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Reference Guide for Suspected, Presumptive, or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 (K-12) Interim Guidance
Published June 8, 2020; Updated March 24, 2021

Introduction

This Reference Guide is intended as a helpful tool for local education leaders across the state that should be used in response to suspected, presumed, or confirmed cases of COVID-19 on a school campus.

Note: This document does not outline all detailed public health guidance for K-12 schools.

- For all public health guidance view the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12).
- For more information on PPE and Infection Control Items, view the StrongSchoolsNC Infection Control and PPE Guidance (K-12).
- For more information on COVID-19 testing, view the K-12 COVID-19 Antigen Testing Interim Guidance.
- For more information on quarantining, view the NCDHHS and the CDC quarantine guidance.

This Reference Guide outlines protocols for next steps in interacting with students or staff who:

1. Share they were exposed to someone with COVID-19 (defined as having close contact of less than 6 feet distance for more than 15 minutes cumulative over a 24-hour period) but have no symptoms;
2. Share they were diagnosed with COVID-19 less than 10 days ago but are not currently symptomatic; OR
3. Present with at least one of the following COVID-19 symptoms while at school (which are newly updated in alignment with the CDC):
   - Fever (temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher)
   - Sore throat
   - Cough (for people with chronic cough due to allergies or asthma, a change in their cough from baseline)
   - Difficulty breathing (for people with asthma, a change from their baseline breathing)
   - New loss of taste or smell
   - Diarrhea or vomiting
   - New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

The following staff should adhere to protocols outlined in this Screening Reference Guide:

- All school staff who interact with students and/or manage staff, to know what to do if students and/or staff share they had an exposure to or diagnosis of COVID-19, or develop COVID-19 symptoms during the day.
- School staff who are conducting daily COVID-19 symptom screening (screenings can be considered for adults but is not recommended for children).
- School nurses or delegated school staff who are responsible for cleaning, notification to local health departments, and/or communication to students, families, teachers and/or staff, according to the protocols outlined in this guide.
## Returning from Exclusion Summary Tool

This summary tool is for school leaders to support individuals returning from exclusion. School leaders should collaborate and communicate with the excluded individuals, their families, local health departments, and health care providers, in determining when an excluded individual can return to school. Note: A negative COVID-19 test is **not** required for an individual to return from exclusion.

For more details on isolation and quarantine, view the [NCDHHS and the CDC quarantine guidance](#).

For more details on COVID-19 testing in K-12 environments, refer to [K-12 COVID-19 Antigen Testing Interim Guidance](#).

### Exclusion Category

- **Diagnosis**
  - Person has tested **positive** with an antigen test but **does not have symptoms** of COVID-19 and is not known to be a close contact to someone diagnosed with COVID-19
  - If the person takes a repeat PCR/molecular test performed in a laboratory within 24 – 48 hours of their positive antigen test, and that PCR/molecular test is negative: the positive antigen test can be considered a false positive and the person can immediately return to school; **OR**
    - The person is not required to have documentation of a negative test in order to return to school.
  - Person has tested **positive** with a PCR/molecular test but the person does **not** have symptoms.
  - Person can return to school 10 days after their positive test.
- **Symptoms**
  - Person has symptoms of COVID-19 and has tested **positive** with an antigen test or PCR/molecular test
  - Person can return to school when:
    - It has been 10 days since the first day of symptoms;
    - AND
    - It has been at least 24 hours since the person had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine);
    - AND
    - Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving.
  - Person has symptoms of COVID-19 but has **not** been tested for COVID-19 nor has visited a health care provider. Therefore, the person who has symptoms is presumed positive.
  - Person can return to school when:
    - It has been 10 days since the first day of symptoms;
    - AND
    - It has been at least 24 hours since the person had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine);
    - AND
    - Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving.
    - The person is not required to have documentation of a negative test in order to return to school.
  - Person has symptoms of COVID-19 but has visited a health care provider and received a negative PCR/molecular test and/or an alternate diagnosis that would explain the symptoms of a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, sore throat, cough (for people with chronic cough due to allergies or asthma, a change in their cough from baseline), difficulty breathing (for people with asthma, a change from their baseline breathing), new loss of taste or smell, diarrhea or vomiting, or new onset of severe headache, especially with a fever.
  - Person can return to school when:
    - It has been at least 24 hours since the person had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine);
    - AND
    - They have felt well for at least 24 hours.
    - Note: The health care provider is not required to detail the specifics of the alternate diagnosis.
- **Exposure**
  - Person has been in close contact with someone with a **confirmed case of COVID-19**.
  - Person can return to school after completing up to 14 days of quarantine. The 14 days of quarantine begin after the last known close contact with the COVID-19 positive individual.
individual. Alternatively the person may complete a 10-day quarantine if the person is not presenting symptoms of COVID-19 after daily at-home monitoring, or they may complete 7 days of quarantine if they report no symptoms during daily at-home monitoring, and the individual has received results of a negative antigen or PCR/molecular test on a test taken no earlier than day 5 of quarantine.

