



North Union Local School District
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UNION COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

January 21, 2021

On January 5, 2021, the Ohio Department of Health issued supplemental guidance to the quarantine protocols for exposures resulting in K-12 educational settings. On January 13, 2021, ODH provided further interpretation of the new guidance.

For the purposes of implementing the new guidance, ODH clarified that the 3' exposure variance allowable under the protocol was intended for K-5 settings. Under this guidance, students that meet the standard definition of 'contact' or 'exposure'--which would include a minimum of 15 minutes of exposure within 6' of a COVID-19 ill individual--but who also met the following conditions would be allowed to remain in class:

- both parties were masked
- a minimum of 3' of distancing was maintained
- all practices, i.e. hygiene, were met

Students who meet the criteria above would be allowed to return to classroom instruction providing they are asymptomatic and continue to meet the practices described above.

The ODH guidance explicitly requires these students continue to be identified as 'contacts' and be required to follow quarantine protocols outside the school.

In the January 13th discussion, ODH emphasized that current research finds that the infectiousness and severity of illness from Sars-CoV-2 remains dramatically less in children through age 12. Conversely, adolescents appear to be as infectious as adults which is why the guidance focuses on elementary age children.

For grades 6-12, the guidance currently remains that student exposures that occur less than 6' for 15 minutes would be excluded from classroom instruction and extracurricular activities as required per the Infectious Disease Control Manual.

At all times, the decision whether to follow the January 5th revised guidance or to revert to the original ODH guidance for classroom exposures and quarantines remains at the discretion of the local school district in consultation with the health department.

This guidance is based on the most recent communications from the state Department of Health and is subject to change as local conditions or state guidance evolves.

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