



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary

ELIZABETH CUERVO TILSON, MD, MPH • State Health Director

August 3, 2020

Dear Private School Partners,

As you work hard to prepare for the upcoming year, making decisions about procedures and protocols in each of your private schools, the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) would like to share resources to help with this critical planning.

Over the last few months, NCDHHS has worked closely with NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), and NC State Board of Education (NCSBE) on detailed plans for how schools can promote prevention strategies and reduce the risk of viral spread of COVID-19. As part of this work, the [StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit \(K-12\)](#) was developed collaboratively with input from a range of stakeholders across the state. New tools and resources are frequently added to the [Schools guidance section](#) on the NCDHHS COVID-19 webpage.

The public health guidance for K-12 schools lays out a comprehensive set of baseline health practices that public schools should follow to reduce risk of exposure to COVID-19 for students, staff, and families. While these requirements are not mandatory for private schools, we encourage adoption of the practices in your planning and procedures as well.

The public health guidance reflects ongoing updates to the [CDC recommendations](#) on best practices for reopening schools in the following areas:

- Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure;
- Cloth Face Coverings;
- Protecting Vulnerable Populations;
- Cleaning and Hygiene;
- Monitoring for Symptoms;
- Handling Suspected, Presumptive or Confirmed Positive Cases of COVID-19;
- Communication and Combating Misinformation;
- Water and Ventilation Systems;
- Transportation; and
- Coping and Resilience.

The StrongSchoolsNC K-12 resources also include:

- Example screening checklists in [English](#) and [Spanish](#),
- Flow charts and protocols for [handling suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19](#)
- Information on [infection control supplies and PPE schools](#) may need
- Frequently Asked Questions for students, families, teachers, and staff in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)

Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed a number of [tools](#) to help school administrators.



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Finally, we strongly encourage all schools to build strong relationships with Local Health Departments to provide guidance and ongoing support on practices for cleaning, screening, and responding to suspected or confirmed cases throughout the school year. Having an established partnership now will be helpful for your planning efforts and will be essential, in the case of outbreaks or cases appearing during the school year. You can find your [local health director's contact information](#) here.

To support you in reducing risk of viral spread among students and staff as your schools reopen, the State is providing five reusable cloth face coverings for all K-12 students, teachers, and staff in private schools registered with the Division of Non-Public Education in the Department of Administration. You can learn more about these face coverings, including how many will be shipped to your school and how they will be shipped in [Details on Cloth Face Coverings Being Supplied for All K-12 Private School Students, Teachers, and Staff](#).

Thank you for all you are doing to help support North Carolina's children and families. If NCDHHS can be helpful to you in your planning, or you have any questions, please direct them to StrongSchoolsNC@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. Cuervo Tilson".

Elizabeth Cuervo Tilson, MD, MPH
State Health Director
Chief Medical Officer