



**2023-2024**  
**Covid Health Plan**  
**Roanoke County Public Schools**  
**Updated August 30, 2023**

The purpose of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Fund is to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impacts of COVID-19 on the nation's students by addressing students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. This plan describes how Roanoke County Public Schools will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and division staff during and following the return to full in-person instruction. Questions about this plan should be directed to Dr. Rhonda Stegall, Assistant Superintendent of Administration at (540) 536-3900 ext. 10121 or at [rstegall@rcps.us](mailto:rstegall@rcps.us).

The health and safety of all Roanoke County Public School children and staff is our priority. RCPS will continue to follow mandates from the public health experts at the Virginia Department of Health, recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, directives of the governor, and guidance from the Virginia Department of Education in our planning and decision-making. f

**COVID-19 Division Team**

Dr. Ken Nicely, Superintendent  
Dr. Jessica McClung, Assistant Superintendent  
Dr. Rhonda Stegall, Assistant Superintendent of Administration, Point of Contact for the Division, [rstegall@rcps.us](mailto:rstegall@rcps.us) or (540)562-3900 ext. 10121  
Mrs. Stephanie Hogan, Executive Director of Elementary Instruction  
Mr. Mike Riley, Executive Director of Secondary Instruction  
Mrs. Charlene Vail, Coordinator of School Health Services  
Dr. Shawn Hughes, Director of School Counseling  
Mr. Jim Bradshaw, Director of Human Resources  
Mrs. Beth Harman, Director of Special Education  
Mr. Todd Kageals, Director of Facilities and Operations  
Mr. Chuck Lionberger, Director of Community Relations  
Mrs. Susan Peterson, Director of Finance  
Mr. Jason Suhr, Director of CTE  
Mr. Jeff Terry, Director of Technology  
Mr. Ben Williams, Director of Testing  
Ms. Hope White, Alleghany Health District, Virginia Department of Health, Epidemiologist – (540) 283-5032

**COVID-19 School Contact**

**Elementary**

Back Creek – Caroline Weaver [cweaver@rcps.us](mailto:cweaver@rcps.us)  
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### **Middle**

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Glenvar Middle – Mary Jane Witter – [mwitter@rcps.us](mailto:mwitter@rcps.us)  
Hidden Valley Middle – Sara Cavicchio – [scavicchio@rcps.us](mailto:scavicchio@rcps.us)  
Northside Middle– Desirae Nagel – [dnagel@rcps.us](mailto:dnagel@rcps.us)  
William Byrd Middle– Molly Rhodes – [mrhodes@rcps.us](mailto:mrhodes@rcps.us)

### **High**

Burton & A-STEP – Charlene Vail – [cvail@rcps.us](mailto:cvail@rcps.us)  
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Northside High – Ashton Carroll [alcarroll@rcps.us](mailto:alcarroll@rcps.us)  
William Byrd High - Alisha Wood [awood@rcps.us](mailto:awood@rcps.us)

Roanoke County Public Schools has taken the following steps detailed below to maintain health and safety during and following the return to full in-person instruction.

In addition, Roanoke County Public Schools has adopted policies listed below on each of the following safety recommendations established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- Coordination with state and local health officials
- Optional masking
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation
- Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policy

## Maintaining Health and Safety

### Division Participation in Community Response Efforts

The division communicates with the local Roanoke/Alleghany Health Department. Input was sought from the division's Medical Advisory Board as well as the division's Safety Advisory Committee.

### Symptoms of COVID-19

Monitoring for signs and symptoms of Covid-19 and testing are essential components of limiting the spread of COVID-19. An important part of keeping our schools safe is actively encouraging sick staff and students to stay home if they are ill and emphasizing to all the importance of knowing the symptoms of COVID-19.

