

# Morton 709 Healthy Quarantining

## Process and Guidelines on Who, Why, and When a Student Must Quarantine Due to an Exposure with a Person Who Tested Positive

### The Quarantine Selection Process

A 14-day quarantine of healthy students and staff is initiated when either the school or the Tazewell County Health Department (TCHD) is informed that a student or staff member has tested positive for Covid-19. That notification launches an immediate investigation by both the school administration and TCHD to determine which other students or staff members were in close contact with that positive case (within 6 feet for 15 or more minutes during the day).

School administrators, teachers, coaches, and bus drivers do their best to determine which students were in close contact with the positive case for the day the student tested positive as well as the two days prior to that test date. We consider all people who were in close contact with the positive case throughout the school day, including those: 1) in all of the classes, 2) at lunchtime, 3) during athletics and activities, and 4) on the bus.

The TCHD also does an independent investigation by contacting the positive case and asking with whom he/she has been in close contact over the past few days. Some of these close contacts may have occurred outside of school, such as family, friends, and church groups. The TCHD and the school district then share the school-related names of those in close contact.

### The Communication Process

After students and staff are identified as close contacts, a school administrator calls the parent of each student determined to be in close contact, and shares the following “talking points” of information with the parent:

- *You are being contacted because, during school, your child has been determined to have been in close contact with another person who has tested positive for Covid-19.*
- *The potential exposure occurred on (specified date).*
- *Due to confidentiality reasons, we are not divulging the name of the person who tested positive.*
- *In cooperation with teachers and other staff members, we have investigated the situation and identified your student as having been in close proximity (6 feet) for over 15 minutes.*

- *Your child will need to quarantine for 14 days after the time of the exposure, which will be through (specified date). He/she may return to school on (specified date).*
- *A negative test result will not shorten the quarantine length. (CDC Guidelines)*
- *You should be getting a call from the TCHD regarding next steps, and you may consult your own physician as well. If the TCHD gives you quarantine dates that are different from what I have told you, please let the school principal know right away.*
- *The TCHD may ask you to monitor your symptoms and inform you that your quarantine is not just limited to school attendance.*
- *Your student's teachers will be made aware of the quarantine and will make every effort to keep your student informed of the lessons and assignments, like any other excused absence. In most cases, your student should be able to learn remotely and remain up-to-date during the quarantine through the use of technology.*
- *Please go to our website and review the document, "Morton 709 Healthy Quarantine Process" for more information.*
- *If you have any questions, please contact the school principal or Asst. Supt., Craig Smock. [craig.smock@mcusd709.org](mailto:craig.smock@mcusd709.org) or 284-8098*

Due to confidentiality reasons and to minimize the stigma of testing positive, only the parents of students who are identified as being in close contact with a positive case will be notified that a person testing positive has been in school. And, the student or staff member who tested positive will not be identified to those parents and students.

### **Remote Learning During the Quarantine**

Toward the beginning of the quarantine, teachers should contact the students to ensure that they are remaining engaged and learning. High school students should reach out to their teachers to inquire about learning options. When possible and reasonable to do so, teachers should use technology to engage students in class in real-time or at least provide daily support and check-in with students. In those cases when students can stay up to speed with their classmates, teachers will maintain similar expectations and deadlines for work to be completed.

However, situations may call for the quarantine to be treated more as an absence in which students are afforded extra time to make up the work according to the student handbook. Whether or not a student can keep up with his/her classmates will, of course, depend upon the student's medical condition and ability to learn and complete work during the quarantine period.

In either case, teachers will post assignments and other information on the Schoology website. For more information, questions, or concerns, please contact your student's principal and/or teachers.

## **The Return to School Process**

There is no requirement for a doctor's release nor a negative Covid-19 test result in order to return to school. However, we are requiring the parent to provide the school with a copy of the letter from the TCHD which communicates the quarantine dates and the return to school date. This will act as verification that the school and TCHD agree on the return date and the "ticket" for a quarantined student to return to school. The letter should be on official letterhead and appear something like this:

*To whom it may concern:*

*This letter is to inform you that (Student's Name) has been quarantined by the Tazewell County Health Department.*

*Under the Illinois Department of Public Health's 77 Control of Communicable Disease Code, Part 690, (Student's Name) is to remain under home quarantine, which helps to prevent the spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick, or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. It can take 2-14 days to show symptoms, so quarantine is necessary so that the infection is not passed on to anyone else. Home quarantine does not allow for any activities or encounters with others outside the home. All activities outside the home, including work or school, are prohibited.*

*As long as (Student's Name) does not develop symptoms or receive a positive COVID test result, (Student's Name) may return to normal activities on (DATE).*

*More information about isolation and quarantine may be found here:*

*<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>*

*If you are in need of resources during this time, please email [resources@tchd.net](mailto:resources@tchd.net), and a Resource Coordinator will contact you to discuss any needs.*

*Please direct any questions to the Tazewell County Health Department at 309-478-5691.*

*Sincerely,*

*TCHD Official or Contact Tracer*

Parents are welcome to contact the TCHD regarding this letter, and if the TCHD is delayed or fails to provide the letter, parents should inform the school principal and we will consider whether or not to temporarily waive the letter requirement in each case.

## Testing for Covid-19

Due to the close contact, you may decide to have your student tested during the healthy quarantine due to your concern or curiosity. Here are a few facts to consider regarding student testing:

- The school cannot, and will not, require a student to be tested for Covid-19. That is your choice as a parent or guardian.
- If you decide to have your student tested, he/she cannot return to school, even if he/she has no symptoms, until after you receive the test results. This waiting period may extend the quarantine beyond the designated day of return.
- If you decide to have your student tested, you must inform the school of the test result as soon as possible, whether positive or negative.
- If your student tests negative, it will not shorten the length of the quarantine at all, based on current CDC guidelines.
- If your student tests positive, it could change the length of the quarantine, depending upon the testing date, symptoms, and other criteria.
- If your student tests positive, the school and TCHD will also contact trace your student and quarantine all people who were in close contact with your student up to two days prior to your student's test date.

## Household Exposures

For close contact exposures that occur in the home when a parent, sibling, or other member of the household tests positive, the length of the quarantine can depend on several factors, such as the degree to which you are able to isolate people in the home. Since it is a more complex and more continuous exposure, the school relies on the TCHD to make the determination of a return date of the student. This return date will be on the letter that TCHD provides the student.