



WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Return to Campus

Guide for Families

Version 2 - September 28, 2020



Contents

- > Welcome
- > Overview
- > Returning to School
- > Health Screening Responsibilities
- > Procedure for Report of COVID-19 on Campus
- > Special Education
- > Maintaining Healthy Spaces
- > Social and Emotional Health
- > Calendars
- > Stay in Touch
- > Resources



Welcome

Families,

This guide contains critically important information for preventing the spread of the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

This school year will be like no other. We must do many things differently. But that will not stop us from vigorously - and safely - pursuing our vision to prepare all students to reach their full potential and lead productive lives.

As with any school year, we want your child to be safe, healthy and ready to learn. We also want you to feel comfortable and confident in sending your children to school. We know that this can be accomplished through active cooperation and clear communication among students, parents, and teachers.

Many teams have devoted countless hours to gather and vet solid information to develop guidance to help keep your child safe and healthy. Remember that many of us have children and grandchildren who attend our schools. We wholeheartedly share the concerns you have when it comes to the well-being of our students.

This guide clearly and thoroughly outlines everything we are doing, along with what we need you to do, to maximize a safe and healthy environment for your child. It includes information regarding:

- > How the school day will look regarding instruction, scheduling and remote learning opportunities;
- > Health screening requirements;
- > Preventive measures such as face coverings and handwashing;
- > Cleaning and sanitizing practices;
- > Social distancing;
- > Transportation; and
- > Meals.



We ask you to take some time to familiarize yourself with the important information contained in this guide. As you do so, please know that our care and concern for your child's safety and learning guides all we do. This will never change.

Despite the challenges we face as a result of COVID-19, we look forward to working with you to create a wonderful school year for our students.

Cathy Quiroz Moore
Superintendent

This information is subject to change.

Please understand that knowledge about the COVID-19 virus and the best practices to respond to the pandemic continue to evolve. For this reason, guidance, plans, and policies related to returning to work and school at WCPSS will also evolve. This guide will be updated frequently. Families will be notified via email of updates. Please ensure your school has a valid email address on file and that your contact information is always up to date.

Find more COVID-19 information for families on wcpss.net/covid19.



Overview

This guide presents protocols developed to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. It is based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), Wake County Public Health, and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI).

Our top priority in all decisions is the health, safety, and well-being of our students, employees, and school communities. This document is subject to updates. If and when the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic change, this guidance may also change.

To combat the spread of this virus as a community, the expectation is that all employees, students and families comply with the procedures, protocols, and requirements outlined in this document and in any linked documents and websites. In addition, the WCPSS community is expected to comply with state and local regulations.

In addition, the WCPSS community is expected to comply with state and local regulations. If state or local requirements differ from the guidance provided below, school communities will follow the stricter requirements.

Please check the district's COVID-19 site regularly for the latest information: wcpss.net/covid19.



Returning to School

We are committed to challenging and engaging students in relevant, rigorous, and meaningful learning.

Learning Environments

Families have sent a clear message: they want options for their children. Many are excited to return to their school campuses; many are not yet ready.

For those who want to return to a school campus, state officials have requested that school districts develop three plans (A, B, and C) for different learning environments to operate in the 2020-2021 school year. The plan in which we operate will be based on state and local officials, [NCDPI guidance](#), and [NCDHHS guidance](#) regarding the safe reopening of schools.



Daily In-Person Instruction (Plan A)

Students in this plan will attend class in the school building, in person with their teachers and classmates every school day. This environment is the most familiar to students and parents. Students receive daily, in-person instruction and support from school employees

Blended Instruction (Plan B)

Students in this plan will experience a combination of in-person learning in the school building with their teachers and classmates and online instruction through an online platform.

Fully-Online Instruction (Plan C)

Under this plan, all students will experience fully-online instruction as a result of school closure based on decisions from state and local officials.

All learning opportunities will happen remotely and will include recorded and live instructional sessions. Instruction will be accessed through the use of a technology device.

