

Gadsden City Schools

Safe Return to School Plan: Employee Guidelines

We look forward to the return of our students, faculty, and staff, and we value the safety and security of everyone on our campuses. We are putting measures in place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 at our schools. Below is a list of employee protective measures that we have put in place:

Employee Protective Measures Overview:

- Employees are required to wear a mask/face covering. (Medical exceptions will be made)
- We encourage respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Sanitizer will be provided in each classroom for use.
- All teachers will be provided with ample cleaning supplies to utilize during the school day.
- Additional cleaning measures have been put in place to routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily as well as nightly to properly disinfect the schools.
- Schools shall take reasonable steps, where practicable, to maintain separation between persons of different households.
- Sanitizing stations will be set up at the entrance of schools for limited visitors.
- Do not report to work if you are sick with a fever, experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms, or have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. *

Although some of the protective measures above are strongly encouraged, others are mandatory such as not reporting to work if sick with a fever or experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms. Prior to reporting to work each day, we ask that employees complete an at home self- assessment.

Home Self-Assessment: Faculty, staff, and students (parents) should conduct symptom screening and confirm temperature is below 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit. Stay home for symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or if you have been in close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 and contact your health care provider for further guidance.

COVID-19 has a wide range of symptoms ranging from mild to severe illness and symptoms may include (*):

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

*This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update this list as they learn more about COVID-19.

Active Screening: If COVID-19 symptoms are present when entering the school building, the use of a non-touch thermometer will be used to check temperature, employees will be asked about COVID-19 symptoms within the last 24 hours, and whether anyone in their home has had COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test.

- Sick employees will be advised not to return until they have met CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation and quarantine or been given a medical excuse to return to work from a health care provider.
- An isolation area will be identified at each school for sick employees or students and the area will be properly cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- The school nurse at each school will be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns.

Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)

All full-time and part-time school system employees are covered by the act and eligible for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19.

- *Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of **paid sick leave** at the employee's regular rate of pay* where the employee is unable to work because the employee is quarantined (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a health care provider), and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis; or
- *Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of **paid sick leave** at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay* because the employee is unable to work because of a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a health care provider), or to care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19; or
- *Up to an additional 10 weeks of **paid expanded family and medical leave** at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay* where an employee, who has been employed for at least 30 calendar days, is unable to work due to a bona fide need for leave to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.
- Employees can also apply for unpaid leave under the traditional FMLA if needed and they qualify.
- Because this emergency leave is subject to salary cap limits, employees may choose to use accrued leave so they can receive full pay, if applicable;
- If an employee chooses to use their accrued leave for childcare, they must also use the emergency leave at the same time; and
- In Alabama, the emergency leave (childcare only) cannot be supplemented by accrued sick leave. Under Alabama law, sick leave can only be used for specified purposes. Caring for a healthy child is not a permissible reason for taking sick leave in Alabama.

Below is list of reasons for leave covered by FFCRA:

- Employee has been advised to self-quarantine by health care provider due to COVID-19 (certification from health care provider may be required).
- Employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and is seeking a medical diagnosis (certification from health care provider may be required).
- Employee is caring for a person subject to federal, state, local or health care official's COVID-19 quarantine/isolation order (certification from health care provider may be required).

- Employee is caring for a son or daughter under whose school has been closed due to COVID-19 or whose place of care is closed for reasons related to COVID-19.
- Employee is experiencing a substantially similar condition as designated by the Department of Health or Human Services.

To summarize, if the leave is required based on the employee’s own health, the employee will earn 100% pay for a total of 2 weeks. If the leave is based on caring for another, an employee will earn 67% of their pay for a total of 2 weeks up to \$200 per day. Additional leave is available for childcare up to 10 weeks at 67% of your pay up to \$200 per day.

EMERGENCY PAID SICK LEAVE & EMERGENCY FMLA LEAVE QUICK REFERENCE CHART					
Related to	Reason for Leave	Employee	Leave	Maximum Pay	Notes
Self	1-Subject to federal, state or local quarantine order	Full time or part time employee	Emergency Paid Sick Leave	100% pay for 10 work days up to \$511/day	As of April 1, there is no current federal, state or local quarantine that would apply in Alabama.
	2-Advised to quarantine by health care provider	Full time or part time employee	Emergency Paid Sick Leave	100% pay for 10 work days up to \$511/day	
	3-Experiencing symptoms and seeking a diagnosis	Full time or part time employee	Emergency Paid Sick Leave	100% pay for 10 work days up to \$511/day	
Others	4-Caring for a person subject to quarantine order from govt. officials or health care provider	Full time or part time employee	Emergency Paid Sick Leave	67% pay for 10 work days up to \$200/day	As of April 1, there is no current federal, state or local quarantine that would apply in Alabama, but this reason still may apply if ordered by a health care provider.
	5-Caring for child whose school or daycare is closed	Full time or part time employee employed for at least 30 days	Emergency Paid Sick Leave	67% pay for 10 work days up to \$200/day	Total of 12 weeks; Applies only to children under the age of 18
			Emergency FMLA Leave	Additional 10 weeks up to \$200/day	
6-Experiencing similar condition as specified by HHS	Full time or part time employee	Emergency Paid Sick Leave	67% pay for 10 days up to \$200/day		

PEEHIP Coverage for COVID-19

PEEHIP has temporarily removed barriers to appropriate testing and care.

- **COVID-19 Testing:** The copay is waived and covered at 100% at CDC and FDA-approved lab locations, as well as the ADPH. No copay, deductible, or coinsurance will apply to the lab test and no prior authorization is required.
- **Teladoc, MDLive, and Telehealth:** The copay is waived and covered at 100% for Teladoc through BCBS and VIVA Health, and for MDLive through Humana. Additionally, our members can have free telehealth visits from any location with any in-network provider who offers them through their local office to address urgent care medical needs. Humana members may also receive free telehealth visits from out-of-network providers as well for urgent care needs. These temporarily expanded benefits are options to seek medical care virtually as opposed to in-person care to limit exposure and spread of the virus.
- **Early Prescription Refills:** So that members can prepare for extended medication supply needs, early prescription refills are allowed, such as an extra 30-day or 90-day supply as appropriate. If you have any questions about early refills, call MedImpact (group #14000 members) at 877.606.0727, VIVA at 800.294.7780, or Humana at 800.747.0008.

PEEHIP has also enhanced Mental Health and Substance Abuse Benefits. The PEEHIP Board voted to make the following enhancements to the PEEHIP Blue Cross Blue Shield Group #14000 mental health and substance abuse benefits effective October 1, 2020. These benefit enhancements will help remove financial barriers against treatment, and will provide easier treatment pathways for members managing mental health and substance abuse issues.

- Reduced \$50 office visit copay to \$15 per visit.
- Increased the 12 visit per plan year limit to 24 visits per plan year. Additional visits will be available if deemed clinically necessary by BCBS and their behavioral health partner.
- For mental health: removed the 30-day per plan year limit for covered inpatient days.
- For substance abuse: removed the 2-admit per lifetime maximum and removed the 1-admit per plan year maximum, so that members have more access if needed to use their 30 inpatient days within a plan year.
- For both: separated the count of days so that mental health days no longer aggregate toward a combined 30-day limit with substance abuse days Inpatient Physician Services now covered at 100% of allowed amount with a \$0 copay for both inpatient mental health and substance abuse physician services.
- For mental health: removed the 30-day per plan year limit for covered inpatient physician days to align with the removal of the 30-day per plan year limit for covered inpatient facility days Outpatient Facility Services.
- Added Intensive Outpatient (IOP) and Partial Hospitalization (PHP) as covered benefits for PEEHIP members. These were previously provided on a case-by-case basis requiring single case agreements between all parties and were provided as deemed necessary by Blue Cross Blue Shield and their behavioral health partner, New Directions Health Benefit. Predetermination for clinical necessity will still apply.
- If no available in-state PPO facility is available, coverage will be available out-of-state at that state's in-network benefit level.
- Changed copay structure from \$20 per day to \$150 per treatment episode to match the out-of-pocket amount to the medical outpatient facility benefit.

Q & A Section

What do I do if I am experiencing symptoms, have tested positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

- If an employee is experiencing symptoms, has been tested for COVID-19, has received a positive test, or has been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, he or she should advise their building principal immediately and do not report to work. Additionally, he or she should submit the COVID Employee Leave Request form for FFCRA electronically to the Accounting Department. A copy of the form is located below. The form can also be located in the district website Employee page.
- Upon submission of the COVID Employee Leave Request form, the Accounting Department will enter your leave in AESOP.
- If positive test results are received, the HR Director should be notified.
- In the case of a positive COVID-19 test of a student or staff member, school officials will follow current guidance from Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) and the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) regarding contact tracing, notification, disinfecting of buildings, and potential school closure.

When can employees with COVID-19 return to work?

To know when it is safe for an employee to return to work, refer to the following two strategies:

1. Employee has tested positive:

- Do not return to return to work until at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery. Recovery is when fever resolves without the use of fever-reducing medications and respiratory symptoms (like cough or shortness of breath) have improved; and
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

2. Employee was symptomatic but tested negative:

- 14 days after symptoms began (in case of false negative)

3. Employee was symptomatic but not tested:

- Do not return to return to work until at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery. Recovery is when fever resolves without the use of fever-reducing medications and respiratory symptoms (like cough or shortness of breath) have improved; and
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

4. Employee had close contacted with a positive person (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) but not symptomatic:

- 14 days from exposure

5. Employee had close contact with a positive person (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) and is symptomatic but not tested:

- 14 days from exposure

These guidelines are provided by the CDC and are subject to change. We will work diligently to provide the most up to date information as they become available.

If I am high risk or caring for a direct family member is high risk, what are my options?

Generally, if the administration has directed employees to report to work, you must comply and assume the same risk that you would normally have working in a school. If you are eligible, you can also apply for leave under the FFCRA or unpaid leave under the traditional FMLA which include the 1,250 hours of employment requirement and the unpaid leave provisions.

What guidelines are required for substitutes?

Substitutes will be required to check in at the front office at the school, complete a health survey including a temperature check, and are required to wear masks/face coverings. (Medical exceptions will be made)



COVID EMPLOYEE LEAVE REQUEST FORM
FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT (FFCRA)
(Up to 10 paid days available)

Employee Name: _____ Job Title: _____

Home School/Location: _____

First Date of Leave: _____ Duration of Requested Leave: _____
(in work days)

Reason for Leave (Check one)

____ 1 – I am subject to federal, state or local COVID-19 **quarantine/isolation order**.
(NOTE: Not currently available in Alabama)

____ 2 – I have been advised to **self-quarantine** by health care provider due to COVID-19.
(Certification from health care provider may be required)

____ 3 – I am experiencing **symptoms of COVID-19** and am seeking a medical diagnosis.
(Certification from health care provider may be required)

____ 4 – I am **caring for a person** subject to federal, state, local or health care official's COVID-19
quarantine/isolation order.

Name of other person: _____

Relationship to me: _____

____ 5 – I am caring for a son or daughter whose **school has been closed** due to COVID-19
or whose childcare is unavailable during COVID-19.

Child(s) Name(s): _____

Closed School(s): _____

____ 6 – I am experiencing a **substantially similar condition** as designated by the
Department of Health and Human Services.

Name of the Government entity or health care provider that issued the quarantine order to self-isolate:

I certify that the above information is correct and my request is based on the reason indicated.

Employee Signature: _____ Date Signed: _____

-CENTRAL OFFICE USE ONLY-

____ APPROVED ____ DENIED COMMENTS/NOTES: _____

APPROVER SIGNATURE

DATE