

School Masking and Testing Guidance: FAQs for Schools

Exposure

1. How is exposure defined? How do you tell when an individual is exposed to COVID-19 and should therefore wear a mask and undergo testing? What does “potentially exposed” mean?

Exposed students are those who meet the definition of a “close contact” to an individual with COVID-19. A close contact is a person, regardless of vaccination status, who was less than 6 feet away from an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes).

A simpler operational definition of exposure for unmasked individuals is to consider the entire classroom in which the infected individual was present to be exposed or potentially exposed. This group definition considers all individuals

should

the distance to determine whether an individual is “exposed” or a “close contact” in schools is 6 feet of distance.

If the school is conducting classic contact tracing and both the infected student and the student(s) for whom exposure status is being determined were wearing well-fitting masks, then the distance

Yes. In case there has been undetected secondary spread within the classroom, such a student should wear a mask along with the rest of the class.

or recommended.

Schools may wish to review and optimize other mitigation measures, as feasible, including improved ventilation, encouraging vaccination, staying home when ill, hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette, physical distancing, as outlined in the [CDC](#) and