#### Symptoms of COVID-19

People with these symptoms or combinations of these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Cough
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever (CDC defines this as 100.4F or greater, or when one feels warm to the touch, or gives a history of feeling feverish)
- Chills
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- New loss of taste or smell

*Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.*

If an individual determines that they have symptoms of Covid-19 or tests positive for Covid-19, they should stay home and not enter the building. The staff member will contact the designated administrator and parent will call and notify the school. The school nurse will call both the staff member and the parent back to provide direction based on VDH or CDC guidance.

If any emergency warning signs are present, including breathing trouble, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, pale gray or blue colored skin, lips, or nailbeds, or any other severe or concerning symptoms, please call 911 or seek care immediately.

## Covid-19 Testing Recommendations

It is recommended by the CDC that persons who have symptoms of Covid-19 should test as soon as possible after symptoms begin. If a person with Covid-19 symptoms tests negative for Covid-19, they should consider getting tested for other respiratory illnesses that could spread to others, such as the flu. At-home Covid-19 tests are antigen tests and are less likely to detect the SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, therefore the FDA recommends repeat testing following a negative result whether or not you have Covid-19 symptoms. If using an At-Home Covid-19 antigen test, persons with symptoms or those who were exposed but have no symptoms should test several times over a 2–3 day period. Diagnostic testing remains the cornerstone for the fight against Covid-19. At-home Covid-19 antigen tests, while not perfect, provide a fast and convenient Covid-19 testing option.

People who are at high risk for getting very sick with Covid-19 who test positive should consult their healthcare provider right away for possible treatment, even if their symptoms are mild.

## Covid At-Home Test Kits

RCPS will continue to offer At-Home Covid tests to staff and families. The At-Home Covid tests can be utilized if a person develops Covid-19 like symptoms or has been exposed to someone diagnosed with Covid-19. VDH recommends that Covid-19 testing only be done on individuals aged 2 years or older. Test kits may be offered by the school nurse for persons who become symptomatic at school/work or can be requested for use in the case of an exposure or symptoms by contacting the nurse at their child's school.

## Positive Covid-19 test

If you receive a **positive result** initially or after a repeat test, this means the virus is detected for SARS- Covid-2 virus and you most likely have Covid-19. If you test positive for Covid-19, the following is recommended by the CDC:

- Stay home for at least 5 days and isolate from others in your home
- Wear a high-quality mask if you must be around others at home or in public
- Do not go places where you are unable to wear a mask
- Do not travel
- Use a separate bathroom, if possible
- Take steps to improve ventilation at home, if possible
- Don't share personal household items like cups, towels, and utensils.
- Monitor your symptoms. If you have an emergency warning sign, like trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake or pale gray or blue colored skin, lips, or nailbeds, seek emergency medical help immediately.

## Negative Covid-19 test

If you receive a negative result, the test did not detect the SARS-CoV-2 virus at the time of the test.

- If you have COVID-19 symptoms, test again 48 hours after the first negative test, for a total of at least two tests. If you get a negative result on the second test and you are concerned

that you have Covid-19, you may choose to test again 48 hours after the second test, consider a laboratory molecular-based test, or call your health care provider.

- If you do not have Covid-19 symptoms and believe you have been exposed to Covid-19, test again 48 hours after the first negative test, then 48 hours after the second negative test, for a total of at least three tests.
- If you get a negative result on the third test and you are concerned that you could have Covid-19, you may choose to test again using an antigen test, consider getting a laboratory molecular-based test, or consult with your healthcare provider.
- If you get a positive result on any repeat test with an at-home Covid-19 antigen test, you most likely have Covid-19 and should follow the CDC guidance for people with Covid-19.

Refer to sections titled '*Student Return to School*' and '*Employee Return to Work*' below as needed.

### **Masks**

- Masks will be optional for students, staff, and visitors and will no longer be required on school buses.
- Mask wearing will be recommended after testing positive and after an exposure per CDC recommendations.
- Anyone who chooses to wear a mask or respirator will be supported in their decision to do so at any transmission level including low.
- At medium and high Covid-19 hospital admission level, people who are immunocompromised or at risk of getting very sick with Covid-19 should wear a mask or respirator that provides greater protection. Since wearing masks or respirators can prevent spread of Covid-19, people who have a household or social contact with someone at risk for getting very sick with Covid-19 may also choose to wear a mask at any Covid-19 hospital admission level.

