



COVID-19 Updates 2022-2023

Thank you for your ongoing partnership as we continue to work together to lower the risk of COVID-19 in our school settings. Please see the following updates for the 2022-2023 school year for COVID-19 Updates:

In Rockingham County Schools, we are striving to find the balance of keeping our kids safe and healthy, while providing a more normalized school environment. Our wonderful teachers and dedicated principals are working collaboratively with our parents to provide a nurturing environment in the safest possible conditions. Please see below for our COVID-19 updates for RCS students and staff:

General Updates and Strategies Minimizing Exposure and Spread of COVID-19 :

Effective June 24, 2022, NCDHHS has issued the process of sunsetting the NC StrongSchools Toolkit. Going forward, school administrators, staff, and families should refer to the CDC's [Operational Guidance for K12 Schools](#) for information on how to lower the risk of COVID-19.

As we transition from the StrongSchools Toolkit (this has sunsetted) to the CDC guidance, highlights of policies for schools include:

- Masks are optional. However, the CDC recommends masks during high levels of community transmission. See this link for monitoring: [CDC COVID-19 community levels](#).
- It is no longer recommended that schools implement physically distancing strategies (such as keeping students 3ft or 6ft apart). However, it is recommended for schools to space out students as much as possible.
- Universal contact tracing is not recommended. Therefore, this means that School Nurses no longer conduct contact tracing for staff and/or students.
- Testing, Ventilation, and Cleaning remain important layers of protection. Please continue to follow the cleaning protocols that are in place (see below for cleaning protocols).

While the StrongSchools Toolkit will no longer be in effect, NCDHHS will continue to update and share supplemental materials to help school leaders plan for the upcoming school year. All resources are available on the [NCDHHS Guidance Website](#).

Procedures for Students concerning COVID-19:

- It is imperative that students stay home when they are sick (whether this be with COVID-19 symptoms or some other sick symptoms). If a student has a fever, symptoms of sickness, and/or symptoms of COVID-19, please do not send your child to school. Please consult your child's healthcare provider, as needed. General guidance for returning to school includes, no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, no vomiting or diarrhea for 24

hours, and improvement of symptoms/feeling well. Once your child is able to return, please submit a note of excuse for the days absent, either from the parent or healthcare provider.

- It is no longer required to report Covid illness/symptoms/exposure information to the school nurse. This process for illness/sickness will transition back and be handled as it was prior to COVID-19 and you should submit an excuse note upon the student's return. For special circumstances, your school nurse is available for assistance. Please follow the guidance below.
- For COVID-19 symptoms, CDC guidance advises to test for possible diagnosis.
 - If a positive result is determined, the student would need to remain home (isolation) for at least five days. If better on the 5th day, then the student can return to school on day 6 with a mask for 5 days. A copy of the test result may be submitted with an excuse note or if unable to submit test result please submit a handwritten note to indicate reason for absence.
 - If a negative test result is determined, please remain home until symptoms are improved and submit an excuse note of reason for absence.
 - If no test or no other diagnosis is determined, then the student should remain home the same time as if a positive diagnosis, which is 5 days. If better on the 5th day, then the student can return to school on day 6 with a mask for 5 days. Please submit a handwritten note to indicate the reason for absence.
- For students who have an exposure to COVID-19, quarantine is ***not required***, unless symptoms occur. Instead, students exposed should wear a mask for 10 days after the exposure when at school or around others and test on the 5th day after exposure or sooner if symptoms develop. ***Precautions should be followed for 10 days after exposure.***
- COVID-19 Isolation rooms will still be in use at this time.
- You may monitor our community levels here: [CDC COVID-19 community levels](#).

Procedures for Staff Concerning COVID-19:

- It is imperative that staff stay home when they are sick (whether this be with COVID-19 symptoms or some other sick symptoms). If a staff member has a fever, symptoms of sickness, and/or symptoms of COVID-19, please do not report to work. Please consult your healthcare provider, as needed. General guidance for returning to work includes, no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, no vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours, and improvement of symptoms/feeling well.
- It is no longer required to report information related to sickness and illness to the school nurse (for staff members). This process will transition back and be handled as it was prior to COVID-19 and you will report to your direct supervisor. Please review the guidance necessary below for Covid concerns.
- For COVID-19 symptoms, CDC guidance advises to test for possible diagnosis.
 - If a positive result is determined, the staff member needs to remain home (isolation) for at least five days. If better on the 5th day, then the staff member can return to work on day 6 with a mask for 5 days. It is recommended to notify your healthcare provider for further guidance/treatment options. |
 - If a negative test result is determined, please remain home until symptoms are improved.

