

Board Resolution #21-2

***NESC staff members should follow the below guidelines, or those of the school districts they serve, whichever is more restrictive.**

To ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, the Northeast Educational Services Cooperative Board of Directors designates all Cooperative employees as Critical Infrastructure Workers for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic and while the Cooperative is utilizing face-to-face instruction. The Northeast Educational Services Cooperative does not have available the necessary substitute staff in sufficient numbers, nor the necessary personnel to fill in for absent staff members, to keep the Cooperative's services in operation. The CDC (Center for Disease Control) advises that critical infrastructure workers may be permitted to continue working following potential exposure to COVID-19, provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are implemented to protect them and the school community.

A potential exposure means being a household contact or having 15 total minutes of exposure to an infected person at 6 feet or less over a 24-hour period with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 individual. The timeframe for having contact with an individual includes the period of 48 hours (about 2 days) before the individual became symptomatic.

Critical infrastructure workers who have had an exposure but remain asymptomatic will adhere to the following practices prior to and during their work shift:

1. Positive Case in the Employee's Household and deemed as close contact by DOH.

Follow the Department of Health's quarantine period and return to work once quarantine has been lifted, or follow the policy of the school district in which the employee is assigned.

2. The SD Department of Health has deemed an employee as a close contact by a confirmed case of COVID-19 outside of the employee's home:
 - a. Self-quarantine for 72 hours (about 3 days) from the onset of the confirmed individual in which you were in close contact and return to work provided you remain asymptomatic, or follow the policy of the school district in which the employee is assigned and follow the below guidelines:

Pre-Screen:

The employee will check their temperature and assess their symptoms prior to the employee starting work in the morning.

Regular Monitoring:

If the employee does not have a fever or other symptoms associated with COVID-19, the employee should self-monitor for symptoms and check their temperature an additional two times during the school day.

Wear a Mask:

The employee should always wear a face mask while in the workplace for 14 days (about 2 weeks) after the last exposure.

Social Distance:

The employee should maintain a social distance of 6 feet and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.

Disinfect and Clean Work Spaces:

All work areas such as offices, bathrooms, shared areas, and shared equipment will be cleaned routinely.

If the employee becomes ill with COVID-19 like symptomology during the school day, the employee will be sent home immediately. Surfaces in their workspace will be cleaned and disinfected. Appropriate notification to the SD Department of Health will be made following established protocols. Others at the school facility with close contact within 6 feet of the employee during this time would be considered close contact.

I am vaccinated, what do I need to do?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), fully vaccinated individuals who are asymptomatic do not need to quarantine at home following exposure. These individuals, however, should be tested 3-5 days following the date of their exposure. They should also wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days (about 2 weeks) or until they have received a negative result. If the result is positive, the individual should follow COVID-19 isolation procedures.

Can staff or students who are fully vaccinated still become sick with COVID-19 and transmit to others?

According to the Department of Education and Department of Health: Yes. The SARS-CoV-2 virus can cause even fully vaccinated individuals to become sick with and transmit COVID-19 to others. However, vaccines, along with appropriate mitigation efforts, are still recommended as the best way to slow the spread of the virus.

I am not vaccinated, what do I need to do?

For individuals not fully vaccinated, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 14 days (about 2 weeks) of quarantine from the day of last exposure to a person with COVID-19. The quarantine period is the length of the incubation period (or how long it may take a person to become ill with COVID-19) for COVID-19.

CDC has provided 2 alternatives that have been adopted by the South Dakota Department of Health:*Release from quarantine after 7 days:*****Assumes the person in quarantine:**

- ~Has remained asymptomatic and
- ~has a negative molecular or rapid antigen test that was collected on day 5 or later, after their last contact with a person with COVID-19, and
- ~continues to mask and monitor their symptoms for the remainder of the 14-day period.

Release from quarantine after 10 days:***Assumes the person in quarantine:**

- ~Has remained asymptomatic and, is not tested, and continues to mask and monitor their symptoms for the remainder of the 14-day period.
- ~both 7- and 10-day quarantine: if an individual begins experiencing symptoms at any point during the 14 days (even if tested negative), they should remain at home or return home and seek testing.

What COVID-19 testing options are available for NESC staff for the 2021-22 school year?

The South Dakota Department of Health (DOH) has made available to schools two testing options:

Abbott BinaxNOW rapid antigen test kits, and Quidel QuickVue over-the-counter (OTC) test kits.

*****NESC has opted to participate in the Quidel QuickVue OTC test kits.*****

Test kits are distributed based on the cooperative's staff population, and are available for schools to use within their school community as best fits their needs. These tests, unlike the Abbott BinaxNOW tests, may be sent home with a student or staff and performed at home. The Quidel QuickVue OTC test is appropriate for symptomatic or asymptomatic individuals.

Can the Quidel QuickVue OTC test be used to meet the testing criteria for release from quarantine after day 7, even with asymptomatic individuals?

Yes, provided the result is negative and the individual remains asymptomatic. If symptomatic and a negative test, it is recommended for the individual to consult with their medical provider and pursue re-testing for confirmation. If ill, individuals should remain at home.

NESC will work with each district on an individual basis to determine the safest avenue for the delivery of services. When possible, NESC will encourage alternative means of providing services to its member districts.