

COVID-19 Response Toolkit for New Mexico Elementary Schools

REPORTING

- **Report all positive cases of COVID-19 within four hours of notification to:**
 - » **New Mexico Public Education Department**
at 505-476-5825, 7am–10pm or
 - » **New Mexico Department of Health**
at 855-600-3453 press 8, 10pm-7am.
- If the case is a **staff member**, also report to the **New Mexico Environment Department** within four hours of notification:
 - » **EMAIL** NMENV-OSHA@state.nm.us
 - » **CALL** 505-876-4700, or
 - » **FAX** 505-876-8734

PREVENTION

- **Maintain physical distance (six feet).**
This is very important in preventing the spread of COVID-19.
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water.**
If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- **Daily clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces** and areas where multiple cohorts of students gather, like the cafeteria and playground equipment.
- **Wear a face mask at all times** except when eating.

TRANSMISSION

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within six feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- When droplets land in the mouths or noses, or are possibly inhaled into the lungs, of people who are nearby.
- COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.
- The virus may also spread when a person touches a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touches their mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

INCUBATION

**Individuals generally become ill
between two and 14 days after exposure.**

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Definitions

Asymptomatic Confirmed Case: A person who has tested positive for COVID-19 by laboratory testing but did not experience any symptoms of illness within 10 days of the test.

Close Contact: Someone who:

- Has an exposure of three minutes or longer within six feet of a confirmed COVID-19 case with or without a face covering, or
- Was in the same class or cohort as a confirmed COVID-19 case.

Confirmed Case: A person who has tested positive for COVID-19 by laboratory testing.*

* Confirmatory laboratory tests include Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) and antigen testing from a respiratory specimen.

Cohorting: The practice of keeping groups of students, and staff if possible, together over the course of the school day. The goal is to limit exposures to only those within the same cohort. This practice may help reduce the spread of COVID-19 by:

- Limiting exposure to an individual with COVID-19 to one particular cohort and not posing a broad risk to the rest of the school.
- Reducing contact with shared surfaces.
- Facilitating more efficient contact tracing in the event of a positive case.
- Allowing for targeted quarantine, testing, and/or isolation of a single cohort, instead of school-wide measures in the event of a positive case or cluster.

COVID-like Symptoms: Fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of smell or taste, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. [See additional information from the Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\).](#)

Infectious Period: Time during which an infected person is contagious and most likely to spread disease to others. If a student, staff or volunteer was at school during their infectious period, all of their close contacts must be identified and quarantined.

- For a confirmed symptomatic COVID-19 case, the infectious period starts two days prior to the illness onset date and continues 10 days after illness onset.
- For a confirmed symptomatic COVID-19 case with severe illness or severe immunosuppression, the infectious period starts two days prior to illness onset date and extends to 20 days after illness onset date.
- For a confirmed asymptomatic COVID-19 case, the

infectious period starts two days prior to the specimen collection date and continues for 10 days after.

- If a confirmed asymptomatic COVID-19 case has severe immunosuppression, at least 20 days should have passed since the date of first positive specimen collected.
- Isolation:** The act of keeping someone who is sick or tested positive for COVID-19 without symptoms away from others by staying home from school, work, and other activities while infectious.
- Isolation should last at least 10 days after the onset of symptoms, until fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, and experiencing improvement of symptoms.
 - For people who never had symptoms, the isolation period is 10 days after the date their first positive test was collected.
 - If someone has a severe illness or severe immunosuppression, the isolation period should be extended to 20 days.
 - A negative test is not required to determine when to end the isolation period. When in doubt, the New Mexico Department of Health should be consulted.

Quarantine: Keeping a person who was in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 away from others. If someone has close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, they should stay home from school, work, and other activities for 14 days after their last exposure. The exposed contact should be tested for the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) no sooner than three days, ideally between seven and 10 days, following the last exposure to a confirmed case. If the close contact has a positive result, isolation should be implemented as described above.

Severe Illness: Indicated by hospitalization in an intensive care unit with or without mechanical ventilation.

Severe Immunosuppression: Severe suppression of immune response of an individual, includes being on chemotherapy for cancer, untreated HIV infection with CD4 T lymphocyte count <200, combined primary immunodeficiency disorder, and receipt of prednisone >20 mg/day for more than 14 days.

- Other factors such as advanced age, diabetes mellitus, or end-stage renal disease, may pose a much lower degree of immunocompromise and not clearly affect decisions about duration of isolation.

COVID-19 Preparation & Response

Assembling a COVID-19 District Planning & Response Team

Assemble a COVID-19 District Planning & Response Team

1. Team Lead/Point of Contact
2. Superintendent or Charter School Leader & their Deputies
3. Head Nurse
4. HR Director
5. Head of Operations & Facilities
6. Head of Security
7. Principal of each school
8. An educator (designated by the Union if educators are represented)
9. A staff/facilities employee (designated by the Union if educators are represented)

The NMPED and NMDOH will train Team Lead/Point of Contact on how to handle suspect cases, quarantine and isolation, assessing exposure and identifying close contacts, and facility management.

At Each School. Prepare & Plan

Prepare a duty list and designate a back up for each team member.

Identify an isolation area for ill students or staff.

Plan for student pick up when one large area or the entire building needs to be evacuated at once:

1. Pick up of students
2. Sending staff home
3. Who stays last
4. Will buses be used

Plan for when a student cannot be picked up immediately.

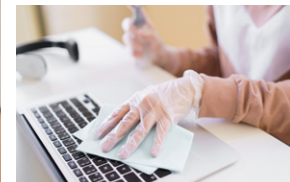
Responsibilities of the School COVID-19 Point of Contact

Collect and maintain all information about who is in each building:

1. Staff rosters including cell phone numbers
2. On-site contractor rosters
3. Classroom and cohort rosters
4. Class schedules
5. After school program rosters
6. Real-time sign-in sheets/visitor rosters
7. Real-time student attendance data from school administrators
8. Bus route rosters
9. Each student's emergency contacts authorized to pick up, authorized medical care, and household member information, etc.
10. Up-to-date student addresses

Have key contact information on hand for state agencies who can answer questions:

- » NMPED hotline for reporting all cases: 505-476-5825
- » NMENV/OSHA for recording staff cases: 505-876-4700
- » NMDOH COVID hotline for general questions: 855-600-3453 press 8



Role of the School

COVID-19 Point Person

Each school will need to identify a COVID-19 point person whose role will be to liaise with the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) Rapid Response Team in the event of a confirmed positive case in the school. For many schools, the school nurse may be well-suited to serve in this role as the point person must be prepared to effectively communicate information to NMPED and other state officials conducting case investigations. This information may include, but is not limited to, relevant classroom rosters, details on safety protocols in place at the school, and close contacts that the identified case may have had while at school. The point person will also ensure that infected or exposed individuals do not return to school until the appropriate isolation or quarantine period has passed.

