



#StayStrongNC

## What Families Can Expect When Schools Reopen

School will be different when it begins in August. Learning may happen in the classroom and remotely, or only remotely. We encourage you to read this brochure with your children so everyone knows what to expect when school starts.

**All of us – students, families, teachers, and school staff – can help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Working together we will keep our schools and communities strong.**

### The Basics of COVID-19

COVID-19 is mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when people do things like talk, cough, sneeze, yell, or sing. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Any time many people are together there is a risk to spread COVID-19.

Children are less likely to have COVID-19 or have severe illness with COVID-19 and younger children may be less likely to spread COVID-19 than adults.



*When we all*  
**WORK TOGETHER,**  
*we can keep our*  
**SCHOOLS &**  
**COMMUNITIES**  
*strong.*



## COVID-19 Symptoms

**Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after someone is exposed to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:**

Other symptoms are also possible. Some people infected with COVID-19 may have very mild symptoms or may never have symptoms at all – so they may never know that they were sick.

Schools are required to send students and staff home and/or to medical care if they have:

- Recently tested positive for COVID-19
- Been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, or
- A fever, chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell, or a new cough.

Students and staff must meet certain criteria before they go back to school.

## School Visitors

Because the health and safety of students and staff is a top priority, schools will limit outside visitors. Only those directly involved in the education process will be allowed in the building. Family members will not be able to have lunch with their child, volunteer in the classroom, or attend events. Schools will share other ways to engage families.



**Fever or chills**



**Cough**



**Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing**



**Sore throat**



**New loss of taste or smell**



**Headache**



**Muscle pain**



**Fatigue**



**Congestion or runny nose**

## Staying Safe Throughout the Day

When children are in school buildings, the day will feel and look different. Some things people used to do at school may not be allowed any more or may be done differently. For example, your child might eat in their classroom instead of the cafeteria or not to share their school supplies with other students. These actions will help prevent the spread of the virus.



### Cloth Face Coverings

Wearing a cloth face covering is one of the best things each of us can do to stop the spread of COVID-19. Help your child be prepared by practicing wearing a cloth face covering at home and outside. All K-12 students and all school staff are required to wear face coverings at school. Every school will provide cloth face coverings for students and staff. There will be some people who are unable to wear one due to a significant medical, developmental, or behavioral need. Children should not wear face coverings if they are eating, drinking, or strenuously exercising. Schools will provide ongoing support for students and staff on how to safely put on and remove the cloth face covering to limit their risk of infection. Remember: Cloth face coverings need to be washed every night.



### Cleaning and Hygiene

Children will need to keep their hands clean to keep germs from spreading that could make them, other children, or their teachers sick. Teachers and staff will ask students to wash their hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds (two rounds of “Happy Birthday”), or they may use a drop of hand sanitizer.



### Social Distancing

Students will be asked to leave plenty of space, at least 6 feet, between themselves and other children and staff, and not touch each other. This helps keep germs from spreading that could make your child or their teacher sick.



### Talking About Feelings

Teachers will ask your child how they are feeling during the day. It's important to encourage your child to tell an adult if they start to feel sick during the day, or if they are feeling worried about the new health precautions at school.

# Back to School



## Arriving at school

Everyone will be screened for COVID-19 before entering a school building. The screening will include a temperature check and questions like, "Have you been near someone with COVID-19." These kinds of screenings are happening in all kinds of building across the country. If your child does not ride the bus, please allow extra time and arrive at school early. Screenings will add time, especially at the beginning of the year. If your child is younger, you may be asked to stay them to help them with screening.

## Getting Ready for the School Day

Know the symptoms of COVID-19. Be on the alert for any symptoms of COVID-19 in your family members and people you spend time with. Keep your child at home if they show any signs of illness, or if they have been in close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19. All students in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and school staff are required to wear cloth face coverings at school. Every student will receive 5 cloth face coverings. Be sure your child has a cloth face covering when they leave for school. And remember to wear one yourself!

## Shopping and Supplies



Schools may request that students bring additional supplies this year such as cloth face coverings, hand sanitizer, plastic bags or other pouches to keep their personal belongings separate from others', and additional items like writing utensils to avoid sharing of materials.

