



# Okaloosa County School District COVID-19 Information for Employees 2021-2022 School Year



**Updated 10/08/2021 1**  
**All Measures Effective Until Further Notice**

Employee health and safety continues to be a top priority as we return to more normal school operations.

Health and safety for students and employees includes not only physical health and safety, but also academic health, mental health, and social-emotional well-being. In Okaloosa County Schools, our plans continue to emphasize keeping healthy students and employees in school, maintaining enhanced cleaning and sanitizing practices, protecting medically fragile students, and providing continuity of academic services for students who miss school due to COVID-19 quarantine or isolation mandates from the Department of Health.

Being in school is critical for the overall well-being of our students and employees. Our plan strikes a sensible balance that emphasizes your student's success at school while also being mindful of the steps we need to take to keep our school environments safe.

Teachers, administrators, and support staff have been working diligently for a return to more normal school operations. The efforts of you, our valued employees, continue to prove invaluable to the success of our School District and each of you is to be commended for all you have done. Thank you in advance for all you continue to do.

## **UPDATED COVID-19 PROTOCOLS**

*The State Surgeon General issued Emergency Rule 64DER21-15 on September 22, 2021 which repeals and replaces Emergency Rule 64DER21-12 and provides for the following procedures for controlling COVID-19 in school settings:*

### **I. EMPLOYEES WITH COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AND NO TEST RESULTS**

- A. Stay home from work.
- B. Do not attend community activities, school-sponsored activities or be on school property until one of the following conditions is met:
  - 1. Isolate at home until the employee receives a negative diagnostic COVID-19 test (PCR or Antigen) AND has no symptoms. **OR**
  - 2. If no COVID-19 testing done, isolate ten days from symptom onset. Employee has had no fever for a minimum of 24-hours and other symptoms are improving. **OR**

3. Receives written permission to return to school from a medical doctor or physician, or advanced nurse practitioner licensed in Florida.

- II. EMPLOYEES WITH A POSITIVE TEST FOR COVID-19 (with or without symptoms).**
- A. Stay home from work.
  - B. Notify the school/site of positive result, provide a copy of result as requested to the school/site.
  - C. Do not attend school-sponsored activities or be on school property until one of the following conditions is met.
    1. Isolate at home until the employee receives a negative diagnostic COVID-19 test (PCR or Antigen) AND has no symptoms. **OR**
    2. Isolate ten days from symptom onset for those experiencing symptoms, or ten days from the date of a positive test if employee had no symptoms. Employee must not have had a fever for a minimum of 24-hours and other symptoms are improving. **OR**
    3. Receives written permission to return to school from a medical doctor or physician, or advanced nurse practitioner licensed in Florida.

**III. PROTOCOLS FOR EMPLOYEES WITH EXPOSURE TO COVID-19.**

- A. Employees who are known to have been in direct contact with an individual who received a positive diagnostic test for COVID-19 may choose one of the following options:
  1. Attend work, school-sponsored activities, or be on school property, without restrictions, so long as the employee remains asymptomatic. **OR**
  2. Quarantine for a period of time not to exceed seven days from the date of last direct contact with an individual that is positive for COVID-19.
- B. If an employee becomes symptomatic following direct contact with an individual that has tested positive for COVID-19, or tests positive for COVID-19, the procedures set forth in section (I) above shall apply.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**1. What safety measures are in place?**

- Hand sanitizer will be available in every classroom, on school buses, and in other common areas.
- Each classroom has a supply of disinfectant wipes to be used as needed throughout the day.
- Daily cleaning and disinfecting protocols will be in place in schools and on buses.
- Masks are strongly recommended in schools and on buses. Buses will have a supply of masks available.
- Signs will be displayed to remind those in schools about social distancing and the use of hand sanitizer/washing of hands.
- Desk barriers will be available upon request by parents and may be used at a teacher's discretion.
- To minimize the use of water fountains, water bottle filling stations will be available in schools.
- Proper handwashing will continue to be emphasized.
- District will support COVID-19 contact tracing in accordance with the Department of Health.
- COVID-19 vaccination clinics will be available at school sites (see TESTING AND VOLUNTARY VACCINATION SITES section).
- As was the case last year, schools are being provided with a daily substitute to provide assistance with safety-related accommodations and classroom coverage.