Follow the recommendations of your local public health department if someone at your schools must quarantine. Local public health authorities make the final decisions about how long quarantine should last in the communities they serve, based on local conditions and needs.

If quarantine is discontinued before day 14, the individual must continue to monitor symptoms and strictly adhere to all non-pharmaceutical interventions (e.g. wear a mask, practice physical distancing) through 14 days after the date of last exposure.

Note: NCDHHS recommends that schools not require an individual who is fully vaccinated (at least 2 weeks after getting their second dose in a 2-dose series or one-dose of a single-dose series) to quarantine if they have had no symptoms after being a close contact to someone with COVID-19, and they do not live in a congregate setting (such as a shelter).
Protocols for a Suspected, Presumptive or Confirmed Case

Student: Exposure, No Symptoms

Student shares they were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 2 weeks but is NOT symptomatic

EXCLUSION

☐ NCDHHS recommends that schools not require an individual who is fully vaccinated (at least 2 weeks after getting their second dose in a 2-dose series or one-dose of a single-dose series) to quarantine if they have had no symptoms from when they were exposed to someone with COVID-19, and they do not live in a congregate setting (such as a shelter).

☐ Separate student in designated area with supervision by a delegated staff person until transportation is available.

☐ School must notify designated parent/guardian/family member, or other individual to facilitate student getting home safely.

☐ Student may not return to school until:
  ○ If no symptoms develop and they do not have a positive COVID-19 test, up to 14 days after last close contact with the positive individual
  ○ If no symptoms develop but the person tests positive for COVID-19, 10 days after the date of the first positive test.
  ○ If symptoms develop and the person tests negative for COVID-19, up to 14 days after the last close contact with the positive individual.
  ○ If symptoms develop and the person tests positive for COVID-19, 10 days after the first positive test.

☐ Student should participate in remote learning while out.

INFECTION CONTROL

☐ Ensure that face coverings are worn by all workers, teachers, guests, other adults, and children age five (5) or older. In all public and nonpublic schools, all workers, teachers, guests, other adults, and children five (5) years or older must wear face coverings at all times when indoors, unless an exception applies, and when outdoors and within six (6) feet of another person, unless an exception applies.

☐ Individuals waiting to be screened must stand six feet apart from each other.

☐ The person taking temperatures must wear a cloth face covering and must stay six feet from the individual unless taking a temperature.

TRANSPORTATION

☐ Person may not utilize group transportation such as the bus in order to leave the school facility.

REPORTING

☐ School is not required to report a positive screening for exposure to the Local Health Department.
COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT
- School may consult with the Local Health Department on next steps for management and considerations on cleaning following a positive screening for exposure.

CLOSURE
- No closure is required.
- However, the school may consult with the Local Health Department on next steps.

CLEANING
- No additional cleaning is required beyond Plan A operational requirements.
- However, the school may consult with the Local Health Department on next steps.

COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND STAFF
- School is not required to share the positive screening for exposure with students, families, and staff.
- However, the school may consult with the Local Health Department on next steps regarding considerations about communication following this particular instance of a positive screening for exposure.

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT NEXT STEPS
- The Local Health Department may provide support to the school on next steps, if requested, for items such as management, considerations on cleaning, and communication following a positive screening for exposure.
**Student: Diagnosis, No Symptoms**

Student shares they were diagnosed with COVID-19 less than 10 days ago, but is NOT symptomatic

**EXCLUSION**

- Separate student in designated area with supervision by a delegated staff person until transportation is available.
- School must notify designated parent/guardian/family member, or other individual to facilitate student getting home safely.
- If they never develop symptoms before or after their positive test: person can return to school 10 days after the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test.
- Student should participate in remote learning while out.

