

Purpose

These guidelines are intended to help school and childcare center personnel identify, report, control, and prevent suspected respiratory illness outbreaks.

Criteria for Reporting Suspected Respiratory Outbreaks

Monitoring for absenteeism and reports of respiratory illness in students and staff can help identify potential outbreaks.

Immediately notify the regional health department when:

A respiratory illness outbreak is identified, defined as: 20% or more of students/staff within a shared setting (i.e., a classroom, sports team, or other epidemiologically linked group) of more than 5 individuals absent or sent home due to a respiratory illness within a 72-hour period.

Respiratory illness definition – Oral temperature of > 100° F with a cough and/or sore throat.

- Each time a **new** outbreak is identified, initial reporting of the outbreak is required.
- Do not submit additional reports on subsequent days of the same outbreak. Outbreaks may be considered over when the respiratory illness identified decreases below the 20% criteria listed above **and** no new cases have been identified for ten (10) consecutive days.
- Report a **new** outbreak if a new respiratory illness is identified or the respiratory illness identified once again meets the criteria for a respiratory illness outbreak described above. (Example: if an influenza outbreak was previously reported and then RSV arises, a new report would need to be submitted for RSV)
- If an unusual or atypical situation arises (e.g., severe morbidity, multiple hospitalizations, extensive outbreaks), contact the regional health department.

Determining which type of Respiratory Illness (Influenza, COVID-19, RSV or Other) an individual may have is difficult based on symptoms alone. Therefore, if multiple individuals (students or staff) are noted to have similar respiratory illness symptoms, testing is recommended to determine the cause of illness.

What to Report

Report as much of the following information, as available, when notifying the regional health department:

- School / Childcare Name
- Number of students/ staff identified with Respiratory Illness
- Number of students/staff in the shared setting (cohort)
- Total school enrollment (students and staff)
- Number of students/staff known to have tested positive for influenza
 - If available Type of Influenza – Type A, Type B, Type A&B or Unknown
- Number of students/staff known to have tested positive for COVID-19
- Number of students/staff known to have tested positive for RSV.
- Earliest illness onset date and latest illness onset date
- Number of individuals with ER visits
- Number of Individuals hospitalized

How to Report

Childcare Centers- Notify your regional health department

Schools- Submit the Reporting Worksheet to your regional health department.

Contact information is listed below and can also be found at: www.scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/Library/CR-009025.pdf

Lowcountry

Allendale, Bamberg, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Hampton, Jasper, Orangeburg

3685 Rivers Avenue, Suite 201
North Charleston, SC 29405

Office: (843) 441-1091
Fax: (843) 953-0051
Nights/Weekends: (843) 441-1091

Midlands

Aiken, Barnwell, Chester, Edgefield, Fairfield, Lancaster, Lexington, Kershaw, Newberry, Richland, Saluda, York

2000 Hampton Street
Columbia, SC 29204

Office: (888) 801-1046
Fax: (803) 251-3170
Nights/Weekends: (888) 801-1046

Pee Dee

Clarendon, Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Sumter, Williamsburg

1931 Industrial Park Road
Conway, SC 29526

Office: (843) 915-8886
Fax: (843) 915-6506
Nights/Weekends: (843) 409-0695

Upstate

Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg, Union

352 Halton Road
Greenville, SC 29607

Office: (864) 372-3133
Fax: (864) 282-4373
Nights/Weekends: (864) 423-6648

Special Circumstances

In the event a novel strain emerges, or significant morbidity and mortality are reported in individuals, schools/childcare centers may be required to report absenteeism rates and/or complete a line list.

Completed



Recommendations for Prevention and Control

Resources

Vaccination



Encourage vaccines for all students and staff, unless they cannot receive it for medical reasons.

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/children.htm>

Respiratory Hygiene Etiquette



Reinforce opportunities for students and staff to engage in hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette.

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>

- Hand-washing should occur upon reentering the building from recess, after handling trash, before eating, after coughing and sneezing, and after using the bathroom.
- Students and staff should cover their nose and mouth with a tissue or their upper sleeve when coughing or sneezing. Place tissue in a trash bin after use and wash hands.
- Provide adequate supplies for hand washing and hygiene.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iFEvkbaFh4>

Limit Contact with Others When Sick



Avoid close contact (i.e., within six feet) with ill persons.

<https://scdhec.gov/health/child-teen-health/school-exclusion>



Ensure staff and students with respiratory illnesses are appropriately excluded from school. Follow the guidance outlined in the School and Childcare Exclusion List.



Ensure procedures are in place to monitor reports of illness in students and staff.

Clean and Disinfect Surfaces



Follow your facility's policies for cleaning and disinfecting. In particular, ensure frequently touched surfaces such as door knobs, tables, desks, computer keyboards, handrails, etc., are routinely cleaned.

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/cleaning.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/cleaning/facility.html>