Please provide the name and contact information of the point person at the school to NMPED in the [online spreadsheet](#). Please note that you may appoint one point of contact who would serve as the point person for all of your schools. However, please ensure that a back-up point of contact works closely with your primary point of contact in the event that your primary point of contact is absent or ill.

Relationship with Local Testing Facilities

In the event of a confirmed case, schools and districts should ensure that all staff and students who were in the same classroom(s) with the infected individual, as well as the identified close contacts of the infected individual, are immediately sent home to quarantine for 14 days and to be tested. They should be directed to the local public health office for testing and quarantine for 14 days. Please review the list of New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) testing sites at COVID-19 Screening & Testing Sites.

School Health Advocates at the New Mexico Department of Health

Districts and schools may also contact their local School Health Advocate (SHA) according to their region for guidance in terms of testing and quarantine procedures. **Please see the *SHA Contact List* on page 19 of this document.**

Communication with Families

Communication regarding positive cases should be handled in a timely and thoughtful manner. Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality of the infected individual. Close contacts (**See page 3 for the definition**) should be notified within four hours of the requirement to be tested for COVID-19 and to quarantine for 14 days. Please note, testing will only be required for those identified as close contacts.

Confirmed infected individuals need to be isolated immediately if they are on district grounds or school sites at the time of initial notification and sent home. Infected individuals need to isolate at home for 10 days before returning to school or district facilities. Students or staff who are confirmed infected individuals must participate in an online or remote-only program until they have completed their 10-day isolation.

Within four hours of the initial notification of the positive case, schools must also notify families and staff that a positive case has been identified at the school site. **Please use the language contained in the *Notification Letter Template* included on page 22 for all school communication, such as emails and the school website.**

Students and staff who are close contacts must participate in an online-only program until they have completed their 14-day quarantine. Close contacts who are students should be immediately notified to quarantine for 14 days and should be highly encouraged to test. Close contacts who are staff members should be immediately notified to quarantine for 14 days and of the requirement to test. Even if the test is negative, the 14-day quarantine must be adhered to. Staff members do not need a negative test in order to return to work.

Please see the ***Staff & Student Individual Decision Tree* on page 11 and the *Quarantine Decision Tree* on page 12** for additional information.

Testing of Students and Staff

NMPED and NMDOH have prioritized testing for staff in order to expedite results. However, students and staff are allowed to have their testing performed at an alternative, certified location. Students are strongly encouraged but not required to get a test before

returning. Regardless of whether or not a student is tested or whether or not they receive a negative test, they must complete the 14-day quarantine before returning to school. Staff members are required to receive a test prior to returning and inform their school administrator of the date on which the test was taken. Regardless of whether or not a staff member receives a negative test, they must complete the 14-day quarantine. Staff members do not need a negative test to return to work.

Contact Tracing

Contact Tracing Process

Contact tracing is the process of reaching out to individuals that have been exposed to a confirmed case of the virus in order to ensure they take the necessary precautions and receive any needed testing. In the event of a confirmed case, a NMPED Rapid Response member will reach out to the COVID-19 point person at the school to gather information regarding exposures in the school.

Confidentiality Considerations

An individual's right to privacy should always be considered. In sharing information with students, families, and staff members, report the fact that an individual in the school has been determined to have COVID-19, rather than specifically identifying the student or staff member who is infected. However, in relation to the sharing of information with NMPED Rapid Response members or NMDOH School Health Advocates, the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits non-consensual disclosures of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) from students' education records under the health or safety emergency exception to "appropriate parties" (such as public health officials) whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of students or other individuals. Additional information regarding FERPA and COVID-19 may be found in the [U.S. Department of Education's FERPA & Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#).

Role of the School in COVID-19 Testing

The main role of the school in this process, in addition to maintaining COVID-19 safe practices, will be to ensure that the COVID-19 point person serves as an effective liaison to the NMPED Rapid Response team, and NMDOH case investigators. The school must also ensure that close contacts get testing and complete their 14-day quarantines before returning to school.

School Closing & Reopening

Procedures in the Event of a Positive Case on a School Campus

Once a school is informed that a positive case has been identified in a student or staff member and the school has ensured the infectious individual has been isolated, the school should contact the NMPED Rapid Response Team at 505-476-5825 and submit their [Initial Report through the online form](#) within four hours of being notified of a positive case.

In the event the confirmed case is a staff member, the school must also report the case to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMENV) within four hours of the initial notification. The school is to then follow the action steps identified in the COVID-19 Rapid Response to a Positive Case in a School Facility document. All directives issued and implemented should be documented thoroughly, including completion dates.

A major part of responding to a positive case in the school setting will include disinfection initiatives. Schools shall ensure that all areas impacted by the positive case are cleaned and disinfected in accordance with NMDOH and CDC guidelines. The school should support and partner with the NMPED and NMDOH in relation to efforts related to reporting, informing school communities, and contact tracing.

Reopening after a Positive Case

In communication and partnership with the NMPED and/or NMENV, schools will determine when it is safe to reopen the portions of the school facilities impacted by the initial closure. Decisions to reopen will be based upon appropriate completion of required action steps related to the positive case of COVID-19.

Rapid Response to a Positive Case in a School Facility

RESOURCES:

- **NMPED Hotline:** 505-476-5825 (7am–10pm)
- **NMDOH Hotline:** 855-600-3453 press 8 (10pm–7am)
- [New Mexico Testing Sites](#)
- [COVID-19 Test Results](#) website indicates which NMDOH results tested negative
- [CDC Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance](#)

Three ways a COVID-19 positive case may be identified in a school facility:

1. School is notified by state agency of a lab-confirmed positive case identified at their site.
2. Report made by a parent/guardian that their child has tested positive.
3. Staff is tested and reports positive result to the school.

