

# Return to Learn: guidance following a positive COVID-19 Symptom Screen (R3)

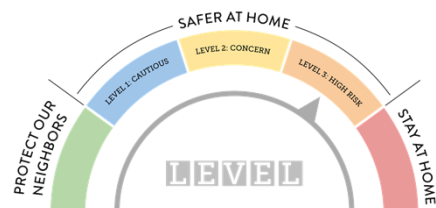


This decision tool is **NOT** intended for cases or close contacts of COVID-19.

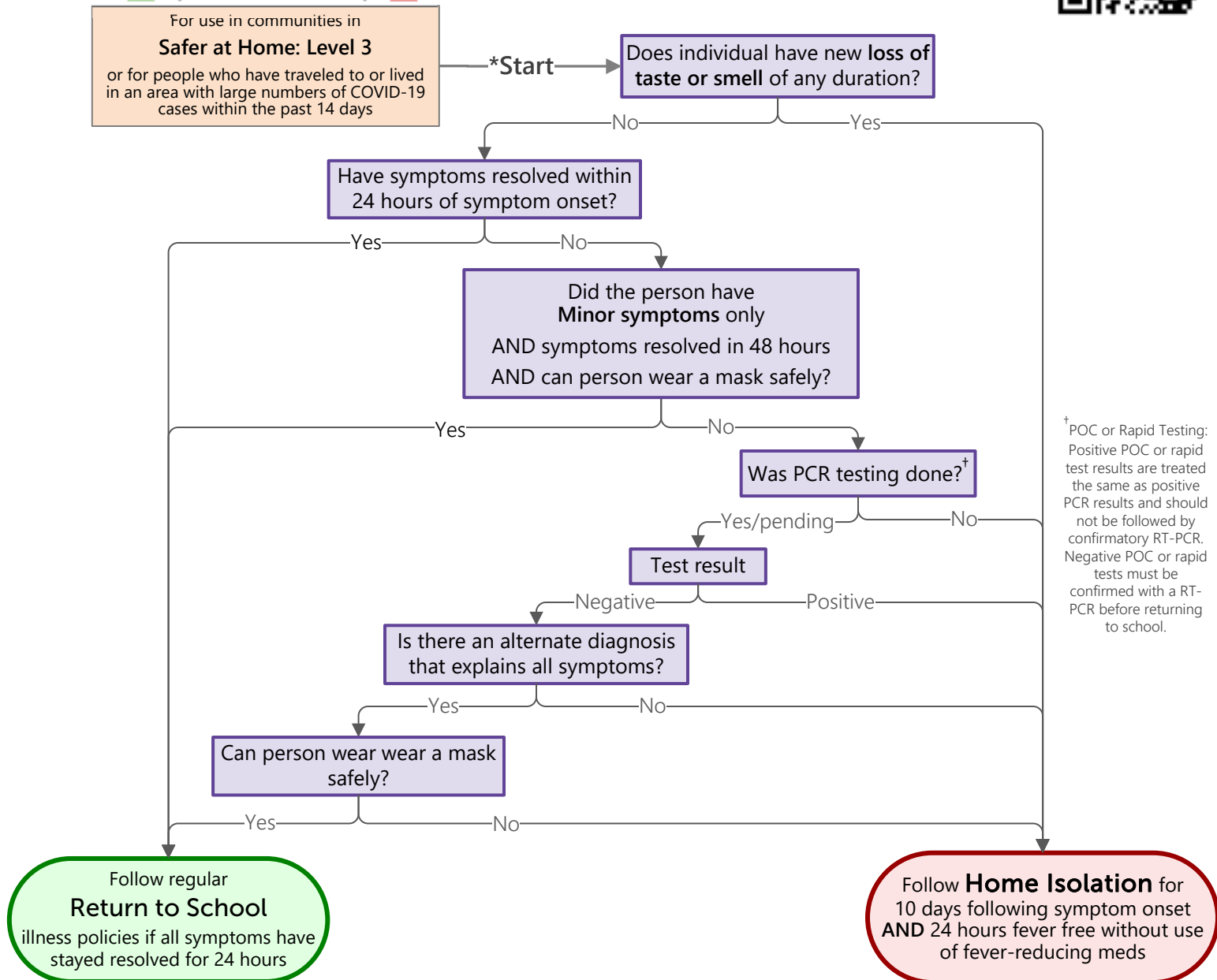
A confirmed COVID-19 case or close contact should follow public health isolation or quarantine instructions for return to school/work. *No test result can end an individual's isolation or quarantine period early.*

**\*All students/staff with symptoms of COVID-19 should be tested as soon as possible.**

To request assistance or provide feedback:  
<https://tinyurl.com/COP12Feedback>



For use in communities in **Safer at Home: Level 3** or for people who have traveled to or lived in an area with large numbers of COVID-19 cases within the past 14 days



† POC or Rapid Testing: Positive POC or rapid test results are treated the same as positive PCR results and should not be followed by confirmatory RT-PCR. Negative POC or rapid tests must be confirmed with a RT-PCR before returning to school.

