



# Schenectady County Public Health Services

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## **Schenectady County Public Health Services (SCPHS): 7 Day Test Out of Quarantine - Pilot in the PreK-12 School Setting**

*This pilot is limited to K-12 students and staff who do not have a household contact with COVID-19*

Quarantine is an effective tool for separating an exposed individual from others to prevent spread before the person knows they have the virus, but quarantine can be burdensome to individuals, families, schools, businesses, and communities. The incubation period of COVID-19 is 2-14 days after exposure, but the risk of becoming ill is not the same every day. Any quarantine shorter than 14 days carries a risk of continuing the spread of disease. CDC evaluated the risk of continued spread versus the benefits of reducing quarantine burden and provided options for reducing the length quarantine.<sup>i</sup>

When local circumstances and resources permit and when diagnostic testing resources are sufficient and available, CDC has indicated that a reduced quarantine period of 7 full days is an acceptable alternative if certain criteria are met. SCPHS requires the following to be considered for early release from quarantine:

### **1. Appropriately Timed Negative Viral Test**

A negative COVID-19 viral test result from a diagnostic specimen is required. Viral tests include both antigen tests and nucleic acid amplification tests (NAAT). These tests can be administered in pharmacies, healthcare provider offices, and schools. In schools that have contracted with SCPHS for Quadrant testing, this test can be utilized. Currently At-Home tests cannot be used for Test Out of Quarantine.

- The specimen must be collected no sooner than Day 5 of quarantine to stay within 48 hours of the time of planned quarantine discontinuation (after 11:59pm on Day 7).
- The laboratory report must include the name of the laboratory, name of the individual tested and their date of birth, the date the specimen was collected, and the result of the viral test.
- Quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7. Day 5 of quarantine is defined as the fifth day after an individual's last documented close contact exposure to an individual infectious with COVID-19 ("last exposure"). In the example below, if an individual's last exposure took place on the 8th of the month, the fifth day of quarantine would be on the 13th. If a specimen collected that day tested negative for COVID-19, the individual could potentially be released from quarantine after 11:59 PM on the 15th of the month.
- Students under quarantine who are found to have more than one close contact exposure to an individual infectious with COVID-19 may have their quarantine period reset, based upon the date of the last documented exposure. For example, if a case exposes a group of five close contacts on December 1<sup>st</sup>, and one of those five close contacts later develops symptoms on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, the remaining four students would have their quarantine period extended by two days if they were in contact with the student on December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html>  
updated 12/02/2020 and last accessed 11/18/2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 <b>Last day of exposure</b>	9 Quarantine Day 1	10 Quarantine Day 2	11 Quarantine Day 3	12 Quarantine Day 4
13 Quarantine Day 5: First day to get tested	14 Quarantine Day 6	15 Quarantine Day 7	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	Potential Release from Quarantine after 11:59pm on Quarantine Day 7 with a negative test result			26
27	28	29	30	31		

**2. The individual under quarantine has not developed any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 since their last exposure, including the entirety of quarantine up to the time at which quarantine is discontinued.**

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. People with these symptoms may have COVID 19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

**3. The individual agrees to maintain continued vigilance against COVID-19 by adhering to the following conditions upon early release from quarantine and through Day 14 following their last exposure.**

Symptom Monitoring: The individual must remain alert for COVID-19 symptoms described above. In a true medical emergency, the individual should first call 911. If any symptoms develop, the individual must immediately self-isolate and seek testing. If the result is positive, the individual will

remain isolated for 10 days after symptom onset as a case. If the result is negative, the individual should remain in quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure.

Other Risk Mitigation Measures: Outside the home, the individual must correctly and consistently wear a mask whenever possible, maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others (3ft as appropriate in a preK-12 school setting), and practice scrupulous hand hygiene and environmental cleaning.

**4. SCPHS retains the right to pause the early release option at any time, either individually or universally and cannot guarantee the speed with which releases can happen. Factors affecting the early release option's availability and response time include, but are not limited to, the following:**

- a. Availability of Diagnostic testing resources: Testing for the purpose of earlier discontinuation of quarantine will be considered only when it will have no impact on community diagnostic testing. Testing of persons seeking evaluation for infection will be prioritized.
- b. Local Transmission Patterns: SCPHS may deny early release owing to local transmissions patterns that, in its assessment, warrant a more cautious quarantine strategy.
- c. Individual Risk Profiles: SCPHS may deny early release based on an assessment of the individual's unique transmission risk.
- d. Public Health Staffing and Resource Capacity: To protect the health and safety of county residents, SCPHS will continue to prioritize vaccination, case investigation, and related COVID- response activities.

### **Process for Early Release**

Currently, SCPHS supports piloting 7-day test out of quarantine in the PreK-12 school setting. The purpose of this process is to limit the number of days that children are out of school and allow children to return to school as quickly and safely as possible.

Schools will be responsible for receiving the negative test result from the parents or guardians of the children. Tests can be done at school or at a lab out in the community. Currently At-Home tests are not acceptable for Test out of Quarantine.

Schools will report the negative test results to SCPHS along with the name of the student, their quarantine period, and an email for the parents or guardian, if an email is not available the schools will provide a mail address. SCPHS will then release the children who have completed the procedure for Test out of Quarantine on day 7 by sending a release letter to the email or mailing address provided. These letters will be sent out Monday-Friday between the hours of 8:30am-4:30pm. This letter officially releases the child from their quarantine, however once the school acquires the necessary test result the child is allowed to return to normal activities including attending school on day 8, even if letter has not yet been received.