Update on Plan A/B/C:

For the latest update on Plan A/B/C, please visit:
www.wcpss.net/return-to-campus



WCPSS Virtual Academy

Students have the option of registering for WCPSS Virtual Academy during the designated registration window. Selecting this option means that the student opts-out of returning to in-person instruction, when the district determines that in-person instruction is feasible. Families must commit to at least one semester, with a recommendation of a one-year commitment.

Families who choose WCPSS Virtual Academy should expect the following to be true across all grade levels:

- > Students will remain enrolled at their current school as assigned by WCPSS Student Assignment.
- > To the degree possible, students will be taught by teachers from their current school.
- > Students will experience a schedule and grading structure similar to their peers engaging in daily in-person or blended instruction.
- > Instruction will be provided through a common online learning platform.
- > Learning opportunities will include both recorded and live instructional session
- > Students will experience social and emotional support through meaningful connections and a classroom community.



All instruction will be relevant, rigorous, and meaningful.

It's our core belief that all students deserve to be challenged and engaged in relevant, rigorous, and meaningful learning each day. This school year, regardless of which learning environment your child attends, they will be taught rigorous content every day that aligns with North Carolina's grade-level standards.

Here's what will be the same across all learning environments and across all schools:

- > All students will have the same grading structures, as outlined in [Board Policy 3400](#).
- > All schools will take attendance.
- > All classes will use similar, district-supported learning materials, texts and instructional tools.
- > All students will get appropriate support and services through the general education program, special education, Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), 504 plans, Academically & Intellectually Gifted (AIG), English as a Second Language (ESL), and intervention.
- > All students will get support from their counselors, social workers, and school psychologists, as needed.
- > All schools will focus on establishing effective relationships and community.



Health Screening Responsibilities

Conducting regular screenings for symptoms and ongoing self-monitoring throughout the school day can help reduce exposure to COVID-19. Students and employees who are sick or not feeling well must stay home. Students are required to have a health screening at home, before riding school transportation, and when arriving to school. If a student begins to not feel well while on campus, shows signs of illness, or becomes sick during the day, they must immediately tell an employee. A parent or guardian will be expected to promptly pick them up from school.

Home Health Screening Requirement

All students should have their temperature taken every day at home before coming to school. Students must stay home if:

- > They have tested positive for COVID-19 and have not met the criteria for returning to school;
- > They have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 and have not met the criteria for returning to school;
- > They have a temperature of 100.4°F or higher.



In addition, students must be free of any symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 to be on a school campus. At this time, these symptoms include one or more of the following:

- > Fever or chills
- > New cough (unrelated to allergies)
- > New shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- > New loss of taste or smell

School Bus Health Screening Requirement

The health attestation form, signed by a parent or guardian, is required before a student may be assigned a seat on the school bus. Note: We are working toward a one-time attestation rather than daily.

All students riding a bus or vendor transportation must wear a face covering unless they have an approved accommodation for medical reasons. (See Cloth Face Coverings section below.)

After arriving at school, all bus riders will be asked the symptom screening checklist questions and have their temperature taken at school, before being allowed to enter the building.

Download the bus attestation form at www.wcpss.net/busform.

Campus Health Screening Requirement

When arriving at school, all students will be instructed to use designated entrances to undergo a health screening. The health screening process contains two parts, a symptom-screening checklist and an on-site temperature check using a touchless thermometer.

Individuals dropping off a student at school should not leave until the student has passed the health screening process.

Students who are feeling unwell or have a temperature of 100.4°F or higher will be escorted to the school's Care Center. Employees will contact students' parents/guardians to immediately pick them up from school.



Students Who Leave and Return to Campus During the School Day

If students plan to leave campus for any reason and return later in the school day, they should get a dated health screening pass before leaving the building so they will not have to go through the health screening again when they return to school. Anyone with a dated health screening pass will not need additional screening before re-entering a WCPSS facility on that day.