- Critical Symptom**
- Loss of taste or smell

- Major Symptoms**
- Feeling feverish, having chills, temperature of 100.4°F or greater
  - New or worsening cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

- Minor Symptoms**
- Sore throat
  - Runny nose or congestion
  - Muscle or body aches
  - Headache
  - Fatigue
  - Nausea, vomiting
  - Diarrhea

<sup>1</sup> In the setting of medium or high transmission, the following are examples of alternate diagnoses that should be considered if the COVID-19 PCR is negative.

- Positive laboratory test: influenza, streptococcal pharyngitis ("strep throat"), bacterial infection
- Clinical diagnoses: worsening of known illness (such as asthma or seasonal allergies) with clear link to underlying disease

## At Home COVID-19 Symptom Screening Tool For Parents and Staff

Parents and guardians can use these symptom checklists to determine when to keep their child at home. School staff can also use this tool to determine if they need to stay at home. **Any student or staff diagnosed with COVID-19 or who is a close contact of a COVID-19 case should not go to school and should [isolate or quarantine](#) according to public health recommendations regardless of current symptoms.**

This symptom screen refers only to new symptoms or a change in usual symptoms. A student/staff should not be kept home for usual symptoms they experience due to a chronic condition unless they are worse than usual. These guidelines are in addition to your regular school guidance (for example, a child with vomiting should also not attend school based on usual school guidance). Please refer to the [Return to Learn](#) guidance to determine when it is appropriate to return to school.

**If your child is/you are experiencing any potentially life-threatening symptoms please call 911.**

Symptom Screen:

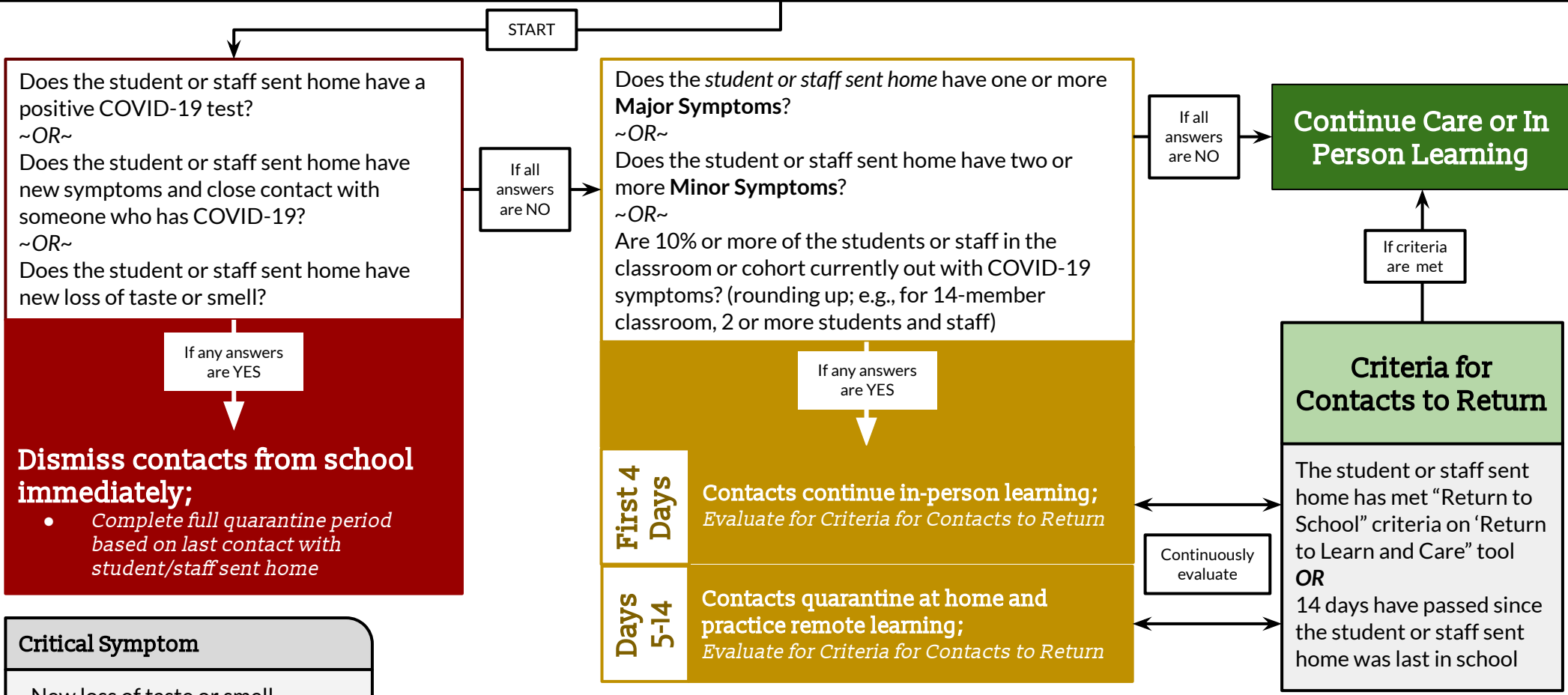
If any of the following symptoms are present, keep the child at home/stay at home, inform the school of symptoms, and reach out to a health care provider about COVID-19 testing and next steps for treatment.

