

Question and answer topics covered in the COVID discussion with Dr. Michele Nitti and Michelle V. Gadaleta from 11/4/20 Essex Fells Board of Education Meeting

- Can you explain what close contact is?
Being exposed to someone who has tested positive within 6 feet proximity for 10 minutes or more.
- Do you have to stay home for 14 days even with a negative test?
Yes, if you have been exposed to a positive COVID case. This is considered the Quarantine period.
- Does that mean only from school? Or Activities?
The quarantine period means from all activities.
- What if you have siblings? Do they have to stay home too?
If they were directly exposed to a COVID positive case then the answer is yes. If not, then they may attend school.
- If you aren't sick with symptoms and get a negative test do you still have to stay home for 14 days?
Yes, the exposure to a positive COVID case is what triggers the 14 day quarantine.
- If you test positive for COVID, how long do you stay home?
A positive test will trigger a 10 Isolation period from the date of the positive test result. If you are in quarantine and then begin showing symptoms and test positive, the additional 10 day Isolation is added on.
- If a family member or someone who lives in your house tests positive for COVID, how long do you have to stay home?
If you have been directly exposed to a positive COVID case then you must quarantine for 14 days.
- Which is more accurate: rapid Antigen tests or PCR tests?
The PCR is the gold standard but can take time to result. 90% of the rapid tests are antigen tests. They result in 15-20 minutes, an advantage but there is a 15% false negative rate. The antigen test is most sensitive a few days after contact when you are pre-symptomatic and just early into the symptoms - so it is used many times for surveillance screening and when PCR is not available. There is a very small percentage of false positive antigen tests - so a PCR in someone who is asymptomatic is usually recommended to make sure it is a "true positive".
- Are rapid test results ok when you have to go to the doctor for something not COVID related and they test just for good measure?

If you go to the doctor with any symptoms that could be covid related and a rapid or other test for coronavirus is done , you need to first wait for results, if negative and doctor provides note that the illness is not covid AND you have no history of recent exposure to someone with confirmed positive test, then you can return to school once you are well as with ordinary illness. Regardless of any symptoms, or test results, doctors opinion etc, if you had known contact with a positive individual - you are out on either isolation (10 days) if you have symptoms or test positive, or you are out on quarantine (14 day) if you have no symptoms and test negative but could be incubating the virus.

If you go for a random test, rapid or otherwise, at doctor office or cvs etc and you have no symptoms and no history of contact then this does not affect school attendance if the test is negative.

- If you travel out of state but are not presenting with symptoms and have not been exposed, do you still have to quarantine for the 14 days?
Yes, if you have traveled to one of the States on the New Jersey Travel Restriction List or Internationally.
- Will a child need to miss school if they travel out of New Jersey?
Yes, if the travel is to one of the states listed on the NJ Travel Restriction list or internationally, the child will be excluded from school for 14 days. Work will be complied by teachers to complete during quarantine.