Contact Tracing FAQs

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry

How does contact tracing work?
For each positive case, contact tracers look for potential exposures in the infectious period for COVID-19. This is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as two days before the onset of symptoms or two days before a positive test if the student has no symptoms.

Next, they identify close contacts – someone who was within six feet of the person who tests positive for a total of 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period during that two-day infectious window, regardless of whether the contact was wearing a mask.

If someone in a class is diagnosed with COVID-19, classmates and instructors are notified only if that individual was present in class during the infectious period. Out of an abundance of caution, ESF informs all classmates when an individual diagnosed with COVID-19 attended class during the infectious period, even though not all classmates meet the definition of close contact. Close contacts who are vaccinated are advised to wear a mask at all times and test at the Testing Center. Close contacts with a vaccination exemption may be placed in quarantine by the DOH.

Is every positive case on campus contact traced?
Yes, every reported positive test case conducted on campus or reported to campus is contact traced.

Should faculty share with their class that a student in the class has tested positive for COVID-19?
NO. An individual’s COVID-19 test result is confidential health information, protected under health privacy laws.