Returning to School After Diagnosis, Exposure, or Illness

For students who have experienced at least one COVID-19 symptom, with or without being diagnosed with COVID-19:

Students who have experienced at least one COVID-19 symptom, with or without being diagnosed with COVID-19, should not be in school.

Students can return to school once there is no fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines and they have felt well for 24 hours if they receive confirmation of an alternative diagnosis from a health care provider that would explain the COVID-19-like symptom(s).

Without confirmation of an alternative diagnosis, students should stay home until they (or a family member answering for a younger child) can answer YES to all three of the following questions:

- > Has it been at least 10 days since they first had symptoms?
- > Has it been at least 24 hours since they had a fever without using fever-reducing medicine?
- > Have respiratory symptoms improved, including cough or shortness of breath?

Students are not required to have documentation of a negative test in order to return to school.

If students have a negative COVID-19 test, they can return to school once there is no fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines and they have felt well for 24 hours.



For students who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 but do not have symptoms:

Students who have been diagnosed with COVID-19, but do not have symptoms must remain out of school until 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test.

Students are not required to have documentation of a negative test in order to return to school.

If a student develops symptoms, they cannot return to school until they meet the criteria for students who have experienced at least one symptom.

For students who have been exposed to COVID-19 and do not have symptoms:

Students who have been exposed to COVID-19 and do not have symptoms must remain out of school for 14 days since their last exposure, even if they test negative for COVID-19. If they develop symptoms, they cannot return to school until they meet the criteria for students who have experienced at least one symptom.



Procedure for Report of COVID-19 on Campus

When students are attending school in-person, the school will notify parents and employees via email and text when the school is notified that someone confirmed to have COVID-19 was in the school.

When students are not attending school in-person, the school will notify the entire school community of positive COVID-19 cases only in the following instances:

- > When individuals cannot be readily identified through contact tracing;
- > When health officials determine two or more positive cases likely resulted from an exposure at school.

We will not notify the school community about suspected or confirmed cases in individuals who have not been on campus or in close contact with anyone on campus.

How will the school or district notify the campus community about COVID-19 cases?

Even with thorough measures in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19 on school campuses, everyone in the community could be exposed to the virus through everyday interactions with others on-campus or off-campus.

WCPSS is required to report confirmed cases of COVID-19 to Wake County Public Health and work with them for follow-up and contact tracing. If a person with COVID-19 was in a WCPSS facility while infectious, WCPSS will coordinate with local health officials to notify anyone who was in close contact with the infected person, while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with FERPA, NCGS 130A-143, and all other state and federal laws. Close contact is defined as being within six feet of someone confirmed to have COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes within two days of the infected person experiencing symptoms or testing positive.

What if one of my students or co-workers tests positive for COVID-19?

Wake County Public Health will determine through contact tracing who, if anyone, will need to quarantine. WCPSS and Wake County Public Health will work together to ensure that individuals believed to have been exposed to COVID-19 are notified.

If one employee or student contracts COVID-19, will the building close down?

NC DHHS does not require or recommend for schools to close as a result of a student or employee testing positive for COVID-19. Wake County Public Health will determine through contact tracing who, if anyone, will need to quarantine.

How will I know if I was exposed to someone with COVID-19 and need to quarantine?

Wake County Public Health will determine through contact tracing who, if anyone, will need to quarantine. Only individuals who had close contact with someone confirmed to have COVID-19 will need to quarantine. WCPSS and Wake County Public Health will work together to ensure that individuals believed to have been exposed to COVID-19 are notified.

What is the campus response to a confirmed case?

Following NC DHHS guidelines, areas used by the infected individual

will be temporarily closed until they have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Our disinfectant is EPA-approved for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

What if a student or employee doesn't report their case?

The district cannot require individuals to self-report any medical information, including a COVID-19 diagnosis. However, it is our hope that individuals will notify us so we can respond appropriately and provide support. To assist with maintaining a healthy school community, we ask students, employees, and visitors to follow notification procedures to assist with any response to positive COVID-19 cases.

