

COVID-19 ADVISORY MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents and Heads of Independent Schools
FROM: Daniel M. French, Ed.D., Secretary of Education
Mark A. Levine, M.D., Commissioner of Health
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Contact Tracing for Fall 2021
DATE: August 19, 2021

Background

The following memo outlines contact tracing in PreK-12 schools effective immediately. Due to the current conditions and case numbers, the Health Department will resume the process initiated during the 2020-21 school year, whereby schools will conduct internal contact tracing in partnership with the Health Department. When we see a reduction in case numbers, the Health Department will initiate a process whereby schools may choose to have the Health Department conduct all contact tracing. Until then, the following section details the contact tracing process. Schools are reminded that they may use [ESSER funds](#) to ensure adequate staffing for COVID-19 coordination and contact tracing given the significant resources required.

COVID-19 Fall Contact Tracing Process

PreK-12 schools will conduct internal contact tracing investigations when a student or staff was present in school or was at a school event while infectious. Schools may learn of these school exposures when a family or staff notifies school administrators directly or when the Health Department identifies an exposure during contact tracing and alerts the school. When schools learn of an exposure, schools will:

1. Verify the student or staff was at school while infectious.
2. Identify all close contacts in the school setting.
3. Meet with the Health Department to review the situation, conduct an exposure risk assessment and discuss close contact determinations.
4. Notify close contacts at the school of their exposure using the “quarantine letter” provided by the Health Department and provide testing guidance as needed. The Health Department will not follow up with close contacts that the school notifies, unless there is a need identified by the school for specific scenarios (e.g. need for translation services, family or staff unwilling to share vaccination status with school, etc.).
5. Provide a line list to the Health Department with information about all close contacts identified.

COVID-19 Fall Contact Tracing Tools

PreK-12 Contact Tracing Resources can be found on the [Health Department’s PreK-12 Schools page](#):

- Handling a Suspected or Confirmed Case of COVID-19

- [What to do when COVID-19 is in PreK-12 School, Child Care, Camps and Out of School Programs](#)
- [Checklist for Handling COVID-19 in School, Child Care, Camps and Out of School Programs](#)
- [COVID-19 Contact Tracing Framework for High-Risk Activities in PreK-12](#)
- [Templates and Forms for Schools to Use](#)
 - Template letter for a confirmed COVID-19 Case in Child Care and School Age Camps/Care (translated in multiple languages)
 - Template letter for students after exposure to COVID-19 at school
 - Template letter for teachers and staff after exposure to COVID-19 at school
 - Line List for Schools, Child Care, Camps and Out of School Programs

Health Department epidemiology staff will be at the Vermont State School Nurse Association (VSSNA) Town Hall currently scheduled for August 26, 2021, to discuss the contact tracing process.