



Changes, Updates, and New Resources NCDHHS K-12 Public Health Guidance

This document is designed to help you keep track of the significant, ongoing changes and new available supports for schools across North Carolina. It does not capture every change, such as correcting typos. You'll find new information shared approximately every month to capture updates to the NCDHHS K-12 public health documents supporting schools during COVID-19.

To view all NCDHHS school-related guidance documents, visit <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/guidance#schools>.

Key Changes – 3/24/2021

[StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit \(K-12\)](#)

- Clarified that daily symptom screenings can be considered for adults and are not recommended for children; Updated example symptom screening tool in alignment
- Clarified that excluding individuals based on COVID-19 symptoms still applies, and provides an updated list of symptoms aligned to CDC
- Incorporated recommendations for Plan A only that at least 3 feet of physical distance between children and 6 feet between adults; No changes to Plan B (remains 6 feet of distance required at all times)
- Replaced “Screening Flow Chart” with new “Exclusion Flow Chart”

[Reference Guide for Suspected, Presumptive, or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 \(K-12\)](#)

- Clarified that daily symptom screenings can be considered for adults and are not recommended for children; Updated example symptom screening tool in alignment
- Replaced “Screening Flow Chart” with new “Exclusion Flow Chart”

[StrongSchoolsNC Infection Control and PPE Guidance \(K-12\)](#)

- Clarified that daily symptom screenings are can be considered for adults and arenot recommended for children

[StrongSchoolsNC FAQ](#)

- Added new questions to clarify changes in symptom screening requirements

[COVID-19 Contact Tracing Procedures for K-12 Schools](#)

- Aligned guidance with new CDC recommendations on symptom screening, physical distancing

Key Changes – 3/23/2021

New Resources:

- Visit <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/guidance#schools> to see recently updated Spanish guidance documents and check back regularly for new updates

[StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit \(K-12\)](#)

- All grade levels can operate on Plan A
- Daily symptom screenings no longer required
- Incorporated CDC recommendations on at least 3 feet of physical distance between children and 6 feet between adults
- Changed wording from “social” to “physical” distancing
- Disinfecting playground equipment no longer required
- Physical barriers no longer recommended

[Reference Guide for Suspected, Presumptive, or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 \(K-12\)](#)

- All daily screening protocols upon arrival at school entry have been removed, as daily symptom screenings are no longer required
- Optional symptom screening resources found at the back of the document

[StrongSchoolsNC Infection Control and PPE Guidance \(K-12\)](#)

- Updated to reflect optional symptom screening

[Requirements and Recommendations for Recess, Specials, and General Activities](#)

- Revised guidance to reflect CDC recommendations on physical distance

[StrongSchoolsNC FAQ](#)

- Revised questions to align with remote learning only being an option for high risk families and/or families who opt-out of in-person instruction
- Revised questions about symptom screenings to reflect that daily screenings are now optional
- Condensed answers to refer directly to regularly updated, linked documents

Key Changes – 2/10/2021

New Resources:

- [NC's K-12 contract tracing guidance](#)
- [NC's guidance on vaccine operations for K-12 schools](#)

Key Changes – 2/2/2021

[StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit \(K-12\)](#)

- Updated operational plan requirements to encourage schools to return to in-person instruction

[StrongSchoolsNC FAQ](#)

- Revised questions related to which grade levels can operate under Plan A and Plan B

Key Changes – 12/4/2020

New Resources:

- [Antigen Testing Pilot Application Packet](#)
- [Requirements and Recommendations for Recess, Specials, and General Activities](#)
- [NCDHHS Holiday Packet – Celebrating Safely](#)

[StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit \(K-12\)](#)

- Updated quarantine requirements to reflect new guidelines from the CDC (page 10)
- Updated the cloth face covering requirements in alignment with Executive Order No. 180, including requirements for students ages 5 and up (page 5)
- Added additional ventilation recommendations in alignment with the CDC (page 11)
- Created a glossary of terms (page 23)

[Reference Guide for Suspected, Presumptive, or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 \(K-12\)](#)

- Updated to reflect masking age requirements (5 and up) and updated quarantine guidance from the CDC (throughout document)

[StrongSchoolsNC Infection Control and PPE Guidance \(K-12\)](#)

- Updated the cloth face covering requirements in alignment with Executive Order No. 180, including requirements for students ages 5 and up (page 2)

[StrongSchoolsNC FAQ](#)

- Revised questions related to mask requirements (page 3)
- Revised questions related to quarantine requirements (page 10)
- Added questions about COVID-19 testing in schools (page 12)
- Revised vulnerable populations definition (page 12)
- Clarified and revised questions about sports and specials guidance (page 7)

