



TOMPKINS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Your Partner for a Healthy Community

Frank Kruppa – Public Health Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19 Update: Health Department Publishes preK-12 COVID-19 Exposure & Contact Tracing Guidance

(Ithaca, N.Y., September 17, 2021) – The Tompkins County Health Department is alerting the community to its recently published guidance for COVID-19 exposures and contact tracing in preK-12 school settings. The guidance is available on the TCHD website's COVID-19 FAQ [page](#). This guidance was made available to administrators at each school building in Tompkins County prior to the start of the school year.

The guidance helps TCHD nurses determine who was a close contact in a school setting following a confirmed positive COVID-19 case, and outlines contact tracing and quarantine procedure. It includes information for classroom settings, indoor non-classroom settings including transport, gymnasium, and cafeteria settings, and outdoor sports and recess. For more details refer to the [published guidance document](#). Precautions are in place for all students and staff, including universal masking, staying home when sick, hand hygiene, available COVID-19 testing and vaccination.

Each positive COVID-19 case is unique, and this guidance is developed as a framework that must be assessed following the information gathered during each case investigation and may be updated as school year progresses.

Tompkins County Public Health Director Frank Kruppa stated, "As preK-12 schools have begun their fall semesters and students are back in the classroom we're sharing this guidance widely with the community so schools and families know what to expect from contact tracing in the event of a positive COVID-19 case. We have seen a few positive cases since school began this week and are following this guidance directly with school districts." Kruppa continued, "We're working to stop the spread, especially in the more vulnerable population of young people who cannot yet be vaccinated, while continuing to do all that we can to keep students in the classroom and learning."

Kruppa added, "Thank you to our school districts for working hard to protect the health, safety, and education of our young people. TCHD is glad to have these close partnerships and will continue to work hand-in-hand with districts on how to keep schools healthy this fall."

TCHD is reminding the Tompkins County community of the precautions that can be taken to stop the spread of COVID-19:

- Tompkins County continues to be under a mask advisory. Wear a mask while indoors and around others.
- Vaccines are readily available. Get vaccinated when you are able and share accurate information with others who are not yet vaccinated. For information on vaccines and local availability, visit <https://tompkinscountyny.gov/health/covid19popup>
 - Individuals who are moderately or severely immunocompromised and are fully vaccinated with one of the mRNA vaccines (Pfizer or Moderna) are advised to get a third dose of vaccine. Immunocompromised individuals should talk to their provider about a third dose, for more information visit: <https://tompkinscountyny.gov/health/covid19vaccinefaq#3rddose>
- Get tested if you are symptomatic or a close contact of a positive case. For more information on testing, visit: <https://tompkinscountyny.gov/health/factsheets/coronavirussamplingsite#whentogettested>
 - If you are a fully vaccinated close contact of a positive case, TCHD [guidance](#) states that you should avoid contact with unvaccinated or immunocompromised individuals for the full 14-day period, even if you test negative.

The Tompkins County Health Department is your partner for a healthy community. Find us online at TompkinsCountyNY.gov/health, and follow us on Facebook at Facebook.com/TompkinsPublicHealth and on Twitter at [@TompkinsHealth](https://Twitter.com/@TompkinsHealth).

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