

COVID-19 STAFF PROTOCOL

Revised: 10/6/21

In order to maintain the health and safety of the HCERS community, it is essential that staff follow these guidelines:

**Note: These guidelines do NOT apply to our Residential Program staff.
Please refer to Residential-specific protocols.**

ILLNESS SYMPTOMS

Our goal is to provide a safe work environment that is free from contagious illnesses such as COVID-19, the flu, and even the common cold. As such, we are now requiring that any staff member with symptoms outside of their normal baseline (and not including symptoms of seasonal allergies) stay home.

Any staff member who is experiencing symptoms of COVID (see chart below) or any other contagious illness, such as the common cold, must remain at home until it's been at least 24 hours since they've had a fever without fever reducing medication, **AND** they've been free of symptoms for at least 72 hours. In addition, staff who were suspected of having COVID will also need to be cleared by the HCERS or Kindle Farm COVID Line before returning to their work site.

Ill staff, whose position allows them to, may work from home if their symptoms are not severe. Staff who are too sick to work, or who are unable to work from home, should use their available sick time until they've met the above requirements.

COVID-19 Related Symptoms		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever or chills • Cough • Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatigue • Muscle or body aches • Headaches • New loss of taste or smell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sore throat • Congestion or runny nose • Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

USE OF FACE MASKS

Effective August 11, 2021, all staff, regardless of vaccination status, need to wear a face mask when indoors in common areas or when unable to maintain physical distancing of 6' or more.

Effective September 27, 2021, all staff, regardless of vaccination status, will need to use a medical face mask (surgical, KN95, N95, or other medical mask). It is no longer considered

sufficient to wear just a cloth mask, although a cloth mask may be worn in addition to a medical mask. The ultimate decision of which mask to wear should be made based on how well it fits. The goal is to eliminate any gaps on the sides of the mask that could allow for air droplets containing the virus to escape.

We recommend that all teams and staff have open communication with each other to ensure everyone's comfort levels with masking and distancing are being met. We have developed a list of tips for having these conversations in an effective manner (attached).

The remainder of this protocol is split into two sections in order to enhance clarity:

- (1) **Protocols for Fully Vaccinated Staff** (in blue)
- (2) **Protocols for Non-Fully Vaccinated staff** (in orange)

FULLY VACCINATED* STAFF

If COVID-19 is Suspected

Staff member should contact the HCRS or Kindle Farm COVID-19 Line (see below).

- Staff will be asked to contact their health care provider for a medical evaluation or recommendations.
- The health care provider may refer the staff member for PCR testing.
- The staff member will stay home until it's been at least 24 hours since they've had a fever without fever reducing medication, **AND** they've been free of symptoms for at least 72 hours, **AND** they've been cleared by the HCRS or Kindle Farm COVID Line.
- If testing is not recommended, or the staff person chooses not to be tested, they will follow the same protocol above.
- If PCR test comes back positive, see next section.

When Staff Test Positive for COVID-19

- The staff member will immediately go into isolation at home.
- Human Resources will be notified of the positive case by the employee, manager, or other means.
- Anne Bilodeau, *Chief Human Resources Officer*, immediately convenes a meeting with a subgroup of the EPRT (Emergency Preparedness Response Team), to include Dr. Paul Boutin, *Medical Director*, our Nurse Manager, the appropriate Division or Program Director, and Alice Bradeen, *Communications Director*, to review the situation.

- This subcommittee assigns one member to be the lead. The lead team member contacts the staff member who tested positive and does the contact tracing with them, completing a contact tracing log.
- The Division Director and Anne Bilodeau, or designees, contact any clients or staff who may have been exposed.
- The Division Director, or designee, notifies appropriate state agencies such as DMH and DAIL.
- Anne, or designee, notifies the Department of Health and discusses any potential exposure with them. The Department of Health provides us with the minimum guidelines that we need to follow for each situation. However, HCRS may decide to implement additional measures we deem necessary for the health and safety of staff and clients. HCRS will also make any necessary decisions regarding in-person or remote services when the positive case involves direct service staff.
- Once a plan is developed and implemented, HR will continue to monitor the situation on a daily basis, following up on test results, symptoms, etc.
 - The staff person with COVID will remain at home until it's been at least 10 days since their positive test, **AND** 24 hours since they've had a fever without any fever-reducing medication, **AND** they've been free of other symptoms for at least 72 hours, **AND** they've been cleared to return to work by the HCRS or Kindle Farm COVID Line.

When a Fully Vaccinated Staff Member has a Household Member who Tests Positive for COVID-19

- The staff member will remain at home.
- The staff member will immediately contact the HCRS or Kindle Farm COVID Line.
- The COVID Line will generally require the staff member to remain home for a certain period of time (depending on vaccination status), and a negative test will be required at the end of that time period.

COVID Pay Code: Fully vaccinated staff may use the HCRS COVID Pay Code for COVID Isolation or Quarantine, assuming they are unable to work from home and have no more than one week of available sick time. For fully vaccinated Kindle Farm staff, they are required to use 2 personal days (if available) prior to use of the COVID Pay Code.

