

Department of Health (DOH) Updates: Guidance from the New York State Department of Health, in collaboration with Herkimer County Department of Public Health and Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES and its 10 component school districts will make the following three clarifications to their COVID-19 absence policies:

1. **'Presumed positive' cases reported to Public Health:** Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms must be evaluated by a healthcare provider within 48 hours. If the individual has not been evaluated within 48 hours of symptom onset by their physician, the district must notify the Herkimer County Department of Public Health of a 'presumed positive' case, and the individual may not return to school. The Department of Public Health will initiate contact tracing, make a determination about quarantine, and determine when the individual may return to school.
2. **Asymptomatic household members can stay in school:** When a student or staff member is home because of COVID-19 symptoms, that individual's household members may remain in school as long as they are symptom-free, or until the Department of Public Health directs otherwise.
3. **Isolation period shortened to 10 days:** The quarantine/isolation period for the symptomatic individual will be 10 calendar days (instead of the current 14 days) from the onset of symptoms, provided that symptoms have been improving and the final three days remain symptom-free. The Department of Public Health will determine the quarantine/isolation period for other individuals in the household if needed. The isolation period can only be lifted by the Department of Health.