**INFECTION CONTROL**

- Ensure that face coverings are worn by all workers, teachers, guests, other adults, and children age five (5) or older. In all public and nonpublic schools, all workers, teachers, guests, other adults, and children five (5) years or older must wear face coverings at all times when indoors, unless an exception applies, and when outdoors and within six (6) feet of another person, unless an exception applies.
- Individuals waiting to be screened must stand six feet apart from each other.
- The staff person taking temperatures must wear a cloth face covering, and must stay six feet from the individual unless taking a temperature.

**TRANSPORTATION**

- Person may not utilize group transportation such as the bus in order to leave the school facility.

**REPORTING**

- School must report a diagnosed case of COVID-19 among students or staff to the Local Health Department, as required by NCGS § 130A-136.
- School must provide requested information, such as answering questions about adherence to mitigation efforts (e.g., wearing cloth face coverings with fidelity) and identifying potential close contacts based on classroom attendance.

**COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

- School must follow the directions from the Local Health Department for this particular instance, such as room or building closure, contacting students, staff, and families, and/or specific cleaning protocols.

**CLOSURE**

- Close off areas used by the sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting.
- Consult with the Local Health Department as to whether closure of a room or entire building is required. There may be no need to close the school if the Local Health Department determines that close contacts are excluded and there is sufficient space to continue normal operations.

**CLEANING**

- Close off areas used by the sick person, including school transportation vehicles, and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting.
Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.

People should not be in the classroom, room, or other area of the facility while it is being cleaned.

Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.

Use an EPA-registered disinfectant that is active against coronaviruses. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

Remember to clean items that might not ordinarily be cleaned daily such as doorknobs, light switches, countertops, chairs, cubbies, and playground structures.

Follow NCDHHS Environmental Health Section guidance for additional cleaning and disinfection recommendations.

For school transportation vehicles:
- Do not use the vehicle until after cleaning and disinfection.
- Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting (or if 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible). Open vehicle windows to ventilate if possible.
- Follow cleaning guidance in the Transportation section of the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12).

School must follow any other cleaning directions from the Local Health Department for this particular instance.

COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND STAFF

School may choose to notify staff and families that there was an individual at the school who was diagnosed with COVID-19.

Any notice to staff and families must maintain confidentiality in accordance with NCGS § 130A-143, FERPA, and all other state and federal laws.

Local Health Department will contact staff and families if they are identified as a close contact of the individual who tested positive.

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT NEXT STEPS

The Local Health Department staff will interview the person with COVID-19. The parents or guardians of minor children may be included in the interview. As part of the interview, public health staff will work with the person/family, and the school, if appropriate, to identify individuals who were in close contact (defined as within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer).

Public health staff will reach out to close contacts and inform them that they need to quarantine at home for up to 14 days after their last contact with the person with COVID-19. If close contacts cannot physically distance from a case in the home, close contacts will need to quarantine for up to 14 days after the person who tested positive for COVID-19 is released from isolation. For more information on quarantining, view the NCDHHS and the CDC quarantine guidance.

Public health staff will share that if a close contact’s quarantine is discontinued before day 14 (i.e., discontinued at day 10 due to absence of symptoms, or discontinued at day 7 due to absence of symptoms and a negative antigen or PCR/molecular test), the individual must continue to adhere to all non-pharmaceutical interventions (e.g. wear a mask, practice physical distancing) through 14 days after the last date of exposure.

Public health staff will recommend the close contacts be tested to identify additional positive cases.

Public health staff will share that a close contact who tests negative no earlier than day 5 of quarantine and is not presenting symptoms of COVID-19 may discontinue quarantine at day 7. However, the individual must continue to adhere to all non-pharmaceutical interventions (e.g. wear a mask, practice physical distancing) through 14 days after the last date of exposure.
Student: Symptoms
Student presents with at least one of the following COVID-19 symptoms: Fever (temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher), sore throat, cough (for people with chronic cough due to allergies or asthma, a change in their cough from baseline), difficulty breathing (for people with asthma, a change from their baseline breathing), new loss of taste or smell, diarrhea or vomiting new onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

EXCLUSION
- Immediately isolate student in designated area with supervision by a delegated staff person.
- School must notify designated parent/guardian/family member, or other individual to facilitate student getting home and to medical care safely.
- Person must immediately go home and seek medical care.
- If diagnosed by a medical professional with COVID-19 based on a test (PCR/molecular or antigen) or symptoms, or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, the person may return to school 10 days after their first day of symptoms and at least 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, and other COVID-19 symptoms are improving.
- If the person receives a negative PCR/molecular COVID-19 test, person may return to school once there is no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines and symptoms are improving.
- If the person receives a negative rapid antigen test, they may not return to school until they have a follow up PCR/molecular test. If the follow-up PCR/molecular test is negative, person may return to school once there is no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines and symptoms are improving.
- Student should participate in remote learning while out.
- The person can return to school, following normal school policies, if they receive confirmation of an alternate diagnosis from a health care provider that would explain the COVID-19-like symptom(s), once there is no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines and symptoms are improving.