Rapid Response Flowchart

Reporting of a Positive COVID-19 Case is Required

ACTION STEP	RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE
1. Ensure the positive individual has been isolated and sent home. Inform the positive individual and his/her parents/guardians (if a student), that the positive individual will need to isolate for 10 days from the positive test.	School Administrator or District/School COVID-19 Point Person	Within four hours of notification
2. Contact the NMPED Rapid Response Team at 505-476-5825 between 7am–10pm or the NMDOH Hotline at 855-600-3453 press 8 between 10pm–7am to report the positive case within four hours of you being notified. Be ready to provide the information required in the Initial Report found on page 8 of the COVID-19 Toolkit.	School Administrator or District/School COVID-19 Point Person	Within four hours of notification
3. If a staff member, also report the positive case within four hours to NMENV at 505-476-8700 .	School Administrator or District/School COVID-19 Point Person	Within four hours of notification
4. Complete the Close Contact Report online form as well as the Supplemental Close Contact Spreadsheet (see page 21 of the COVID-19 Toolkit) and email to NMPED at rapid.response@state.nm.us as soon as possible but no later than six hours from contacting NMPED or NMDOH. During this time, you should also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shut down impacted facilities/classrooms for 24 hours; and • Perform enhanced cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting of facilities in accordance with CDC guidance. 	School Administrator or District/School COVID-19 Point Person	After calling NMPED and NMENV; submit Close Contact Report within six hours
5. Provide COVID-19 Positive Case Letter to all staff and families in appropriate languages and on district/school letterhead. Use the template provided on page 22 in the COVID-19 Toolkit.	School Administrator	Within four hours of notification
6. Call your regional School Health Advocate for any guidance needed regarding testing, cleaning, closure, etc. See the School Health Advocate Contact List on page 19 in the COVID-19 Toolkit.	School Administrator or District/School COVID-19 Point Person	Within four hours after calling NMPED and NMENV

- **Report all positive cases of COVID-19 within four hours of notification:**
 - » **New Mexico Public Education Department** at 505-476-5825, 7am–10pm, and
 - » **New Mexico Department of Health** at 855-600-3453, 10pm–7am.
 - » Be ready to answer the questions indicated in the **Initial Report** during this call.
- If the case is a **staff member**, also report to the **New Mexico Environment Department** within four hours of notification:
 - » **EMAIL** NMENV-OSHA@state.nm.us
 - » **CALL** 505-876-4700, or
 - » **FAX** 505-876-8734

What to Prepare

Each district or school's COVID-19 Point of Contact should have the following in place at all times in order to promote safety and the facilitation of close contact tracing:

- The most up-to-date contact information for each student at the school.
- The most up-to-date class lists for each teacher, bus rosters that list all riding students and the bus they ride, and after school program lists for all participating students that include location and program sponsor.



What to Report

Each district or school's COVID-19 Point of Contact should be ready to answer the following questions from NMPED representatives. As soon as possible, report to NMPED (for any person) and NMENV (only if a staff member) the following Initial Report Information.

Initial Report Information:

Please gather the information below and have it ready to share with NMPED when you call. You will also be required to submit the [Initial Report online form](#) (see page 20 of this Toolkit).

1. Your contact information as the district COVID-19 Point of Contact (phone and email)
2. Name and address of the school or district site that the infected person physically occupied
3. Date employer was notified of the positive test(s)
4. Last date each positive employee or student was at the school or district site
5. Date each positive employee/student began isolation
6. Name, email, and cell phone number of Principal or Director
7. Number of staff/contractors and all other persons who were in the building on the date of positive case notification
8. Number of students who were in the building on the date of positive case notification
9. Type of School: Public, Charter, State-supported, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), or Private.
10. Role of the positive individual (for example: student, teacher, school administrator, food service, custodial, bus driver, counselor, librarian, school nurse, educational assistant, administrator, secretary)
11. If a student, the grade the positive student is in
12. STARS ID#, if positive individual is a student
13. Birthdate of the positive individual
14. Home mailing address of the positive individual
15. Email address of the positive individual
16. Phone number of the positive individual

Close Contact Report Information

Within six hours of submitting the Initial Report, please act quickly to collect and submit to NMPED the following information to complete the [Close Contact Report online form](#).

Download, complete, and email the Close Contact Supplemental Spreadsheet to rapid.response@state.nm.us. (See page 21 of this Toolkit)

1. Have you notified NMENV for employee cases?
2. What date were families notified of the positive case? If they have not been notified yet, what date will they be notified? **Please use the Positive Case Letter template provided on page 22 of this Toolkit**, printed on your school/district letterhead.
3. What date were staff notified of the positive case? If they have not been notified yet, what date will they be notified? Please use the **Positive Case Letter template provided in this Toolkit**, printed on your school/district letterhead.
4. What type of reentry model was the district or school in when notified of the positive case? (For example: Full Reentry; Hybrid (ES), (ES, MS), (ES, MS, HS) or Small Groups of PreK–3, and/or Students with Disabilities only)
5. Which parts of the school site or building have you or will you close? (classroom, wing, school, cafeteria)
6. Is the case related to an earlier case at your school that you know of?
7. If the case is related to an earlier case, on what date was the school notified of the earlier case?
8. How many individuals are in the cohort of the positive case?



A “close contact” is defined as a person who came within six feet of the positive individual (even while wearing a mask) for longer than three minutes AND all students and staff who were in the same classrooms of the infected individual. For all identified close contacts, you should send them home to quarantine for 14 days and to be tested.

9. How many student close contacts were identified?
10. How many staff close contacts were identified?
11. On what date did the school or impacted area reopen?
12. How long was the school (fully or partially) closed?

Important Final Step: Check to see if the confirmed positive individual resides with any other district students or employees. If so, share confirmed positive case information among the appropriate schools through their COVID-19 Point of Contact members so that impacted students are quarantined and tested. For example, siblings or household members of a confirmed infected student who attend various schools within district, or students who are the children of employees or contractors at the district/school.

Important Note: If you are notified that a household member of a student or staff member is infected, please contact your regional School Health Advocate to confirm whether this information is a confirmed infected case. If so, isolate and quarantine the students or staff members who reside in the same household of this confirmed case. They should quarantine for 14 days and be tested.

You may hear from a representative of NMENV or OSHA in your jurisdiction to implement control measures if staff are involved.

Guidance for Closures

Consult with the NMPED Rapid Response Team and your School Health Advocate to determine which areas to close as appropriate.