- 2. Will employees who are quarantined as a result of being a close contact at work be charged leave?**  
Employees will not be charged leave if identified as a close contact at work.
- 3. What is “COVID Leave?”**  
Employees who have to miss work due to isolation or quarantine will be afforded a total 10 additional (cumulative) paid sick leave (COVID) days if the absence or absences are due to certain criteria (see below). Additional leave (5 days) may be granted for a positive result in which symptoms exceed isolation timeline.
- 4. Will employees who are quarantined as a result of being a close contact away from work be charged leave?**  
Employees will qualify for COVID leave if identified as a close contact away from work according to the provisions above (#3).
- 5. Will employees who are awaiting COVID test results or seeking related medical assistance be given “COVID Leave?”**  
Yes. This will apply to the 15-day total noted above (#3).
- 6. Will employees who are COVID positive be given “COVID Leave?”**  
Yes. Employees who are COVID positive qualify for COVID Leave as detailed above (#3). If an employee has a second positive COVID test occurrence tied directly to school exposure, and that occurrence forces the employee to be away from work beyond the 15 original COVID leave days, the employee will be granted up to an additional 15 days of COVID leave.
- 7. Will employees who have to care for a quarantined child be given “COVID Leave?”**  
Employees who are caring for a child under quarantine or isolation or whose daycare has closed for COVID reasons will be granted COVID Leave. After using the 10 COVID days, coverage will continue at 2/3 pay. Employees may supplement this pay with their own sick leave if they so choose.
- 8. Will absences due to isolation/quarantine or COVID symptoms be approved for Leave Without Pay once COVID leave runs out?**  
Yes. In a case of extended COVID-related illness where an employee exhausts all COVID Leave and Personal Leave, Leave Without Pay will be approved with a note from a doctor.
- 9. Who do I contact for employee-related COVID questions?**  
Principal/Site Supervisor/COVID Administrator  
District Contact - Courtney Huffstutler (850) 833-5802
- 10. Who do I contact for student-related COVID questions?**  
Principal/Site Supervisor/COVID Administrator  
District Contact - Teri Schroeder (850) 833-3105
- 11. Will mySchool Online be an option this year?**

No. The mySchool Online program, and others like it across the state, are not available options this year. Okaloosa Online is the district's primary K-12 virtual option. Information about this option is available at [www.okaloosaschools.com/schools/okaloosa-online](http://www.okaloosaschools.com/schools/okaloosa-online).

**12. What are the COVID symptoms?**

Fever greater than 100.4°, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficult breathing, headache, body or muscle aches, GI symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea), new loss of taste or smell, nasal congestion/runny nose.

**13. Will wellness checks be conducted daily upon arrival to school?**

Documented wellness self-checks will be required for staff members who have been identified as a close contact to a positive, are asymptomatic, and choose to report to work. All other employees should conduct personal wellness checks for COVID before going to work and should stay home if they exhibit COVID-19 symptoms

NOTE: An employee's baseline should be assessed when symptoms in #13 above are observed. Are any of the above symptoms normal for the staff member, for example, a runny nose or congestion with history of allergies? If so, that would be considered the individual's baseline. If there are any symptoms that are not normal for you, (symptoms outside of your baseline), i.e, fever or shortness of breath, the individual should stay home and seek testing.

**14. Will COVID-related attendance codes be used again this year?**

Yes: S (Symptoms), Q (Quarantine Close Contact), C (Contact in School: Asymptomatic), I (Isolated Positive Case)

**15. Will masks be mandatory in schools this fall?**

No. Masks are recommended in our school building but not mandated. Masks were not required last year, and they will not be required this year. Employees may wear a mask if they so choose.

**16. Will masks be mandatory on school buses?**

No. Masks are strongly recommended on school buses. Parents are welcome to provide a mask for their child if they choose. Buses will have a supply of masks available. Students will use hand sanitizer when entering and exiting a school bus.