INFECTION CONTROL
- Ensure that face coverings are worn by all workers, teachers, guests, other adults, and children age five (5) or older. In all public and nonpublic schools, all workers, teachers, guests, other adults, and children five (5) years or older must wear face coverings at all times when indoors, unless a exception applies, and when outdoors and within six (6) feet of another person, unless an exception applies.

TRANSPORTATION
- The person may not utilize group transportation such as the bus in order to leave the school facility.

REPORTING
- School must report a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case among students or staff to the Local Health Department, as required by NCGS § 130A-136.
- School must provide requested information, such as answering questions about adherence to mitigation efforts (e.g., wearing cloth face coverings with fidelity) and identifying potential close contacts based on classroom attendance.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT
- If suspected or confirmed positive case is reported:
  - School must follow the directions shared by the Local Health Department for this particular instance, such as contacting students, staff, and families, and/or specific cleaning protocols, and possible room or building closure.
CLOSURE
- Close off areas used by the sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting.
- Consult with the Local Health Department as to whether closure of a classroom or entire building is required. There may be no need to close the school if the Local Health Department determines that close contacts are excluded and there is sufficient space to continue normal operations.

CLEANING
- Close off areas used by the sick person, including school transportation vehicles, and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting.
- Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- People should not be in the classroom, room, or other area of the facility while it is being cleaned.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Use an EPA-registered disinfectant that is active against coronaviruses. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Remember to clean items that might not ordinarily be cleaned daily such as doorknobs, light switches, countertops, chairs, cubbies, and playground structures.
- Follow NCDHHS Environmental Health Section guidance for additional cleaning and disinfection recommendations.
- For school transportation vehicles:
  - Do not use the vehicle until after cleaning and disinfection.
  - Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting (or if 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible).
  - Follow cleaning guidance in the Transportation section of the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12).
- School must follow any other directions shared by the Local Health Department for this particular instance.

COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND STAFF
- If a suspected or confirmed case is reported:
  - School may choose to notify staff and families that there was an individual at the school with a suspected or confirmed case for COVID-19.
  - Any notice to staff and families must maintain confidentiality in accordance with NCGS § 130A-143 and all other state and federal laws.
  - Local Health Department will contact staff and families if they are identified as a close contact of the suspected or confirmed case.
- If there is no suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19:
  - School is not required to share the positive screening for symptoms with students, families, and staff.
  - However, the school may consult with the Local Health Department on next steps regarding the need for communication following this particular instance of a positive screening for symptoms.
  - Any notice to staff and families must maintain confidentiality in accordance with NCGS § 130A-143 and all other state and federal laws.

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT NEXT STEPS
- If a suspected or confirmed case reported:
  - The Local Health Department staff will interview the person with COVID-19. The parents or guardians of minor children may be included in the interview. As part of the interview, public health staff will work with the person/family, and the school, if appropriate, to identify individuals who were in close contact (defined as within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer).
- Public health staff will reach out to close contacts and inform them that they need to quarantine at home for up to 14 days after their last contact with the person with COVID-19. If close contacts cannot physically distance from a case in the home, close contacts will need to quarantine for up to 14 days after the person who tested positive for COVID-19 is released from isolation. For more information on quarantining, view the NCDHHS and the CDC quarantine guidance.

- Public health staff will share that if a close contact’s quarantine is discontinued before day 14 (i.e., discontinued at day 10 due to absence of symptoms, or discontinued at day 7 due to absence of symptoms and a negative antigen or PCR/molecular test), the individual must continue to adhere to all non-pharmaceutical interventions (e.g. wear a mask, practice physical distancing) through 14 days after the last date of exposure.

- Public health staff will recommend the close contacts be tested to identify additional positive cases.

- Public health staff will share that a close contact who tests negative no earlier than day 5 of quarantine and is not presenting symptoms of COVID-19 may discontinue quarantine at day 7. However, the individual must continue to adhere to all non-pharmaceutical interventions (e.g. wear a mask, practice physical distancing) through 14 days after the last date of exposure.