### **Physical Distancing**

- There are no physical distancing protocols at this time.

### **Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

- The school will continue to encourage hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette daily at school.
  - Handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
  - Avoid touching your face
  - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue in the trash immediately
  - Use hand sanitizer throughout the day
- Schools have posted signs and messages in highly visible locations that promote everyday protective measures, describe how to stop the spread of germs and proper hand washing.

### **Custodial Services**

- Support healthy hygiene behaviors by providing adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer, and paper towels.

Actions taken to promote Custodial Employee Safety:

Additional hand sanitization dispensers and wipes have been deployed.

Below are the current strategies employed by RCPS and Contracted Custodial Staff in the extenuation of the COVID- 19 virus. Appropriate cleaning supplies have been procured.

Equipment: RCPS and Contracted Custodial has procured electrostatic sprayers, backpack sprayers, and Clorox 360 machine utilized in the disinfection process. These units will be utilized in the cleaning plan to address the disinfecting of classroom space and public gathering areas as needed.

Current Approved Custodial Cleaning Plan- COVID-19:

The attached cleaning specification approved by RCPS, and FDA will continue to be used with the following modifications.

Additional cleaners have been added with EPA rated Virucides.

- Frequencies of cleaning tasks will be modified on a building-by-building bases, based on occupancy and traffic.
- RCPS / Custodial Contractor will be focusing on highly used areas, providing additional disinfecting and cleaning as needed.
- RCPS and Custodial Contractor will provide services for specific areas when requested by the site.
- Areas that are not being utilized i.e., Secured/closed areas will be cleaned less frequently, and the focus and frequency will be on public spaces and high traffic areas.
- RCPS and Custodial Contractor recommends that staff/faculty clean and disinfect their personal items in their office, i.e. Phone, keyboard, mouse, TV and computer.
- RCPS and Custodial Contractor will provide disinfectant spray bottles and product upon request.

Process for Special Cleaning: Areas with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 exposure:

RCPS and Custodial Contractor will utilize electrostatic and back-pack sprayers, and Clorox 360 Machine as needed to remediate areas that could have been contaminated with the COVID-19. Below is the process for treating the contaminated areas.

- A request will be generated identifying specific areas that need disinfecting.
- Any areas having been exposed to the virus will be cleaned by RCPS/Custodial Contractor employees.
- If exposure is in common areas, RCPS/ Custodial Contractor employees will disinfect immediately.

- An electrostatic/backpack sprayer or Clorox 360 machine containing an EPA rated virucide will be utilized followed by a wipe down after the process.
- RCPS / Custodial Contractor will notify the request initiator once task is complete.

#### General Cleaning Procedures during COVID-19:

Added safety procedures for the disinfecting process during the COVID-19 Pandemic include the following:

- Change out gloves when needed.
- Utilize spray bottles or a bucket of disinfectant.
- Wipes and rags are both used to clean touch points.
- Disinfectant utilized in buckets is changed out based on soil loading.

#### **Maintenance**

- Cleaning ALL HVAC unit coils
- Replacement of all HVAC Filters
- Inspection and Change-out of Filters on 4 – 6-month rotation
- Increase outside Air settings on all HVAC units as needed to increase the volume of outside air introduced to the HVAC system, as the equipment design will allow.
- Water bottle fillers are installed strategically in the schools. Students are encouraged to bring water bottles to fill rather than drinking directly from the fountain. The fountains will be disinfected regularly throughout the day.

#### **Transportation**

- Designated windows will be slightly lowered to increase air flow as needed during times of higher transmission
- Standardized disinfectant cleaning products for use when cleaning buses as needed. Electrostatic sprayers or backpack sprayers are available for use.

