

A Strong and Healthy Start: Independent Schools with Student Boarding Programs

Rev. July 24, 2020

Background

In June, the Agency of Education and the Department of Health published joint health guidance for public and independent schools during the COVID-19 emergency (see [A Strong and Healthy Start: Safety and Health Guidance for Reopening Schools, Fall 2020](#)). The purpose of this guidance is to provide additional guidance relative to the unique aspects of student boarding programs at independent schools that were not addressed in the previous guidance. Independent schools with student boarding programs must comply with all other aspects of the *Strong and Healthy Start* guidance.

Student Quarantine

In order to protect the health and safety of students, faculty, staff and the community, all schools must implement strict quarantine procedures for students returning to campus using one of the following health protocols:

Traveling to Vermont in Private Vehicle

Students must quarantine at home for 14 days immediately prior to traveling to Vermont. When travelling to Vermont, do not make prolonged stops along the way. Avoid group gatherings such as restaurants, and limit gas stops. If overnight travel is required, reduce social contacts. Individuals may complete a shorter quarantine if they receive a negative COVID-19 test after day 7 and travel directly to Vermont without breaking the quarantine.

Traveling to Vermont from a Nonquarantine County

Students traveling to Vermont from a nonquarantine county as identified by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development after August 1st, and who travel in a private vehicle without making a prolonged stop, may arrive without completing a quarantine.

Traveling to Vermont After Mass Transit

Students traveling on mass transit must quarantine for 14 days upon arrival to Vermont. After day 7, a student may get a COVID-19 test and upon receiving a negative result, end their quarantine.

Quarantine Procedures

Schools must verify that students who need to complete a quarantine in Vermont do so. Students may quarantine in one of the following locations:

- At a private residence in Vermont, including the student's Vermont apartment;
- At a lodging property in Vermont including hotels and short-term rentals;
- In a dormitory under the following conditions:
 - Campus-wide quarantine: Students required to quarantine are brought back 14 days earlier than non-quarantine students and the entire quarantine cohort quarantines on the campus together for 7 days after receiving negative COVID-19 test results. Schools must ensure strict social distancing between staff while the students are on campus quarantine. Students must be confined to the campus but may leave their dormitory for meals and activities. They shall practice strict social distancing from other quarantining individuals; or
 - Dormitory quarantine: Students required to quarantine are isolated in the smallest groupings possible, and all services are provided to the students in their dormitory including meals, learning, orientation, etc. The quarantine shall be 14 days or may end if a negative COVID-19 test result is received after day 7. The students must have no interaction with individuals outside their quarantine cohort during the quarantine. Campuses may have more than one quarantine cohort on campus at a time.

These quarantine policies will allow the Department of Health to work with schools to implement isolation and quarantine policies for ill students and any individuals who have had close personal contact with those students. For students who have a positive test on day 7, isolation procedures and contact tracing must be immediately initiated.

Dormitory Density

Schools should consider limiting shared living spaces to no more than 2 students per room. Common areas shall remain restricted to a capacity that allows for physical distancing.