

COVID-19 Communication Guide

Ensuring the safety of our students and staff is a top priority for School District Five. This guide was created to reaffirm School District Five's commitment to school safety and share how we will communicate COVID-19 cases in our schools and offices.

Communication is key in emergency situations. The district works with state and local officials to communicate pertinent information when appropriate. School messages are coordinated through the district, and updates are provided as information becomes available.

Our communication strategy for COVID-19 notifications was created in collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) and other health officials.

COVID-19 NOTIFICATIONS

Close Contact/ Student Close Contact

If a student or staff member has had close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19, parents/guardians and staff will receive a telephone call from the school nurse or a school administrator followed by an email, which will include next steps (i.e. quarantine instructions, etc.). This may be an automated message with a phone number for inquiries or a direct call from the school nurse.

School-wide Communication

Like communication for other infectious illnesses/diseases, the district and its schools must follow federal guidelines related to the privacy of students and staff records. School-wide communications regarding COVID-19 cases will be limited to instructional model changes (i.e. a school-wide switch from in-person learning to virtual learning to ensure the safety of students and staff).

District-wide Communication

District-wide communication regarding COVID-19 cases will be done via the COVID-19 Dashboard. The Dashboard is updated every school day. The COVID-19 data on the dashboard includes new reported positive cases, positive cases that are out on isolation and close contact/student close contacts that are in quarantine. Student and staff data will be reflected on the Dashboard.

Definitions

Close Contact: SCDHEC defines close contact as being within 6 feet of someone who tested positive for COVID-19 for at least several minutes (usually about 15 minutes).

Student Contact: K-12 unvaccinated students within 3 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period from 48 hours prior to symptom onset (or specimen collection for an asymptomatic infected person) of the infected person.

Contact Tracing: Contact tracing is the process of identifying individuals who may have come into contact with an infected person and subsequent collection of further information about these contacts.

Quarantine: According to SCDHEC, quarantine is the process of separating "people who are close contacts of someone with a contagious disease, like COVID-19, from others for a period of time to see if they become sick. This is to prevent the spread of disease." Fully vaccinated students and staff or those who have tested positive for COVID 19 in the past 90 days will not be required to quarantine.

Fully Vaccinated: A person is considered fully vaccinated, ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine.

SCDHEC Q&A

My student/I was in the same room/building as someone who tested positive for COVID-19, but not in close contact with him/her. What should I do?

If you were not in close contact with someone with COVID-19, your risk of catching the virus from that person is low. Follow the general precautions, including social distancing, washing your hands often, wearing a face mask while in confined public places, and avoiding close contact with sick people.

My student/I was in close contact to someone who is sick but not tested for COVID-19. What should I do?

If you were around someone while they had symptoms, like fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus or another respiratory virus that causes similar symptoms, like the flu or the common cold. You should continue to practice social distancing, wash your hands often, wear a face mask while in confined public places and monitor for symptoms.

If you develop any symptoms, you should isolate at home and avoid contact with other people. Call your doctor or other healthcare provider to discuss the need to be tested for COVID-19. You may also seek telehealth evaluation and find testing site resources on SCDHEC's website.

Telehealth: <http://bit.ly/TelehealthEval>
DHEC Website: <http://bit.ly/DHECTestingSite>

For more information, visit the Contact Guidance tab at www.scdhec.gov

What will the district and school do if my student has been/I am a staff member that has been in a classroom with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 (i.e. there was no close contact)?

1. Per SCDHEC, "if you were not in close contact with someone with COVID-19, your risk of catching the virus from that person is low."

2. Students and staff will only be notified by email if they are impacted and follow up action needs to occur. SCDHEC suggests those students "follow the general precautions, including social distancing, washing your hands often, wearing a face mask while in confined public places, and avoiding close contact with sick people."

What should I do if my student or another member of our household tests positive for COVID-19? If I am a staff member, what should I do?

1. Call your school nurse or school administrator immediately.
2. If you receive a positive test result after school hours, please email a school administrator. Contact information is available online at www.lexrich5.org/d5staffdirectory.

District/School Next Steps

A district nurse will contact you and provide next steps, including contact information to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. School officials in partnership with DHEC will determine next steps, including contact tracing and identifying any students/staff who need to be notified. The school nurse and/or school administrator will communicate with individuals, per SCDHEC's guidance. Parents will receive communications regarding their student's instruction.

Important Notes

1. Federal law (FERPA, HIPAA, etc), prohibits districts from sharing private, identifying information of students or staff members who test positive for COVID-19. We seek to provide families with pertinent information, while protecting the privacy of our students and staff.
2. School District Five of Lexington & Richland Counties has worked in collaboration with health officials to establish health protocols for the 2020-21 school year, in response to COVID-19. Students and staff will be asked to complete daily self-screenings before reporting to school/district campuses. District schools will follow SCDHEC guidance regarding the management of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases.

Self-Screening Checklist

<http://bit.ly/selfscreeningchecklist>

COVID-19 Exposure Flowchart

<http://bit.ly/COVID19Exposure>

DHEC guidelines regarding the management of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases

<http://bit.ly/DHECSchoolExclusion>

School Nurse Contact

www.lexrich5.org/d5staffdirectory