



COVID-19

HAWAII STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DOH GUIDANCE FOR TEST TO STAY (TTS) IN K-12 SCHOOLS

Who is exempt from quarantine and TTS protocols?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People who are ages 18 and older and have received all recommended vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people.• People who are ages 5–17 years and completed the primary series of COVID-19 vaccines.¹	<p>Exempt individuals who remain asymptomatic are not required to participate in TTS or quarantine response protocols and can remain in school. Individuals should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get tested at least 5 days after last close contact with someone with COVID-19, and• Immediately self-isolate and get tested, if symptoms develop, and• Wear a well-fitting mask around others at all times in school settings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Close contacts who have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days	<p>Individuals who have been previously diagnosed with COVID-19 within the past 90 days and then become a close contact of someone with COVID-19 are exempt from TTS and quarantine response protocols if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The exposure occurred within 90 days of the onset of their own illness; and• The exposed individual is recovered and remains without COVID-19 symptoms, also• Individuals should wear a well-fitting mask around others at all times in school settings

Test to Stay for Asymptomatic Close Contacts*:

The purpose of this document is to outline an *optional* strategy for asymptomatic close contacts who are not exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols in K-12 schools: Test to Stay (TTS).

TTS is a strategy to allow school-associated close contacts who have not completed their primary series of COVID-19 vaccination (for those ages 5-17 years old) or are not up to date on all recommended COVID-19 vaccinations (for those ages 18 years and older) to continue in-person learning. This strategy relies on serial testing (testing that is sequentially repeated).

Schools may consider the use of TTS to minimize the impact of quarantine and limit school absences after a SARS-CoV-2 exposure in the K-12 school setting. Initial investigations in K-12 schools implementing TTS with layered mitigation strategies demonstrated low SARS-CoV-2 transmission in the school setting. However, TTS requires a large number of tests and can be resource intensive. Therefore, it may not be a viable option for every school.

¹Quarantine recommendations for people aged 5-17 will be updated upon further guidance from the CDC. People are considered to have completed their primary series 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna, or 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine.

Eligibility criteria for TTS:

To be eligible for participation in TTS, the individual must:

- Be a **K-12 student or staff** member.
- **Remain asymptomatic**, without any [signs of symptoms of COVID-19](#) for the duration of their participation in TTS.
 - Caregivers should actively monitor their children, and staff should actively monitor themselves through Day 10. Individuals should self-isolate immediately if symptoms develop.
- **Have been exposed to the person with COVID-19 at school only.** Those exposed to a person with COVID-19 outside the school setting are **not** eligible to participate.
 - For example, individuals exposed in the household or community (e.g., social activity) would not be eligible to participate.
- **Have been engaged in consistent and correct mask usage** for the duration of the exposure between the COVID-19 case and close contact, if exposure occurred indoors.
- **Quarantine when not at school.** Individuals who are enrolled in TTS should stay home when not in school and quarantine for the duration of their participation, including holidays and weekends.

Test to Stay Protocol

- **Duration of TTS:** 5 days from date of initial exposure.
- **Return to school:** K-12 school-associated close contacts can remain in school and do not have to quarantine, provided they:
 - Remain asymptomatic.
 - Take a minimum of 2 rapid* COVID-19 tests during the 5-day period and receive negative results.
 - At least one of these tests should be conducted on a school day.
 - At least one of the tests should be conducted on day 4 or 5.
 - All tests utilized should be authorized under an EUA by the FDA.
 - *A PCR may be substituted for a rapid test if the negative result is received before returning to school.
 - Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 10. Individuals should self-isolate immediately if symptoms develop.
- **Note:** Individuals who develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 within 10 days following the initial exposure should be sent home immediately to isolate and follow 5 day isolation as specified in the [Home Isolation and Quarantine Guidance for Schools](#).

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Additional considerations:

- Parents or guardians should sign a document of informed consent for their children participating in TTS that details the requirements for participating.
- Schools should consider conducting daily symptom screening for all individuals participating in TTS.
- Individuals who are unable to meet the testing requirements for TTS or provide results for their COVID-19 test should be sent home from school to follow the 5-day quarantine protocol as specified in [Home Isolation and Quarantine Guidance for Schools](#).
- Testing should come at no cost to the individual.
- Individuals participating in TTS are required to wear a mask during the entirety of the school day, other than when eating or drinking. When individuals cannot be masked, schools should implement layered mitigation strategies (e.g., physical distancing of at least 3 feet, if possible, or to the greatest extent possible; maximizing ventilation; cohorting) to minimize risk.
- TTS is a part of a layered prevention strategy. Schools should continue utilizing layered mitigation strategies according to [HDOH School Guidance](#) to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Schools must enforce correct and consistent use of well-fitting masks in all indoor settings and in outdoor settings where crowding may occur, regardless of vaccination status.

Participation in high risk extracurricular activities:

Participation in extracurricular activities that are high-risk for disease transmission and do not allow for mask usage and physically distancing to the extent possible (e.g., indoor or close-contact sports, singing, playing wind instruments, etc.).

- Individuals participating in TTS should remain out of high-risk extracurricular activities until 10-days after their last exposure.

Appendix:

***Close contacts in a school setting:**

- An **adult close contact** is defined as within **6 feet** of a person with COVID-19 infection for a combined total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (regardless of mask use).
- A **student close contact in a K-12 indoor classroom** setting or an outdoor setting with sustained close contact (i.e., holding class outdoors with educator supervision), where everyone is wearing a mask correctly and consistently, is defined as within **3 feet** of a person with COVID-19 infection for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.
- In **cafeterias or indoor rooms** (e.g., breakroom, classroom) where people eat and drink unmasked, a close contact is any adult or student who was within **6 feet** of a person with COVID-19 infection for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

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References:

<https://health.hawaii.gov/coronavirusdisease2019/files/2022/01/Home-Isolation-and-Quarantine-Guidance-for-Schools.pdf>

<https://health.hawaii.gov/coronavirusdisease2019/files/2021/08/COVID-19-Guidance-for-Schools.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/what-you-should-know.html>

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/transmission_k_12_schools.html

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