

Questions and Answers: School Case Management

When does my child have to isolate?

Like adults, unvaccinated children who are exposed to a case within their household are required to self-isolate for 14 days from their last exposure and cannot attend school or daycare. Unvaccinated children that were exposed to COVID-19 outside of their household (school, extracurricular activities or other community places) and who do not have symptoms may leave self-isolation only to attend school or their regular daycare for the hours childcare is required. They cannot attend any extracurricular activities and must wear a mask unless they are aged two or under.

Why the focus on household exposures?

There is a higher risk of transmission within households due to closer and more prolonged interactions. Household members commonly share meals, spaces such as bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchens, and most likely don't wear masks when together. When a household member tests positive for COVID-19 and is isolating in the home, it is difficult to prevent ongoing exposures even when household members try to isolate themselves from others in the home.

Does my child have to isolate if they are vaccinated?

Children who are fully immunized (14 days after the second dose of a two-dose vaccination) and do not have any symptoms do not need to isolate. If they develop symptoms, they should get tested and must isolate regardless of vaccination status. If the test is negative, they must stay home until their symptoms have improved for 48 hours.

What if my child develops symptoms of COVID-19 after being exposed to a case?

All individuals should self-monitor following an exposure. If your child develops symptoms, your child should get tested and not attend school or daycare. If your child is not fully immunized (14 days after the second dose of a two-dose vaccination):

- And if the exposure occurred within the household, they will need to continue to isolate until 10 days after their last exposure to the case, even if their test results are negative.
- And the exposure occurred outside of the household, once they have a negative test and their symptoms have improved for 48 hours, they can leave isolation only to attend school or daycare for the duration of their 10 days self-isolation period.

If your child is fully immunized, they should not attend school until their symptoms have improved for 48 hours. Proof of a negative test is not required for children to return to school or daycare.

My child attends childcare before and after school. Does the exemption apply to child care and daycares?

Daycare, including before and after school, is included within the exemption. Children who have been exposed outside of the household can continue to go to daycare as long as they do not have any symptoms. They will not be able to participate in before and after-school extracurricular activities that aren't associated with the care of minors, e.g. volleyball, swimming, chess club, etc.

Does this apply to preschools and playschools?

Playschools and preschools are not included in the exemption. Children in playschool and preschool must not attend playschool or preschool at any time during their self-isolation period if they are in close contact with a confirmed case. Only Pre-Kindergarten to grade 12 students that attend curriculum-based programming and children that attend daycare will be notified by public health of classroom exposures and exempt from self-isolation to attend classes or daycare. If a child that goes to pre/playschool also attends daycare, they can continue to attend daycare for the hours childcare is required as long as they were not exposed to a case within their household and do not have any symptoms.

Why aren't teachers exempted from isolation when there's a classroom exposure?

As COVID-19 transmission risk is higher from adults to adults and from adults to children in school, household and community settings, teachers who are not fully immunized must self-isolate if they are in close contact with a case.