



## Best-Practice Recommendations Return to School Matrix

Criteria below represent the best-practice recommendations for the return to school. Additional information is available from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/) (CDC).

- Criteria labeled **Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccination** apply to individuals age 6 months and older who have received all [recommended vaccine doses](#), including booster doses as applicable.
- Criteria labeled **Had COVID-19 and Recovered in the Last 90 Days** apply to individuals, regardless of coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination status, who have had confirmed COVID-19 and recovered in the last 90 days.
- Criteria labeled **Unvaccinated or Not Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccination** apply to any other individuals.

Scenario	Criteria to Return
1. COVID-19 symptoms <sup>1</sup>  <i>Recommend the individual seek healthcare guidance to determine if COVID-19 testing is indicated.</i>	Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccination, Had COVID-19 and Recovered in the Last 90 Days, OR Unvaccinated or Not Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccination  <u>Option 1: The individual is tested:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If positive, see Scenarios 2A and 2B.</li> <li>• If negative, see Scenario 3.</li> </ul> <u>Option 2: The individual is not tested:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit documentation from a healthcare provider of an alternate diagnosis and meet standard criteria to return after illness (the individual school’s existing policies and protocols for an individual to return after illness).</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet COVID-19 symptom-based criteria to return:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Individual is younger than age 2 OR unable to wear a well-fitting mask:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At least 24 hours after the fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication (e.g., acetaminophen, ibuprofen) and other symptoms have improved;</li> </ul> </li> <li>AND               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ After at least 10 days (i.e., on day 11) from when symptoms first started, whichever is later.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ <b>Individual is age 2 or older AND able to wear a well-fitting mask through day 10:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At least 24 hours after the fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms have improved;</li> </ul> </li> <li>AND               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ After at least five days (i.e., on day 6) from when symptoms first started, whichever is later.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Students or staff with pre-existing health conditions that present with specific COVID-19-like symptoms must not be excluded from entering the school building on the basis of those specific symptoms, if a healthcare provider has provided written or verbal documentation that those specific symptoms are not due to COVID-19.

Scenario	Criteria to Return
<p>2A. Positive COVID-19 Test Result (Antigen or NAAT<sup>2</sup>) <u>with Symptoms</u></p>	<p>Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccination, Had COVID-19 and Recovered in the Last 90 Days, OR Unvaccinated or Not Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccination</p> <p><b>Individual is younger than age 2 OR unable to wear a well-fitting mask:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After at least 10 days (i.e., on day 11) from when symptoms first appeared.</li> </ul> <p><b>Individual is age 2 or older AND able to wear a well-fitting face mask through day 10:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>If fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms have improved:</u><sup>3</sup> After at least five days (i.e., on day 6) from when symptoms first started.</li> <li>• <u>If still have a fever and/or other symptoms have not improved at day 5:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ After being fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms have improved.</li> <li>OR</li> <li>○ After at least 10 days (i.e., on day 11) from when symptoms first started.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>If an individual has access to a test and wants to test, the best approach is to use an antigen test toward the end of the five-day isolation period.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The individual should test only if they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms have improved.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• If the individual tests and the result is positive, they should continue to isolate through day 10 and return on day 11.</li> <li>• If the individual tests and the result is negative, they can end isolation but should continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others at home and in public through day 10.</li> </ul>
<p>2B. Positive COVID-19 Test Result (Antigen or NAAT) who were <u>Moderately</u><sup>4</sup> or <u>Very Sick</u><sup>5</sup> from COVID-19 OR Positive COVID-19 Test Result (Antigen or NAAT) and Individual has a <u>Weakened Immune System</u></p>	<p>Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccination, Had COVID-19 and Recovered in the Last 90 Days, OR Unvaccinated or Not Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After at least 10 days (i.e., on day 11) from when symptoms first started.</li> </ul> <p>Note: People who are very sick from COVID-19 and people who have weakened immune systems might need to isolate at home longer. They may also require testing with a viral test to determine when they can be around others. CDC recommends an isolation period of at least 10 and up to 20 days for people who were very sick from COVID-19 and for people with weakened immune systems. Individuals who fall into one of these categories should consult with their healthcare provider and follow their advice.</p>

<sup>2</sup> Please note: a PCR test is a type of NAAT (Nucleic Acid Amplification Test).

<sup>3</sup> Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.

<sup>4</sup> “Moderately ill” means experiencing symptoms that affect the lungs like shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.

