



Hello Racker Families!

Happy New Year!!

Our first week back has been a whirlwind! We've welcomed new children into our programs and have worked to navigate some of the shifts in COVID guidelines.

COVID

It seems appropriate to start with COVID. We are seeing incredible spikes in infections in all of our counties. In our programs, we have had to work through several positive tests within the Racker community – including in people who are both vaccinated and boosted.

We have been working with the local health departments to clarify the updated quarantine rules and how they impact our programs. We attached a document that outlines some of the FAQs that we've worked through. Because things are changing pretty regularly, we'll continue to communicate with you as we learn more.

Thank you all for your kindness and patience as we continue to navigate these unprecedented times.

COVID Closures

Our goal is to maintain in-person learning. We know that virtual education and therapies are incredibly challenging for our children. That said, with the spikes in cases, we may need to pivot to remote instruction, on short notice. This could occur based on children's quarantines and/or staff shortages based on COVID infections or quarantines. Please consider your contingency plans if we need to move to close or move to remote learning on short notice.

Snow Reminders

Racker will announce snow days and delayed starts in a variety of ways. We'll send a school messenger weather, post on our website and Facebook, and will also have messages on the radio and TV. Please be sure your school messenger information is up to date to get those notices. As a reminder, Racker built-in 3 snow days to our preschool calendar. If we exceed those days, we will transition to remote learning for subsequent weather closures.

Please be sure to send your children to school with cold weather gear! We do go outside even on cold and snowy days.



MLK Day

We are closed in observation of Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Monday, January 17.

Three handwritten signatures in blue ink. From left to right: Sonia Ferro, Patrick Schloupt, and Cris Donovan.

Sonia Ferro, Cortland Director Patrick Schloupt, Tompkins/Tioga Director Cris Donovan, Associate Executive Director



Quarantine FAQs

Updated on January 7, 2022. Updates underlined.

What is quarantine?

Quarantine means separating a healthy person or group of healthy people away from others due to exposure to a contagious disease like COVID-19. When someone has been exposed to a person who has COVID, they should quarantine to protect others from possible infection. Quarantine is designed to limit further exposure to others and limit the spread of the infection.

With the increased cases of COVID, local health departments are increasingly relying on individuals with COVID to inform their close contacts of their exposure. Formalized contact tracing by the Health Departments will not occur as is has in the past. We all have a role to communicate and observe the quarantine guidelines for the health and safety of others.

What is the purpose of quarantine?

The purpose of quarantine is to monitor an individual for the development of symptoms of contagious disease during its incubation period. Incubation goes from date of exposure to the onset of symptoms.

When Racker has a confirmed COVID case in the preschool or child care programs, what happens?

First, we identify the “close contacts” of the person who is ill.

1. We track children’s attendance as well as staff and therapist schedules and absences and are able to determine who was in contact with the person who is ill.
2. Close contacts in our setting includes the children in the classroom, staff who work in the classroom, and therapists who were in the classroom or provided therapy to the positive child (if it is a child)
 - a. If a child is positive for COVID, we also trace who was on the bus
 - b. If a child is in wrap around care, there is the possibility that they will have been exposed in that classroom

Once we have the list of staff and children, we share the information with the local Health Department and then attempt to contact each person by phone. If we are unable to reach the close contacts by phone, we also use text and email to attempt contact.

Is everyone who is a close contact placed into quarantine?

People who are not fully vaccinated ARE placed into quarantine.

People who are fully vaccinated (2 weeks following last dose) AND eligible for a booster BUT have not yet received their booster shot ARE placed into quarantine.

People who are fully vaccinated (2 weeks following last dose) AND not yet eligible for a booster AND are **not** exhibiting symptoms of COVID are **not** placed into quarantine.

People who are fully vaccinated (2 weeks following last dose) AND have received their booster shot (at least two weeks prior to exposure) AND are **not** exhibiting symptoms are **not** placed into quarantine.

Who places people in quarantine?

The current spike in COVID cases makes contact with all close contacts by the Health Department impossible. When Racker becomes aware of COVID cases in our programs, we will contact you to let you know of the exposure, dates of quarantine, and return date. The expectation from New York State and Racker is that all people who are aware of their exposure follow the guidelines for quarantine.

How long is quarantine?

Based on current NYSDOH guidance, individuals exposed to COVID and required to quarantine as described above must quarantine for 5 days followed by well-fitting mask wearing around others for an additional 5 days.

****Children and adults who are quarantined and are unable to consistently wear a well-fitting mask around others for the additional 5 days must remain in quarantine for the full 10 days from exposure.****

Quarantine dates are calculated from the last date of exposure where the date of exposure is day "0". Each 24-hour timeframe is one day.

If symptoms develop during these days, the individual must immediately isolate themselves from others.

Can I get a test for my child and stop being quarantined?

No, you cannot "test out" of quarantine.

What happens if my child develops symptoms while quarantined?

If symptoms develop, quarantine is extended by 4 days and the Return to School Protocols following COVID symptom requirements are followed.

What if I don't get a call from the Health Department?

At this time, it is unlikely that you will receive a call from the Health Department. Many are providing the requirements along with attestations for completion of quarantine.

If my child rides the bus, do I need to notify them that my child is in quarantine?

If you pick up your child from preschool due to symptoms or a COVID exposure outside of Racker, please notify the bus company of the transportation needs and return. If you need assistance with this, please let us know.

If your child is quarantined due to exposure at Racker and a quarantined classroom, we will notify the bus company of the dates of the classroom closure/quarantine.

What documentation does Racker need for my child to return to school following quarantine?

Because it is extremely unlikely that you will receive an official release from quarantine from the Health Department, it is critical to maintain good communication with Racker. We will provide an initial expected return date upon contact related to the exposure.

If your child develops symptoms, please be in contact with us to let us know of the delayed return.