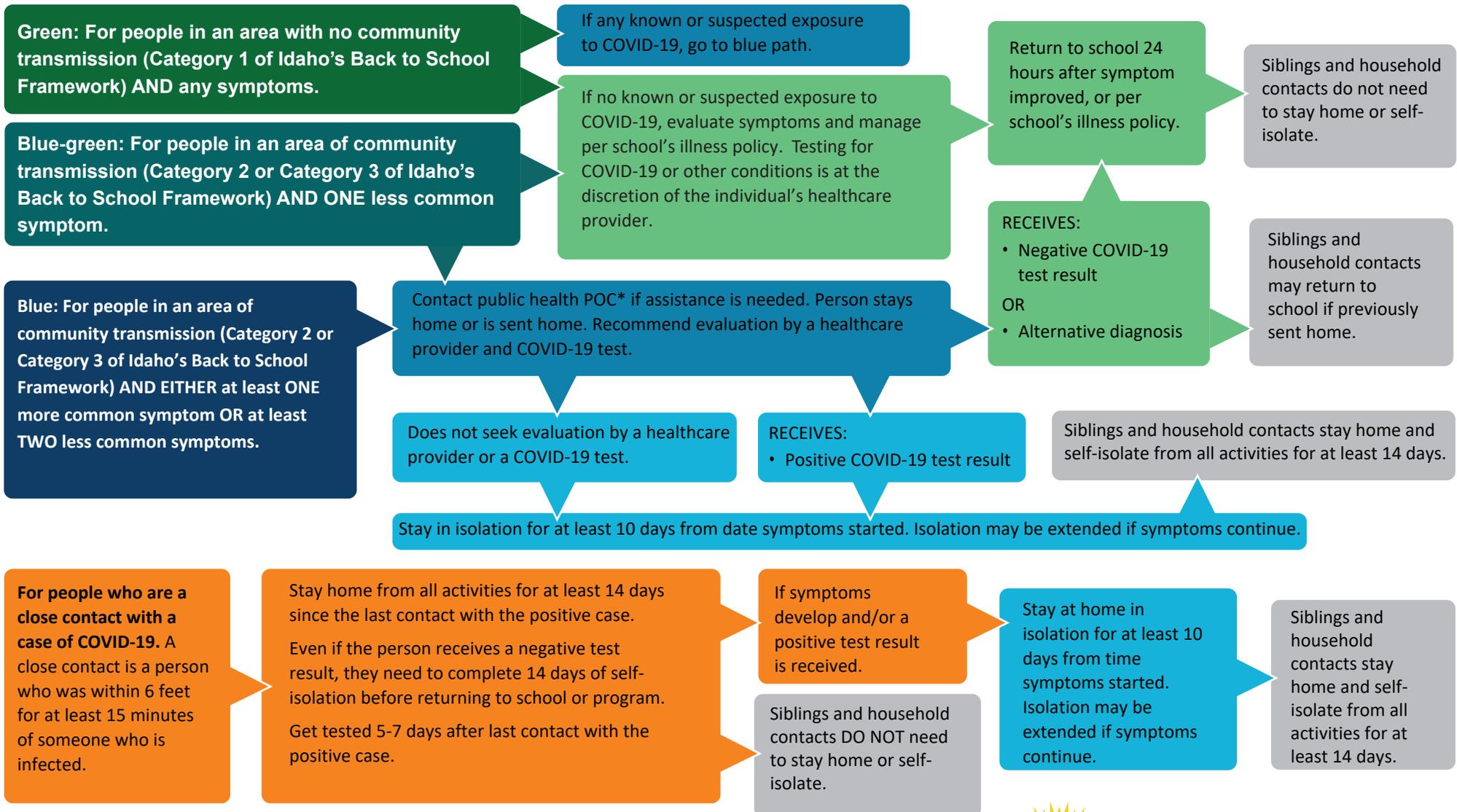


# Decision Tree for Evaluation and Testing of COVID-19 Among Students, Teachers, and Staff in Idaho Schools

Follow the appropriate path if a child, student, or staff person is experiencing the following symptoms consistent with COVID-19:

- More common: fever greater than or equal to 100.4° F, new onset and/or worsening cough, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell.
- Less common: sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, chills, muscle pain, excessive fatigue, new onset of severe headache, new onset of nasal congestion or runny nose.



\*POC: Point of Contact. Your point of contact is \_\_\_\_\_

# Decision Tree for Evaluation and Testing of COVID-19 Among Students, Teachers, and Staff in Idaho Schools

## Introduction

This tool supports decision-making around students, teachers, and staff members who are experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19. The guidance assumes that risk mitigation measures, including mask wearing, physical distancing, and frequent hand hygiene are in place. Symptoms consistent with COVID-19 fall into two groups:

- More common symptoms are: fever of 100.4° F or higher, new onset and/or worsening cough, difficulty breathing, and new loss of taste or smell.
- Less common symptoms are: sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, chills, muscle pain, excessive fatigue, new onset of severe headache, and new onset of nasal congestion or runny nose.

*Known or suspected exposure to COVID-19* is any exposure that the school district (in consultation with the public health POC, if needed) determines may have increased the risk of a person contracting COVID-19 (for example, travel to an area with substantial community transmission, or being in a classroom or on a sports team with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 but not meeting the definition of “close contact”).

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## Supporting people with COVID-19 symptoms

After identifying the COVID-19 symptoms, select one of three possible paths.