COVID SITUATION	DURING INVESTIGATION	POST INVESTIGATION
One or more confirmed cases within the same classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close off areas used by the person who is infected. • Wait 24 hours before you clean or disinfect. • Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as classrooms, offices, bathrooms, and common areas. • Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be opened for use. • Students and staff in close contact with positive case self-quarantine for 14 days and get tested. Testing is required for staff and highly recommended for students. • School/District sends out Positive Case Letter on appropriate letterhead to staff and students using the provided template in this Toolkit.
At least 2 cases within same cohort and within 14 days of each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close affected rooms/wing. • Follow same procedures as above. 	Follow same procedures as above.
At least two cases spread across different classrooms in different parts of the building and/or across different cohorts or groups within 14 days of each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close affected rooms/wing. • Follow same procedures as above. 	Follow same procedures as above.
<p>Considerations for siblings and household members:</p> <p>If an individual (student or staff) tests positive, all of their household members should be quarantined for 14 days and tested.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close the room of the positive individual. • Follow same procedures as above. • If siblings or household members test positive, their classrooms will need to be closed and their close contacts will need to be quarantined and tested. • If siblings or household members test negative, there is no need to close their classrooms or quarantine or test their close contacts. 	Follow same procedures as above.

Staff & Student Individual Decision Tree

The following decision tree was created for families, students, and staff to better understand the steps that should be taken if they develop symptoms or have close contact with a confirmed case.

INDIVIDUAL PERSON

Are you experiencing any **symptoms of COVID-19**?

Fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of smell or taste, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea?

No

Continue going to school, unless classroom/cohort has been quarantined

Yes AND NOT Tested*

If at home, stay at home and get tested for COVID-19

If at school:
 1. Tell your teacher or supervisor immediately.
 2. Go to isolation unit until you can leave school or get picked up as soon as possible

***Get tested at a testing site.**
 Call the NMDOH hotline for help at **1-855-660-3453 press 8**

Test result is NEGATIVE

Stay home until 24 hours fever-free and improving symptoms

Test result is POSITIVE

Yes AND POSITIVE test*

No BUT POSITIVE test*

Stay home until released from isolation (10 days after symptom onset, 24 hours fever free, and improving symptoms)

CLOSE CONTACTS

Have you been in **CLOSE CONTACT**** with a confirmed case during their infectious period, in school or out of school?

No

Continue going to school, unless classroom/cohort has been quarantined

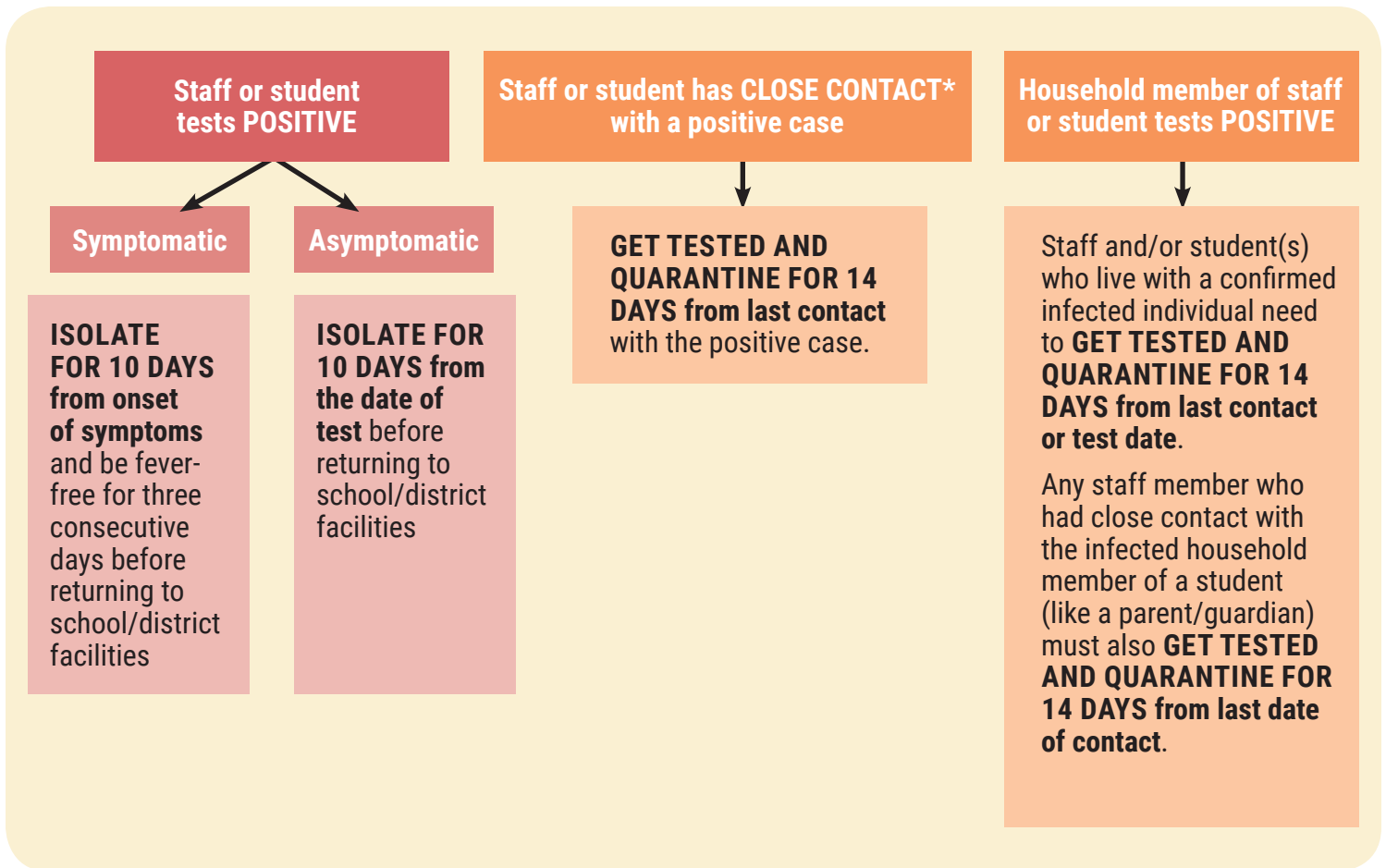
Yes

Stay home for 14 days after last exposure to confirmed case

**See definition of Close Contact on page 3.

Quarantine Decision Tree

The following decision tree was created for families, students, and staff to better understand the steps that should be taken if quarantine is necessary.



*See definition of Close Contact on page 3.

Face Coverings & Personal Protective Equipment

In accordance with the [New Mexico Department of Health Public Health Order](#), all students and staff must wear a face mask while at school, during school-sponsored activities, and on school transportation. Limited exceptions are described below.