☐ If there is no suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19:

- School is not required to share the positive screening for symptoms with students, families, and staff.

- However, the school may consult with the Local Health Department on next steps regarding the need for communication following this particular instance of a positive screening for symptoms.

- Any notice to staff and families must maintain confidentiality in accordance with NCGS § 130A-143 and all other state and federal laws.
Staff Member: Exposure, No Symptoms

Staff shares they were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 2 weeks but is NOT symptomatic

EXCLUSION

☐ NCDHHS recommends that schools not require an individual who is fully vaccinated (at least 2 weeks after getting their second dose in a 2-dose series or one-dose of a single-dose series) to quarantine if they have had no symptoms from when they were exposed to someone with COVID-19, and they do not live in a congregate setting (such as a shelter).

☐ Supervisor must be notified immediately.

☐ Person must immediately go home.

☐ Person may not return to school until:
  o If no symptoms develop and they do not have a positive COVID-19 test, up to 14 days after last close contact with the positive individual.
  o If no symptoms develop but the person tests positive for COVID-19, 10 days after the date of the first positive test.
  o If symptoms develop and the person tests negative for COVID-19, up to 14 days after the last close contact with the positive individual.
  o If symptoms develop and the person tests positive for COVID-19, 10 days after the first positive test.

☐ Person may participate in remote teaching (if applicable) while out.

INFECTION CONTROL

☐ Ensure that face coverings are worn by all workers, teachers, guests, other adults, and children age five (5) or older. In all public and nonpublic schools, all workers, teachers, guests, other adults, and children five (5) years or older must wear face coverings at all times when indoors, unless an exception applies, and when outdoors and within six (6) feet of another person, unless an exception applies.

TRANSPORTATION

☐ Person may not utilize group transportation such as the bus in order to leave the school facility.

REPORTING

☐ School is not required to report a positive screening for exposure to the Local Health Department.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

☐ School may consult with the Local Health Department on next steps for management and considerations on cleaning following a positive screening for exposure.

CLOSURE

☐ No closure is required.

☐ However, the school may consult with the Local Health Department on next steps.

CLEANING

☐ No additional cleaning is required beyond Plan A operational requirements.

☐ However, the school may consult with the Local Health Department on next steps.
COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND STAFF

☐ School is not required to share the positive screening for exposure with students, families, and staff.

☐ However, the school may consult with the Local Health Department on next steps regarding considerations about communication following this particular instance of a positive screening for exposure.

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT NEXT STEPS

☐ The Local Health Department may provide support to the school on next steps, if requested, for items such as management, considerations on cleaning, and communication following a positive screening for exposure.
Staff Member: Diagnosis, No Symptoms

Staff shares they were diagnosed with COVID-19 less than 10 days ago, but is NOT symptomatic

EXCLUSION

☐ Supervisor must be notified immediately.
☐ Person must immediately go home.
☐ If they never develop symptoms before or after their positive test: person can return to school 10 days after the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test.
☐ Person may participate in remote teaching (if applicable) while out.

INFECTION CONTROL

☐ Ensure that face coverings are worn by all workers, teachers, guests, other adults, and children age five (5) or older. In all public and nonpublic schools, all workers, teachers, guests, other adults, and children five (5) years or older must wear face coverings at all times when indoors, unless an exception applies, and when outdoors and within six (6) feet of another person, unless an exception applies.

TRANSPORTATION

☐ Person may not utilize group transportation such as the bus in order to leave the school facility.

REPORTING

☐ School must report a diagnosed case of COVID-19 among students or staff to the Local Health Department, as required by NCGS § 130A-136.
☐ School must provide requested information, such as answering questions about adherence to mitigation efforts (e.g., wearing cloth face coverings with fidelity) and identifying potential close contacts based on classroom attendance.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

☐ School must follow the directions from the Local Health Department for this particular instance, such as room or building closure, contacting students, staff, and families, and/or specific cleaning protocols.

CLOSURE

☐ Close off areas used by the sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting.
☐ Consult with the Local Health Department as to whether closure of a room or entire building is required. There may be no need to close the school if the Local Health Department determines that close contacts are excluded and there is sufficient space to continue normal operations.

CLEANING

☐ Close off areas used by the sick person, including school transportation vehicles, and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting.
☐ Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
☐ People should not be in the classroom, room, or other area of the facility while it is being cleaned.
☐ Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
☐ Use an EPA-registered disinfectant that is active against coronaviruses. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Remember to clean items that might not ordinarily be cleaned daily such as doorknobs, light switches, countertops, chairs, cubbies, and playground structures.