Through contact tracing, the local health department will notify individuals if they are believed to have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, even if the infected person does not notify WCPSS. We are cleaning and disinfecting our facilities daily, with more frequent cleaning and disinfection of high contact areas.

Health Information is a Private Matter

Each individual's health information is a private matter. No one should publicly declare another employee or student as sick. In the event others need to be notified of a suspected or positive case of COVID-19, local health officials will notify them and provide them further instructions. Do not notify colleagues, students or families of positive cases.

To protect individual privacy, notifications will not identify anyone by name or contain information that could be used to identify them.



BE BRAVE.

BE KIND.

BE YOU!

Special Education

Students with disabilities may require modifications to the general health guidelines in order to provide required services and maintain healthy practices. We are committed to working closely with students with disabilities and their families to address individual concerns and needs.

Arrival and Health Screening

All students will be required to have a daily health screening and temperature check when they arrive at school. Schools may have a separate health screening entrance designated for students with special needs who may not be able to use one of the established health screening entrances,

Schools may make these modifications for students with special needs:

- > Assigning a known employee to conduct the screening.
- > Encouraging families of nonverbal students to complete the daily Attestation Form if an adult will not be available to answer the questions at drop-off.



Face Coverings

Students and employees are expected to follow Cloth Face Covering guidelines included in the Maintaining Healthy Spaces section of this document.

Social Distancing

The district recognizes that some parents of students with complex medical needs will have additional concerns. Students with disabilities and employees who work with them are expected to practice social distancing when possible. Personal protective equipment will be utilized by employees.

Handwashing

Teachers will be teaching handwashing in the classroom, incorporating handwashing breaks into the school day, and reinforcing handwashing during key times throughout the school day, such as:

- > before eating;
- > using the restroom; and
- > touching shared objects.

Students who require assistance with hand washing will have hand-over-hand assistance. If the student is unable to access a hand-washing station, hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol) will be provided.

If your child has sensitivities to hand sanitizer, please communicate this with your child's teachers so they can provide your child other opportunities to clean their hands.



Maintaining Healthy Spaces

Cloth Face Coverings

North Carolina requires a face covering of your choice for all employees, adult visitors, and K-12 students at all times, even when 6 feet or farther from other individuals, including:

- > inside school buildings and anywhere on school grounds, including outside; and
- > while traveling on buses or other contract transportation vehicles.

Cloth face coverings remain strongly recommended for pre-K students if appropriate for that child, but are not required for them.

A face covering must be secured safely over the nose, mouth, and under the chin.

State health officials strongly recommend face coverings for all people over the age of two.

Face coverings are not required for individuals who:

- > Cannot tolerate a face covering due to developmental, medical, or behavioral health needs
- > Are actively eating or drinking
- > Are strenuously exercising



- > Are seeking to communicate with a hearing impaired person in a way that requires the mouth to be visible
- > Have found that a face covering is impeding visibility to operate equipment or a vehicle
- > Are children whose parent, guardian, or responsible person has been unable to place a face covering safely on the child's face

Face coverings are an additional step to help slow the spread of COVID-19 when combined with everyday preventive actions and social distancing in public settings.

Face coverings will be provided for students who do not have access to one. If given a reusable face covering, it is the responsibility of the family to wash it when needed and bring it back to reuse it.

Please also review face covering best practices on the [CDC website](#) with your child and help them practice wearing face coverings appropriately for extended periods of time.

Schools may give students a brief face covering break if they can meet all of the following conditions:

- > Outside only
- > Spaced 8-10 feet from all other individuals, including employees
- > Students should remain stationary in the same space
- > Students should all face the same direction

Handwashing

Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick. The CDC recommends everyone wash their hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Teachers will be teaching handwashing in the classroom, incorporating handwashing breaks into the school day, and reinforcing handwashing during key times throughout the school day such as before eating, using the restroom, and touching shared objects.



