

September 3, 2021

Dear Mitchell County School Students, Employees and Parents,

Toe River Health District is glad to have children back in school this year. We have been working diligently with the Mitchell County School System, including the superintendent, principals, teachers, and the nurses, to try to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for your children. We have reviewed various situations and we wanted to share what we have learned since August 16th, based on our data and the guidance provided by the NCDHHS NC Healthy Schools ToolKit updated August 26, 2021.

<https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/media/164/open>

- We have active coronavirus cases in our schools. Students are able to recover at home so far.
- The quarantine numbers continue to grow due to exposures and positive cases.
- Based on the NCDHHS Tool Kit, during the school day if a masked student is exposed to another masked student who tests positive, a quarantine is not necessary.
- Based on the NCDHHS Toolkit, at an after school event or activity if a masked student is exposed to another masked student who tests positive, a quarantine may be required.
- A fully vaccinated individual or an individual with a lab confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 within the past 90 days who is exposed to a positive, does not have to quarantine as long as they remain symptom free.
- If your child tests positive for COVID-19 or is a contact to someone who has tested positive, please answer your phone when the Nurse Liaison from the health department calls. She will give you all of the guidance you need to get through this and get your child back to school.
- If a student is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19, a COVID test or a note from your physician will be required to return to school based on the state regulations. If COVID testing is necessary, the school nurses or Toe River Health Department will request for the student or adult to be tested at a local testing facility (your family doctor, Health Department testing at First Baptist Church or at the Health Department location, MCHP at Celo or Bakersville, Sisters of Mercy Urgent Care in Burnsville etc). An at home test or “presumed positive” cannot be accepted based on state guidelines.
- For anyone who has been exposed to a positive, you may be released from quarantine on day 8 after the exposure with a negative test on day 5 or later with the approval of the Toe River Health Department. Parents please share the negative test result with the school nurse and the Toe River Health Department.
- If a test is not conducted on day 5 or later, you may return to school on day 11 after the exposure with approval from the Toe River Health Department.
- We have directions for parents concerning antibodies testing attached to this letter.

- Principals and teachers are working with students and families who are in quarantine. Work packets, materials, supplies, and assignments will be provided for your child.
- We thank you for being honest and staying at home if you are not feeling well. The Toe River Health District nurse liaison and school nurses will help you through this process and help answer any of your questions.

Diane Creek
Health Director
Toe River Health District

Chad Calhoun
MCS Superintendent

Jessica Hensley
Public Health Nurse Supervisor

Amelia McMahan
MCS Lead School Nurse