<sup>5</sup> “Very sick” means people who were hospitalized or required intensive care or ventilation support.

Scenario	Criteria to Return
<p>2C. Positive COVID-19 Test Result (Antigen or NAAT) <u>without Any Symptoms</u> (Asymptomatic Infection)</p>	<p>Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccination, Had COVID-19 and Recovered in the Last 90 Days, OR Unvaccinated or Not Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccination</p> <p><b>Individual is younger than age 2 OR unable to wear a well-fitting mask:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After at least 10 days (i.e., on day 11) from positive test.</li> </ul> <p><b>Individual is age 2 or older AND able to wear a well-fitting mask through day 10:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>If individual continues to have no symptoms:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ After at least five days (i.e., on day 6) from positive test.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>If symptoms develop:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Isolation restarts with day 0 as the day symptoms started. See Scenarios 2A and 2B for return criteria.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>If an individual has access to a test and wants to test, the best approach is to use an antigen test toward the end of the five-day isolation period.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the individual tests and the result is positive, they should continue to isolate through day 10 and return on day 11.</li> <li>• If the test result is positive, they can also choose to test daily and if the result is negative, they can end isolation but continue to wear a mask around others at home and in public through day 10.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Negative COVID-19 Test Result (Antigen or NAAT) After Symptoms of COVID-19</p>	<p>Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccination, Had COVID-19 and Recovered in the Last 90 Days, OR Unvaccinated or Not Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>If negative NAAT:</u> When meet standard criteria to return after illness (the individual school’s existing policies and protocols for an individual to return after illness).</li> <li>• <u>If negative antigen:</u> To improve results, antigen tests should be used twice over a three-day period with at least 24 hours and no more than 48 hours between tests.</li> </ul>

Scenario	Criteria to Return
4. Asymptomatic Close Contact of an Individual with Confirmed COVID-19	Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccination or Had COVID-19 and Recovered in the Last 90 Days
	<p>Individuals who are up to date on their COVID-19 vaccination do not need to quarantine and may return immediately, but they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get a COVID-19 test (antigen or NAAT) at least five days after the date they were exposed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If the test is positive, see Scenarios 2A, 2B or 2C.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms for a full 10 days after exposure. They should isolate and test if symptoms develop.</li> <li>• Wear a well-fitting mask when around others at home and in public for 10 days after their exposure.</li> </ul> <p>Individuals who have had COVID-19 and recovered in the last 90 days do not need to quarantine and may return immediately, but they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms for a full 10 days after exposure. They should isolate and test if symptoms develop.</li> <li>• Wear a well-fitting mask when around others at home and in public for 10 days after their exposure.</li> </ul>
	Unvaccinated or Not Up to Date on COVID-19 Vaccination
	<p><b>Individual is younger than age 2 OR unable to wear a well-fitting mask:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>If able to isolate from COVID-19-positive individual:</u> After a minimum of 10 days (i.e., on day 11) from last exposure to COVID-19 positive individual.</li> <li>• <u>If unable to isolate from COVID-19-positive individual:</u> After a minimum of 10 days from the end of the COVID-19-positive individual’s isolation period (see Scenarios 2A, 2B and 2C).</li> </ul> <p><b>Individual is age 2 or older and able to wear a well-fitting mask through day 10:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>If able to isolate from COVID-19-positive individual:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ After a minimum of five days (i.e., on day 6) from last exposure to the COVID-19-positive individual IF no symptoms and tested for COVID-19 at least five days after the last close contact AND receive a negative test result (antigen or NAAT).</li> </ul> </li> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">OR</li> <li>○ If unable to get a test, after a minimum of five days (i.e., on day 6) from last exposure to COVID-19-positive individual IF no symptoms throughout the five-day quarantine period.</li> <li>• <u>If unable to isolate from COVID-19-positive individual:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ After a minimum of five days (i.e., on day 6) from the end of the COVID-19-positive individual’s isolation period (see Scenarios 2A, 2B and 2C) if tested for COVID-19 at least five days after the end of the COVID-19-positive individual’s isolation period AND receive a negative test result (antigen or NAAT).</li> </ul> </li> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">OR</li> <li>○ If unable to get a test, after a minimum of five days from the end of the COVID-19-positive individual’s isolation period (see Scenarios 2A, 2B and 2C) IF no symptoms throughout the five-day quarantine period.</li> </ul>