

Outagamie County Public Health

Antigen Testing Scenarios for Schools

Scenario 1:

- Symptomatic individual
- NOT a close contact
- Antigen test = negative

Question: Can this patient come back to school sooner than 10 day isolation period with that negative test?

Answer: OCPH supports schools in requiring a confirmatory PCR test:

- The current guidelines in the WI DHS OB for students and staff that test negative for COVID-19 infection and have symptoms are applicable to PCR tests, not antigen.
- [HAN #17](#): explains that because of the risk of false negative results, symptomatic patients who have a negative antigen test result should be re-tested with an alternative method to confirm the result.

Scenario 2:

- Symptomatic individual
- Antigen test = positive

Question: Should I treat this the same as a positive case?

Answer: OCPH recommends schools follow their process for contact tracing probable cases.

- [HAN #17](#) explains that for positive tests in symptomatic patients, or when there is a high pre-test probability (outbreak or close contacts), positive antigen tests should be considered presumptive evidence and don't require confirmatory testing with a PCR.
- According to the [HAN #17](#), a symptomatic patient with a positive antigen should be considered probable cases, placed in isolation, and reported to public health for investigation and contact tracing.



Scenario 3:

- Asymptomatic individual**
- IS a close contact**
- Antigen test = positive**

Question: Should the individual be quarantining?

Answer: OCPH recommends quarantine of all close contacts for 14 days from the date of last exposure before returning to school.

- WI DHS OB Guidance (pg. 19-20) directs students and staff who remain asymptomatic during their quarantine and are either not tested or test negative for COVID-19 infection by PCR to quarantine for 14 days from the date of last exposure before returning to school or day care.
- [HAN #17](#) explains that when there is a high pre-test probability of COVID-19 disease, such as a person who has been in close contact with someone known to have COVID-19, antigen tests can provide rapid diagnostic information needed to inform immediate clinical decisions or infection control measures such as isolation and quarantine.

Scenario 4:

- Asymptomatic individual**
- NOT a close contact**
- Antigen test = positive**

Question: Should this student isolate? Is follow up testing recommended?

Answer: OCPH recommends schools follow their process for isolating and contact tracing probable cases. OCPH supports schools in requiring a confirmatory PCR test:

- [HAN #17](#) explains that if used for asymptomatic screening, antigen tests are expected to result in a high proportion of false positive results, and lead to unnecessary infection control interventions.
- All positive antigen results from asymptomatic people without recent contact with COVID-19 should be followed by a different method as soon as possible **and** within 48 hours. Molecular testing is highly preferred for the greatest test accuracy.

