

# Information and FAQs for parents

The Department of Health (WA Health) and the Department of Education have considered the importance of providing face-to-face learning to students for their learning, social and emotional development, physical and mental wellbeing in determining the new very high caseload settings that are currently in effect for all schools in Western Australia.

The purpose of these revised measures is to keep schools open and functioning, while balancing this with the health and safety of the wider WA community in this very high COVID-19 caseload environment.

The main impact for your household is the change in requirements for close contacts, which are in place for all schools and care services across WA. This means only a household close contact or a close contact who is symptomatic is required to quarantine for 7 days.

You can read more about these guidelines here: [wa.gov.au](http://wa.gov.au)

## What is the difference between isolation and quarantine?

These terms are used interchangeably, for example they are used as follows:

- People who have tested positive to COVID-19, also referred to as 'cases', are required to isolate to avoid spreading the virus to other people.
- People who are deemed a household close contact of a COVID positive case are required to isolate because there is a chance that they could also develop COVID-19.
- People who are a non-household close contact of a COVID positive case are required to quarantine as there is less chance that they could also develop COVID-19.

## Who is defined as a household close contact and can they attend school?

Where there is a COVID-19 positive person in a household the other members of the household are considered household close contacts if they have had contact with them during their infectious period.

Household close contacts must quarantine for 7 days and may not attend school.



## Who is defined as a school close contact?

A school close contact is someone who has had close interaction with a COVID-19 case during their infectious period, as follows:

- At least 15 minutes face to face contact where a mask was not worn by the exposed person and the person with COVID-19; or
- Greater than two hours within a small room or classroom with a case during their infectious period, where masks have been removed for this period by the exposed person and the person with COVID-19 (note: others wearing masks in this scenario would not be considered a close contact); or
- Someone who is directed by WA Health that they are a close contact.

## We have been notified that my child is a close contact of a COVID-19 positive case in the school community, do they need to quarantine?

Under the new, very high caseload settings students who are asymptomatic but have been identified as a school close contact under the existing definitions, above, excluding household close contacts, will be able to continue attending school, Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) or Care Service Centres.

Students deemed a close contact through association anywhere other than through your household can also attend other activities, sporting, or after school events, during or immediately before and after school hours **on their school grounds only**.

However, they must quarantine at home at all other times until the seven days have passed. In the event that they develop symptoms - they need to get tested and if positive they must remain at home in isolation for 7 days from the time of the positive test. If they receive a negative test result they can proceed as above. Notify your school of your child's COVID-19 test results [here](#).

## If my child is a close contact do I need to quarantine with my child?

No. Only close contacts of a COVID-19 positive case need to quarantine.

However, for younger children one parent or caregiver may still need to miss work or work from home to care for their child while they are in quarantine. The rest of the household, including other adults or brothers and sisters, who have not been identified as close contacts of the COVID-19 positive case, can attend work or school.

Household members of close contacts need to take extra precautions and limit interaction with the person who is a close contact wherever possible. It is important to monitor



for symptoms. If anyone in the household experiences symptoms consistent with COVID-19, you should get tested immediately. Note, the Omicron strain can present with less typical symptoms such as diarrhoea, particularly in children.

### **My child has tested positive for COVID-19, what should I do?**

When your child tests positive to COVID-19 they must begin 7 days of isolation and you must notify the school immediately, which you can do most easily [here](#). Do not send your COVID-19 positive child to school, Care Service Centres or OSHC.

If your child's COVID-19 positive result was obtained from a self-administered Rapid Antigen Test (RAT), you must register the result online with the Department of Health [here](#), or call 13 COVID for assistance.

You and the other members of your household immediately become close contacts, must begin 7 days of quarantine.

If they do not have any symptoms after Day 7, your child can leave isolation, without any testing required.

For example, if the COVID-19 positive test result is received at lunchtime on Monday 7 March, this is Day 0, and the isolation period finishes the evening of the following Monday 14 March. If they don't have symptoms after Day 7, your child can leave isolation, and return to school Care Service Centres or OSHC on Tuesday morning 15 March.

### **If another member of the household tests positive within or on my child's last day of isolation, what does this mean for the members of the household?**

An individual within the household who tests COVID-19 positive, must commence 7 days of isolation. Close contacts who have not tested COVID-19 positive, may leave quarantine after completing the original 7 day quarantine. They do not have to start their 7 days quarantine again if there is a new COVID-19 positive case in the household.

### **Is my child required to wear a face mask indoors and outdoors at school for the 7 days following their isolation period?**

Masks are required for all students in Years 3 to 12, and for all adults, both indoors and outdoors at school, for the 7 days following their exit from isolation.

Children in Year 2 or younger returning to school or care services after isolation are not required to wear a mask.

### **How long is the infectious period?**

The infectious period is taken from 48 hours before the onset of symptoms, or 48 hours before the positive test result, until the end of the 7 day isolation period. For example, if your child first tested positive on Wednesday afternoon, their infectious period started on Monday afternoon.

### **Do we need to notify anyone else beyond the school if my child has tested positive?**

Yes, notify persons with whom your child has had close personal interaction during their infectious period, as follows:

- At least 15 minutes face to face contact where a mask was not worn by the other person and your child; or
- Greater than two hours within a small room with your child during their infectious period, where masks have been removed for this period by the other person and your child.

*Please note:* others wearing masks in this scenario would not be considered a close contact.

### **How should my child isolate on their own if other people living in the house don't need to?**

Ideally, your child should isolate in a room alone, away from the other members of your household. If you have more than one bathroom, reserve one bathroom for use by your child who is isolating. If this is not possible, ensure surfaces such as taps are cleaned following each use.

If isolation within the home is not feasible, you can take the following precautions to reduce the risk of transmission:

- As a priority anyone experiencing excessive symptoms should be in their own room.
- If there is more than one person with the same symptoms, they can be placed together in the same room.

### **If there is another COVID-19 positive case in my child's class, after my child has recently had COVID-19, will they be considered a close contact again?**

Close contacts who have recently had COVID-19 do not need to quarantine if:

- they remain asymptomatic and
- re-exposure is less than 8 weeks since they were in isolation as a COVID-19 positive case.

If they have symptoms, they should get tested.

### **Is the isolation period different for vaccinated/ unvaccinated children?**

Requirements for isolation are the same for vaccinated and unvaccinated children.

Further information for parents is provided on the [wa.gov.au](http://wa.gov.au) website and via the following links:

[COVID-19: My child is a close contact](#)

[COVID-19: My child has tested positive](#)

