

STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND REQUIRED HEALTH PROTOCOLS

COVID-19 GUIDANCE | Last updated 10/12/20

Introduction

WCPSS students, families, and employees have a collective responsibility to create and maintain a safe and healthy learning and work environment for the approximately 160,000 students and 20,000 employees across all schools and worksites. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this responsibility includes every student and employee taking affirmative steps to help minimize the spread of COVID-19 by strictly adhering to the health safety protocols set forth below.

Health experts serving on the [ABC Science Collaborative](#) and providing health guidance to the school system have repeatedly stressed that **the single most critical factor in a successful return to in-person instruction during the pandemic is the development, implementation, and adherence to health guidelines, requirements, and protocols.**

This plan outlines required health safety protocols, provides links to key health guidance, and reminds students and families of relevant Board policies.

This plan may be updated as public health guidance and conditions change.

Individuals are required to follow federal, state, and local requirements, if they are more restrictive than WCPSS guidelines. These requirements and recommendations are subject to change at any time, depending on federal, state, and local health guidance and mandates.

Mandatory Health Safety Guidance

Students and Families Must Agree to Follow Covid-19 Health Guidance.

Students and families are required to familiarize themselves and agree to follow our health guidelines, as described in the [Return to Campus Family Guide](#) and posted on wcpss.net/ReturnToCampus. These guidelines are mandatory and will be strictly enforced.

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Key Protocols for Health Safety

In adherence to our health experts' guidance from the ABC Science Collaborative, all students must adhere to all protocols from our [Return to Campus Family Guide](#), including but not limited to the protocols outlined below.

Complete a Daily Symptom Screening

All students, employees, and any visitors must complete a daily health screening and temperature check before entering school, per the Health Screening guidance. Students riding school transportation must have a completed health attestation form before boarding school transportation.

Students must stay home or leave school immediately if:

- They have tested positive for COVID-19 and have not met criteria for returning to school;
- They have had close contact with a person with COVID-19 and have not met criteria for returning to school;
- They have a temperature of 100.4°F or higher; or
- They are experiencing [symptoms of COVID-19](#):
 - Fever (100.4° or higher) or chills
 - New cough (unrelated to allergies)
 - New shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - New loss of taste or smell

Wear a Cloth Face Covering

There is growing evidence that wearing face coverings helps reduce the spread of COVID-19, especially for those who are sick but may not know it. Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators ("N-95"), or other medical personal protective equipment (PPE). Recent studies on types of face coverings suggest that multi-layered cotton face coverings provide good coverage to keep droplets from spreading when we speak, sneeze, or cough. Individuals should be reminded frequently not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands regularly.

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Properly wearing a face covering is a critical measure to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Students, employees, and any visitors must [wear cloth face coverings](#) while on a school campus even when they are six feet or more apart from other individuals, including:

- Inside school buildings
- While traveling on buses, vendor transportation, or other WCPSS vehicles
- Anywhere on WCPSS property, including outside, unless students are on a face covering break

Preschool children, ages 3-4 are expected to wear cloth face coverings if they can reliably wear, remove, and handle cloth face coverings throughout the day.

All face coverings should fit properly and must be secured safely over the nose, mouth, and under the chin, [per CDC guidelines](#). Face coverings should not be pulled down for conversations.

The expectation is that students are to provide their own face covering to wear when at school and on bus or vendor transportation. NC Department of Health and Human Services is providing all K - 12 students and school employees with five reusable cloth face coverings.

When at a WCPSS school, if a student does not have access to a face covering, one will be given to them.

Face coverings will be available on buses and vendor transportation for students who do not bring their own face covering.

Students should wash reusable face coverings regularly, per CDC recommendations.

Face Covering Breaks

- Employees may give students a 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
- Individuals may briefly remove their face covering while eating or drinking

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Accommodations to Face Covering Requirement

If a student is unable to comply with the face covering requirement, a parent or guardian can request an accommodation for their student that is related to a student's disability, or medical needs. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the nature of the disability or medical need, the availability of alternative safety measures, and current public health guidance.

- ❑ To request an accommodation, parents or guardians must complete this [form](#) and return it, along with supporting documentation, to your school's principal.
- ❑ Unless a face covering requirement accommodation request form has been approved, all students are subject to the same face covering requirements outlined in this document.

Maintain Social Distance

Students should stay six feet apart from employees, other students, and visitors at all times.

Students should not congregate during arrival/dismissal and in stationary settings. Schools may alter the typical "traffic flow" inside school buildings to promote and facilitate social distancing in hallways, bathrooms, and during times of transition. Signage will be placed throughout the school building to indicate guidelines.

Wash Hands Frequently

Students will be provided opportunities to and should wash their hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Students should avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. When soap and water is not readily available, students should use hand sanitizer, which will be provided in every classroom and school entrances and exits.

Resources for Students and Families for Health Safety Guidance

[Videos](#) are available for students and families about face coverings, hand washing, health screenings, social distancing, and water fountains to support families in preparing students for return to in-person instruction safely.

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Model Compliance

As part of our return to in-person instruction, schools will be provided resources to educate and encourage students about the importance of health safety guidance. Lessons will be included as part of our return to in-person instruction to ensure students are taught our health safety expectations.

All students, families, and employees are expected to model compliance with face-coverings and other protocols to create a school culture aligned with safety.

Students can report to a teacher, employee, or an administrator if anyone on school property is not following health and safety requirements.

Ensuring widespread compliance with protocols is essential. WCPSS will not tolerate any retaliation against a student or employee who reports instances of noncompliance.

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.

We will work with students through non-disciplinary interventions that include, but are not limited to:

- 1) student-parent-teacher or student-parent-administrator conferences;
- 2) behavior contracts;
- 3) reward systems;
- 4) oral or written warnings;
- 5) referrals to school counselors;
- 6) referrals to programs or agencies that support at-risk students;
- 7) peer mediation; and

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- 8) restorative justice practices. Teachers and administrators are encouraged to solicit the assistance of designated school-based or central office staff in developing appropriate responses and interventions in specific cases.

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 face coverings at school could result in an involuntary transfer to a virtual learning environment.

Other Board Policies Regarding Safety

Students should also be familiar with Board policies that align with the protocols and responsibilities outlined in this plan. These policies and their relevant provisions include the following:

1. [Policy 4309 Student Behavior – Code of Student Conduct \(New Manual\)](#)

Students will not "intentionally engage in conduct that, despite efforts by staff to intervene or redirect the behavior, (1) substantially disrupts the educational environment or (2) threatens the health, safety, or welfare of staff or students."

2. [Policy 4230 Communicable Diseases-Students \(New Manual\)](#)

"School employees are required to notify the principal if they have reason to believe that any student is suffering from a communicable disease," such as COVID-19. "Parents will be encouraged to notify the principal as well."

Our curriculum will include health, hygiene, and safety education, including age-appropriate information concerning safe health practices that inhibit and prevent the spread of communicable diseases.

3. [Policy 1510/4200/7270 School Safety \(New Manual\)](#)

"Staff and students **share the responsibility** for taking reasonable precautions and **following established safety measures** to create and maintain safe schools."

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School employees “**shall enforce school rules pertaining to wearing personal protective equipment.**”

4. [Policy 5021 Prohibited Conduct on School Property and at School Events \(New Manual\)](#)

All individuals are prohibited from engaging in conduct “threatening the health or safety of others” while on school property or at school-related events.