Key Changes – 11/5/2020

*Note- Files were posted online on 11/6/2020

[StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit \(K-12\)](#)

- Streamlined the daily symptom screening checklists (Pages 15 – 18)

- Revised alternate diagnosis language to allow someone excluded from school to return (Pages 9 and 21)
- Clarified language regarding PCR testing; now reads “PCR/molecular test” (throughout)
- Gloves are not required for people conducting symptom screenings (Page 8)
- Aligned high-risk status categories to current CDC recommendations (Page 6)
- Added consideration for protective layering if sustaining contact with unmasked persons (Page 6)

[Reference Guide for Suspected, Presumptive, or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 \(K-12\)](#)

- Created new “Return from Exclusion Summary Tool” (Page 8)
- Added daily symptom screening checklists for reference (Pages 4 -7)
- Clarified language regarding PCR testing; now reads “PCR/molecular” (throughout)

[StrongSchoolsNC Infection Control and PPE Guidance \(K-12\)](#)

- Added broader recommendations for how to use common infection control items (Pages 1 – 3)
- Revised Starter Pack and Booster Pack descriptions to reflect past-tense (Pages 3 – 5)

[Considerations For COVID-19 Testing of Adults and Children Who Work at or Attend a K-12 School](#)

- Linked to new antigen testing flow chart (Page 1)

[What Are We Learning About COVID-19 and Children?](#)

- Updated broken links

[StrongSchoolsNC FAQ](#)

- Added new questions relating to immunizations and mask exceptions
- Updated broken links

Key Changes – 10/8/2020

New Resources:

- [Considerations For COVID-19 Testing of Adults and Children Who Work at or Attend a K-12 School](#)
- [When to Quarantine \(Spanish\)](#)

[StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit \(K-12\)](#)

- Clarified what is required for schools to report to Local Health Departments: suspected or confirmed cases.
- Added language about excluding siblings/household members that are close contacts of a symptomatic person
- Added links to quarantine example calendars
- Clarified language regarding Plan B bus restrictions following request from NC State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction
- Added links to quarantine example calendars
- Clarified screening flow chart language regarding antigen vs. PCR testing

[Reference Guide for Suspected, Presumptive, or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 \(K-12\)](#)

- Language and protocol clarifications throughout document
- Clarified what is required for schools to report to Local Health Departments: suspected or confirmed cases.
- Added language about excluding siblings/household members if one individual is symptomatic or exposed, which reflects the screening form
- Added links to quarantine example calendars
- Clarified screening flow chart language regarding antigen vs. PCR testing

[StrongSchoolsNC Infection Control and PPE Guidance \(K-12\)](#)

- Link added to CDC do-not-use list of hand sanitizer products contaminated with methanol

[StrongSchoolsNC FAQ](#)

- New FAQs added:
 - Exposure guidance for those doing COVID-19 screenings
 - Confidentiality
 - Social distancing protocols under Plan A
 - Parental consent and COVID-19 testing
- Updates
 - Wording and question order clarity throughout document

Key Changes – 9/17/2020

[StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit \(K-12\)](#)

- As of October 5, 2020, elementary schools (K – 5th grade) can operate under Plan A.
- At this time, middle and high schools (6th – 12th grade) may operate under Plan B or Plan C, only.
- It is strongly recommended schools operate transportation under Plan B health and safety requirements to ensure reduced density in a more confined space.
- It is strongly encouraged that if schools implement plan A, they also implement and emphasize *recommended* strategies in the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit for social distancing and minimizing exposure like choosing to cohort students and teachers.
- Clarified that symptom screenings should take place daily

[Reference Guide for Suspected, Presumptive, or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 \(K-12\)](#)

- Updated screening flow chart with grammatical and wording changes for clarity

[StrongSchoolsNC FAQ](#)

- Updated answers to 4 questions to align with newly announced option for K-5 to transition to Plan A:
 - Why are elementary (K – 5th grade) schools able to choose to operate under Plan A, while middle and high (6th – 12th grade) schools cannot?
 - Are face coverings/masks required at all times for North Carolina’s students, teachers, and staff when school buildings reopen
 - Which operational plan will my child’s school reopen under?
 - Are school districts allowed to provide remote learning during the 2020-21 school year?
- Updated miscellaneous grammatical and wording changes to align with Toolkit

Key Changes – 9/1/2020

[StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit \(K-12\)](#)

- Updated wording changes to align with child care guidance
- Inserted list of mask exemptions
- Updated hyperlinks and minor language errors

[StrongSchoolsNC FAQ](#)

- Clarified symptoms that exclude a child from in person attendance
- New FAQ added concerning financial support for families seeking school-age child care
- Updated language and responses to questions that relate to cloth face coverings and face shields, in alignment with Executive Order 163