

The Oklahoma State Department of Health is instituting a short-term change in policy for quarantining of students in public schools. Beginning November 30, 2020 and until December 23rd, 2020, we are permitting schools that are able and willing to follow specific guidelines, to institute in-school quarantine of students who have been exposed to COVID-19 in the school setting. This will provide flexibility to schools in determining how best to serve their students and community. Note that this policy is OPTIONAL- schools that choose to continue with existing policy or can choose to offer exclusively distance education.

Benefits of this policy include the ability to continue to protect students and staff from COVID-19, while also providing a safe environment and resources needed for students to engage in distance learning during their quarantine period. Under existing policy, students subject to quarantine may have lost many of the benefits schools can provide, including a safe environment with adult supervision, nutritional support, internet and technology resources, and easier access to instructor assistance.

Additionally, this policy will allow assessment of the frequency of transmission of COVID-19 occurring among such students, and provide data to inform future public health practice. Specific requirements:

- Availability of facilities that will permit housing of quarantined students in a socially distanced environment, and away from contact with non-quarantined students and staff. Examples could include (but not limited to) a gymnasium, auditorium, or cafeteria. The area must be dedicated exclusively to the housing of quarantined students during school hours. Use of the facility outside of school hours should be limited, and follow thorough cleaning
- Quarantined students shall remain in the space at all times during the school day except for breaks for restroom and outside time
- Quarantine students will maintain social distancing of AT LEAST 6 feet within the quarantine space (with greater distance strongly encouraged)
- Quarantine students will be required to wear masks at all times except when eating
- Quarantine students will be tested repeatedly (at least on days 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12, and 14 of quarantine, but more frequently if schools choose), using the Binax Now rapid diagnostic test.
 - Tests will be provided to the schools by the OSDH
 - Schools must have a CLIA-waiver number, and appropriately trained personnel to collect, perform, and interpret the test
 - Schools must report results of the tests to the OSDH daily
 - Any student who tests positive for COVID-19 (either at school, or a different test performed by another qualified testing facility) shall immediately enter isolation and is no longer be permitted in the in-school quarantine program
- Students in the in-school quarantine program are not permitted to participate in extra-curricular activities; ride buses to or from school; attend after-school events; or be in any other situations where contact with non-quarantined persons is likely
- Schools must be able to provide supervision of students in quarantine. This supervision does not need to include instruction; students will be engaged in distance learning. However, it will require appropriate adult supervision to ensure any student who becomes ill can receive appropriate care.

- Schools need to provide opportunity for students to get outside multiple times a day. This time should not permit interaction among quarantined students- social distancing is still required. However, it should allow for unmasked time and some degree of individual physical activity.
- Parents of quarantined students must be informed of the requirements of the program, and sign an agreement for their student to attend.

Any school choosing to adopt this policy MUST NOTIFY THEIR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION, to ensure ability to comply with all requirements. After December 23rd, data from all testing will be collated and examined for frequency of students becoming infected during the quarantine period. This information can then be used to guide policy for return to school in winter/spring semester 2021.