



## **Return to School Policy**

**A. Purpose.** The purpose of this Policy is to set the guidelines by which a student or staff member who has experienced any of the below may return to the School's premises in compliance with New Mexico Public Education Department's (NMPED) requirements. These guidelines are to be in compliance with these requirements at all times. If at anytime these guidelines do not comport with these requirements the School shall endeavor to update this Policy as soon as possible and may, in the meantime, refer students, legal guardians, and staff directly to the NMPED, New Mexico Department of Health's (NMDOH), the website, or any other applicable governmental entity website for current guidance.

1. A positive test for COVID-19 and/or symptomatic of COVID-19 where the individual does not have a severe illness or severe immunosuppression;
2. A positive test for COVID-19 and/or symptomatic of COVID-19 where the individual has a severe illness or severe immunosuppression;
3. Acute COVID-19-like Symptoms;
4. COVID-19-like Symptoms from a Chronic Condition.

**B. A positive test for COVID-19 where the individual does not have a severe illness or severe immunosuppression.**

1. If the individual is symptomatic, at least 5 consecutive days of isolation have passed since the day after symptoms first appeared or since the positive test and vigilant mask wearing will occur for 5 additional consecutive days; or
2. If the individual is asymptomatic, at least 5 consecutive days of isolation have passed since their first positive test specimen was collected and vigilant mask wearing will occur for 5 additional consecutive days; and
3. At least 1 day (24 hours) has passed with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and
4. There is improvement in symptoms.

**C. A positive test for COVID-19 where the individual has a severe illness or severe immunosuppression.** In order to return to School premises or events the following criteria must be met:

1. At least 20 consecutive days of isolation have passed since the day after symptoms first appeared or since the positive test.

#### **D. COVID-19-like Acute Symptoms**

Both vaccinated and unvaccinated students and staff with no known exposure to COVID-19 but with new onset COVID-19 symptoms, such as headache or runny nose, will be sent home from school to self-isolate for 5 days and are encouraged to test.

**Exception:** If the student or staff member provides proof of a negative PCR test result (or two rapid antigen test results taken 24–48 hours apart), they may return to school before the full 5 days of isolation. If they decide not to test, they must isolate for the full 5 days.

**However:** if an unvaccinated symptomatic person has had a known exposure to COVID-19, the person should be tested at five days after exposure and must self-isolate for the full 5 days regardless of a negative test.

#### **E. COVID-19-like from a Chronic Condition.**

1. Students who have not provided evidence of vaccination and who exhibit chronic, mild non-specific COVID-19 symptoms should have their symptoms assessed either by a school nurse or primary care provider.
  - a. If there are no changes in symptoms from the baseline state, students do not need to be tested and may participate in school.
  - b. If students have a change in symptoms from their baseline as assessed either by a school nurse or a primary care provider, then the students should be tested for COVID-19 and be placed in isolation until the results are available. A negative result will discontinue the isolation.
  - c. If a student has a change in their baseline state and the student does not get tested, the student must self-isolate for 5 days and be fever-free without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours and have improving symptoms before returning to school.
2. Staff with allergies, asthma, or other non-infectious chronic disease which may present with mild non-specific COVID-19 symptoms should contact their primary care provider. The primary care provider may furnish the staff member with medical documentation stating that present, non-specific mild symptoms do not differ from the patient's baseline, indicating the individual may return to school without being tested for COVID-19.
3. Students or staff who have not provided evidence of COVID-19 vaccination, who have tested negative for COVID-19 in the past two weeks and who have no known exposure to COVID-19, do not need to be tested again in the presence of chronic symptoms that have not changed in a meaningful way during that interval. If those symptoms were to change from their baseline, then the student or staff should begin home isolation.

**Exception:** Students or staff with mild, chronic conditions, such as asthma or allergies, who have not provided evidence of COVID-19 vaccination and who receive a negative rapid COVID-19 antigen test, are not required to quarantine and may participate in school and

extracurricular activities until such time as the individual has a positive COVID-19 test or has a change in symptoms.

#### **F. Notification**

1. Any staff member experiencing any of the above situations must notify the Head Administrator immediately.
2. If the individual is a student, the student or legal guardian should notify the Head Administrator immediately so that arrangements for the student to be kept current with his or her or their school work can be made.

#### **G. Penalties for Non-Compliance.**

1. Failure of a staff member to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary action including termination or discharge.
2. Failure of a student or legal guardian to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary action including suspension from school.