

January 10, 2022

Dear Richland Families,

The Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois State Board of Education, and Will County Health Department announced that the agencies have adopted CDC guidance for K-12 schools that reduces the isolation and exclusion period. Effective today, Monday, January 10th, Richland will adhere to this new guidance.

Starting today, Monday, January 10th, the isolation, and exclusion period for students and staff members sick with COVID-19 or considered a close contact has been reduced to five days as long as the person is fever-free for 24 hours and symptoms have improved. Staff and students who are currently impacted by a previous exclusion will complete their full exclusion period unless otherwise notified.

This announcement does not change the state of Illinois' mask requirement for anyone inside school buildings. The Governor's indoor mask mandate for school is still in effect until further notice.

Below is some information related to exclusion and isolation periods:

How does this new guidance impact staff and students if they test positive for COVID-19?

CDC Recommended Isolation Period for Those Testing Positive for COVID-19

- Staff or students who test positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, should isolate for 5 days after onset of symptoms, or 5 days from specimen collection date if no symptoms are present.
- Staff or students who test positive for COVID-19 and have no symptoms or their symptoms are resolving can be released from isolation after 5 days. To calculate the 5-day isolation period, day 0 is the first day of symptoms or specimen collection date if asymptomatic. If they continue to have fever or other symptoms have not improved after 5 days of isolation, they should wait to end isolation **until they are fever-free for 24 hours and their other symptoms have improved.**
- Schools should ensure that staff or students who test positive for COVID-19 also do the following:
 - Continue to wear a well-fitted mask around others (including at home) for 5 additional days after release from isolation. If unable to wear a mask when around others, the case should continue to isolate for a total of 10 days.
 - Avoid being around students or staff who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#).
 - If masks need to be removed (e.g., for lunch), ensure 6 feet of physical distancing until 10 days after symptom onset or positive test.

Source: Illinois Department of Public Health

NEW LUNCH GUIDANCE

Please note, the new guidance is as follows: for students/staff that are positive, "if masks need to be removed (e.g. for lunch), ensure 6 feet of physical distancing until 10 days after symptom onset or positive test. Students may be isolated/excluded in a variety of ways during the lunch period in order to meet this IDPH requirement.

How does the new guidance impact staff and students who are considered close contacts to someone who tested positive with COVID-19?

CDC Recommended Quarantine Period for Close Contacts to Someone with COVID-19

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 18 or older and have received all recommended vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people. • Ages 5-17 years and completed the primary series of COVID-19 vaccines. • Confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (you tested positive using a viral test). 	<p>Quarantine not required</p> <p>Wear a mask around others for 10 days¹ Test on day 5, if possible</p> <p>If a person develops symptoms, they should immediately isolate until a negative test confirms symptoms are not caused by COVID-19</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 18 or older and completed the primary series of recommended vaccine, but have not received a recommended booster shot when eligible. • Received the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine (completing the primary series) over 2 months ago and have not received a recommended booster shot. • Unvaccinated or have not completed a primary vaccine series. 	<p>Stay home and mask around others for 5 days. After that, continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days</p> <p>Test on day 5, if possible</p> <p>If a person develops symptoms, they should immediately isolate until a negative test confirms symptoms are not caused by COVID-19.</p>

¹Children who have received the primary vaccination series and are not eligible for booster doses after 5 months for Pfizer, 6 months for Moderna, or 2 months for Johnson and Johnson should not be excluded from school after close contact unless they develop symptoms and test positive for COVID-19. If masks need to be removed (e.g., for lunch), ensure 6 feet of physical distancing until 10 days after exposure.

Source: [Illinois Department of Public Health](#)

For detailed information on the CDC recommendations for COVID-19 exclusions, [click here](#).

Thank you for your continued support and flexibility.