

Health Guidelines and FAQ for 2020-21 School Year

When should I keep my child home from school?

Highland Park ISD is mandated to follow guidance for health criteria as determined by Dallas County Health Services in conjunction with the CDC and TEA.

If your student exhibits any of the following symptoms, please keep them home from school.

- Fever over 100.4 or chills
- Cough
- Nasal congestion or runny nose
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting
- Stomachache
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle or body aches

Your student may return to school when they are **SYMPTOM FREE**. This includes **no fever for the past 24 hours, without the use of medication such as Tylenol, Advil or Motrin.**

Does my child need a negative Covid test to return to school if they stay home sick?

No, if you have elected to keep your child home from school for illness, they may return to campus provided they are symptom free for a full 24 hours.

If my child is told to quarantine, can they return to school after a negative Covid test?

No. The only exemptions from a fourteen day quarantine are proof of a dated positive PCR Covid test within the last 90 days or current positive antibody test.

Who should I notify if my child or someone in our family tests positive for Covid?

Please reach out to your school nurse if anyone in your family tests positive. They will help you determine who is required to quarantine. Please also notify your school nurse if you have been informed by Dallas County that your child is a close contact. Your student will be automatically transitioned to remote learning for their isolation period. Clinic staff will let your student's teachers know they will be participating remotely.

If my child stays home sick or goes home sick can they participate in extracurricular activities, practices, games or athletics?

No, any student who misses school is automatically excluded from after school activities.

My child took a rapid Covid test and it was negative, can they come back to school?

No, once tested, even if a rapid test was negative, they cannot return to school until they have a **NEGATIVE PCR test**. *You should assume they are positive and self-quarantine at home until your receive confirmation of a negative PCR test.*

What are the different types of Covid tests? What test does HPISD accept?

Per Dallas County, anyone tested for Covid should do so with a **molecular PCR test**. Some of the PCR tests are rapid, some take several days, depending on test location.

My child was sent home from school through the clinic displaying symptoms consistent with Covid and not typically experienced. When can they come back?

If your child is sent home from school through the clinic with Covid like symptoms, they will be assumed to be a possible positive case. There are three options:

- Remain home from school for a minimum of ten days and return after ten days if asymptomatic.
- Return to school with a physician note documenting an alternative diagnosis and symptom free for a full 24 hours.
- Return to school with a negative PCR Covid test and symptom free for a full 24 hours.

What is the process when a student tests positive?

The student is told to isolate at home for a minimum of ten days. **All family members are automatically close contacts and must quarantine for 14 days.** Dallas County and the school nurses and administrators will begin contact tracing. Anyone who has had contact in the *previous 48 hours* is potentially told to quarantine for 14 days.

When can my child return to school after a positive Covid test?

If a student is confirmed as a COVID-19 positive case, they must isolate at home and are not permitted to return until **ALL THREE** of the following criteria are met:

- At least one day (24 hours) has passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications)
- The individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)
- At least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared or since positive test if student was asymptomatic

Who is a close contact?

Per Dallas County, a close contact is anyone who has been within six feet or less of an individual, masked or unmasked, for a **cumulative** 15 minute period. If your student is identified as a close contact, they will be instructed to quarantine for 14 days. **This means no on or off campus activities.** This includes all sports practices, training and games. Quarantine for close contacts begins from the last contact. For example, if a student tests positive on Saturday, but was at school on Thursday and Friday, quarantine for close contacts starts from Friday and lasts through day 14. The 48 hour backward look for close contacts begins from the time the positive case became symptomatic or from the time they tested positive, if they were asymptomatic.

If someone in our family tests positive should they retest later?

The CDC specifically recommends against retesting as you could potentially continue to test positive for several weeks. Per the CDC, you should consider yourself non-contagious once a minimum of ten days have passed, symptoms have significantly improved and fever free without the use of fever reducing medications. Some symptoms, such as loss of taste or smell may persist for several weeks.

Types of Covid Tests

Per Dallas County, anyone tested for Covid should do so with a **molecular PCR test**. Some of the PCR tests are rapid, some take several days, depending on test location.

There are two different types of tests – **diagnostic tests** and **antibody tests**.



A **diagnostic test** can show if you have an active coronavirus infection and should take steps to quarantine or isolate yourself from others. Currently there are two types of diagnostic tests which detect the virus – **molecular tests**, such as RT-PCR tests, that detect the virus's genetic material, and **antigen tests** that detect specific proteins on the surface of the virus.



An **antibody test** looks for antibodies that are made by your immune system in response to a threat, such as a specific virus. Antibodies can help fight infections. Antibodies can take several days or weeks to develop after you have an infection and may stay in your blood for several weeks or more after recovery. Because of this, antibody tests should not be used to diagnose an active coronavirus infection. At this time researchers do not know if the presence of antibodies means that you are immune to the coronavirus in the future.

	MOLECULAR TEST	ANTIGEN TEST	ANTIBODY TEST
Also known as...	Diagnostic test, viral test, molecular test, nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT), RT-PCR test, LAMP test	Rapid diagnostic test (Some molecular tests are also rapid tests.)	Serological test, serology, blood test, serology test
How the sample is taken...	Nasal or throat swab (most tests) Saliva (a few tests)	Nasal or throat swab	Finger stick or blood draw
How long it takes to get results...	Same day (some locations) or up to a week	One hour or less	Same day (many locations) or 1-3 days
Is another test needed...	This test is typically highly accurate and usually does not need to be repeated.	Positive results are usually highly accurate but negative results may need to be confirmed with a molecular test.	Sometimes a second antibody test is needed for accurate results.
What it shows...	Diagnoses active coronavirus infection	Diagnoses active coronavirus infection	Shows if you've been infected by coronavirus in the past
What it can't do...	Show if you ever had COVID-19 or were infected with the coronavirus in the past	Definitively rule out active coronavirus infection. Antigen tests are more likely to miss an active coronavirus infection compared to molecular tests. Your health care provider may order a molecular test if your antigen test shows a negative result but you have symptoms of COVID-19.	Diagnose active coronavirus infection at the time of the test or show that you do not have COVID-19