- Follow NCDHHS Environmental Health Section guidance for additional cleaning and disinfection recommendations.

- For school transportation vehicles:
  - Do not use the vehicle until after cleaning and disinfection.
  - Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting (or if 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible). Open vehicle windows to ventilate if possible.
  - Follow cleaning guidance in the Transportation section of the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12).

- School must follow any other cleaning directions from the Local Health Department for this particular instance.

COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND STAFF

- School may choose to notify staff and families that there was an individual at the school who was diagnosed with COVID-19.

- Any notice to staff and families must maintain confidentiality in accordance with NCGS § 130A-143, FERPA, and all other state and federal laws.

- Local Health Department will contact staff and families if they are identified as a close contact of the individual who tested positive.

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT NEXT STEPS

- The Local Health Department staff will interview the staff person with COVID-19. As part of the interview, public health staff will work with the person/family, and the school, if appropriate, to identify individuals who were in close contact (defined as within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer).

- Public health staff will reach out to close contacts and inform them that they need to quarantine at home for up to 14 days after their last contact with the person with COVID-19. If close contacts cannot physically distance from a case in the home, close contacts will need to quarantine for up to 14 days after the person who tested positive for COVID-19 is released from isolation. For more information on quarantining, view the NCDHHS and the CDC quarantine guidance.

- Public health staff will share that if a close contact’s quarantine is discontinued before day 14 (i.e., discontinued at day 10 due to absence of symptoms, or discontinued at day 7 due to absence of symptoms and a negative PCR or molecular test), the individual must continue to adhere to all non-pharmaceutical interventions (e.g. wear a mask, practice physical distancing) through 14 days after the last date of exposure.

- Public health staff will recommend the close contacts be tested to identify additional positive cases.

- Public health staff will share that a close contact who tests negative no earlier than day 5 of quarantine and is not presenting symptoms of COVID-19 may discontinue quarantine at day 7. However, the individual must continue to adhere to all non-pharmaceutical interventions (e.g. wear a mask, practice physical distancing) through 14 days after the last date of exposure.
Staff Member: Symptoms

Staff presents with at least one of the following COVID-19 symptoms: Fever (temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher), sore throat, cough (for people with chronic cough due to allergies or asthma, a change in their cough from baseline), difficulty breathing (for people with asthma, a change from their baseline breathing), new loss of taste or smell, diarrhea or vomiting new onset of severe headache, especially with a fever.

EXCLUSION

☐ Supervisor must be notified immediately.
☐ Person must immediately go home.
☐ If diagnosed by a medical professional with COVID-19 based on a test (PCR/molecular or antigen) or symptoms, or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, the person may return to school 10 days after their first day of symptoms and at least 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, and other COVID-19 symptoms are improving.
☐ If the person receives a negative PCR/molecular COVID-19 test, person may return to school once there is no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines and symptoms are improving.
☐ If the person receives a negative rapid antigen test, they may not return to school until they have a follow up PCR/molecular test. If the follow-up PCR/molecular test is negative, person may return to school once there is no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines and symptoms are improving.
☐ Person may participate in remote teaching (if applicable) while out.
☐ The person can return to school, following normal school policies, if they receive confirmation of an alternate diagnosis from a health care provider that would explain the COVID-19-like symptom(s), once there is no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines and symptoms are improving.

INFECTION CONTROL

☐ Ensure that face coverings are worn by all workers, teachers, guests, other adults, and children age five (5) or older. In all public and nonpublic schools, all workers, teachers, guests, other adults, and children five (5) years or older must wear face coverings at all times when indoors, unless an exception applies, and when outdoors and within six (6) feet of another person, unless an exception applies.

TRANSPORTATION

☐ The person may not utilize group transportation such as the bus in order to leave the school facility.

REPORTING

☐ School must report a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case among students or staff to the Local Health Department, as required by NCGS § 130A-136.
☐ School must provide requested information, such as answering questions about adherence to mitigation efforts (e.g., wearing cloth face coverings with fidelity) and identifying potential close contacts based on classroom attendance.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

☐ If suspected or confirmed positive case is reported:
  ○ School must follow the directions shared by the Local Health Department for this particular instance, such as contacting students, staff, and families, and/or specific cleaning protocols, and possible room or building closure.