Hand-Sanitizing Stations

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, individuals are encouraged to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol). Schools will provide hand-sanitizing stations at every school entrance and exit, in the cafeteria, in every class, and on every bus and transportation vehicle.

If your child has sensitivities to hand sanitizer, please communicate this with your child's teachers so they can provide your child other opportunities to clean their hands.

Social Distancing

Schools are taking actions to ensure all campus spaces and buildings support health and safety. These actions include: signage and floor markings to remind students of social-distancing practices, strategic furniture placement in classrooms and changing the typical traffic flow inside school buildings to promote and facilitate social distancing in hallways, bathrooms, and during times of transition.

Before and after school, we ask students to avoid congregating on campus. Employees will direct students to clear the hallways and parking lots and leave campus in an effort to encourage social distancing.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Buildings will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day and every evening. The CDC defines cleaning as removing germs, dirt and impurities from surfaces or objects. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces or objects. Hospital-grade disinfectants are used in all school facilities.

Students are not permitted to assist with cleaning and disinfecting.

Classrooms

Disinfecting supplies will be provided to each classroom to support the cleaning of desks and other high touch surfaces between classes, after lunch, and the cleaning of shared program materials/equipment as desired. After school each day, desks and other touch points will be disinfected.



Restrooms

Custodial Services will clean and disinfect all restrooms using approved procedures a minimum of four times daily, and after school hours.

Meals

If students eat in the cafeteria, Child Nutrition Services will clean and disinfect seats and tables before and after each meal. If students eat in the classroom, students and employees are expected to clean up after themselves by placing all trash and recyclables in the bins placed in the hallways. Bins will be located near multiple classrooms.

Response to Presumptive, Suspected or Positive COVID-19 Illness

Affected areas will be closed and thoroughly disinfected. Custodial employees will notify the School Administrator, COVID-19 Coordinator, or Care Center Attendant when the area is ready to be re-opened.

Visitors

Only essential visitors will be allowed on school campuses in an effort to protect the health and safety of our community by minimizing the number of people on sites.

All efforts will be made to keep necessary visitors to a minimum, including the use of virtual or telephone meetings with families and guests.

If it is essential to have family members or visitors enter the facility, they must go through the same health screening process as students and employees. All visitors are required to follow guidelines in the Cloth Face Covering section of this document. Any meetings with a family member or visitor must follow social-distancing guidelines.

Water Fountains

In response to COVID-19, students will be prohibited from drinking directly from water fountains.

All students are encouraged to bring their own bottled water or reusable water bottles. All water bottles should be clearly labeled with the user's name. It is the students' responsibility to keep track of their water bottles and take them home for regular cleaning.



If students need water and do not have a water bottle, they may ask an employee for a cup to get water from the water fountain.

Transportation

Seating capacity on buses will be consistent with [state guidelines](#).

All K-12 students are required to wear a face covering at all times while in a vehicle, unless they meet one of the exceptions listed in the Cloth Face Covering section. If an employee or student does not have a face covering, one will be provided.

Hand sanitizer will be available on all school transportation vehicles for safe use by employees and older children.

Touch points, including doors and windows, grab handles, arm rests, hard seats, door handles, and seat belt buckles, will be disinfected between each bus run with an EPA-approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Every bus will be cleaned between morning and afternoon runs and at the end of each day.

Cafeteria

Our child nutrition employees will continue to prepare food in our school kitchens following very strict food safety and sanitation procedures required by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), and NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). All meals will be individually packaged for direct service to students.

Through December 31, breakfast and lunch will be available at no cost for all students. Meals are currently available at curbside and community locations listed at wcpss.net/food.

Information about applying for Meal Benefits for the 2020-21 school year can be found at wcpss.net/meals. Students eligible for reduced-price meals will receive their breakfast and lunch at no cost for the 2020-21 school year. Applications can be completed online at MySchoolApps.com, or a paper application can be requested by calling 919-588-3535.



