

COVID-19 outbreaks in schools

The Utah Department of Health and Utah's 13 local health departments provide guidelines to help school administrators understand when a group of students, teachers, or employees at the school may need to be dismissed from in-person learning because there is spread of COVID-19 in the school.

These guidelines may change as we learn more about COVID-19. Schools and public health need to be willing to adapt to these changes as we learn more about the best ways to keep students, teachers, and employees safe and schools open for in-person learning.

What is an outbreak of COVID-19 in a school?

An outbreak is when a disease happens in higher numbers than expected. An outbreak can happen in one area (like a classroom) or extend more widely (like a school or even a school district).

The Utah Department of Health and Utah's 13 local health departments do not consider a single case of COVID-19 (meaning only one person tested positive for COVID-19) in a school or classroom to be an outbreak. However, it is important to know what the public health recommendations are for this situation and how these recommendations change as more people test positive for COVID-19 in the school.

At this time, these guidelines only apply to the classroom or school setting. This is at the discretion of the school district and the health department when this may happen. The decision of when to consider an outbreak in extracurricular activities, like a sports team, will be made by the local health department in collaboration with the school on a case-by-case basis.



Where is the outbreak happening?	How many people tested positive for COVID-19?	What are some examples of this type of outbreak?	What are the recommendations to protect students, teachers, and employees at the school?
Individual	1 This is not considered an outbreak if only one person tests positive for COVID-19 in a classroom or school.	A student tests positive. A teacher tests positive. A bus driver tests positive.	The person who tested positive should isolate until they have been fever-free for 24 hours and it has been at least 10 days since they first got sick or tested positive. The school should follow the cleaning guidelines on page 79.

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Classroom	<p>2 people who are connected by the same setting, exposure, and 2-week time period.</p> <p>The Council for State and Territorial Epidemiologists considers 2 cases of COVID-19 among students or staff within a 14-day period an outbreak. People living in the same home are not considered an outbreak.²²</p> <p>If there are 2 positive cases in a setting and exposure period, this is the point Utah public health advises schools to be on heightened awareness.</p>	<p>A teacher tests positive and within 2 weeks, one of his or her students also tests positive.</p> <p>Two students in the same class test positive within 2 weeks of each other.</p>	<p>The health department and school will monitor the situation carefully. Extra precautions at the school should be considered to protect others from being infected and an outbreak from occurring.</p> <p>The school should consider notifying parents, teachers, and employees about the situation and ask them to take extra precautions, including checking for symptoms of COVID-19 every day and staying home when sick.</p> <p>The people who tested positive should isolate until they have been fever-free for 24 hours and it has been at least 10 days since they first got sick or tested positive.</p> <p>The people who were exposed should quarantine for 14 days from the last date of exposure.</p> <p>The school should follow the cleaning guidelines on page 79.</p>
Classroom	<p>3 people who are connected by the same setting, exposure, and 2-week time period is considered a classroom outbreak.</p> <p>People living in the same home are not considered an outbreak.</p>	<p>A teacher tests positive and within 2 weeks, two of the students in his or her class also test positive.</p> <p>Three students in the same class test positive within 2 weeks of each other.</p>	<p>The people who tested positive should isolate until they have been fever-free for 24 hours and it has been at least 10 days since they first got sick or tested positive.</p> <p>The people who were exposed should quarantine for 14 days from the last date of exposure.</p> <p>No one in the whole class can go to school for 14 days from the last date of exposure.</p> <p>The school should clean the classroom using the cleaning guidelines on page 79.</p>

²² https://preparedness.cste.org/?page_id=211

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School	15 people tested positive for COVID-19 across multiple settings in the school (more than one classroom) and are connected by the same time period or 10% of the student population, whichever is lower, is considered a school outbreak.	<p>15 students and teachers in different classes in the school test positive within 2 weeks of each other.</p> <p>A charter school has 100 students and 10 of the students (10% of the total student population) have tested positive.</p>	<p>The people who tested positive should isolate until they have been fever-free for 24 hours and it has been at least 10 days since they first got sick or tested positive.</p> <p>The people who were exposed should quarantine for 14 days from the last date of exposure.</p> <p>No students can go to school for 14 days from the last date of exposure.</p> <p>They should clean the whole school using the cleaning guidelines on page 79.</p>
School district	An outbreak that affects more than one school in a school district. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the local health department in collaboration with the local school district.		