#### **Maintaining Healthy Operations**

- The school nurse at each school will serve as the designated COVID-19 point of contact for all parents with concerns. All concerns will then be shared with Charlene Vail, RCPS School Nurse Manager, who will serve as the liaison with the VDH.
- Parents of students who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 should notify the school principal and participate in the development of an individual health and education plan.

#### **Health Protocol**

- Covid 19 Hospital Admission Levels – CDC recommends that schools use this guidance when making decisions related to COVID-19 prevention strategies. At high Covid-19 hospital admission levels or if a school is experiencing an outbreak, RCPS may consider implementing additional layered prevention strategies to maintain safe, in-person learning.

- A system will be in place at each school for students to visit the school nurse which allows time for cleaning and disinfecting between visits as needed. The nurse will socially distance students in the clinic as needed to minimize COVID-19 transmission. CDC/VDH guidelines will be followed in determining who should be sent home.
- Nurses will wear a mask as needed during routine student visits.–If Covid-19 is not suspected in a student/staff member presenting for care (based on symptom and exposure history) the nurses should follow Standard Precautions and Transmission-Based Precautions if required based on suspected diagnosis. As Covid-19 transmission in the community increases, the potential for encountering asymptomatic pre-symptomatic patients with Covid-19 infection also likely increases, at which time, broader use of respirators and eye protection during student/staff health encounters may be implemented, including possible use of an N-95 mask and face shields.
- Medical grade PPE including N95 mask (with fit testing), gown, gloves and face shield will be worn during aerosol generating procedures if the student is experiencing covid-19 like symptoms, has a positive Covid-19 test or during times of increased Covid-19 community transmission. Aerosol generating procedures will be done in a separate room with appropriate ventilation.
- Healthcare providers are encouraged to treat students with asthma and other chronic respiratory conditions with an inhaler and spacer while at school. Parents should contact their school nurse and healthcare provider to discuss the student's needs. Nurses will follow guidance from VDH/CDC on aerosol generating procedures.
- Masks will be placed on symptomatic students/staff (regardless of the mask opt-out) and will be sent home. Students/staff who present with Covid-19 like symptoms are encouraged to get tested for Covid-19. Symptomatic persons who cannot wear a mask should be separated from others as much as possible and children should be supervised by a designated caregiver who is wearing a well-fitting mask or respirator until they leave school grounds.
- Students or staff who have a negative Covid-19 test may return to school/work once they feel better.
- If the Covid-19 test is positive, isolation at home will be recommended based on the latest guidance.
- Quarantine is no longer recommended for people who are exposed to Covid-19 in schools, however, it is recommended that someone that has been exposed to Covid-19 wear a well-fitting mask and get tested per most recent guidance.
- Refer to the CDC Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Education Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning- Updated May 11, 2023, for further information.

### **Student Instruction during Isolation**

- Secondary students will access assignments on Blackboard and can communicate with

individual teachers as needed using school email.

- Elementary students will be provided a laptop to take home to access assignments on Blackboard. A parent must sign the Acceptable Use Agreement prior to providing a laptop for use at home. If a parent would prefer, paper copies of the assignments can be provided. The parent would need to contact the school to make those arrangements.

## **Case Investigation and Contact Tracing**

The focus will be on follow-up of outbreaks.

- Schools will not conduct contact tracing on every individual case. Contact tracing may be completed if the school is experiencing an outbreak of COVID-19 that has been difficult to control or is unusual in size or scope.
- Nurses will observe for any signs of a Covid-19 outbreak in the school and work with the local or state health department in accordance with state and local regulations. Recommendations from the CDC/VDH for additional prevention strategies may be implemented.
  - An example of an outbreak would be if 10% or more of a large group is experiencing transmission.
  - Outbreak = 3 or more positive cases in one classroom, known to be exposures to each other, within a 14-day period that can be linked to a specific person, place, or time.
  - Athletic teams and other activity group leaders will report to the school nurse when they know of 2 or more individuals within their team or groups that have been removed from activity due to COVID-19.
  - VDH Isolation and Quarantine guidelines: Schools have the authority to make decisions regarding when to exclude children and staff from school or work due to illness.