**17. What if a child is medically fragile and plans to remain in brick and mortar instruction?**

Schools will have procedures to ensure individualized safety measures for medically fragile students. Teachers should make every effort to facilitate social distancing to the greatest extent possible.

**18. I have a question regarding medically fragile employees.**

Contact Courtney Huffstutler in Human Resources. (850) 833-5802.

**19. Will schools continue to provide extra cleaning of classrooms and other areas?**

Yes. We will retain some of the protocols put in place last year to help keep our schools as clean as possible. That includes spray disinfecting and cleaning frequently touched surfaces more regularly with employee-safe cleaners.

**20. Will cleaning supplies be provided to teachers?**

Daily custodial cleaning of classrooms will occur, including sanitization of surfaces. Teachers will be provided with supplies to use at their discretion.

**21. Will desk barriers be used again this year?**

Desk barriers will be available if requested by a parent. They also may be used at a teacher’s discretion.

**22. Will I need to maintain seating charts?**

Yes. Seating charts in classrooms and buses are critical to the contact tracing process.

**23. Do library books still need to be held for 72 hours?**

Schools should follow their normal media center protocols.

**24. COVID-19 cancelled or modified many different types of school events last year, such as field trips and athletic and performing arts events. Will these return to normal this year?**

Yes. Athletic events and extracurricular activities such as band and choral concerts will occur as normal. Field trips will be permitted at this time. We will be mindful as we continue through the school year and make adjustments as appropriate.

**25. Will parents be able to volunteer in classrooms this fall and chaperone trips?**

At this time, essential volunteers will be permitted on campus at the discretion of the principal. Parents will be permitted to chaperone field trips. Wellness checks will be performed for students, employees, and parent chaperones prior to departure.

**26. What protocols are in place for Professional Development, Faculty Meetings, and other instances where Staff may gather?**

Professional Development is critical to our school District’s expectation of continuous learning and academic excellence. Additionally, the best practice systems and routines that facilitate communication, professional growth, culture, and comradery are similarly important. Schools may conduct these activities as normal while being mindful of social distancing to the degree possible.

**TESTING AND VOLUNTARY VACCINATION SITES**

**Voluntary Vaccination Clinics**

Voluntary vaccination clinics for students (age 12+) and staff at area middle and high schools were held September 20-22 (1<sup>st</sup> shot). For those who participated, follow-up shots are scheduled for October 12/14. Contact your school for more information. (NOTE: An individual is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after they receive their second shot.)

Testing Site ○ COVID-19 testing has been a challenge for many of our families in Okaloosa County.

As a result, the Okaloosa County School District has partnered with the Department of Health to provide a COVID-19 testing site for both **SYMPTOMATIC & ASYMPTOMATIC** students, employees, and their family members. ○



SYMPTOMATIC individuals will receive a rapid antigen test with results within 15 minutes. If there is a negative result, a PCR test will be administered.

- ASYMPTOMATIC individuals will receive a PCR test.
- Results for the PCR test will be sent via email and/or text usually within 24 hours.

**TO MAKE AN APPT.** ○ Location: OCSD Central Administrative Complex, 202 Highway 85N, Niceville, FL ○ Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday 7:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m. **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.** To schedule an appointment, go to [https://hipaa.jotform.com/telopoint/okaloosa\\_1](https://hipaa.jotform.com/telopoint/okaloosa_1) or use the QR code provided on the left.

