

September 30, 2021

Dear Ronald Knox Community:

We are extremely grateful for a successful first month of school! We could not have had this success without the cooperation of the entire Ronald Knox Community. Currently, all faculty and staff members are 100% vaccinated! We are maintaining daily cleaning procedures to provide the safest learning environment for our children.

Nonetheless, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a part of our daily lives, and to maintain our commitment to keeping school open and safe, we need your ongoing support.

Our COVID committee closely monitors the guidance released by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Information from these groups changes in response to a number of factors, and we will continue to update school practices based on information from these groups.

As always, should you have any concerns about your child’s health, please contact his or her pediatrician.

The COVID-19 Committee would like to highlight three important topics as they represent the most frequently asked questions from our community:

**1. ARRIVAL PROCEDURES**:

Starting on October 1, 2021, the school will no longer require on-site temperature checks and completion of symptom screening paper questionnaires. As always, please monitor your child’s health and keep your child at home should he or she develop symptoms of an infectious disease, particularly COVID-19. Please contact your child’s physician if you have concerns about your child’s symptoms or health.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever (temperature greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle/body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. If you or your child develop symptoms of COVID-19 or you are concerned that your child is unwell, please do not come to school and contact your medical provider to discuss evaluation and testing. If your child has a pending COVID-19 test, please await results of that test before sending your child back to school.

For severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or difficulty waking up, or bluish lips or face, please seek the closest emergency department or call 9-1-1 immediately.

**2. TRAVEL ADVISORY GUIDANCE:**

At this time our students remain in the **unvaccinated** patient population and we are committed to keeping school open and safe for their benefit.

The Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) has updated their Travel Guidance to align with updated CDC recommendations. All families should remain apprised of the regular updates provided by the CCDPH: <https://cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/covid-19/covid-19-travel-guidance>

As of September 28, 2021, the CDC advises that:

**Before travel**, unvaccinated individuals traveling to a high-risk ("orange") state should:

* Get tested with a viral test 1-3 days prior to departure.

**While traveling**:

* ALL individuals regardless of vaccination status should wear a mask on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and while indoors at U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations.
* CDC recommends that travelers who are not fully vaccinated continue to wear a mask and maintain physical distance when traveling.
* Wear a mask in all indoor public settings, regardless of vaccination status.
* Avoid crowds as much as you can and wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol).

**After travel, unvaccinated individuals returning from a high-risk ("orange") state should:**

* Get tested with a viral test 3-5 days after travel **AND** stay home and self-quarantine for a full 7 days
* Even if you test negative, stay home and self-quarantine for the full 7 days.
* If your test is positive, isolate yourself to protect others from getting infected. We recommend you contact your child’s pediatrician for further guidance pertaining to your child’s unique health
* If you don’t get tested, stay home and self-quarantine for 10 days after travel.
* Avoid being around people who are at increased risk for severe illness for 14 days, whether you get tested or not.

**All travelers are advised after travel to monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms and isolate and get tested if they develop symptoms.**

Following the travel guidance from the Cook County Department of Public Health and the CDC will help keep our students, staff and community safe. Thus, we ask all families to carefully consider and plan to follow travel guidance. While we strongly encourage families to follow the CCDPH travel guidance, at this time, RKMS will not be monitoring travel of students or staff nor collecting PCR testing results related to travel guidance.

**This information is subject to change at any time based on CDC and CCDPH guidance, as well as local conditions changing.** We anticipate that travel advisory will continue to change. For that reason, we will continue to monitor and keep the community updated and informed on the RKMS COVID website, especially as holiday plans get underway and as guidance changes.

**3. ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE PROCEDURES:**

All individuals must remain at home when sick or experiencing any symptoms to minimize the chance of spreading COVID-19 or other Illnesses. COVID-19 diagnoses and close contact cases must be reported to the school office.

