

D52 Health Reminders, Quarantine Guidelines, and Communication Process

Thanks to all of you for continuing to work with our nursing and office staff on keeping everyone safe and healthy. A few reminders for all as we move forward.

- ❖ If someone in your household is being tested for COVID, please keep all siblings home until results are received.
- ❖ If your child is in a quarantine or isolation period, we are requiring the parent to provide the school with a copy of the letter from the TCHD which communicates the quarantine and return to school dates.
- ❖ Complete the wellness check daily.
- ❖ Keep your child home from school if they are not feeling well and contact the office for further instructions. When a student comes to school and presents a symptom(s) on the Covid-19 list they will be sent home and will need a note from a doctor to return to school.

The Quarantine Process

A 14-day quarantine of healthy students and staff is initiated when either the school or the Tazewell County Health Department (TCHD) is informed that a student or staff member has tested positive for Covid-19. That notification launches an immediate investigation by both the school administration and TCHD to determine which other students or staff members were in close contact with that positive case (within 6 feet for 15 or more minutes during the day). School administrators, teachers, coaches, and bus drivers do their best to determine which students were in close contact with the positive case for the day the student tested positive as well as the two days prior to that test date. We consider all people who were in close contact with the positive case throughout the school day.

The TCHD also does an independent investigation by contacting the positive case and asking with whom he/she has been in close contact over the past few days. Some of these close contacts may have occurred outside of school, such as family, friends, and church groups. The TCHD and the school district then share the school-related names of those in close contact.

The Communication Process

After students and staff are identified as close contacts, a school administrator calls the parent of each student determined to be in close contact, and shares the following “talking points” of information with the parent:

- You are being contacted because, during school, your child has been determined to have been in close contact with another person who has tested positive for Covid-19.
- The potential exposure occurred on (specified date).
- Due to confidentiality reasons, we are not divulging the name of the person who tested positive.
- In cooperation with teachers and other staff members, we have investigated the situation and identified your student as having been in close proximity (6 feet) for over 15 minutes.

- Your child will need to quarantine for 14 days after the time of the exposure, which will be through (specified date). He/she may return to school on (specified date).
- A negative test result will not shorten the quarantine length. (CDC Guidelines)
- You should be getting a call from the TCHD regarding next steps, and you may consult your own physician as well. If the TCHD gives you quarantine dates that are different from what I have told you, please let the school principal know right away.
- The TCHD may ask you to monitor your symptoms and inform you that your quarantine is not just limited to school attendance.

Testing for Covid-19

Due to the close contact, you may decide to have your student tested during the healthy quarantine due to your concern or curiosity. Here are a few facts to consider regarding student testing:

- The school cannot, and will not, require a student to be tested for Covid-19. That is your choice as a parent or guardian.
- If you decide to have your student tested, he/she cannot return to school, even if he/she has no symptoms, until after you receive the test results. This waiting period may extend the quarantine beyond the designated day of return.
- If you decide to have your student tested, you must inform the school of the test result as soon as possible, whether positive or negative.
- If your student tests negative, it will not shorten the length of the quarantine at all, based on current CDC guidelines.
- If your student tests positive, it could change the length of the quarantine, depending upon the testing date, symptoms, and other criteria.
- If your student tests positive, the school and TCHD will also contact trace your student and quarantine all people who were in close contact with your student up to two days prior to your student's test date.