- If no test or no other diagnosis is determined, then the staff should remain home the same time as if a positive diagnosis, which is at least 5 days. If better on the 5th day, then the staff member can return to work on day 6 with a mask for 5 days.
- For staff who have an exposure to COVID-19, quarantine is ***not required***, unless symptoms occur. Instead, staff who are exposed should wear a mask for 10 days after the exposure when at work or around others and test on the 5th day after exposure or sooner if symptoms develop. ***Precautions should be followed for 10 days after exposure.***
- The leave options for staff absences have been determined by the Human Resources Department in collaboration with the local health department. RCS Staff will be asked to obtain an electronic lab result (ELR) from a health care provider or an agency (i.e. Walgreens, CVS) that offers an ELR to document a positive COVID-19 case. This will be required for usage of contagious disease policy. If an ELR is not provided, the staff member may exercise their options and select sick leave.
- RCS staff will work with their direct supervisor to submit the leave form. There is a section on the leave form that reflects contagious disease leave and this can be selected if the electronic lab result is provided as noted above.
- You may monitor our community levels here: [CDC COVID-19 community levels.](#)

Cleaning Supplies

- If you need additional cleaning supplies and COVID-19 related items, please request from Maintenance and use the established order process.
- [Custodial Inventory Request Order Form](#)
- All schools are still required to:
 - Provide adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol for safe use by staff and older children, paper towels, and tissues).
 - Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol by staff and older children.
 - Increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students and staff.
 - Supervise use of hand sanitizer by students.
 - Ensure that children with skin reactions and contraindications to hand sanitizer use soap and water.
 - Reinforce handwashing during key times such as: Before, during, and after preparing food; Before eating food; After using the toilet; After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; After touching objects with bare hands which have been handled by other individuals.
 - Provide hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) at every building entrance and exit, in the cafeteria, and in every classroom, for safe use by staff and older students.
 - Systematically and frequently check and refill hand sanitizers.
 - Encourage staff and students to cough and sneeze into their elbows, or to cover with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Incorporate frequent handwashing and sanitation breaks into classroom activity.

- Clean surfaces once a day, prioritizing high-touch surfaces. If there has been a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, clean and disinfect the space using an EPA approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19).
- Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including securely storing and using products away from children, and allowing for adequate ventilation when staff use such products.

Staff Meetings

- Risk of virus spread is reduced with increased spacing when possible.
- Please be considerate of providing spacing for individuals during in-person meetings as we have optional masks as this will limit spread/risk and staff absences.

Water Fountains

- Discourage use of drinking directly from water fountains. Post signs requesting water fountains be used for bottle filling stations only.

Signage

- Continue to leave the signage that was provided for you (poster, doors, halls, etc) until further guidance is updated. We need to keep this in place in case new variants impact our schools. Each of the signs are safety protocols that are recommendations and not requirements at this point.

Resources for COVID-19 Testing

- For COVID-19 symptoms, CDC guidance advises to test for possible diagnosis.
- If a positive result is determined, the student/staff member would need to remain home (isolation) for at least five days. If better on the 5th day, then the student/staff member can return to school/work on day 6 with a mask for 5 days. For students, a copy of the test result may be submitted with an excuse note or if unable to submit test result please submit a handwritten note to indicate reason for absence.
- If a negative test result is determined, please remain home until symptoms are improved and students should submit an excuse note of reason for absence.
- If no test or other diagnosis is determined, then the student/staff member should remain home the same time as if a positive diagnosis, which is 5 days. If better on the 5th day, then the student/staff member can return to school/work on day 6 with a mask for 5 days. For students, please submit a handwritten note to indicate the reason for absence.
- COVID-19 Testing Options (see chart below provided by the Rockingham County Health Department):

| Name of Testing Entity | Testing Venue | At Home Testing Kits Available | Age for Pick-Up | Limits on Test Kit Pick-Up (per person) |
|------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|---|
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| Rockingham County Department of Public Health (NCDHHS Access Point) | Rockingham County Governmental Center | Antigen (Rapid) | 14 and above | 10 kits per person |
| James Austin Health Center | Primary Care Physician | Antigen (Rapid) | All ages 3+ | No Limit |
| CVS | Pharmacy | PCR/Antigen | All populations Ages 3+ | Up to 8 Per Person Every 30 Days |
| Walgreens | Pharmacy | PCR/Antigen | All populations Ages 3+ | 2-8 per person |
| Covidtests.gov | Federal Government 1-800-232-0233 | Rapid Antigen | All residential households 2+ | 8 kits per person |
| USPS.com | USPS.com | Rapid Antigen | All populations 2+ | 4 kits per residential address |

**It is strongly advised to request and obtain these home tests in advance. Thank you!*