Face Masks

Reasons for Wearing Face Masks

[Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC) guidance [calls on Americans to wear face masks to slow and stop the spread of COVID-19](#). [Wearing face masks slows the spread of COVID-19](#) by reducing the distribution of respiratory droplets by the wearer. The Public Health order requires mask-wearing for all people, including asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic people who are around other people, because they don't know they have the virus. The most important function of masks is source control. When there is universal mask-wearing, people protect each other from getting the virus. Universal mask-wearing, coupled with social distancing, hygiene practices, and other transmission-reducing practices, are critical for reducing the contagion rate of COVID-19.

Face Mask Criteria

Face masks must cover the mouth and nose and fit snugly against the sides of the face in order to contain respiratory droplets. **The types of allowable face masks include:**

1. [Face masks made of two or more layers of cloth](#).
2. Disposable masks for people who forget to bring their masks to school.
3. [Face masks with a clear plastic window](#) or that are made of clear material.
4. Surgical, procedural, [N95 or KN95 face masks](#) that are approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use by staff performing medical duties or similar close contact assignments.

The following face coverings are NOT substitutes for face masks:

- [Masks that have exhalation valves or vents](#)
- [Bandanas](#)
- Scarves
- [Neck gaiters](#) (also known as a neck fleece)
- Face shields in most instances (see further discussion below)

[Masks that have exhalation valves or vents are not permissible, according to the CDC](#). Masks with exhalation valves or vents do not prevent the person wearing the mask from transmitting COVID-19 to others because they allow respiratory droplets to be expelled.

In addition, based on research that has emerged regarding the relative effectiveness of different types of materials and designs, bandanas, scarves, and neck gaiters are not permitted as substitutes for face masks because they are significantly less effective at containing the droplets that are expelled when a person speaks, sings, coughs, sneezes, etc.

Finally, the CDC states that “it is not known what level of protection a face shield provides to people nearby from the spray of respiratory droplets from the wearer. There is currently not enough evidence to support the effectiveness of face shields for source control. Therefore, [CDC does not currently recommend use of face shields as a substitute for masks](#).”

Any district or school that has invested significant sums in purchasing these materials should contact NMPED as soon as possible to pursue alternative options.



Using Face Masks

Wearing the Face Mask Correctly

- Wash your hands before putting on your mask.
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.
- Fit it snugly against the sides of your face.
- Make sure you can breathe easily.
- Don't put the mask around your neck or up on your forehead.
- Don't touch the mask while it's on your face unless removing it to eat or drink, and, if you do, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer to disinfect before touching your mask.



Removing the Mask to Eat or Drink

- When removing the mask, it is important to avoid touching your face—especially your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before removing the mask.

Washing Cloth Face Masks

- Ideally, a cloth face mask should be washed and dried after each use (after a day at school).
- Masks may be washed in a washing machine or by hand. Optimally, the face mask is dried in a dryer at the hottest setting or is dried outside with sunlight.

Keeping Face Masks on During the Day

Face masks must be worn all day while on school campuses, at school-sponsored events and on school transportation. The only time the face mask may be off is while eating and drinking during allowed times.¹ If a student removes the face mask and refuses to wear the mask during other times, then the student will have to be picked up from school and taken home. While waiting for pick up, the student should be supervised and quarantined from other students. Local school district and charter school policies should set forth the number of times a student may remove a face mask and receive a warning prior to being sent home.

¹Please note that the mask-wearing practices for licensed and registered child care facilities described in the Health and Safety Guidance for New Mexico Child Care Centers and Early Childhood Professionals, updated August 14, 2020, do not apply to public school students, including students in Pre-Kindergarten.

Limited Exceptions to Wearing Face Masks

There are very limited circumstances under which a face mask cannot be worn. According to the [CDC guidance](#), the following individuals should not wear a face covering: children under age two, or anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. In these cases, fully remote learning is the best option to keep the student safe, as well as other students, staff, and the greater school community.

When wearing a face mask would obstruct breathing or exacerbate another medical condition for a student, then the student should be seen by a healthcare provider to discuss whether it is safe for the student to be in school during the public health emergency. [American Lung Association Chief Medical Officer Dr. Albert Rizzo](#) states that “cases of exemption are very few and far between,” and “people with supplemental oxygen or compromised respiratory status which become short of breath even when walking might meet [CDC] criteria, which in that case, going out in public is a health risk to the person.” For these students, fully remote learning is the safest option.

For students who cannot wear a face mask and have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan, the IEP or 504 team should meet to make a determination about possible accommodations based on the totality of needs, including the student's needs and the community's public health needs. **In most cases, the IEP or 504 team should consider fully remote learning as the appropriate accommodation.** In other cases, such as when the student has a breathing obstruction or other severe medical condition that would be exacerbated by mask-wearing, the IEP or 504 team may request medical documentation and may determine whether a face shield could be substituted for a face mask. In the event the IEP or 504 team allows a face shield to be substituted for a face mask, the face shield must be hooded, or start at the forehead, and wrap around the face from ear to ear and extend to the chin. Moreover, additional personal protective equipment (PPE) for the student and the staff serving the student should be considered.

When a student with an IEP or 504 Plan cannot wear a face mask due to a behavioral issue, then the IEP or 504 team should convene to develop a fully remote learning option and a plan for teaching the student to wear a face covering so the student may return to in-person learning as soon as possible.

When convening the IEP or 504 team to consider remote learning or face shields as reasonable accommodations, please meet with your legal counsel and Special Education Director or 504 coordinator to ensure that all state and federal laws are followed, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the New Mexico Human Rights Act, Section 28-1-1 NMSA 1978 et seq. In addition, please convene appropriate school staff to explore all options to include the student in whatever activities are feasible, including outdoor learning, in a safe manner to the greatest extent possible while minimizing and mitigating risks and making other possible accommodations.

Students who do not have and are not eligible for an IEP or 504 Plan must wear a face mask in order to attend school in-person. The alternative is fully remote learning.

Face Masks & Staff

[According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of the U.S. Department of Labor, wearing a face mask is considered a lawful condition of employment.](#) When wearing a face mask would exacerbate a breathing obstruction or another severe medical condition for the staff member, the staff member will provide medical documentation to support a request for alternate work as a reasonable accommodation if feasible.

Staff who work with students wearing a face shield instead of a face mask under the circumstances described above should wear a face shield in addition to a mask. In these situations, schools should provide staff with a medical mask (surgical, procedural, N95, or KN95) and/or other PPE.

