



January 5, 2022

Hello PIC Families,

As promised, I am writing to inform our community of some COVID policy changes that we are putting into place. We will be updating our COVID Handbook with the following information and the most recent version will be available on our website at parentinfantcenter.org by Monday, January 10th.

I remind everyone that the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) guides all isolation and quarantine decisions and determines if and when classrooms in Philadelphia child care centers need to close for COVID-related reasons. Every child or staff member who tests positive for COVID needs to be reported to the PDPH, and we await their guidance on quarantine timelines and closures.

The PDPH updated their guidance last night. I know that many families are hoping we adapt the latest guidelines set by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for shortened quarantine timelines for those who test positive for COVID and for those exposed to someone who has tested positive. **The PDPH makes it clear in their updated quarantine guidance that the new CDC guidance should not be followed by schools and child care programs.** The biggest reason that child care programs need to have separate guidelines is that young children cannot remain consistently masked throughout the day because of a) the developmental ages, b) masks are removed daily for eating and napping, and c) the lack of ability to physically distance young children.

I also want to note that the policy changes outlined below are those in place as of January 2022 and are subject to change as we continue to learn more information.

All guidance below assumes the following:

- All exposed individuals will continue to monitor for symptoms for 14 days, and if any develop, they will stay home and seek testing.
- Test results for all situations will be emailed to Deb Green at dgreen@parentinfantcenter.org and Jessica Carter at jcarter@parentinfantcenter.org.

I. GUIDELINES FOR A CHILD OR STAFF MEMBER WITH EXPOSURE TO A PERSON WHO TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID:

FOR NON-HOUSEHOLD EXPOSURES (i.e., The person who tested positive for COVID does NOT live with the PIC child or staff member.) ***THIS INCLUDES ALL CLASSROOM EXPOSURES.***

1. If the exposed person is **NOT fully vaccinated**

- a. Stay home for 10 days without testing OR
- b. Stay home for 7 days and can return to PIC on day 8 with a negative COVID PCR test that was done on days 5-7. (Only a PCR test is acceptable in this scenario.)

Note, this guidance has been updated to include the option of returning to PIC on day 8 if a negative COVID PCR test is obtained.

1. If the exposed person is **fully vaccinated**

- a. No need to quarantine and can come to PIC
- b. Must obtain a PCR test between days 5-7 (Again, only a PCR test is acceptable in this scenario.)

***** FOR HOUSEHOLD EXPOSURES** (*i.e., The person who tests positive for COVID lives with the PIC child or staff member.*):

1. If the exposed person is **NOT fully vaccinated**

- a. Stay home for 10 days OR
- b. Stay home for 7 days and can return to PIC on day 8 with a negative COVID PCR test that was done between days 5-7.
- c. *Note, this guidance is the same as for non-household contacts.*

2. If the exposed person is **fully vaccinated**

- a. Stay home for 5 days AND
- b. Obtain a COVID PCR test between days 5-7.
- c. If the PCR test is negative, they can return when the negative test is received.

****PDPH guidance says "household contacts may require further investigation, by either PDPH or school officials, to determine dates of quarantine." It has been shown that when one household member has COVID, the other people in that household are much more likely to develop COVID, even if vaccinated. As a result, separate guidelines are in place for household exposures.*

II . GUIDELINES FOR A STAFF MEMBER, FAMILY MEMBER, OR CHILD WHO TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

For both vaccinated and unvaccinated persons

1. If the person who tests positive has **NO COVID symptoms**:
 - a. Return to PIC 10 days after the COVID test date
2. If the person who tests positive **HAS COVID symptoms**:
 - a. Return to PIC 10 days after the symptoms first appeared AND
 - b. 24 hours of no fever and no fever reducing medications

III. Buddy Classrooms Quarantine (*this is new information*):

We have kept our buddy classroom system in place since July of 2020. This system has allowed us to only ever have two to three groups of children interact with one another. This has helped us minimize any spread of COVID to more classrooms and children.

While we will continue to keep our buddy classroom system in place, **we will no longer be requiring quarantine if someone in the buddy classroom tests positive for COVID and the classrooms have only interacted with one another outside**, due to the very low risk of transmission in this scenario.

Note: There may be times when the buddy classrooms are together for short periods of time indoors. In the event that this happens and that there is a child or teacher in either of the buddy rooms who has tested positive, we will need to consider the children in both of the classrooms “exposed” and will then need to close both rooms for quarantine.

IV. Vaccines: *(this is new information)*

All individuals over the age of 5 are now eligible for the COVID vaccine and we highly encourage all families with eligible children to receive the vaccine.

There are now different quarantine guidelines for vaccinated children versus unvaccinated children that allow for vaccinated children to remain at PIC after a non-household exposure.

We will now need to track children who have received the COVID vaccine in order to determine quarantine time. **If your child has received the COVID vaccine, please take a photo of the vaccine card and email it to Deb Green at dgreen@parentinfantcenter.org.** We will only accept the vaccine card for children who are 5 years of age or older at the time of the vaccine (as children younger than 5 are currently ineligible to receive the vaccine.)

Please note that if we need to quarantine children due to a classroom exposure at the preschool classroom level (children between the ages of 3 and 5), only the unvaccinated children in the classroom now need to quarantine. **The fully vaccinated children and the classroom teachers may come to PIC** (as long as they continue to have no symptoms) and the classroom will function as it typically does (but with fewer children since there are many children in all of our preschool age classrooms who are not yet vaccine eligible).

Teachers will communicate with families of preschool children that are not yet vaccine eligible or are eligible but unvaccinated about virtual learning opportunities.

V. Home (Self) Tests

We understand that access to PCR testing, as well as access to home kits can be very challenging right now. We understand that individuals are taking home tests while awaiting PCR tests and that understanding the results can be challenging. Below are some of the challenges we have recently faced and the protocols that we will be following.

- For an individual with symptoms and a home test with a positive result (while awaiting a PCR test):
We assume this is a true positive test and follow all guidelines for an individual who has tested positive for COVID.
- For an individual with symptoms who has a home test with a negative result:
A PCR test will be needed in order to rule out COVID infection.
- For an individual without symptoms who has a home test with a positive result followed by a negative PCR test:

Two negative PCR tests, collected at least 24 hours apart, are needed in order to determine that the home test was a false positive. If two negative PCR tests are documented, then the individual may follow guidelines for a negative test result.

VI. Test to Stay Option

We have received many questions about the test-to-stay option that would allow unvaccinated children to continue to come to PIC if they have a classroom exposure and if they test negative on an every other day basis. At this time this is not a feasible option for PIC as this option requires that we offer ongoing onsite testing.

This is a LOT of information to process. Please know that we are here to continue to work through individual situations and to help sort out these details.

The most important support we need from all families is to keep children home if they have COVID symptoms and comply with guidance around exposures. Continue mask wearing and washing hands. And continue to get vaccinated and boosted when able.

More than ever.... We are all in this together!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deb Green". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Deb" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Green".

Deb Green
Executive Director