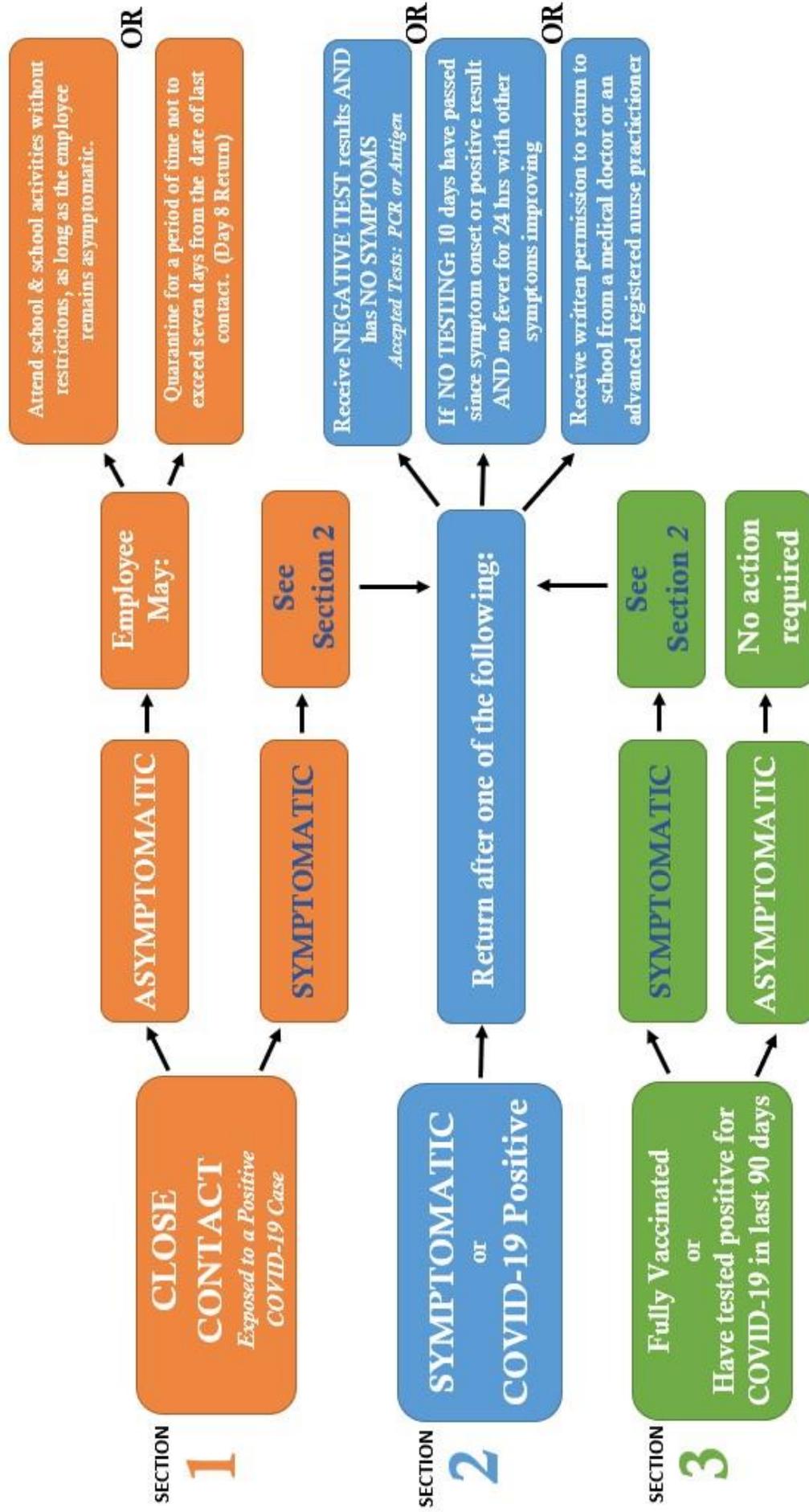
We will all continue to be mindful of our surroundings and be prepared to adjust our routines if needed. Please contact your school administration for more information.

Note: The protocols for Eglin Elementary School on Eglin Air Force Base will be in accordance with the ICD guidance for the installation.

# OKALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT COVID-19 Decision Tree

Updated  
10/07/2021

Per FL Department of Health Emergency Rule 64DER21-15



## HOME TESTS

In order for the Department of Health to accept home test results, the test must be administered as outlined in the package directions. Employees must download an app **BEFORE** administering the test. The verified test result will be provided via the app or an email. This documentation should be provided to the school. **NOTE: The ONLY home test approved by the FDA and FL DOH for a NEGATIVE RESULT is an ELLUME.**