[Our menus](#) will continue to feature student favorites, fresh Got To Be NC farm-to-school fruits and vegetables, and will provide the protein, whole grains, low-fat dairy, fruits and vegetables that are important ingredients in a nutritious meal.

More information regarding Child Nutrition Services is available in our [Child Nutrition Reopening Guide for Parents](#).

Athletic and Co-Curricular Activities

The school board has approved [this schedule](#) for the gradual return of athletic activities. This is a summary of health and safety protocols for student-athletes and staff. Contact your school for more detailed information and workout schedules.

Forms

The following documents are required for athletic participation. These documents should be submitted prior to attending their first athletic pre-season activity.

- > [Initial Screening Form](#) (must be signed prior to beginning participation)
- > [High School Athletic Participation Form](#)

Safety Requirements

Check temperature before leaving home. Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, or reporting signs or symptoms, must not participate. Coaches and athletes will be screened on site daily by answering symptom questions and getting their temperature checked. Participants who are being dropped off should have their ride wait until the participant has successfully passed the daily screening and has been cleared for that day's activities.

Face Coverings

All individuals are required to wear a face covering at all times, except when engaged in athletic activity. This includes coaches, participants, trainers, managers, and anyone else gathered for the activity.



Workout Guidelines

Students may not attend more than one workout per day for a maximum of 90 minutes. There is a maximum of 50 individuals per group outdoors, 25 individuals per group indoors, including coaches. Weight rooms and locker rooms remain closed.

If a person on a team tests positive for COVID 19, all members of the pod who have been exposed will quarantine for 14 days and watch for symptoms. Individuals who have had positive screenings must provide a note from a health care provider before being allowed to return.

Spectators are not allowed at this time.

Field Trips

For the upcoming school year, in-person field trips have been suspended to ensure the safety of our students and employees.

Consequences for Violation of Health Protocols

Face covering requirements and other health protocols are critical tools for creating and maintaining a healthy environment in our schools and limiting the spread of COVID-19.

As part of our return to in-person instruction, schools will educate and support students and families on the importance of health safety guidance to support, encourage, and model the behaviors we expect of all students.

In instances where a student inadvertently violates health safety guidance, the staff will remind the student of the proper protocol.

When support and non-disciplinary interventions are not enough to change student behavior that may risk the health safety of a school community, Board Policy Code: 4309 Student Behavior – Code of Student Conduct authorizes disciplinary consequences, including in-school or out-of-school suspension, following the procedures contained in the Student Code of Conduct.. Additionally, willful or repeated failures to wear masks at school could result in an involuntary transfer to a virtual learning environment.



Social and Emotional Health

The volume of information in the media and elsewhere about COVID-19 can cause concern for parents and students. Here are some tips to help address your family's social and emotional needs:

- > Share age-appropriate information with students and correct misinformation.
- > Reassure children that they are safe and that adults are working to keep them safe.
- > Emphasize ways children and families can be “germ-busters” and reduce the spread of illness.
- > Try to keep routines as normal as possible.
- > Limit the amount of exposure to television and social media regarding COVID-19.

Our schools are thoughtfully planning how to support all students' mental and emotional well-being upon their return to school.

If you have concerns about your student, please contact your student's school counselor. If you have an urgent concern, contact Alliance Health at 1-800-510-9132.



Calendars

Current 2020-21 school calendars can be viewed at wcpss.net/calendar. They are subject to change pending state requirements and health guidance.



Stay in Touch

Please ensure that your school has your most recent contact information, including your email address and cell phone number.

We'll use email and text messages to share critical information with you. You can opt-in to text messages by texting YES to the shortcode 67587.

More information is available at wcpss.net/schoolmessenger.



Resources

- > For details about the district's overall response to the COVID-19 pandemic, visit wcpss.net/covid19.
- > For Wake County information, including drive-through testing sites, visit covid19.wakegov.com.
- > For information about North Carolina's response, visit the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Resources website at covid19.ncdhhs.gov.
- > For federal guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), visit cdc.gov/coronavirus.



WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM