



School and Childcare Exclusion List

Official School and Childcare Exclusion List of Contagious or Communicable Diseases

**Statutory authority: SC Code of Laws Sections 44-1-140, 44-29-200; 63-13-180
SC Code of Regulations Chapter 61-20 and Chapter 114, Article 5**

Requirements

South Carolina law requires schools to take measures to prevent the spread of disease in the school and childcare populations by limiting the attendance of students and staff with contagious or infectious diseases at school and school activities. [SC Regulation #61-20](#) requires DHEC to publish each year an Official School and Childcare Exclusion List of Contagious and Communicable Diseases, hereinafter referred to as the School and Childcare Exclusion List.

SC Law indicates that schools “on account of the prevalence of any contagious or infectious diseases or to prevent the spread of disease, may prohibit or limit the attendance of any employee or student at any school or school-related activities under its control.” SC Regulation states that schools, out-of-home childcare providers, and parents/guardians should not allow the attendance of children with “any contagious or infectious disease or syndrome requiring isolation” ... “if the disease or syndrome of the child or minor is on the Official School and Childcare Exclusion List of Contagious and Communicable Diseases.”

Students, employees, and staff (including volunteers) are also excluded from school or childcare attendance if they have been exposed to one or more of the conditions designated in these lists, until the return to school or childcare criteria are met.

Guidance for Implementing the School and Childcare Exclusion List

- 1. The School and Childcare Exclusion List** applies to the following groups of people in out-of-home childcare, (as defined in S.C. Code Ann. Section 63-13-20), and in any private, public, parochial or church school or any childcare center or facility (Reg 61-20).
 - Children and staff in out-of-home childcare settings;
 - Preschool/kindergarten students in grades 3K, 4K, and 5K;
 - Students in grades 1-12; and
 - School employees and staff (including volunteers) who have contact with students
- 2. Parent Notification:** Schools and childcare providers are encouraged to distribute the list of conditions that require exclusion from school attendance to parents/guardians, and/or distribute parent guides developed by DHEC. The list is also available at <https://scdhec.gov/health/child-teen-health/school-exclusion>.
- 3. Parent Reporting to School:** Schools and childcare providers should inform parents/guardians that they must notify the school within 24 hours after the child has developed a known or suspected communicable illness addressed on the Exclusion List.
- 4. Return to School:** Students, children, and staff may return to the school as soon as their symptoms are resolved, unless stated otherwise in the Exclusion List or by their health care provider.
- 5. Special Circumstances:** Immunocompromised or medically fragile children with an excludable condition or exposure may need longer periods of exclusion, subject to recommendations by their health care provider(s) or by DHEC. For the purposes of school exclusion, the term “medically fragile” refers to those students with special health care needs or developmental delays who require close assistance with feeding or other personal hygiene activities by which communicable illnesses may be easily spread. Nothing in these criteria precludes the exercise of the professional judgment of the local education agency, medical and/or nursing staff to protect the health of students.
- 6. Sports or other school activities:** Children with communicable illnesses may not be allowed to participate in some sports, physical education, or other school activities.
- 7. Notes/Documentation for Return:** Physicians, advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), or physician assistants may provide medical notes for return to school following an excludable condition or DHEC may provide a release to return based on a negative test result or other circumstance. Medical notes, which document diagnosis, initiation of treatment, improvement in status, etc., and parent notes should be kept on file at the school for at least one calendar year, or as otherwise required by local school district policy. Medical notes may not shorten or abrogate the minimum period of exclusion required by DHEC for any specific condition.
- 8. Period of Exclusion:** If an individual does not respond to treatment for an excludable condition, the health care provider or health department may suggest longer periods of exclusion.
- 9. Outbreaks:** Certain conditions within the School and Childcare Exclusion List have specific guidance detailing its criteria for an outbreak. For conditions without specific criteria establishing a threshold for when an outbreak situation exists, one should consider a possible outbreak situation when a group or setting experiences unusual occurrences or more than an expected number of cases for a specific condition. The regional public health office should be contacted/consulted if there is a concern or question regarding a potential outbreak at a school or childcare center. All outbreaks must be reported to DHEC.

Note: During outbreaks or under special circumstances, DHEC may change the length of an exclusion period, and also apply the exclusion criteria to other students, children and staff who are not confirmed by laboratory testing but who display the same symptoms of illness as lab-confirmed cases.

- 10. Respiratory illness outbreak:** 20% or more of students/staff within a shared setting of more than 5 individuals (i.e., a classroom, sports team, or other epidemiologically linked group) absent or sent home due to a respiratory illness within a 72-hour period.
- 11. Minor illnesses:** Conditions that generally do not result in severe illness but are transmissible, may affect a child's ability to participate in normal activities, and may require exclusion. Selected examples include conjunctivitis, fifth disease, hand-foot-mouth disease, scabies, and head lice. Consider consultation with a regional public health office for other conditions if there are questions about opening an investigation or initiating an outbreak response. Outbreaks of diarrheal illnesses (e.g., known or suspected Norovirus outbreaks) are investigated per applicable policies.
- 12. Disease/Outbreak reporting to the Health Department and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):** DHEC has determined that conditions reportable immediately or within 24 hours by phone, including all clusters or outbreaks of illnesses, fall under the FERPA allowance and exception of reporting illnesses without parental consent. Conditions that are reportable within 3 days may be reported to DHEC by name with parental consent or reported de-identified without parental consent.
- 13. The requirement to report Immediately Reportable or Urgently Reportable (within 24 hours) conditions applies to physicians, laboratories, health facilities, and “any person or entity that maintains a database containing health care data.”** The List of Reportable Conditions may be accessed here: <https://scdhec.gov/health-professionals/south-carolina-list-reportable-conditions>