Penn State Student Quarantine and Isolation Guidance
(Updated September 11, 2020)

This document is ready for distribution and will be updated regularly as new information and guidance becomes available. **Revisions will be highlighted in yellow.**

Guidance pertaining to students who are placed in quarantine or isolation

If a student has been placed in quarantine or isolation, this means Penn State has initiated its contact tracing effort, so there's no need for additional notification to students in your class. The contact tracing office is charged with the responsibility of notifying students who are at risk through close contact. You will receive a formal notification from the University in the form of an email from “Student Support Services”. The student may notify you that they have been placed in quarantine or isolation before you receive a formal notification; if this is the case, you do not need to contact UHS.

Even a general announcement to your class that a student has been quarantined or isolated runs the risk of violating a student's privacy. Because every student has the right to expect faculty to protect their privacy and trained contact tracers are already working to identify at risk students, you should treat the notifications you receive as private student information that should not be shared.

In general, the steps we are all taking already by masking, distancing, using additional PPE in lab classes and enhanced cleaning limit exposure risk in the classroom. So, you may continue your class as in-person or hybrid mode as originally planned after you receive notification that a student from your class has been placed into either isolation or quarantine. Exceptions to this are some instructional settings where students and faculty may be in closer contact than would be typical, such as hands-on courses in the arts, healthcare, or research lab settings. In those cases, contact tracers will determine whether other individuals in the class are considered close contacts.

If a student who should be in isolation or quarantine appears back in class prior to the date their isolation or quarantine is set to expire, they must be asked to leave. If they do not leave, the same disciplinary sequence should be followed as in circumstances when a student not wearing a mask refuses to wear one. Faculty members will receive an email from “Student Support Services” that provides a date when the quarantined/isolated student may attend class again.

Guidance pertaining to students who are not in either quarantine or isolation

If a student not in quarantine or isolation reports to you that they feel ill or that they think they have been exposed, they should be excused from class and advised to contact UHS ASAP. Later this week, the University will be rolling out electronic processes that enable someone to self-identify that they have tested positive for COVID or that they may be a close contact of a COVID-positive individual.

Managing student absences

Students who contract this virus will have varying symptoms, from mild cold symptoms to flu-like symptoms to hospitalization (the least likely). Mild to moderate illness can last up to 14 days. Students are being encouraged to communicate with their faculty to describe their level of
illness and the work that they can accomplish while they are ill. Other related challenges that might impact attendance should be communicated to faculty in a similar fashion.

*Senate Policy 42-27 on Class Attendance* emphasizes the importance of regular attendance but also grants faculty a great deal of latitude in providing reasonable opportunities for students to make up work for legitimate and unavoidable reasons including illness, family emergency, etc. Although faculty can use their judgment in assessing a student’s illness claim, students are not required to secure the signature of medical personnel and faculty do not need to secure documentation to support their professional judgement.