## **Definition of a Close Contact to Determine Possible Exposure to Covid-19**

An individual is more likely to get COVID-19 if they are in close contact with a person who has COVID-19 while they are contagious or still able to spread illness to others  
Close contact means: Being within 6 feet of a person who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, or

- Having direct exposure to respiratory secretions (e.g., being coughed or sneezed on, sharing a drinking glass or utensils, kissing)

People who are exposed to someone after they have completed their 5 days of isolation are not considered close contacts.

People with COVID-19 can pass the COVID-19 virus to their close contacts starting from 2 days before they become sick (or 2 days before they test positive if they never had symptoms).

If exposed, persons should:

- Conduct active monitoring for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 each day before and after school attendance for 10 days after an exposure. In the case of a household exposure, the individual with COVID-19 isolating at home should minimize contact with others in the household as much as possible. This includes having the person with COVID-19 stay in a separate bedroom and use a separate bathroom if possible, staying at least 6 feet apart, minimizing time spent with each other, wearing well-fitting masks and improving airflow by opening a window. Those who have ongoing household exposure, should count the date of the last contact with the person with COVID-19 as Day 0.
- Immediately contact their healthcare provider and school if any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 develop.
- Refrain from attending school/work if any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 develop.
- Notify the school of any new or additional close contact exposure to an individual with COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19
- Promptly pick up their child from the school if they develop signs or symptoms of Covid-19 while attending school.
- Comply with public health recommendations for quarantine/isolation when not attending the school, (stay at home and away from others).

### **Student Return to School**

The school nurse will have a conversation with student's parent and will evaluate circumstances to determine if a pre-existing condition could be the cause of the symptoms. If an alternative diagnosis is determined by the health care provider, the student can return based on usual guidance related to the diagnosis. The student/parent should:

- provide a note to return to school.
- The school nurse may request testing for COVID-19 for the student and may provide a test kit.
- If the health care provider recommends the student be tested and isolate, the student will need to stay at home until test results have returned.
- If the test returns negative, the student may return to school. Please follow testing recommendation as noted in the *Maintaining Health and Safety* section above.
- If the student's test is positive, the student will need to isolate at home for 5 days and follow other advice. The child may return on Day 6 if symptoms improve and has no fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medication. It is recommended that the student wear a mask on days 6-10 if able. If the student continues to be symptomatic on day 5, they should not return to school until fever free without fever-reducing medication and improved symptoms for at least 24 hours. Note: loss of taste and smell might persist for

weeks or months and this should NOT delay the end of isolation.

- Parents are requested to report any exposure or positive case in a student/household to the school of attendance.

### **Employee Return to Work**

- Staff who determine they must stay home from work due to COVID-19 symptoms or a positive Covid-19 test will first contact the principal or designee at their home school. The principal will notify the school nurse. Staff members shall notify the nurse at their school for further guidance based on their individual situation. The school nurse may recommend the employee to be out of work based on COVID-19 symptoms or positive test. Employees will use personal sick time.
- If an alternative diagnosis is determined, the employee can return based on usual guidance. If the employee is out longer than 4 days a note will need to be provided to return to work. These notes should be given to their principal.
- The school nurse may request testing for COVID-19 for the employee and may provide a test kit if the employee becomes symptomatic at work.
- If the health care provider recommends the employee be tested and isolate, the employee will need to stay at home until test results have returned.
- If the test returns negative, the employee may return to work. Please follow testing recommendation as noted in the *Maintaining Health and Safety* section above
- If the employee's test is positive, the employee will need to isolate at home for 5 days and follow other advice. The employee may return on Day 6 if symptoms improve and has no fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medication. It is recommended that the employee wear a mask on days 6-10 if able. If the employee continues to be symptomatic on day 5, they should not return to school until fever free without fever-reducing medication and improved symptoms for at least 24 hours. Note: loss of taste and smell might persist for weeks or months and this should NOT delay the end of isolation.

