www.sfdcp.org/covid19>
- 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. 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”* and *“Isolation and Quarantine Packet”* at <https://www.sfdcp.org/covid19>
- 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://sfdcp.org/CovidSchoolsChildcare>

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

- For pods or cohorts of children under 12 years all, all staff and children in the same pod or cohort as the person with COVID-19 are considered close contacts.
- Close contact also includes 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.
- Additional situations that involve close contact include carpooling, eating together, and socializing together outside of the program.

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

- Everyone who has been in close contact with the person with COVID-19 must quarantine for 14 days after their last exposure.
- 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.
- SFDPH will do a risk assessment, including interviews of the infected person and possibly others. Together with the site administration, SFDPH will determine who is a close contact and who needs to quarantine.
- 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 (12 years old and younger) to quarantine?

- Children under quarantine should 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, playground, 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 monitor 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 (415) 554-2830. Press 1 for COVID-19, then press 6 for Schools
Schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org
- COVID-19 guidance for the public, including schools and employers
<https://www.sfdcp.org/covid19>
- *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, at <http://sfdcp.org/covidschoolschildcare>
- *“What to do when someone has suspected or confirmed COVID-19: Quick Guide for Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth”* at <https://sfdcp.org/CovidSchoolsChildcare>
- *“What to do if Someone at the Workplace Tested Positive for COVID-19”*
<https://www.sfdcp.org/covid19> under Businesses and Employers.
- *“Leaving Isolation or Returning to Work for Those Who Have Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19”*
<https://www.sfdcp.org/covid19/rtw>



**SAMPLE TEMPLATE: List of Close Contacts of
Confirmed Positive COVID-19 Case**

In order to contain the spread of COVID-19 in San Francisco, please help by collecting names of close contacts to confirmed positive cases. SFDPH will contact them to offer support and provide information on limiting the spread of the virus and testing. This template can be a useful tool to help organize information.

Instructions: Complete the information below for every school- or office-related close contact. A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive testing date or specimen collection), continuing until the time the patient is isolated. Parent/Guardian name is only needed if the close contact is a student. For pods/cohorts of children under 12, SFDPH considers all children and staff in a cohort to be close contacts.

- When completed, work with your DPH representative from the Education Hub to submit this form. Please call SFDPH’s COVID-19 Contract Tracing Hub @ 628-217-6102 or send a secure email to trace@sfdph.org with a cc to schools-childcaresites@sfdph.org **within 24 hours** to provide the names and contact information of identified close contacts.

Site Name (school or office):

Case Name (Person who tested positive) & Date of Birth:

	Close Contact’s First Name, Last Name	Parent/Guardian First Name, Last Name	Phone Number	Date of Birth	City/County of Residence
1					
2					
3					
4					
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