CLOSURE

☐ Close off areas used by the sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting.
☐ Consult with the Local Health Department as to whether closure of a classroom or entire building is required. There may be no need to close the school if the Local Health Department determines that close contacts are excluded and there is sufficient space to continue normal operations.
CLEANING

- Close off areas used by the sick person, including school transportation vehicles, and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting.
- Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- People should not be in the classroom, room, or other area of the facility while it is being cleaned.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Use an EPA-registered disinfectant that is active against coronaviruses. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Remember to clean items that might not ordinarily be cleaned daily such as doorknobs, light switches, countertops, chairs, cubbies, and playground structures.
- Follow NCDHHS Environmental Health Section guidance for additional cleaning and disinfection recommendations.
- For school transportation vehicles:
  - Do not use the vehicle until after cleaning and disinfection.
  - Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting (or if 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible).
  - Follow cleaning guidance in the Transportation section of the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12).
- School must follow any other directions shared by the Local Health Department for this particular instance.

COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND STAFF

- If a suspected or confirmed case is reported:
  - School may choose to notify staff and families that there was an individual at the school with a suspected or confirmed case for COVID-19.
  - Any notice to staff and families must maintain confidentiality in accordance with NCGS § 130A-143 and all other state and federal laws.
  - Local Health Department will contact staff and families if they are identified as a close contact of the suspected or confirmed case.
- If there is no suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19:
  - School is not required to share the positive screening for symptoms with students, families, and staff.
  - However, the school may consult with the Local Health Department on next steps regarding the need for communication following this particular instance of a positive screening for symptoms.
  - Any notice to staff and families must maintain confidentiality in accordance with NCGS § 130A-143 and all other state and federal laws.

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT NEXT STEPS

- If a suspected or confirmed case reported:
  - The Local Health Department staff will interview the person with COVID-19. The parents or guardians of minor children may be included in the interview. As part of the interview, public health staff will work with the person/family, and the school, if appropriate, to identify individuals who were in close contact (defined as within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer).
  - Public health staff will reach out to close contacts and inform them that they need to quarantine at home for up to 14 days after their last contact with the person with COVID-19. If close contacts cannot physically distance from a case in the home, close contacts will need to quarantine for up to 14 days after the person who tested positive for COVID-19 is released from isolation. For more information on quarantining, view the NCDHHS and the CDC quarantine guidance.
  - Public health staff will share that if a close contact’s quarantine is discontinued before day 14 (i.e., discontinued at day 10 due to absence of symptoms, or discontinued at day 7 due to absence of symptoms...
and a negative PCR or molecular test), the individual must continue to adhere to all non-pharmaceutical interventions (e.g. wear a mask, practice physical distancing) through 14 days after the last date of exposure.

- Public health staff will recommend the close contacts be tested to identify additional positive cases.
- Public health staff will share that a close contact who tests negative no earlier than day 5 of quarantine and is not presenting symptoms of COVID-19 may discontinue quarantine at day 7. However, the individual must continue to adhere to all non-pharmaceutical interventions (e.g. wear a mask, practice physical distancing) through 14 days after the last date of exposure.

- If there is no suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19:
  - School is not required to share the positive screening for symptoms with students, families, and staff.
  - However, the school may consult with the Local Health Department on next steps regarding the need for communication following this particular instance of a positive screening for symptoms.
  - Any notice to staff and families must maintain confidentiality in accordance with NCGS § 130A-143 and all other state and federal laws.
Returning from Exclusion Flow Chart

**Returning from Exclusion**

**EXPOSURE, NO SYMPTOMS**
- Home for 14 days since exposure; or 10 days if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring; or 7 days if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring and the individual has received results of a negative antigen or PCR/molecular test on a test taken no earlier than day 5 of quarantine

**DIAGNOSIS, NO SYMPTOMS**
- Home for 10 days since first positive COVID-19 test

**AT LEAST 1 SYMPTOM**
- If confirmed positive COVID-19 OR person has Home for 10 days since first symptoms, no fever (without the use of fever reducing medicine), a significant improvement, including coughing and shortness of breath
- If negative rapid antigen test: home until follow-up PCR/molecular test, no fever for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medicine), AND they have felt well for 24 hours.
- If negative PCR /molecular COVID-19 test: Home for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medicine), AND they have felt well for 24 hours.
- If they receive an alternate diagnosis from a healthcare provider and the health care provider determines no COVID-19 is needed, can return to school, following normal attendance once there is no fever without the use of fever reducing medicine, AND they have felt well for 24 hours. The health care provider is required to detail the specifics of the alternate diagnosis and explain symptoms.

