

Herscher Community Unit School District No. 2

DR. RICHARD S. DECMAN, SUPERINTENDENT
SHELLY PARSONS, SPECIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR
PETE FALK, CURRICULUM DIRECTOR

Dear Herscher CUSD No. 2 parents and guardians,

We are pleased to share that the isolation and quarantine period for students and staff members sick with COVID-19 or considered a close contact has been **reduced to five days**.

Last Friday, the Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois State Board of Education announced that the agencies have adopted CDC guidance for PK-12 schools that halves the isolation and quarantine period. The Centers for Disease Control updated its [guidance](#) for PK-12 schools on January 6.

As a result, effective immediately, all schools in the Herscher CUSD No. 2 will implement the updated guidance. As soon as possible, we will contact staff, students and families who are currently impacted by a quarantine with a revised return to school plan.

Today's announcement **does not** change the state of Illinois' mask requirement for anyone inside school buildings. The Governor's indoor mask mandate for school is still in effect until further notice.

Staff and students who are currently impacted by a quarantine now have a revised return to school date. Please see the chart below to know when to send your child back to school.

<i>If a student or staff member tested positive or first had symptoms on the following date:</i>	<i>The new return to school/work date is the following:</i>
Monday, 1/3	Monday, 1/10
Tuesday, 1/4	Monday, 1/10
Wednesday, 1/5	Tuesday, 1/11
Thursday, 1/6	Wednesday, 1/12
Friday, 1/7	Thursday, 1/13
<i>*Any date prior to 1/3/2022 may return on Monday, 1/10</i>	<i>**The date above is if a person is fever free for 24 hours and symptoms have improved.</i>

Unvaccinated students and not boosted staff members who are close contacts are now required to quarantine for 5 days. The following is a table with the revised return to school dates.

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<i>If an unvaccinated student or not boosted staff member was a close contact on the following:</i>	<i>The new return to school/work date is the following:</i>
Monday, 1/3	Monday, 1/10
Tuesday, 1/4	Monday, 1/10
Wednesday, 1/5	Tuesday, 1/11
Thursday, 1/6	Wednesday, 1/12
Friday, 1/7	Thursday, 1/13
<i>*Any date prior to 1/3/2022 may return on Monday, 1/10</i>	<i>**Test on day 5 if possible *if your student is unable to quarantine from a positive case in the household, return dates may be prolonged. There is also a test to stay option for individuals who are considered a close contact.</i>

In addition, I want to pass along information from IDPH and CDC related to quarantine and recommended isolation periods. Below is summary information.

What is quarantine?

Quarantine means staying home for at least 5 days after exposure to someone diagnosed with COVID-19. This is because someone can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 but may not show symptoms. Even though someone may not show symptoms, they can still spread the virus. The new guidance issued on Friday, allows staff and students to “test to stay” during their quarantine. Test to stay would allow students to come to school during their quarantine if they test negative and provide a negative test on certain days of quarantine. Negative results must be submitted to the school each morning.

Quarantine is different from isolation. Isolation is used by someone who has symptoms of COVID-19, or tests positive for the virus that causes COVID-19, even if they don't have symptoms. Isolation helps prevent transmission of the virus by separating people infected with the virus from those who are not infected.

How does this new quarantine guidance impact staff and students if they test positive for COVID-19?

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CDC Recommended Isolation Period for Those Testing Positive for COVID-19

- Staff or students who tests positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, should isolate for 5 days after onset of symptoms, or 5 days from specimen collection date if no symptoms are present.
- Staff or students who test positive for COVID-19 and have no symptoms or their symptoms are resolving can be released from isolation after 5 days. To calculate the 5-day isolation period, day 0 is the first day of symptoms or specimen collection date if asymptomatic. If they continue to have fever or other symptoms have not improved after 5 days of isolation, they should wait to end isolation until they are fever-free for 24 hours and their other symptoms have improved.
- Schools should ensure that staff or students who test positive for COVID-19 also do the following:
 - Continue to wear a well-fitted mask around others (including at home) for 5 additional days after release from isolation. If unable to wear a mask when around others, the case should continue to isolate for a total of 10 days.
 - Avoid being around students or staff who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#).
 - If masks need to be removed (e.g., for lunch), ensure 6 feet of physical distancing until 10 days after symptom onset or positive test.

How does the new quarantine guidance impact staff and students who are considered close contacts to someone who tested positive with COVID-19?

CDC Recommended Quarantine Period for Close Contacts to Someone with COVID-19

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ages 18 or older and have received all recommended vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people.• Ages 5-17 years and completed the primary series of COVID-19 vaccines.• Confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (you tested positive using a viral test).	<p>Quarantine not required</p> <p>Wear a mask around others for 10 days¹</p> <p>Test on day 5, if possible</p> <p>If a person develops symptoms, they should immediately isolate until a negative test confirms symptoms are not caused by COVID-19</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ages 18 or older and completed the primary series of recommended vaccine, but have not received a recommended booster shot when eligible.• Received the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine (completing the primary series) over 2 months ago and have not received a recommended booster shot.• Unvaccinated or have not completed a primary vaccine series.	<p>Stay home and mask around others for 5 days. After that, continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days²</p> <p>Test on day 5, if possible</p> <p>If a person develops symptoms, they should immediately isolate until a negative test confirms symptoms are not caused by COVID-19.</p>

¹ Children who have received the primary vaccination series and are not eligible for booster doses after 5 months for Pfizer, 6 months for Moderna, or 2 months for Johnson and Johnson should not be excluded from school after close contact unless they develop symptoms and test positive for COVID-19. If masks need to be removed (e.g., for lunch), ensure 6 feet of physical distancing until 10 days after exposure.

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Thank you for your continued support of our students and teachers. It's been an incredibly difficult year, but we will continue to push forward together.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard S Decman, Superintendent.



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