



COVID-19 Communication October 1, 2021

Mask Mandate Extended Through October 22

The district-wide mask mandate will be extended through Friday, October 22. With increased travel and other activities among students and staff during Fall Break, we feel it is important to continue implementation of our Significant Spread Protocols upon our return from Fall Break. We will continue to evaluate the spread of the virus in the community, our district, and at each school to determine if and/or where the Significant Spread Protocols, including masking, are necessary moving forward.

If you would like to opt your child out of the mask mandate and have not done so already, you must contact your child's school for a copy of the form.

COVID-19 Operating Procedures Updated

The COVID-19 Operating Procedures have been [updated](#). Under "Responding to a Positive Case/Quarantine & Contact Tracing," please note the following additions:

- Home test results should be shared with the school nurse and results emailed to the SCRHD in order to initiate contact tracing. Please send an email to COVIDlabs@sullivanhealth.org that includes: a picture of the test results, a picture of test packaging, the student's/staff's full name, date of birth, gender, address, and phone number. Testing completed at health care facilities, including BTCS testing sites, will automatically populate in the Tennessee Department of Health network for contact tracing.
- Clusters of positive cases – If a cluster of positive cases is identified in a classroom, grade level, or group, BTCS will notify parents of possible exposure based on the number of cases. Parents will then have the option for their child to voluntarily quarantine and initiate Temporary Homebound status or return to school and monitor for symptoms.
- In some instances, BTCS may work with the SCRHD to quarantine all students (in a classroom, grade level, or group) associated with a cluster. When this happens, BTCS will notify families and exclude the impacted students from school. The SCRHD will follow-up with a phone call or text to families within 24 hours with additional information. Due to the overwhelming number of cases, this could be delayed.

Under the Significant Spread Protocols, please note the following additions:

- If deemed necessary, the school district can apply for a seven-day waiver to the state and immediately transition a class, grade level, or school to remote learning. Waivers are not permitted to be implemented district-wide. Approved waivers provide up to a seven-day shift to virtual learning when the number of staff and/or student absences makes it difficult to continue in-person learning and school operations. Students are expected to participate in virtual learning based on the hours of their regular school day.
- The decision to cancel instruction is not made lightly. Before considering closing all schools across the district, all mitigation strategies and alternatives will be considered. During a closure, inclement weather/emergency closure days would be utilized. Should a district-wide closure be warranted, the district must utilize stockpiled inclement weather/emergency closure days. There is no instruction during a district-wide emergency closure.

Beginning October 11 COVID-19 Testing Appointments Must Be Scheduled By Phone

Beginning Monday, October 11, **all COVID-19 testing appointments at the BTCS Administration Building must be scheduled by phone.** We will no longer be scheduling online appointments. Since staff and students must meet certain criteria in order to qualify for testing, it is helpful to speak with staff members or parents/guardians prior to scheduling an appointment. Those criteria can be found at the following [link](#).

Testing is available from 2 to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday when school is in session. To schedule a testing appointment, call the **COVID-19 Testing Appointment Line at (423) 793-7911, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.** Appointments may be scheduled up to five days in advance. We will not conduct testing during the week of Fall Break.

Testing for COVID-19 continues in each school clinic during school hours. Parents are encouraged to complete the [consent form](#) online if you have not done so already.

COVID-19 FAQs Now Available

BTCS has compiled additional information for students, parents, and staff regarding COVID-19. The information is organized as Frequently Asked Questions related to Safety, Isolation/Quarantine, Vaccines, Testing, Contacts & Contact Tracing, and Virtual Learning. To access this information, please visit [FAQs Related to COVID-19](#).