

Sweetwater City Schools

P.O. BOX 231

• SWEETWATER, TENNESSEE 37874

• (423) 337-7051

Sweetwater City Schools COVID-19 Update

The guidelines below should help explain how student illnesses will be managed at Sweetwater City Schools for the second half of the 21-22 school year. These guidelines are based on local, state, and federal legislation in addition to recommendations from the CDC and the Tennessee Department of Health. All guidelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Director of Schools and School Board, as health recommendations and legislation evolve.

- School districts do not have the authority to isolate students or staff due to a positive COVID-19 test alone.
- While we expect an increase in symptomatic illnesses over the next weeks and months, we will follow revised guidance on our response to symptoms that may or may not be COVID-19 related. SCS and school clinics will respond to symptoms as we have historically responded to sick individuals prior to COVID-19.
- If a student or teacher is presenting a temperature or gastrointestinal symptoms, the individual will be sent home from school. The nurse will use their medical judgment to make a recommendation to send home a sick student.
- Neither the schools nor the clinics will diagnose COVID-19 or suggest a preponderance of COVID-19 symptoms. In addition, they will not suggest or recommend testing. It will be the personal decision of the family to seek testing.
- The outcome of a COVID-19 test does not impact the district as we are no longer allowed to send home quarantine letters of any kind. The COVID decision tree and previous algorithm charts should be discarded. We are only authorized to respond to symptoms and can enforce keeping a person away from school when presenting symptoms.

- COVID-19 absences will only occur in Synergy for families who provide **one of the following**:
 - documentation of a positive COVID-19 test result from a medical professional or technician
 - documentation of being a household close-contact written by a medical professional or technician
 - verification of a positive at-home COVID-19 test. This will be accepted if parent or custodian can provide a picture of the positive test along with the date and the name of the student. Discarded test kits will result in a parent note or unexcused absence.

The district will honor these isolation and quarantine scenarios for up to 5 days for positive cases and household contacts as recommended by the Tennessee Department of Health. These absences will be marked DL/COVID in Synergy.

- Masks are encouraged for those returning from isolation and quarantine for an additional 5 days.
- All other illnesses with symptoms will be marked in Synergy as an absence and excused with parent notes just as we have followed in the past. When absences raise to the level of truancy, school officials will use sound judgement to make determinations to explore. Parents/Guardians are not required to have their child tested for COVID-19 to receive an excused absence.