



MONROE COUNTY
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January 25, 2022

Dear MCCSC Students, Families & Staff,

Tonight, the MCCSC Board of School Trustees approved significant changes to our COVID-19 Re-Entry Procedures. These new procedures are a result of rapidly-changing realities and understandings associated with the COVID-19 variants and a recognition that due to the number of cases and staffing limits, maintaining our current procedures has become impossible. Underlying these decisions is a clear desire to keep our schools open to in-person learning and to maximize the time by which students can attend in-person instruction while simultaneously maintaining safety procedures to help limit the spread of COVID-19 in our schools.

In order to fulfill these two goals simultaneously, our students, staff and visitors MUST continue to wear masks. We encourage you to adhere to federal officials' guidelines that surgical-style disposable masks, as well as top grade N95 or KN95 respirators, provide more protection to the wearer than cloth masks. MCCSC is working to quickly provide additional higher-quality masks to those who need one. If these masks are not possible, identifying better-designed cloth masks, including those with multi-layered cloth materials, are better. Information on where to obtain free N95 masks and a link to videos on effective mask wearing can be found on MCCSC's COVID-19 Information and Impact Page.

Second, MCCSC continues to remind our community that FDA-approved vaccines, including boosters, are highly effective at preventing COVID-19. Many of the situations in which students and staff are temporarily removed from school can be avoided with full vaccination. We understand that situations exist where vaccinations are not possible. However, we ask those who are eligible to speak to their personal physician about vaccinations. More information on vaccines, including locations, can be found at www.ourshot.in.gov.

Important changes to our COVID-19 protocols are outlined within this letter and have come as a recommendation from district administration on behalf of a working group of school health officials, administrators, county health and experts in medicine and public health. A more complete description of COVID-19 changes approved tonight can be found in the "Covid-19 Information and Impact Page".

SUMMARY:

- Those who test positive for COVID-19 will be allowed to return to school after isolating for five days if they receive a negative lab antigen test and their symptoms are resolved or resolving.
- Our contact tracers will prioritize the highest risk cases for notification.
- An unvaccinated individual who is notified that they have been identified as a close contact will be required to quarantine, but may return to school after five days if they have no symptoms and can provide the results of a negative lab antigen test or a negative home antigen test.
- For many single symptoms, students will be allowed to return the next day without testing.

Prioritizing Higher Risk Cases for Contact Tracing: MCCSC officials will now prioritize case investigations and general contact tracing procedures focusing on notifying positive cases and people at highest levels of risk. This prioritization seeks to ensure that those with the highest risk levels are contacted in a timely manner.



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Dedicated staff will attempt to reach as many individuals as possible; however, circumstances may arise where it is not possible to contact trace all lower-risk individuals.

When notified, some close contacts will still be required to quarantine. Situations that require quarantine are: unvaccinated household close contacts, unvaccinated close contacts at school, and unvaccinated outside-of-school self-reported close contacts.

Updated Return to School Procedures after Isolation for Positive COVID-19:

(Please note, for each of the scenarios below, the first day of symptoms or a positive test is Day 0.)

- If asymptomatic OR no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and symptoms improving, an individual may return no sooner than Day 6 with a negative lab antigen test performed no sooner than Day 5. Must wear well-fitting mask upon return.
- If test cannot be obtained OR if symptomatic on Day 5, an individual may return on Day 11.
- Cardiac clearance is required for student athletes returning from Post-COVID isolation in accordance with IHSAA guidelines.

Updated Return to School Procedures after Quarantine for Close Contacts:

- Unvaccinated, asymptomatic close contacts who can follow “enhanced precautions” through Day 14 (see MCCSC “enhanced precautions” on the COVID-19 Information and Impact page at www.mccsc.edu), may return on Day 6 from last exposure if a negative test is performed no sooner than Day 5. (Lab antigen test preferred, home antigen test accepted when lab antigen tests are not readily accessible.) To expedite a student’s return, proof of the test result (such as a photo) should be provided directly to the school office prior to return.
- Unvaccinated, asymptomatic close contacts who cannot obtain a negative test result but who can follow “enhanced precautions” through Day 14, may return on Day 11 without a test.
- Unvaccinated, asymptomatic close contacts who cannot obtain a negative test result and who cannot follow “enhanced precautions” through Day 14, may return on Day 15.
- All students who return to school after a quarantine may participate in extra-curricular activities with a mask through Day 14.

CHANGES TO PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS SHOWING SYMPTOMS

The MCCSC Board of School Trustees also approved changes to re-entry for students who develop symptoms and who are not required to stay home for other reasons such as isolation or quarantine due to close contacts.

Return to School after SINGLE Symptom:

If an individual (student or staff member) is sent home from school or kept home from school with a **single symptom** of:

- Headache,
- Abdominal pain or vomiting,
- Cough,
- Sore throat, or
- Fever > 100.4 degrees,

the individual may return to school the following day, or when the symptom is improving and the individual is fever-free for more than 24 hours, without a COVID test or note from a physician.



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If an individual (student or staff member) is sent home from school or kept home from school with a **single symptom** of:

- Loss of smell OR loss of taste

the individual may return to school with a negative COVID test from a clinical lab (antigen or PCR) without a note from a physician.

Return to School after MULTIPLE Symptoms:

If an individual (student or staff member) is sent home from school or kept home from school with **two or more symptoms** of:

- Headache,
- Abdominal pain or vomiting,
- Cough,
- Sore throat,
- Fever >100.4 degrees,
- Malaise/fatigue,
- Loss of smell, or
- Loss of taste,

the individual may return to school when the symptoms are improving and the individual is fever-free for more than 24 hours, with a negative COVID test from a clinical lab (antigen or PCR) without a note from a physician.

For situations regarding “Return to School after Symptom(s)”, if the individual has the **above symptoms in addition to:**

- Difficulty breathing,
- Chest pain, or
- Persistent abdominal pain or vomiting,

families should contact their physician for medical advice and COVID and/or other testing.

Finally, based upon new information regarding optimal data for understanding current COVID-19 realities, and an inability to accurately provide current COVID-19 data at the school and/or district level, we will stop updating the MCCSC COVID-19 Impact Chart and other direct reports of general COVID-19 data on the Corporation website. Updates to the COVID Impact Chart may resume in the future or the COVID Impact Chart may be redesigned with new information.

Thank you, again, for your continued support during these challenging times. Additional information regarding these changes and other COVID-19 protocols may be found on the website at www.mccsc.edu. For individual questions, please contact your child’s school office, or contact the MCCSC “Call Center” at (812) 349-4757 or email callcenter@mccsc.edu. Most importantly, please continue to stay safe: Check for symptoms daily – If you are sick, stay home. Wear a high-quality mask. Continue to follow social distancing protocols. And, PLEASE get vaccinated if you are able.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeff Hauswald