

What is a Close Contact in an Educational Setting?

A close contact is most often someone that has been within 6 feet of a contagious person for at least 15 minutes of cumulative time.*

Assessing Close Contacts in Schools

Classroom



Classmates would be considered close contacts of a contagious individual if their desk is within 6 feet*. This is typically desks within two rows on all sides of the contagious individual.

If a teacher is contagious and spends time with a student providing one-on-one instruction or walks throughout the classroom during instruction, students may be considered close contacts.

Teachers should be consulted for classroom close contacts in order to assess distance, contact duration, and absences. Seating charts are recommended to help identify close contacts.

Lunch and Snack Time



If students/staff are sitting within 6 feet* of a contagious individual, they are considered close contacts. Lunch is a higher risk activity, as face coverings cannot be worn.

Outdoor Mask Breaks and Recess

During outdoor mask breaks and recess, if individuals are within 6 feet* of the contagious individual, they are considered a close contact, unless interactions are consistently kept brief and no common items are shared. Mask breaks are a higher risk activity, as masks are not worn.



Electives



In electives, such as music class, close contacts may need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In general, close contacts are individuals within 6 feet* of a contagious individual.

Sports

During practice or games, individuals within 6 feet* of the contagious individual are considered close contacts. This includes individuals from opposing teams. The type of sport and player position are additionally considered when assessing close contacts.



Transportation



Bus riders are considered close contacts of a contagious individual if they sit within 6 feet*. This includes bus riders, as well as the bus driver. It is advised that seating charts are employed to aid in the assessments of close contacts.

Bus drivers should be consulted for bus close contacts in order to assess contact duration and absences.

Special Considerations

Environmental and activity-related factors may play a role in determining close contacts. When assessing close contacts in schools, please consider:

- The proximity of the case to contacts
- The duration of exposure
- The symptoms of the case
- Type of interaction or activity



- * LCHD may determine that distances beyond 6 feet can still result in high-risk exposures based on other considerations and circumstances in each particular case.