**Students and Staff need to Isolate or Quarantine under the following circumstances:**

* **A positive COVID test**
* **Potential COVID symptoms without a test or awaiting test results**
* **Certain close contact situations (see below)**

1. **POSITIVE CASES (Confirmed COVID-19 positive with a test)**

Any individual who tests positive for COVID-19 MUST isolate for a minimum of 10 days from the earliest of symptom onset or positive test result regardless of vaccination status.  *The individual must also be fever-free for at least 24 hours with 75% decrease in COVID-like symptoms before returning to school.* **There is no testing out of isolation with a negative test! If your child tests positive there is a minimum of 10 days required for quarantine.**

1. **Symptomatic individuals (without a test or while awaiting test results)**

* Individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 are considered a positive case unless symptoms last less than 24 hours or have a negative PCR test.
* If symptoms last less than 24 hours, individual can return to school if fever-free for at least 24-hours with 75% decrease in symptoms.
* If symptoms last longer than 24 hours, the individual can return to school if fever-free and after a 75% decrease in symptoms **and** one of the following:
* A negative COVID **PCR** Test; or
* Quarantine for 10 days from symptom onset

If symptomatic individual subsequently receives a positive COVID test result, please follow POSITIVE CASE instructions above.

**\*Please send all COVID-19 TEST RESULTS to Blythe Silva at** [**COVID**\_testreport**@ronaldknox.org**](mailto:COVID-_testreport@ronaldknox.org)

1. **CLOSE CONTACTS OF A CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID-19**

While in school, students and staff that maintain a minimum of 3 ft. of distance from the confirmed case and were properly masked during exposure are **NOT** considered a close contact and do not need to quarantine after exposure to a positive case.

Outside of school, a close contact is someone who was within 6 ft. of a confirmed positive case, whether masked or unmasked, for at least 15 minutes cumulatively during a 24-hour period**.**

**When You Do Not Need To Quarantine Following Close Contact:**

* Individuals, regardless of vaccination status, who were masked at time of close contact and maintained 3 ft. physical distance from a COVID positive individual while in school are NOT considered close contacts and do not need to quarantine **IF** **they remain asymptomatic.**
* Vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine if they are a close contact and remain asymptomatic. If the individual becomes symptomatic, follow the Symptomatic Guidelines

**When You Do Need To Quarantine Following Close Contact:**

* Unvaccinated individuals who were masked but did not maintain 3 ft. distance from a COVID positive individual must quarantine
* Unvaccinated individuals that were not properly masked at all times while exposed to a COVID positive individual (within 6 ft. for at least 15 minutes within 24-hr. period) must quarantine
* Vaccinated individuals who become symptomatic must quarantine

***Once it is established that a Close Contact must quarantine there are 2 options:***

1. Quarantine for 10 days from the last date of exposure to a positive case, at which point they can return to school as long as they are asymptomatic  **OR**
2. Quarantine for 7 days and obtain a negative COVID PCR test no earlier than 6 days after the last date of exposure to a positive case and within 48 hours of returning to school.

**\*Please send all COVID-19 TEST RESULTS to Blythe Silva at** [COVID**\_testreport@ronaldknox.org**](mailto:COVID_testreport@ronaldknox.org)

1. **Others Who Need To Quarantine:**

Unvaccinated individuals who are close contacts to COVID-positive household members, including siblings, parents, caregiver etc., are considered close contacts and must quarantine as follows:

If the close contact **CANNOT isolate** from the positive case, the close contact must ***quarantine for the same 10-day period of the positive case. Once this 10-day quarantine is complete, the close contact must choose one of the following:***

1. Quarantine for additional 10 days (20 days in total), at which point they can return to school as long as they are asymptomatic;  **OR**
2. Quarantine for additional 7 days (17 days in total) and obtain a negative COVID PCR test no earlier than 6 days into the 7-day quarantine period within 48 hours prior to returning to school.

If the close contact **CAN** isolate from the positive case, then the quarantine period for the close contact is determined as outlined in the Need To Quarantine Following Close Contact section above.

***Thank you all for doing your part to keep our school open and our RKMS community safe! This a time when we have the opportunity to look beyond our individual preferences and act to promote the common good FOR THE BETTER OF THE COMMUNITY.***

***Wishing your family the best of health and happiness,***

**Blythe Silva and COVID-19 COMMITTEE**

**COVID-19 Committee Members:**

**Morgan Ruey – Board President**

**Dr. Elizabeth Pappano – Board Vice President**

**Dr. Christine Roloff – Board Trustee**

**Dr. Corey Franklin – Committee Member**