Staff who work with students who need to lip read or face read in order to learn will wear a face mask with a clear plastic window, or that is made of clear material, during instruction. Discussion of [how to improve communication with clear plastic face masks, what factors to look for, where to buy clear masks](#) may be

found online. **(Please note that NMPED does not endorse any specific mask or vendor mentioned in these articles).**

Mask-Wearing & the Americans with Disabilities Act

The need for public health and safety must be balanced with requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to make reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. Under the ADA, a public accommodation may not be required when it would pose a “direct threat” to the school community. [§ 36.208 \[Direct threat\]](#) of the ADA, states as follows:

- a. This part does not require a public accommodation to permit an individual to participate in or benefit from the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and accommodations of that public accommodation when that individual poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.
- b. In determining whether an individual poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, a public accommodation must make an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment that relies on current medical knowledge or on the best available objective evidence, to ascertain: The nature, duration, and severity of the risk; the probability that the potential injury will actually occur; and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures or the provision of auxiliary aids or services will mitigate the risk.

Moreover, a reasonable accommodation also may not be required when it presents an “undue burden”. [§ 36.104 \[Definitions\]](#) of the ADA regulations defines “undue burden” as involving “significant difficulty or expense. In determining whether an action would result in an undue burden, factors to be considered include:

1. The nature and cost of the action needed under this part;
2. The overall financial resources of the site or sites involved in the action; the number of persons employed at the site; the effect on expenses and resources; legitimate safety requirements that are necessary for safe operation, including crime prevention measures; or the impact otherwise of the action upon the operation of the site;

3. The geographic separateness, and the administrative or fiscal relationship of the site or sites in question to any parent corporation or entity;
4. If applicable, the overall financial resources of any parent corporation or entity; the overall size of the parent corporation or entity with respect to the number of its employees; the number, type, and location of its facilities; and
5. If applicable, the type of operation or operations of any parent corporation or entity, including the composition, structure, and functions of the workforce of the parent corporation or entity.

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, all people's health and safety must be considered. To keep people safe by reducing community spread of COVID-19, wearing a face mask is a state mandate and must be enforced in schools. The following reasonable accommodations for students and staff who have a disability that precludes mask-wearing are permitted:

1. Students with an IEP or 504 Plan will have access to fully remote learning as the accommodation that keeps the maximum number of people safe;
2. For students who have a breathing obstruction or other severe medical condition that would be exacerbated by mask-wearing, the IEP or 504 Plan team may consider whether to allow the student to wear a face shield after taking into account whether PPE and other additional precautionary measures could be used to keep everyone in the school community safe;
3. Staff for whom wearing a face mask would exacerbate a breathing obstruction or another severe medical condition may provide medical documentation in support of a request for alternate work as a reasonable accommodation.

Please note that the above discussions of legal considerations do not constitute legal advice and should not be relied upon in any individual case. It is critical that school districts and charter schools seek the advice of human resources staff and legal counsel about specific cases.

Mask & PPE Supplies Required at Each School

Schools must have a sufficient quantity of masks as well as PPE for staff in close contact assignments² on hand to start the school year prior to students returning for in-person learning.³

- Two multi-layer cloth masks per staff member
- Two multi-layer cloth masks per student
- Additional disposable masks for students and staff
- 20 medical masks (surgical, procedural, or N95) and a face shield for each staff member with a close contact assignment
- At the request of the employee, a reusable or disposable full-length gown for any employee whose duties subject them to conditions in which social distancing and PPE standards cannot be guaranteed
- Bottled hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) or soap and water hand-washing stations available for use by employees and students
- Employees who work with staff or students with COVID-like symptoms (school nurses, staff in isolation rooms, etc.) shall have N-95 masks and face shields

² A close contact assignment includes any staffing assignment in which a staff member must be within six feet of distance from a student in order to fulfill their duties (such as staff who change student diapers, who change feeding tubes, or who provide services to students with behavioral needs necessitating closer contact).

³ If a school does not have medical masks and/or face shields on hand for staff with a close contact assignment, the school may still have elementary students return in the hybrid model, but must not require a staff member to perform close contact duties until a medical mask and face shield is provided.

Surveillance Testing in PreK–12 Public Schools

To identify unrecognized COVID-19 cases and reduce exposures in the PreK–12 public school population, NMPED, in partnership with NMDOH, will be launching a robust statewide surveillance testing to ensure that all educators have access to critical testing resources as schools reopen for in-person learning.

All schools that meet the following qualifications are eligible to have elementary students on campus after September 8, 2020:

1. Have an approved reentry plan, and
2. Have adequate personal protective equipment onsite, and
3. Be located in a county with a 14-day average daily case count of fewer than eight per 100,000 and a test positivity rate of under 5%.
4. Provide a signed ***Safety Plan Checklist*** as outlined on Page 18.

For eligible schools that choose to open, NMPED will require a 5% surveillance testing requirement for faculty and staff each week when students are present on campus.

NMDOH Public Health Offices throughout the state will make surveillance testing opportunities available to educators at each PreK–12 public school. School staff members will have the ability to pre-register for available testing slots through the [NMDOH registration app](#) and will need to complete the employer and insurance information. A list of NMDOH [Public Health Offices](#) and other established NMDOH Public Health testing sites can be found on the [NMDOH website](#).

Additionally, identified points of contact at each PreK–12 public school will collect and report the total number of faculty and staff tested, and the number of positive results, to NMPED weekly. This will facilitate swift and efficient rapid response efforts in the event of an identified case.

Access to testing will be provided at no cost to the individual.