* Exposure refers to being within 6 feet of someone diagnosed with COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more cumulative over a 24-hour period.
DAILY SYMPTOM SCREENING CHECKLIST

THIS DAILY SYMPTOM SCREENING CHECKLIST IS NO LONGER REQUIRED IN NC K-12 SCHOOLS. IT CAN BE CONSIDERED FOR ADULTS BUT IS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR STUDENTS.

Upon entry to school, the screener may ask the questions below directly to the individual. If the answer is “yes” to any of the questions below, that individual should be excluded from school, and should be referred for diagnostic COVID-19 testing.

For more detailed steps on how to respond to a “yes” on any of the questions below, screeners and school leaders should refer to the Reference Guide for Suspected, Presumptive, or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19.

1. Ask: Have you been diagnosed with COVID-19 since you were last at school?
   - Yes
   - No
     - If No, move on to Question 2.
     - If Yes, say and ask: You cannot go to school.

2. Ask: Have you had any of the following symptoms since you were last at school?
   - Fever (temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher)
   - Sore throat
   - Difficulty breathing (for people with asthma, a change from their baseline breathing)
   - Cough (for people with chronic cough due to allergies or asthma, a change in their cough from baseline)
   - New loss of taste or smell
   - Diarrhea or vomiting
   - New onset of severe headache
     - If No, move on to Question 3.
     - If Yes to at least one symptom on this list, say: You cannot go to school.

3. Ask: Have you had close contact (been within 6 feet of someone diagnosed with COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes over a 24-hour period) in the last 14 days?
   - Yes
   - No
     - If No, move on to Question 4.
     - If Yes, say: You cannot go to school.

4. Ask: Has any health department staff or a health care provider been in contact with you and advised you to quarantine?
   - Yes
   - No
     - If No, say: You may go to school.
     - If Yes, say: You cannot go to school.
(OPCIONAL) LISTA DE VERIFICACIÓN DIARIA PARA EVALUACIÓN DE SÍNTOMAS

PARA CUALQUIER PERSONA QUE PUEDA RESPONDER CON PRECISIÓN POR SÍ MISMO

(Sugerido para adultos)

Al ingresar a la escuela, el evaluator debe hacer las siguientes preguntas directamente a la persona. Si la respuesta es “sí” por cualquiera de las preguntas siguientes, esa persona debe ser excluida de la escuela.

Para ver pasos más detalles sobre cómo responder a un “sí” en cualquiera de las preguntas siguientes, los examinadores y los líderes escolares deben consultar la Guía de Referencia para Casos Sospechosos, Presuntivos o Confirmados de COVID-19 (inglés).

1. Pregunte: ¿Le han diagnosticado COVID-19 desde la última vez que fue en la escuela?
   - Sí
   - No
     - Si no, pase a la pregunta 2.
     - En caso afirmativo, diga y pregunte: No puede ir a la escuela. ¿Alguien más que vive contigo también va o trabaja en esta escuela?  
       - Sí  
       - No
         - En caso afirmativo, diga: Esas personas No ir a la escuela.

2. Pregunte: ¿Ha tenido alguno de los siguientes síntomas desde la última vez que fue en la escuela?
   - Fiebre
   - Escalofríos
   - Falta de aliento o dificultad para respirar
   - Nueva Tos
   - Nueva pérdida del sentido del olfato o del gusto
     - Si no, pase a la pregunta 3.
     - En caso afirmativo a al menos un síntoma en esta lista, diga y pregunte: No puede ir a la escuela.
       - ¿Alguien más que vive contigo también va o trabaja en esta escuela?  
         - Sí  
         - No
           - En caso afirmativo, diga: Esas personas no pueden ir a la escuela.

3. Pregunte: ¿Ha tenido contacto cercano (a menos de 6 pies de alguien diagnosticado con el COVID-19 durante un total acumulado de 15 minutos durante un periodo de 24 horas) en los últimos 14 días?
   - Sí
   - No
     - Si no, pase a la pregunta 4.
     - En caso afirmativo, diga: No puede ir a la escuela.

4. Pregunte: ¿Algún personal del departamento de salud o un proveedor de atención médica ha estado en contacto con usted y le aconsejó que se ponga en cuarentena?
   - Sí
   - No
     - Si No, diga: Puede ir a la escuela.
     - En caso afirmativo, diga: No puede ir a la escuela.