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Success Begins at Ben Hill County Schools

Ben Hill County Charter System

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SUPERINTENDENT

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Reference: **New COVID-19 Guidelines**

Dear Parents and Students,

I hope this letter finds all of you well and safe from the Holiday Season. As we are approaching the return to school and with COVID-19 being on the rise across the Nation again from the Holidays. I wanted to share with everyone the new COVID-19 guidelines and protocols that are in place as of today by the CDC. *(Please see below for the new guidelines)*

COVID-19 GUIDELINES (updated 1.3.2022)

If you have tested positive for COVID-19:

- Report the positive case to your school nurse ASAP
- All positive COVID-19 cases must isolate per DPH guidelines. DPH isolation guidelines were updated on 12-28-2021. Updates are:
 - **If you have symptoms, you may return to school when:** 5 days have passed since symptoms first appeared and it has been at least 24 hours since your last fever and your symptoms have improved.
 - **If you did NOT have symptoms, you may return to school when:** at least 5 days have passed since the positive laboratory test and you remain asymptomatic.
- *To determine when 5 days have passed, day 0 of isolation is defined as either the date your symptoms started or the date of your positive test, if asymptomatic.*

If you were exposed to someone with COVID-19:

School-Based - Close Contacts/Exposures – Ben Hill County Schools will not mandate a quarantine for “school exposed students or staff” who are asymptomatic. (Based on the Georgia

DPH Amended Administrative Order signed by Kathleen Toomey, M.D., Commissioner, State Health Officer, schools may make modified decisions for school-based exposures)

- Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of a positive person for a total of 15 minutes or more.
- Parents will be notified when a student meets “close contact” criteria and will have the following options.
 - o **Option A** (standard DPH quarantine) - quarantine at home for the recommended 5 days and return to school on the 6 th day. Students should wear a mask at school until the 10th day of their quarantine period and continue to monitor for symptoms daily.
 - o **Option B** (close monitoring) students and staff will be allowed to remain at school, but will be mandated to wear a mask correctly and follow same guidance as if they were quarantined at home.
- Close contacts must wear a mask for 10 days following exposure.
- Close contacts should monitor symptoms daily prior to coming to school and stay home if any symptoms develop.
- At home isolation will be required if the individual tests positive during quarantine or begins to exhibit COVID-19 symptoms.
- If you have any questions regarding school exposures, please contact your school nurse.

Community-Based or Home - Close Contacts/Exposures - Must follow DPH quarantine guidelines.

- Vaccinated staff and students are not required to quarantine regardless of exposure location.
- Unvaccinated staff and students may return to school after 5 full days have passed since their exposure. You should continue to monitor your health and wear a mask until 10 days after your most recent exposure.

*****MASKS ARE HIGHLY ENCOURAGED FOR EVERYONE AT THIS TIME*****

Again, we would like to **THANK YOU** for your continued patience and flexibility in working with our schools and school system, as we continue to deal with COVID and its challenges. Please contact your school if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. J. Shawn Haralson, Superintendent