- Feeling feverish, having chills, or temperature 100.4°F or higher.
- New or unexplained persistent cough.
- Shortness of breath.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Loss of taste or smell.
- Fatigue.
- Muscle aches.
- Headache.
- Sore throat.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- Runny nose or congestion.

# What happens to the contacts?

**Q: When a student or staff is out of school because of a COVID-19 test or symptoms, do their contacts need to be dismissed and quarantined?**

**A: If the student or staff sent home was in class within 48 hours prior to their test or symptom onset, follow the flowchart below.**



Critical Symptom
- New loss of taste or smell

Major symptoms
- Feeling feverish, having chills, temperature of 100.4 or greater
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Minor symptoms	
- Sore throat	- Fatigue
- Runny nose or congestion	- Nausea, vomiting
- Muscle or body aches	- Diarrhea
- Headache	

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# Who is a close contact?

Close contact determination for schools meeting all of the criteria outlined below.

**In special circumstances, the below tool *may* be used to determine who needs to be quarantined in the event of an student/staff member with COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19 in school.**

*In addition, consider the following:*

- The most effective mechanism to limit the potential for disease transmission and reduce disruption to in-person learning is creating small cohorts and following the “standard contact identification” path (generally, quarantine of an entire exposed classroom). Use of the “Targeted Contact Identification” approach represents a less-tested strategy and may be associated with greater risk.
- Targeted contact identification is likely to be most impactful and feasible in middle and high school settings
- Contacts should be identified based on the full contagious period, including 2 days before the sick student/staff member’s symptoms started or positive test date, whichever is earlier
- All time-based criteria are cumulative
- Schools are strongly encouraged to complete a “contact tracing drill” before adopting a targeted contact identification strategy

## TARGETED CONTACT IDENTIFICATION CRITERIA

- DISEASE PREVALENCE**
  - Is your county in “Protect our Neighbors” or “Safer at Home” 1 or 2?
  - Is there only one student/staff member in the class who has COVID-19 or is currently symptomatic?
- ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY**
  - Is there a plan in place to track and respond to illness-related absences in the school?
  - Does every class attended by the affected student/staff member have a seating chart?
  - Do students remain in their seats enough to make seating charts applicable?
  - Is there a plan in place to perform contact tracing in conjunction with local public health in the school?
- MINIMIZING TRANSMISSION RISK**
  - Is screening completed for each student and staff member each day?
  - Did the affected student/staff member wear a mask at all times (except during mealtimes)?
  - Were steps taken to minimize transmission risk during meals (e.g. lunch outside, staggered mealtime, spacing)?
  - Did the affected student/staff member refrain from activities such as singing, playing wind/brass instruments, or vigorous exertion known to increase the risk of disease transmission above normal masked speech?

### TARGETED CONTACT IDENTIFICATION

Follow quarantine guidance for students who meet ANY of the following criteria:

- Were within 6 feet of the individual for 15 minutes or greater, when both parties are masked OR
- Were within 12 feet\* of the individual for 15 minutes or greater, when either parties is unmasked and indoors (e.g. mealtimes)

YES  
to all

NO  
to any

### STANDARD CONTACT IDENTIFICATION

Follow quarantine guidance for all students who meet ANY of the following criteria:

- Were in the classroom with the individual for 40 minutes or greater
- Were within 6 feet of the individual for 15 minutes or greater, when both parties are masked OR
- Were within 12 feet\* of the individual for 15 minutes or greater, when either parties is unmasked and indoors (e.g. mealtimes)

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\*[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)31142-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)31142-9/fulltext)