Safety Plan Checklist for COVID-19 Preparation & Response

- ☐ You have and will maintain an inventory of **masks and PPE** for students and staff:
 - ▶ Two multi-layer cloth masks per staff member
 - ▶ Two multi-layer cloth masks per student
 - ▶ Additional disposable masks for students and staff
 - ▶ 20 medical masks (surgical, procedural, or N95) and a face shield for each staff member with a close contact assignment
 - ▶ At the request of the employee, a reusable or disposable full-length gown for any employee whose duties subject them to conditions in which social distancing and PPE standards cannot be guaranteed
 - ▶ Bottled hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) or soap and water hand-washing stations available for use by employees and students
 - ▶ Employees who work with staff or students with COVID-like symptoms (school nurses, staff in isolation rooms, etc.) shall have N-95 masks and face shields
- ☐ You have identified a **PPE Point Person for your district/school** and [entered their contact information in the appropriate NMPED Google document](#). Your district PPE point of contact is responsible for maintaining and reporting weekly inventory of masks and PPE to NMPED through a web-based portal. NMPED will provide training and support on this requirement.
- ☐ You have identified a **COVID-19 Point Person for each school** in your district and [entered their contact information in the appropriate NMPED Google document](#).
- ☐ You have a **social distancing plan** in place which allows no more than 50% of the registered students to be in any given classroom at any one time.
- ☐ You will ensure **student groups remain in cohorts**.
- ☐ You have and will maintain an inventory of **CDC-approved cleaning supplies**.
- ☐ You shall have **sufficient custodial resources** so that the areas of the schools are cleaned in accordance with CDC standards in between “A Day” and “B Day” cohorts. Custodians may volunteer for overtime if necessary; if the District cannot complete the necessary tasks with voluntary overtime, it will engage third party vendors to insure that the work areas are cleaned in accordance with CDC standards between “A Day” and “B Day”.
- ☐ You shall have an **established and written protocol on inspecting, repairing, and providing maintenance on ventilation systems within your buildings**. Filtration levels (MERV ratings) shall be maximized for equipment capabilities; use at least MERV 13, or equivalent.
- ☐ You have read and reviewed **NMPED’s COVID-19 Preparation & Response Toolkit** and will abide by its guidelines.

I certify that my district/school has completed the above actions.

DISTRICT/CHARTER SCHOOL NAME

SUPERINTENDENT/CHARTER DIRECTOR NAME

SUPERINTENDENT/CHARTER DIRECTOR SIGNATURE

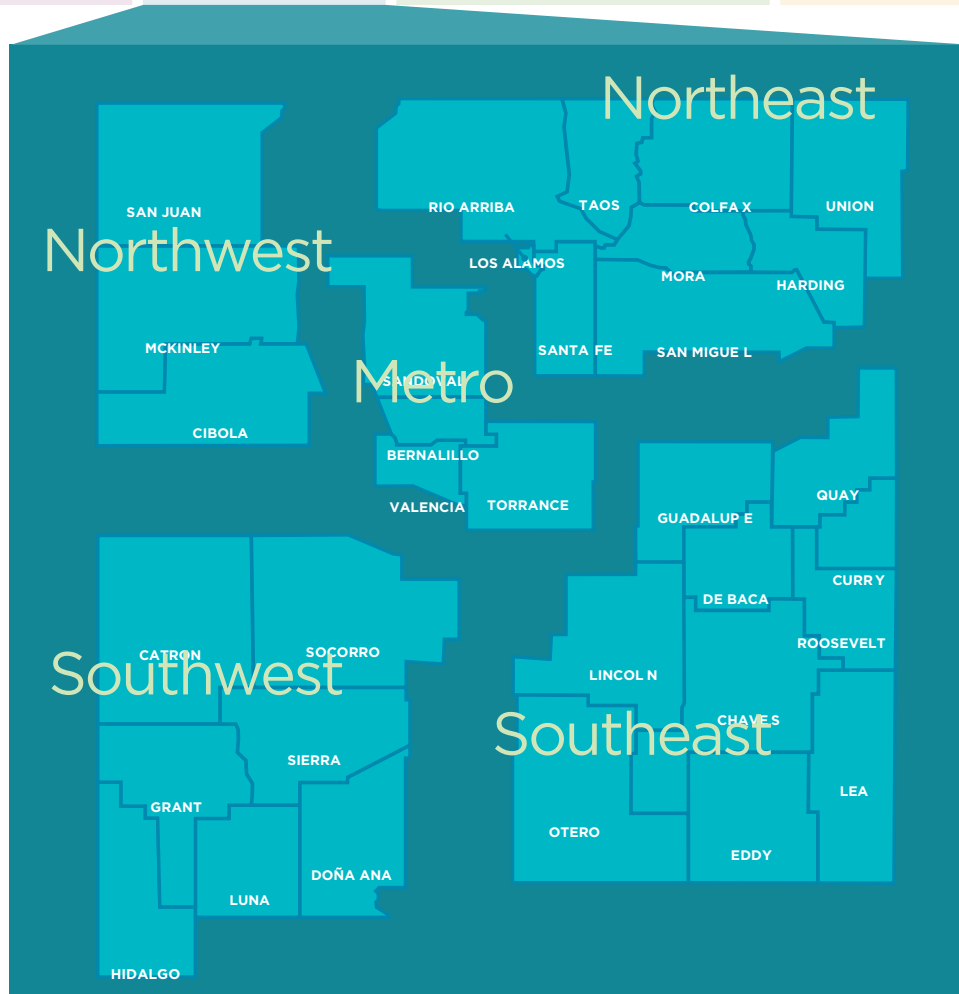
DATE

NM Department of Health

School Health Advocate Contact Roster

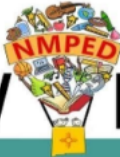
Districts and schools may contact their local School Health Advocate (SHA) according to their region for guidance in terms of testing and quarantine procedures.

SCHOOL HEALTH ADVOCATE	REGION	EMAIL	OFFICE PHONE	PROFESSIONAL CELL
Leslie Berry RN	Northwest	leslie.berry@state.nm.us	505.836.4561	505-469-7433
Jennifer Downey RN	Northeast	jennifer.downey@state.nm.us	505-476-2653	505-469-3010
Barbara Lynn Wheeler RN	Northwest-Metro Area	barbaral.wheeler@state.nm.us	TBD	505-231-6543
Maricelda Pisana RN	Southeast	maricelda.pisana@state.nm.us	Teleworking	505-231-1517
Crista Pierce RN	Southwest	crista.pierce@state.nm.us	Teleworking	505-231-1852



Initial Report Form

Please gather the information on page 8 and submit the [Initial Report online form](#) within four hours of notification of a positive cases of COVID-19.



