



**HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE
HAMILTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

A Hamilton County Schools and Hamilton County Health Department Joint Press Release

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

November 17, 2020

Hamilton County Schools, Health Department Update Quarantine Process for Hamilton County Students

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – The Hamilton County Health Department and Hamilton County Schools want residents to be informed of the updated quarantine process for public school students.

With an increase in cases and contacts in both public and private schools, the Health Department and Hamilton County Schools worked together to streamline the quarantine process. A quarantine would be required if, in the course of a COVID-19 investigation, the Health Department and Hamilton County Schools make a determination that a student is a close contact with a positive case.

If a child is identified as a close contact to a positive case, their parents will be notified through the letter included below, which states that their child is required to begin a quarantine period. The letter will include a release of quarantine date, at which point the child may return to school, assuming they do not develop symptoms during their quarantine period.

Previously, the Health Department would call parents to initiate a quarantine period, then mail a release of quarantine letter to the parents when their child completed the quarantine period. The quarantine letter process has changed. Parents will now receive only one letter at the beginning of the quarantine period, which will include the release of the quarantine date.

According to the [CDC](#), a “close contact” is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a total of 15 minutes. This process is the same whether the child was exposed at school or in any other setting.

“Because school-age contacts and transmission are increasing in Hamilton County, it is very important that parents abide by the quarantine orders issued by the Health Department,” said Health Department Administrator Becky Barnes, “This also means quarantined students are not allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities, even if they are outside or wearing a mask.”

The age brackets of 0-10 years and 11-20 years accounted for **18.6%** of all new cases last week, up **2%** from the week before. Cumulatively, throughout the pandemic in Hamilton County, these same ages account for **21.6%** of all positive or probable COVID cases, and includes K-12 students in both public and private schools.

It is recognized that some students would not receive the school lunch if they are quarantined at home. To help alleviate this hardship, the family can contact the child’s school. Student meals are available free of charge to all students, regardless of income.

Questions about COVID contact tracing, the quarantine process, or COVID in general should be directed to the Health Department’s hotline (423-209-8383) and not Hamilton County Schools.



HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE
HAMILTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

DATE, 2020

Legal Notice of Quarantine Issued Under the Authority of the Hamilton County Health Department

To the Parent(s) or Guardian of STUDENT,

This message is to notify you that someone within your child’s school family has tested positive for COVID-19. It has been determined that **your child was a close contact** of that individual. A “close contact” is defined as any person who has been in close proximity with a confirmed COVID-19 case (less than 6 feet) for fifteen minutes or more with an infected person, with or without a mask. Because of privacy laws we cannot share the positive individual’s name.

Due to this exposure it is now required that your child restrict their movements and quarantine for 14 days after this exposure. Restricted movement includes **NOT GOING TO ANY** areas such as:

Work (exceptions may be made for critical essential workers)	Public transportation (bus, taxi, ride share)
Schools/daycares	Church activity
Shopping centers/malls	Theaters/performances
Movie theaters	Any other place where crowds gather
Stadiums	Having gatherings at your home

The date your child may return to school provided they do not have any symptoms is _____

You may or may not receive a call from the local or state health department during this quarantine period due to the potential backlog resulting from the rate of new active cases. If you have any questions about the information in this letter, please call the Hamilton County Health Department COVID 19 hotline at 423-209-8383.

It is not necessary to obtain a COVID-19 test for your child unless your child develops symptoms of COVID-19. A negative COVID-19 test does NOT alter this quarantine period, you may not return to school until the end of the quarantine period. While the virus that causes COVID-19 does not cause illness in every person who becomes infected, it is contagious. Your child is at risk of getting sick for up to 14 days after they last had contact with an infected person. If your child or someone in your family becomes ill during this period of quarantine, contact your child’s medical provider for guidance.

If your child’s being in quarantine is a hardship for your family, please contact your school. Student meals are available free of charge to all students, regardless of income. Hamilton County is also distributing free food boxes at its COVID-19 testing site for those who have been tested on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8:30AM-1:00PM at Alstom, 1125 Riverfront Pkwy, Chattanooga, TN 37402. We are closely monitoring the situation and will provide additional updates when available.

Sincerely,

PRINCIPAL NAME, SCHOOL NAME

Dr. Bryan Johnson
Superintendent, Hamilton County Schools

Paul M. Hendricks, MD
Health Officer

Free Health Department COVID-19 Testing and Flu Vaccine:

- Drive-through COVID-19 testing at the Alstom site is open daily from 8:30AM-1:00PM, but will close at 11:30AM, Thursday, November 19, to accommodate a 12:00PM flu vaccine clinic.
- Free drive-through flu vaccine clinic at the Alstom site Thursday, November 19, 12:00PM-5:00PM.
- The Alstom COVID testing site will be closed Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after. Testing will resume the following Saturday, November 28.
- Call the Health Department's hotline at 423-209-8383 to request free transportation to Alstom, or for information about other community testing sites.
- *Everyone in the car coming through the Alstom site should be wearing a mask.*
- Pediatric flu vaccines are by appointment only at the Health Department's 3rd Street (423-209-8050) and Sequoyah clinics (423-209-5490). *All parents/guardians should be wearing a mask when accompanying children.*

Additional information may be accessed through these Health Department resources:

- Health Department hotline: (423) 209-8383
- Website: <http://health.hamiltontn.org/>
- English Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/HamiltonTNHealthDept/>
- Spanish Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SaludHamiltonTN/>
- YouTube English: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCkF8VUBQFLiJoxh8Sk10mA>
- YouTube Spanish: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwHuLpBFuLOf6hDTCFbfyQ>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/HamiltonHealth>
- Subscribe to the Mailing List: <https://landing.mailerlite.com/webforms/landing/j6u3e5>

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