### Green path

1. The first path is for when the person is located in an area where there is no community transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (Category 1 of Idaho’s Back to School Framework).
2. Evaluate whether the person has had any known or suspected exposure to COVID-19.
3. If any known or suspected exposure, follow blue path numbers 2-6.
4. If no known or suspected exposure, person may be managed per the school’s usual illness policy.
5. The person’s siblings or household contacts do not need to stay home or self-isolate.

### Blue-Green path

1. The second path is for when a person is located in an area of community transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (Category 2 or Category 3 of Idaho’s Back to School Framework) and is experiencing only ONE less common symptom.
2. Evaluate whether the person has had any known or suspected exposure to COVID-19.
3. If any known or suspected exposure, follow blue path numbers 2-6.
4. If no known or suspected exposure, person may be managed per the school’s usual illness policy. The person’s siblings or household contacts do not need to stay home or self-isolate.

### Blue path

1. The third path is for when a person is located in an area of community transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (Category 2 or Category 3 of Idaho’s Back to School Framework) and is experiencing at least ONE more common symptom or at least TWO less common symptoms.
2. The school may contact the public health POC if assistance is needed. Person stays home or is sent home. Recommend evaluation by a healthcare provider and testing for COVID-19 (and other conditions as determined by the healthcare provider).
3. If the person does not seek a medical evaluation or a COVID-19 test, they must stay at home in isolation for at least 10 days from the time their symptoms started until symptoms are improved and no fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medications. Siblings and household contacts must stay home and self-isolate from all activities for at least 14 days starting with the day they were last in contact with the person who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Note that a household contact may need to self-isolate for up to 24 days (10 days of the case’s isolation period plus an additional 14 days). [See CDC guidance.](#)
4. If the person receives an alternate diagnosis to explain the symptoms, they can then return to school 24 hours after symptoms have improved or as directed by a health care provider or per the school’s illness policy. Siblings and household contacts may return to school if previously sent home.
5. If the person tests negative for COVID-19, they can return to school 24 hours after symptoms have improved or per the school’s illness policy. Siblings and household contacts may return to school if previously sent home.
6. If the person tests positive for COVID-19, they must stay at home in isolation for at least 10 days from the time the symptoms started until symptoms have

improved and no fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medications. Siblings and household contacts must stay home and self-isolate from all activities for at least 14 days starting with the day they were last in contact with the person who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. See [CDC guidance](#) for additional information.

### Orange path

1. The document also provides guidance for people who are a school close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. A close contact is a person who was within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes of someone who is infected.
2. If a person is a close contact in a school setting, the person must self-isolate and stay home from all activities for at least 14 days since the last day of contact with the positive case. Even if the close contact receives a negative test result, they need to complete 14 days of self-isolation before returning to school. Close contacts should seek COVID-19 testing 5-7 days after last contact with the positive case. The siblings and household members of the close contact do not need to stay home or self-isolate if the close contact does not develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19.
3. If a person who is a close contact develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, the person must stay home in isolation for at least 10 days from the time their symptoms started until symptoms are improved and no fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medications. Siblings and household contacts also must stay home and self-isolate from all activities for at least 14 days (see blue path, number 6).

## Additional details about this tool

### Symptoms

- The symptoms listed are those most often identified among people who test positive for COVID-19. More common symptoms are seen more frequently among people who are confirmed to have COVID-19 and may be the only symptoms a person develops. Less common symptoms have been identified and associated with people who are confirmed to have COVID-19, but are less specific to COVID-19.
- New onset means that the symptom is not something that is experienced on a regular basis or is associated with a pre-existing condition. Pre-existing conditions are a sickness or physical disorder for which someone was treated, received medical advice, or had taken medication within the previous 12 months.

### Evaluation by a health care provider

- Evaluation by a health care provider is a recommendation, not a requirement.

Medical evaluation and/or testing for COVID-19 may be considered for ANY of the symptoms listed, depending on suspicion of illness from a health care provider and availability of testing. When there are high levels of community transmission or multiple unlinked cases in the school, testing is strongly encouraged. Evaluation may include in-person, phone triage or telehealth, emergency department, clinic, and/or urgent care. An evaluation can help to identify the need for COVID-19 testing or if there is another reason/diagnosis to explain new symptoms. Public health POCs can help identify local locations for testing in the community.

- Alternative diagnosis means an established medical diagnosis obtained through evaluation by a health care provider and/or diagnostic test (e.g., strep, influenza, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)). Schools or school districts may require written documentation (e.g., after-visit summary, provider note) for a student, teacher, or staff member to return to school.

### COVID-19 testing

- Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is a viral test that checks a sample from a person's respiratory system to determine if a person currently has an infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Results can take several days. PCR testing is currently considered the gold standard for diagnosing COVID-19 infection.
- Antigen tests detect the presence of a specific viral antigen, which implies current viral infection. Antigen tests are lower complexity tests and can be done in a CLIA-waived laboratory with results often available in less than 30 minutes. According to the emergency use authorizations issued for these devices, rapid antigen tests are intended for use in individuals with COVID-19-compatible symptoms early in the course of the illness. They are not authorized for use in persons without symptoms.

**NOTE:** Antibody tests check blood samples by looking for antibodies, which can show if a person had a past infection with the virus that causes COVID-19. They are not used to diagnose COVID-19.

Adapted from Minnesota Department of Health, COVID-19 Decision Tree for People in Schools, Youth, and Child Care Programs, 8/31/2020.



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For current COVID-19 information visit <https://phd3.idaho.gov/covid19/>. The COVID-19 Hotline is available Monday-Friday 8:00 AM-5:00 PM (208) 455-5411

