

July, 2021

## CONTACT TRACING

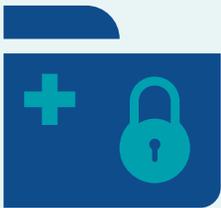
Contact tracing is a private, public health process used in response to a confirmed case of COVID-19 or other infectious disease. Contact tracing is conducted by the Guilford County Department of Public Health.



Within GCS, this process is coordinated by our Chief Student Services Officer and our Department of Health Services. School and department personnel cooperate fully in this process while also adhering to strict guidelines designed to protect the privacy of students and staff.

## CONFIDENTIALITY OF HEALTH-RELATED INFORMATION

Local, state and federal laws prohibit sharing personal information about students and staff with others. This prohibition includes private medical information.



GCS and public health employees cannot and will not release the name or other private information about a student or staff member with individuals who may have come in contact with someone at school with a verified/confirmed case of COVID-19.

## NOTIFICATION PROTOCOLS

When a student or employee has been identified by public health as a close contact, the student's parent/guardian or the employee will be notified directly by a public health official or the principal/supervisor. This contact may occur via phone/voice mail, text message or letters provided by public health that are emailed, hand delivered and/or mailed. The communication will outline next steps the student's family or employee should take.



**Parents/guardians and/or employees who haven't been contacted** by public health (students) or their school principal/supervisor (employees) **have not been in close contact with an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a GCS school or facility.** No actions are needed. However, the number of confirmed cases per school/work site are posted on the district's website. (See/search for COVID-19 data dashboards.)

**If the impact is widespread** (e.g. if public health has confirmed that a "cluster" of five or more epidemiologically linked cases has occurred at a school/site), **all parents and staff members** at the affected school or site will be notified by the principal/supervisor.

# COVID-19 Contact Tracing & Communications



To ensure you receive all school messages, parents/guardians should contact their child's school to ensure that their child's contact information is updated in PowerSchool. Employees should update their information using the [employee self-serve portal on the GCS website \(under Human Resources\)](#).

Parents and staff members also may access GCS' COVID-19 data [dashboards](#) (or go to <https://www.gcsnc.com> and go to/search for "Data Dashboards") for district and school data regarding verified/confirmed cases of COVID-19. The COVID-19 dashboards are updated daily, M-F. Graphs with this data are also posted on the district's Reopening of Schools website.



The Guilford County Division of Public Health's data dashboards may be accessed on the department's [COVID-19 webpage](#) ([healthyguilford.com](http://healthyguilford.com)).

## RESOURCES

[North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services: StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit \(K-12\)](#).

See also [NCDHHS contact tracing](#) information.

[GCS Reconnect, Reopen and Stay Safe website](#), including health and safety protocols and procedures.



## PUBLIC HEALTH DEFINITIONS

**Confirmed Positive Case:** An individual case of COVID-19 that has been verified/confirmed by public health or another healthcare provider.

**Contact Tracing:** The process of identifying, assessing and separating people who have been exposed to a contagious disease from others to prevent onward transmission.

**Close Contact:** Anyone who has been within six feet of a person infected with the virus for 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period or who has had direct contact with the infected person's secretions.

**Exposure:** Condition of being subjected to something (e.g. an infectious agent such as COVID-19 that could have a harmful effect.)

**Cluster:** Five or more active cases at one location that are epidemiologically linked. Clusters are reported to NCDHHS. [NCDHHS updates its report on Clusters in School Settings](#) twice weekly.

