

# Rutherford County Schools

## Pandemic/Epidemic Reporting, Containment, and Reentry Procedures

ADM 1-4(c)

### Approved: August 10, 2021

The authority to quarantine individuals related to COVID-19 lies with the Rutherford County Department of Health. To the extent practicable and in consideration of its statutory purpose to educate students safely, Rutherford County Schools will support the Rutherford County Department of Health's mission by implementing the following procedure for the 21-22 school year. This procedure is subject to change in response to the needs of the schools and with input from the Rutherford County Department of Health. **If an individual is given instructions by Federal, State, or Local Health Department, the health department instructions supersede this procedure.**

### Definition of a Contact

A "contact" is any person who has been in close proximity (less than six feet) with an infected person for fifteen cumulative minutes or more over a twenty-four-hour period, or an intense shorter interaction (e.g. coughed directly on someone, physically touched, etc.).

Contacts are only quarantined if the person suspected of having COVID-19 is confirmed to have COVID-19 or is deemed an official probable case by the local or state department of health.<sup>1</sup> The sole authority to quarantine an individual is the State and Local Health Departments. RCS will recommend quarantine to any identified contacts. RCS will not allow positive or symptomatic individuals to return to work/school unless they have complied with this procedure.

### When does a student or employee have to be sent home or told to stay home?

If a student or employee:

1. Tests positive for COVID-19; OR
2. Exhibits two or more symptoms from the COVID-19 symptom list; OR
3. Runs a fever over 100.4; OR
4. Identifies a loss of taste or smell as a symptom; OR

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<sup>1</sup> Tennessee Department of Health Recommendations for the Management of COVID-19 in Schools (Last Updated April 6 2021), available at: [https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/cedep/novel-coronavirus/School\\_Recommendations.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/cedep/novel-coronavirus/School_Recommendations.pdf).

5. Is identified as a contact of a probable or confirmed case as determined by the local or state departments of health.<sup>2</sup>

**If a student or employee becomes ill while at school/work (with two or more COVID-19 symptoms) or answers YES to two or more of the screening questions, or answers YES to loss of taste/smell OR has a fever of 100.4 or higher, and COVID-19 is suspected:**

1. Ensure surgical mask is covering individual's mouth and nose. Provide individual with a mask if needed.
2. Move individual to a designated "isolation" room where minimal contact with others is possible but where the individual can still be observed.
3. Anyone assisting this individual closely should wear:
  - a. Mask
  - b. Eye protection
  - c. Gloves
  - d. Gown
4. Notify individual's emergency contact to pick them up.
5. Clean the area where the individual has been in the building.

**When can a student/employee that was ill (with two or more symptoms of COVID-19) or answered YES to two or more of the screening questions, or answers YES to loss of taste/smell OR has a fever of 100.4 or higher, and COVID-19 was suspected return to work/school?:**

The individual may return to work or school when one of the four following statements is true. No exceptions will be made:

1. A health care provider has confirmed in writing that the illness was NOT COVID-19-related because of an alternative diagnosis. \*\*Other viral illnesses, upper respiratory infections, pneumonia, seasonal allergies, and allergic rhinitis do not exclude COVID-19 and are not adequate to authorize return.
  - a. Documentation is required.
2. The individual had a positive test and isolated for ten days plus twenty-four hours after fever has resolved without fever-reducing medications and symptoms have been improving for twenty-four hours, including ALL respiratory symptoms.
3. The individual chooses NOT to be tested but chooses to isolate for ten days plus twenty-four hours after fever has resolved without fever-reducing medications and symptoms have been improving for twenty-four hours, including ALL respiratory symptoms.
4. The individual tests negative while actively having symptoms, never tested positive at any time during the illness, and fever has resolved without fever-reducing medications and symptoms have been improving for twenty-four hours. All respiratory symptoms MUST be improved.
  - a. Documentation is required.

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<sup>2</sup> Contacts will be notified by RCS, but if the contact is asymptomatic, RCS will recommend quarantine rather than require it.

**When can a student/employee who tests positive for COVID-19 or is deemed a probable case by the Health Department return to work/school?:**

- Cases *with symptoms* must isolate for a minimum of 10 days after illness onset. They may be released from isolation when they have been without fever for 24 hours (without fever-reducing medication) and are showing improvement in symptoms.
- Cases *without symptoms* must isolate through 10 days after their specimen collection date.

**Notes:**

- If a follow-up PCR test is positive, cases do not need to re-enter isolation as long as they have completed the minimum 10-day isolation and had symptom resolution for a minimum of 24 hours.
- If a case has been released from isolation and symptoms return, individuals do not need to re-enter isolation as long as they have completed the minimum 10-day isolation and had symptom resolution for a minimum of 24 hours.

**The Health Department confirmed someone in the school was positive or a probable COVID-19 case and asked us to help identify contacts. What do we do?**

If the local or state health department contacts the district and indicates contact tracing is needed, follow the instruction given by the health department and assist to the best of your ability. If RCS becomes aware of a confirmed positive/probable case at a school, RCS will notify confirmed contacts from the most recent day the contact was at school or a school sponsored event in the last 24 hours since the positive case tested positive and request the contacts follow this procedure. The contact is encouraged to call the health department after being notified in order to receive instructions. If the contact does not receive specific instructions from the health department, this procedure applies.

**When can a contact return to work/school?**

Individuals identified as a contact either by a health department or confirmed by RCS should work with the local health department to determine an appropriate quarantine period; however absent additional/different guidance from the department of health, contacts may choose to quarantine (if asymptomatic) and they may return to school on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of quarantine if they remain symptom-free the whole period they were quarantined.

A contact should work with the department of health to determine when they are able to return to school/work if they are a contact of a household member; however, absent additional/different guidance from the department of health, household contacts may choose to quarantine (if asymptomatic) and they may return to school on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of quarantine if they remain symptom-free for the whole period they were quarantined.

Any contact who IS experiencing symptoms should comply with the procedure on page 2, starting with line 17, for individuals experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

**All contacts should continue to self-monitor for symptoms through the full period recommended by the CDC (14 days for contacts; 24 days for household contacts).**

**What about contacts that had been positive or had a test for antibodies?**

While RCS will follow any directions provided by the Rutherford County Health Department, close contacts that can provide documentation of a positive SARS-CoV-2 antigen (Rapid Test) or positive COVID-19 test (PCR test) within 90 days of the last contact with the case do not have to quarantine. They are considered “immune” for at least 90 days per CDC research. This does NOT include antibody tests.

Likewise, persons who have documentation of a positive COVID-19 test within the past 90 days do not have to stay home or be sent home from school/work if exhibiting only mild symptoms (i.e., mild cough, nasal congestion/runny nose, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, headache, myalgia, fatigue). \*Those persons who have been deemed probable cases by the Health Department cannot be granted this 90-day grace period.

**What if an identified contact has had a COVID-19 Vaccine?**

Vaccinated persons with an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are not required to quarantine if they meet all the following criteria:

1. Being fully vaccinated (i.e.,  $\geq 2$  weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or  $\geq 2$  weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine);
2. Remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure.

Persons who do not meet all of the above criteria should continue to follow current quarantine guidance after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.<sup>3</sup>

**SROs**

SROs shall follow the protocol provided to them by the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/clinical-considerations.html>