The employee may return to work once isolation requirements have been met. If an employee continues to be symptomatic on day 5, they should not return to work until fever free without fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours and improved symptoms. Note: loss of taste and smell might persist for weeks or months and this should NOT delay the end of isolation.

### **Positive Covid-19 Test in Asymptomatic Person**

A person who has a positive COVID-19 test and has remained asymptomatic will need to isolate for 5 days after the date of the positive test. Day 0 is the day the positive Covid-19 test is performed. If person becomes symptomatic, follow guidance above for person who is symptomatic.

The nurses will follow isolation requirements set out by the Virginia Department of Health when advising families and staff. Close contacts need to follow appropriate guidance for household or non-household contacts per the Virginia Department of Health. Notify the school nurse or Charlene Vail regarding any known positive cases in the school. (562-3900, ext. 29801)

## **Vaccination Efforts**

Working as a partner with the Roanoke City Alleghany Health Department the school division helped organize optional VDH vaccination clinics for RCPS staff and students age 5-18. School was closed on two days to allow staff to attend the vaccination clinics to receive both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. Bus transportation was provided for students age 12-18, with parent permission, to a school in the division serving as a student vaccinate site during school hours. The vaccination clinics were offered for both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

VDH has also scheduled several vaccination clinics at our schools after hours to help with community access.

## **Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities have individualized IEP or 504 plans that consider their individual and unique needs. If additional accommodations and/or services are necessary as a result of health and safety concerns related to the current health crisis, the student's plan outlines these provisions.

## **Continuity of Services**

Roanoke County Public Schools has taken and will continue to take actions to ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs.

Food Service will provide meals for all in-person students during the school day as needed. When school close temporarily due to Covid-19, food service may be available to students to pick up at their school.

## **Opportunity for Public Comment**

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, Roanoke County Public Schools sought public input and took such input into account as described below. 8/12 Public Hearing

8/16 Parent Advisory Council

8/22 Student Advisory Council Survey

8/23 Employee Advisory Committee

8/24 Principal Meeting

8/25 SEAC Suggestions

2/28 Updated Plan Posted to Website

6/9 School Board Work Session

## **Periodic Review and Revision of Plan**

During the period of the ARP ESSER award (until September 2023), Roanoke County Public Schools will periodically review and, as needed, revise its plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services. The plan will be reviewed at least every six months, and Rhonda Stegall, Assistant Superintendent of Administration, will seek and take into account public input during the review process. Plan revisions will address updated CDC guidance on safely reopening schools, if any are issued.

## **Making the Plan Available to the Public**

Roanoke County Public Schools has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at <https://www.rcps.us/cms/lib/VA01818713/Centricity/ModuleInstance/9419/2022-2023RCPSHealthPlan.pdf>
- The plan is available in multiple languages as it has a translate options associated with the website;
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact Paula Newbill at [pnewbill@rcps.us](mailto:pnewbill@rcps.us) to request translation; and
- Upon request, a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA may be provided with the plan in an alternative format accessible by contacting Rhonda Stegall, Assistant Superintendent of Administration, at [rstegall@rcps.us](mailto:rstegall@rcps.us).

## **Anonymous Complaints**

Employees, parent, or students who wish to place anonymous complaints regarding policies and procedures that are not being followed related to COVID-19 may send a complaint through the RCPS Speak-Up anonymous reporting system. Complaints will be investigated and handled according to current COVID-19 standards and guidelines. Employees, parent, and students shall not be reprimanded nor retaliated against in any way for reporting violations.

**Speak Up** – call or text 540-595-0706 or email to [speakup@student.rcps.us](mailto:speakup@student.rcps.us)