NEW MEXICO

Public Education Department

Initial Report COVID-19 Positive Case (One Form per Positive Case)

Please submit one form PER each positive case

*** Required**

Email address *

Your email

Name of PED Rapid Response Team Member

Your answer

Name of Person Reporting Positive Case

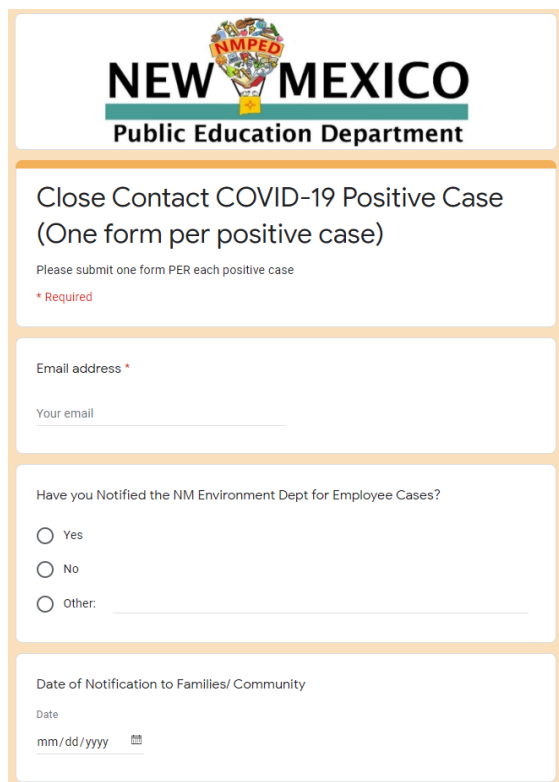
Your answer

Point of Contact Cell Phone Number (include area code)

Your answer

Close Contact Form & Supplemental Spreadsheet

After answering the questions on page 9, complete the [Close Contact Report](#) online form and download and fill out the [Supplemental Close Contact Spreadsheet](#) and email it to rapid.response@state.nm.us within six hours of the initial contact with NMPED or NMDOH and submittal of the Initial Report.



NEW MEXICO
Public Education Department

Close Contact COVID-19 Positive Case
(One form per positive case)

Please submit one form PER each positive case

* Required

Email address *

Your email

Have you Notified the NM Environment Dept for Employee Cases?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other: _____

Date of Notification to Families/ Community

Date

mm/dd/yyyy

Information to Collect for the Close Contact Supplemental Spreadsheet:

Lab-verified Positive Individual Name

Date of Birth

Close Contact Last Name, First Name, Middle Name

Date of Birth

Student STARS ID (if student)

Street Address, City, Zip

Phone number

Email

Mother's Last Name, First Name (if student)

Phone Number, Email

Father's Last Name, First Name (if student)

Phone Number, Email

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Supplemental Close Contact Report due 6 hours after initial contact with NMPED or NMDOH								
2	Lab-verified positive individual name:			Lab-verified positive individual date of birth:					
4	Last name (close contact)	First name (close contact)	Middle name (close contact)	DoB (close contact)	Student STARS ID (if student)	Street Address (close contact)	City (close contact)	Zip (close contact)	Phone number (close contact)
5									
6									
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Template for Notification of Positive Case to School Community

This letter template may be used to notify the school community of a COVID-19 positive case. [Download a MS Word document](#) to customize.

[PRINT ON LETTERHEAD OF FACILITY]

[INSERT DATE]

To: Parents or Guardians of children who attend [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL]

[INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL CHILD ATTENDS] is working with the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) and New Mexico's Department of Health (NMDOH) because a staff member at our facility or a child who attends our school has tested positive for COVID-19.

This letter is to inform you about the next steps necessary to protect your child and our community from COVID-19. Per guidance from both NMPED and NMDOH, we are required to investigate to see who had "close contact" with the staff member or student who tested positive for COVID-19. A "close contact" is defined as being closer than six feet for more than three minutes to a person who is positive for COVID-19 and all staff and students who were in the same classroom as the infected individual. According to NMPED and NMDOH, all staff and students who were in "close contact" with the infected individual must be tested, and they must self-quarantine at home for 14 days.

In the meantime, if you or your child begin to develop symptoms of COVID-19, which are fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of smell or taste, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea [<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>], please call your public health office or the COVID-19 Hotline at 1-855-600-3453 press 8.

It is important that you call your regional public health office to schedule an appointment for testing [INSERT PHONE NUMBER].

You may call [INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL-BASED COVID-19 POINT PERSON at PHONE NUMBER] or NMDOH at (505) 827-0006, if you have questions.

Thank you for your support in these efforts.

Sincerely,

[SIGNED BY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR]

Useful Phone Numbers

Coronavirus

- **Coronavirus Health Hotline**—call for any health-related questions about the Coronavirus: 1-855-600-3453 press 8
- **Coronavirus Information Hotline**—call if you have any questions about school closures, job issues, eviction notices, etc.: 1-833-551-0518

Food

- **Assistance obtaining food for school-age children:** 1-505-827-6683
- **SNAP Benefits:** 1-800-283-4465
- **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children**—questions on food or formula availability: 1-505-469-0929
- **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children**—general questions: 1-866-867-3124

Mental Health

- **New Mexico Crisis and Access Line**—24/7 community & state resources for individuals, families, and agencies concerned with mental health: 1-855-662-7474 or 1-855-227-5485 (TTY)
- **National Hopeline Network:** 1-800-SUICIDE
- **Spanish-Language Suicide Hotline:** 1-866-331-9474
- **Suicide 24/7 Emergency Line:** 575-758-1125
- **Suicide Text Line:** 741741
- **University of New Mexico Mental Health:** 505-272-2800

Additional Resources

- **Alcoholics Anonymous:** 505-266-1900
- **Child Abuse Hotline:** 505-841-6100 or dial #SAFE from a mobile phone (note: #SAFE cannot receive text messages)
- **Domestic Violence Hotline:** 1-800-773-3645
- **Gambling Addiction:** 1-800-522-4700
- **National Child Abuse Hotline:** 1-800-24-ACHILD
- **National Child Abuse Prevention Line:** 1-800-CHILDREN
- **National Human Trafficking Hotline:** Call 1-888-373-7888 (TTY: 711) *Text 233733
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline:** 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline (Español):** 1-800-942-6908
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline**—TTY, text telephone for deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired): 1-800-787-3224
- **National Runaway Switchboard:** 1-800-637-0701 Ext. 118
- **National Sexual Assault Hotline:** 1-800-656-HOPE
- **National Teen Dating Abuse Help:** 1-866-331-9474
- **Native American Professional Parent Resources:** 505-345-6289
- **New Mexico Healthcare Worker and First Responder Support Line:** 855-507-5509
- **New Mexico Legal Aid:** 505-633-6694
- **New Mexico Rape Crisis Center:** 505-266-7711
- **New Mexico Substance Abuse Helpline:** 1-855-505-4505
- **Poison Control:** 1-800-222-1222
- **Pull Together:** 1-800-691-9067
- **Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners:** 505-883-8720