

Quarantine or Isolation: What's the Difference?

Quarantine

Quarantine keeps someone who might have been exposed to the virus away from others.

Isolation

Isolation keeps someone who is infected with the virus away from others, even in their home.

Quarantine

- An individual was within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more (continuous or cumulative within a 24 hour period)
- An individual who has traveled internationally to an area requiring quarantine, designated by the Georgia DPH.

What is a COVID quarantine in the HCSD?

A quarantine is utilized in the HCSD as a measure to help maximize health and safety in our school environments for both students and HCSD team members. It is based upon best-practice guidance from the CDC.

Isolation

- Individuals may return to school or work from isolation if: at least 10* days have passed since symptom onset **and**
- At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Other symptoms have improved.
- Isolation is a minimum of 10 days. Many factors may increase the isolation period to 20 days or longer. Your healthcare provider will determine if more time is needed.

*Many factors may affect when the ten day period for isolation or quarantine will begin. The HCSD case reviewer will give you an anticipated date of return. The Department of Public Health (DPH) contact tracer, your healthcare provider, or the HCSD case reviewer, at a later time, may need to adjust your specific return date. Additionally, vaccine status and a recent COVID infection may enable an individual to avoid quarantine.

How does the HCSD determine if someone has been a direct contact?

A school principal notifies our contact-tracing team that we have an individual who has tested positive for COVID. With the support of our local public health department, Tamara Etterling, Director of Student Services, is ultimately over this process.

A member of the contact tracing team, who has been trained, works directly with school administration to determine if any direct contacts exist, and who those individuals were. Principals immediately contact classroom teachers to determine seating charts and identify who was in contact. Administrators physically measure the distance between where an infected individual was seated and where surrounding students or adults were located. On busses, video footage is pulled and an administrator watches the entire route to see who was seated within 6 feet of the contagious individual. We consult with DPH officials to determine a list of close contacts to the positive case. Often these activities consume nights and weekends as the safety of all involved is paramount.