



**OKLAHOMA**  
Education



**OKLAHOMA**  
State Department  
of Health

# **Coronavirus/COVID-19: Quarantine and Isolation FAQs for Oklahoma Public Schools**

**UPDATED AUG. 2021**

In-person learning is essential. Going to school improves the social, physical and mental health of kids, and there is abundant evidence that schools can offer in-person instruction safely if we do it carefully. Here are answers to some frequently asked questions about schools and COVID-19.

## **What does the Delta variant mean for schools?**

- The Delta variant now makes up over 95% of sequenced cases in Oklahoma. Because it's at least twice as transmissible, the variant poses a serious challenge to pandemic control. This is especially true in schools because a vaccine for children under age 12 has not yet been approved.
- Despite its increased transmissibility, there's no evidence to date that COVID-19 caused by the Delta variant causes more severe illness among kids. As with other variants, however, children and adults can become severely ill and may develop symptoms of Long COVID-19, so we must take the risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools seriously.

## **What can schools do to protect students, teachers and staff?**

- It's important that schools know about all of the tools in their toolbox to protect students, teachers and staff from COVID-19. This means using multiple layers of safety to prevent transmission, including vaccination, consistent and correct mask wearing indoors, social distancing, cohorting and handwashing.
- Even with many layers of safety, it's inevitable some cases will emerge. Anticipating this, school leaders can help by making testing available to promptly identify cases and taking swift action when a positive case is identified.

## Do students really need to stay home when they are sick with COVID-19? When they are exposed to COVID-19?

- Yes. Keeping students at home when they are infected with COVID-19 ([isolation](#)) or have been exposed as a [close contact](#) ([quarantine](#)) is critical to controlling the transmission of COVID-19, especially since infected individuals are known to transmit the virus to others before they experience symptoms or when they are only experiencing mild symptoms.
- Schools and parents have a duty under state law (63 O.S. § 1-505) to keep students home when they are in isolation or quarantine. These students should remain away from school facilities and activities until their period of isolation or quarantine has ended. Isolation and quarantine are determined by the Oklahoma State Department of Health or – within Oklahoma County or Tulsa County – by their respective county health departments.

## Do schools need to notify health officials of students who have tested positive for COVID-19 or for known exposures?

- Yes. Oklahoma law requires school districts to immediately notify health officials of known positive cases and exposures in school (63 O.S. § 6303). Reporting is also a condition of a school district's continuing receipt of COVID-19 relief funding made available under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act according to the assurances districts submitted to OSDE.
- To accomplish this, the Oklahoma State Department of Health and the Oklahoma State Department of Education have partnered to establish a uniform reporting mechanism for schools – the **State Infection Reporting System (SIRS)** – accessible to authorized school and health officials through [Single Sign-On](#). School districts must login and accurately report this information **on a daily basis**, even if there are no cases and/or exposures on that particular day.

## Where can I find more guidance and information?

- More detailed school guidance from the Oklahoma State Department of Health can be found [here](#). Additional school guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention can be found [here](#).
- For public health investigation and quarantine questions, contact your local county health department.
- For OSDE specific questions, contact Brad Clark, General Counsel, at 405-521-4906, or Victoria Korrekt, Paralegal, at 405-521-4889.