NON-FULLY VACCINATED* STAFF

While we strongly encourage that all staff get vaccinated against COVID-19, we understand and respect that there are many reasons that a staff member may opt not to. Due to the contagiousness and seriousness of COVID-19, any staff member who is not fully vaccinated must take the following measures to protect not only themselves but also the entire HCRS community:

- Wear a mask at all times while at their work site (unless working from home) except for the brief time required to eat meals. Eating should be done at their desk or in a space not occupied by others.
- Maintain distancing from others of at least 3 feet. This includes when attending in-person meetings.
- Obtain a negative COVID-19 test every week:
 - **HCRS Staff:** The test needs to be done between Saturday and Tuesday and the results will need to be uploaded into our testing database by Friday morning at 9:00. The testing needs to be done outside of work hours.
 - **Kindle Farm Staff:** Unvaccinated staff at Kindle Farm School may get tested through the school's weekly surveillance testing but are still responsible for uploading their negative test results into the HCRS database every week by Wednesday at 9:00 am.
 - If a staff member's test comes back as inconclusive, the staff member will upload the inconclusive test report into the database, check the box stating inconclusive results, and get tested again the next week (as long as they aren't experiencing any symptoms). Staff with symptoms should follow the protocol in the box below.
 - If an unvaccinated staff member tests positive for COVID-19, they will be exempt from this weekly COVID testing requirement for 90 days after date of positive test, since the test will continue to come back positive for that length of time.
 - HCRS' testing database for uploading test results is located at the following link: <https://hcrs-mail.hcrs.org/staffonly/COVIDtest.asp>.

If COVID-19 is Suspected

Staff member should contact the HCRS or Kindle Farm COVID-19 Line (see below).

- Staff will be asked to contact their health care provider for a medical evaluation or recommendations.
- The health care provider may refer the staff member for PCR testing.
- The staff member will stay home until:
 - It's been at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared, **AND**
 - At least 24 hours since they've had a fever without fever reducing medication, **AND**

If COVID-19 is Suspected

- They've been free of symptoms for at least 72 hours, **AND**
- They've been cleared by the HCRS or Kindle Farm COVID Line.

- If testing is not recommended, or the staff person chooses not to be tested, they will follow the same protocol above.
- If PCR test comes back positive, see next section.

When Unvaccinated Staff Test Positive for COVID-19

- The staff member will immediately go into isolation at home.
- Human Resources will be notified of the positive case by the employee, manager, or other means.
- Anne Bilodeau, *Chief Human Resources Officer*, immediately convenes a meeting with a subgroup of the EPRT (Emergency Preparedness Response Team), to include Dr. Paul Boutin, *Medical Director*, our Nurse Manager, the appropriate Division or Program Director, and Alice Bradeen, *Communications Director*, to review the situation.
 - This subcommittee assigns one member to be the lead. The lead team member contacts the staff member who tested positive and does the contact tracing with them, completing a contact tracing log.
 - The Division Director and Anne Bilodeau, or designees, contact any clients or staff who may have been exposed.
 - The Division Director, or designee, notifies appropriate state agencies such as DMH and DAIL.
 - Anne, or designee, notifies the Department of Health and discusses any potential exposure with them. The Department of Health provides us with the minimum guidelines that we need to follow for each situation. However, HCRS may decide to implement additional measures we deem necessary for the health and safety of staff and clients. HCRS will also make any necessary decisions regarding in-person or remote services when the positive case involves direct service staff.
- Once a plan is developed and implemented, HR will continue to monitor the situation on a daily basis, following up on test results, symptoms, etc.
 - The staff person with COVID will remain at home until it's been at least 10 days since their positive test, **AND** 24 hours since they've had a fever without any fever-reducing medication, **AND** they've been free of other symptoms for at least 72 hours, **AND** they've been cleared to return to work by the HCRS or Kindle Farm COVID Line.

When an Unvaccinated Staff Member has a

Household Member who Tests Positive for COVID-19

- The staff member will remain at home.
- The staff member will immediately contact the HCRS or Kindle Farm COVID Line.
- The COVID Line will generally require the staff member to remain home for a certain period of time (depending on vaccination status), and a negative test will be required at the end of that time period.

COVID Pay Code: Non-fully vaccinated staff may only use the HCRS COVID Pay Code when they have had an exposure at work, are unable to work from home, **AND** have no more than one week of available sick time. For non-fully vaccinated Kindle Farm staff who have a work exposure and aren't able to work from home, they are required to use 2 personal days (if available) prior to use of the COVID Pay Code.

HCRS COVID/Infection Control Lines

- **HCRS Staff –**
(802) 886-4561 (that goes to HR staff at ext. 2181)
HRCOVID19@hcrs.org
- **Kindle Farm Staff –**
(802) 886-4562 (that goes to Kindle staff at ext. 2182)
KindleCOVID19@hcrs.org

Note: The COVID/Infection Control Lines are not monitored during non-office hours or on weekends.

* **Fully Vaccinated:** It's been at least 2 weeks since your final dose of COVID-19 vaccine.