



Handbook Updates

- **When and how will the school notify parents if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19?**

We are being very intentional about following the DPH and CDC's guidance for notifying all direct contacts. As we have learned, careful contact tracing takes time.

Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of a person for 15 minutes or more. If a child is identified as a close contact, DPH guidance states that he/she should quarantine for 14 days from the last possible exposure and continue to monitor for symptoms. **Our practice will be to work with DPH to make personal calls to the parents of any child who is identified as a close contact at school as soon as possible.**

We will also *send letters home* with students if *they shared a class with a person who tested positive but were NOT identified as a close contact*. These students *may continue to go to school and do NOT have to quarantine*.

Our first priority will be to notify the close contact students. The letters of non-close contact students may not be sent until the following day.

- **If a student tests positive for COVID-19, how will this affect the attendance policy?** All COVID-19 absences will be excused
- **If a teacher tests positive, will the entire class be required to quarantine?**
We are following Department of Public Health (DPH) guidelines and will work closely with DPH to identify close contacts. When we know of a positive COVID-19 test, we will notify parents if their child could have been exposed to a person with COVID-19. Not every case will require an entire class to be quarantined, but some may.
- **Please note that all currently scheduled breaks will remain as listed in the 2020-2021 school calendar.**
- In order to avoid creating any incentives for ill individuals to attend school/work, all perfect attendance awards, school monthly attendance awards, and all other attendance incentives will be waived for the 2020-2021 school year. Echols County Schools will still be required to take student attendance and report student attendance data to the Georgia Department of Education. Students are considered to be in attendance when participating in live or online instruction. For students choosing the online learning option, lack of participation in the course will result in absences and could be a violation of the Georgia Compulsory School Attendance Statute. Echols County Schools cannot completely waive truancy requirements in Georgia law, but will modify the process to avoid punitive action due to COVID 19 related absences. Schools will work with parents to resolve attendance issues related to illness.

**This information may be subject to change based on additional guidance received from the Governor's Office, Georgia Department of Education, and the Georgia Department of Public Health. As always, the safety of our students and staff is our top priority.*