## School Meals

Nutritious meals will be available through the School Nutrition Program. Safety procedures will be in place for meals and snacks. Students and staff will have to wash hands before and after eating. Your child may be asked to eat in their classroom instead of the cafeteria to maintain social distancing.



## Washing hands: Follow these five steps every time.



Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.



Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.



Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.



Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.



Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

\* For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html)

## Use Hand Sanitizer When You Can't Use Soap and Water

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. However:

- Sanitizers do not get rid of all types of germs.
- Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.
- Hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals from hands like pesticides and heavy metals.
- Never drink hand sanitizers.

## Riding the Bus

Help prevent the spread of the virus by making sure your child does not have symptoms before they get on the school bus. Your school may ask you to fill in a form that says your child does not have symptoms before they are allowed to get on the bus. And please remind children to practice staying apart (social distancing) while waiting at the bus stop.

When the bus arrives, the driver and/or another adult will check your child's temperature and ask about symptoms before your child can get on the bus. The bus driver and everyone on the bus will be wearing cloth face coverings. Everyone, including the driver, should be keep a safe distance from each other. Children should be keeping a safe distance from each other, too. Families will need to be patient. Bus routes, pick-up and drop-off times, and vehicles may need to change because of new health safety precautions.



## Sports and Extracurricular Activities

Sports and other after school activities may have to change or cancelled. Your child's school will provide instructions about sports and afterschool activities.

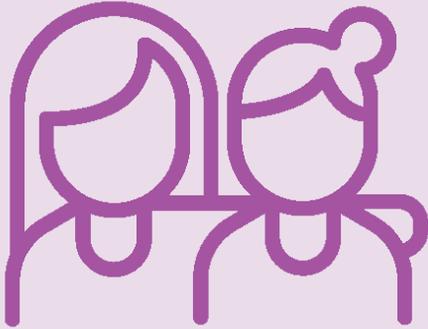


## What if my Child Gets Sick or Someone in Their Class Gets Sick?

Have a plan for someone who can pick up your child in case you are unavailable during the day. Children will need to be picked up if:

- They develop symptoms during the day, or
- They have been in close contact with someone at the school who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Make sure your child and your school know who will pick up your child if you are not available. If a student or teacher has symptoms, tests positive for COVID-19, or has been exposed to someone who tested positive, your child's school will work with the Local Health Department to determine if any part of the school should close, who should be contacted, and if testing is needed. Ask your child's school about their plans.



## Checking in with your child

Talk with your child in an age-appropriate way about how going back to school will feel different than usual. Encourage your child to share how they are feeling. All of these changes may be stressful for children. Check-in with your child often. Let them know that their feelings are okay. You can help your child, particularly for younger children, name how they feel. For example, saying out loud that it is ok if you feel sad or scared, or if you miss how school used to be. Share any concerns with your child's teacher. You might ask your child some of the following questions:

### Younger Children:

How are your friends at school?

What was your favorite activity today?

Are you happy to see your teacher?

What makes you feel safe and healthy when you are at school?

What is the hardest part of being at school?

Tell me some of the things the teachers at school ask you to do to stay clean, healthy, and safe.

Do you understand why we have to take the time to be safe at school?  
Tell me what you know!

### Older children:

Tell me about your classes - what feels different about school now? What feels similar to before?

How do you feel about the new health protocols at school? Do you understand why we have to take the time to do them?

What is the most difficult part about the new health protocols at school?

Which teachers do you feel most comfortable talking to?

What do you need to be your best self at school?  
How can I support you?

Are things beginning to feel more routine? Do your friends feel the same way?



## Checking in with your child's school

Communicate with teachers openly, honestly, and promptly about your child's health and the health of people your family is around. Please follow all health requirements required by your child's school. And ask questions about any new processes.



## Questions for school leaders

Where should I go to review the most updated school information?

In what format and how often should I expect to receive updates from the school?

Who is my direct point of contact should my child or a family member become ill?

What items should my child bring to school daily?  
What items should stay home?

If there is a necessary school closure, how will that information be communicated?

Will schools still accept donations?

Are there any restrictions?



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
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