

Miller County Health Center

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Miller County Schools COVID-19 Policy

September 8, 2021

The following protocol is subject to change due to developing science and/or levels of disease in the community.

CONTACT TRACING

The Miller County Health Center (MCHC) will contact every newly reported case of COVID-19. Contact may be via telephone or letter. All persons under 19 will include telephone attempts. In addition, we encourage the health care providers in the Lake area to provide the “What Happens After I Get Tested?” flowchart (found at millercountyhealth.com).

MCHC shall notify the school of any known active cases of students and staff and provide their symptom onset date. (The date symptoms began.) If asymptomatic, the date of test shall be used. This date shall be used to determine their isolation period and close contacts. We shall also notify the school if we are aware of any close contacts affiliated with the school that are quarantined.

Isolation is required for all infected persons for a minimum of 10 full days after their symptom onset. Isolation means they must stay home and not go to school/work, shopping, ball games, etc. They are only permitted to seek health care. They may return if their symptoms improved after 10 days. This is done to avoid spreading the disease to others. MCHC is no longer following up with the case after 10 days to assess illness.

All cases will be asked by MCHC to notify their close contacts of the exposure. MCHC no longer calls all the close contacts but may assist upon request.

MCHC will request the schools to perform an internal contact tracing investigation. The time period for contact tracing is from the last time the person was in school going back to two days prior to onset of symptoms or test date, whichever is earlier.

Quarantine all eligible close contacts 14 days from the time of the most recent exposure. Quarantine is essentially the same as isolation, don't go to work, school, etc. This is necessary because the person may be incubating disease and become infectious anytime during the 14 days.

Definition of close contacts remain anyone within six feet for an accumulation of 15 minutes over a 24-hour period.

Updated modified definition of close contact for students in a classroom setting only:

- Students 3 – 6 feet for an accumulation of 15 minutes over a 24-hour period
 - Both parties wearing a mask, not considered a close contact and do not have to quarantine
 - If one or both parties are NOT wearing masks, then they must quarantine
- Students 0 to 3 feet for an accumulation of 15 minutes over a 24-hour period
 - Both parties wearing a mask, the contact must quarantine but MAY go to school. No extracurricular activities, shopping, etc.
 - If one or both parties are NOT wearing masks, then they must quarantine

Exceptions for quarantine include:

- Fully vaccinated persons (more than 2 weeks after last dose). If symptomatic, they should isolate and call their health care provider.
 - Vaccinated close contacts are recommended to get tested 3-5 days after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after exposure or until they receive a negative test result.
- Persons who have been infected in the previous 90 days and were diagnosed by a health care professional (i.e., not a home test). Although positive home tests are used to identify current infection and the need to isolate and contact trace, they will not be permitted to exempt one from quarantine from a future exposure due to inability to validate.
- Persons who have tested antibody positive within 3 months before or immediately following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and who have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure do not need to quarantine, **provided there is limited or no contact with persons at high risk for severe COVID-19 illness, including older adults and persons with certain medical conditions**. This strategy remains controversial and is NOT supported by DHSS or DESE at this time. MCHC is accepting the strategy to maintain consistency among neighboring school districts. MCHC will support your district if the policy is to not permit these students to return.

For those quarantined, there are options to return to school/work earlier if your district approves. It remains possible the exposed person could develop disease up to 14 days after exposure, but less likely. It is important to minimize missed school days, so the following is acceptable:

- Return after the 10th day of quarantine, but always wear a mask until the end of day 14
- Return after the 7th day of quarantine with a negative test on or after the 5th day. A mask must be always worn until the end of day 14. (Home testing is not acceptable for this option.)

Household contacts that cannot separate themselves from the infected person are continuously exposed to the virus resulting in a much greater risk. Their quarantine will continue 14 days after the last exposure, which will be the day the infected person recovers. (Early return also applies) Examples include:

- Very young children with a single parent
- Caregivers for elderly or those with functional needs
- Large families with small homes where one can't isolate to a bedroom

All isolated and quarantined students/staff are not permitted to participate in any extracurricular activities, such as games, concerts, etc. This includes all students that have returned prior to 14 full days of quarantine. Practice is acceptable if the student consistently and appropriately wears a mask and maintains a minimum of six feet from everyone.

There are no exceptions to isolation and quarantine policies, including notes from health care providers, unless the person's physician needs them to isolate/quarantine longer.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MASKS AND EVENTS

The Miller County Health Center supports DHSS, DESE, and MSHSAA recommendations and requirements for mask usage and restrictions to events.

At the time this document was written, Miller County was an area with substantial or high community transmission. DHSS and DESE recommend non-vaccinated persons to wear masks when in indoor public places. No masks are recommended at outdoor settings.

The Miller County Health Center does not recommend any occupancy restrictions at the time this document was written. We encourage the district to give adequate space for event observers to distance (i.e. open upper deck of gym). Recommend signage encouraging distancing and face masks that reflect current public health guidance. Recommend face masks or a plexiglass partition for the staff/volunteers serving at concessions or ticket booths.