



WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Return to Campus

Guide for Families

Version 1 - July 1, 2020



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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.

We expect to start the school year using a blend of in-person instruction and online instruction. Details are outlined on page 5 of this guide. At this time, the governor has not yet made a specific recommendation about school calendars. We believe it is critical, however, that you and your child's school have time to plan for the coming year. If the state requires additional calendar changes, we will let you know quickly so you can make necessary adjustments.

K-12 families will have the option to choose the WCPSS Virtual Academy if they are not ready or able to return to a school campus. Details are on page 6 of this guide.

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 prevent 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.

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. The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced many uncertainties, including how we will return to school in August and how that learning environment could change over the course of the school year.

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.

To accommodate a variety of needs, all students will have the option of attending our Virtual Academy if they are not ready or able to return to a school campus. Details are included in the WCPSS Virtual Academy section of this document.



Daily In-Person Instruction (Plan A)

Under this plan, PreK-12 students 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)

K-12 students will experience a combination of in-person learning in the school building with their teachers and classmates and online instruction through an online platform.

Both learning environments will have high expectations and will result in work that contributes to the student's overall grade. Teachers will strategically place learning opportunities in each environment to create an overall experience that aligns to rigorous state standards for the grade level or course. Experiences during online instruction will be a combination of recorded and live instructional sessions.

We are exploring options for PreK students to attend school on a daily basis as soon as is feasible.

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.

How we'll schedule students in Plan B:

In Plan B, students will be assigned to groups (1, 2 or 3). Siblings will be in the same groups. Groups will attend school in an ongoing rotation by attending school in person for one week and receiving online instruction for two weeks.



WCPSS Virtual Academy

K-12 families will have the option to choose the WCPSS Virtual Academy for fully online instruction in the 2020-2021 school year. 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.

More information will be available at www.wcpss.net/Virtual-Academy the week of July 6.

Students can apply to WCPSS Virtual Academy beginning the week of July 13.



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

Daily health screenings can help reduce the risk of 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
- > Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- > New loss of taste or smell

School Bus Health Screening Requirement

Families should print, complete, and sign an Attestation Form daily for every student who rides the bus. Health officials advise that screening children at home and completing the form every day should reduce students' risk of exposure to illness while riding the bus. Every student must show the bus driver their completed daily attestation form upon entering the bus.

If students do not have the completed and signed daily Attestation Form, they will be asked symptom screening questions before they board the bus.

A responsible adult or older sibling is required to wait with elementary-age children at the bus stop to help the child return home should they not be able to board the bus.

For all students riding express buses, a parent, guardian or responsible person must wait with the student until they pass the health screening and are allowed to board the bus.

All students riding a bus or vendor transportation must wear a face covering unless they cannot tolerate a face covering due to developmental, medical, or behavioral health needs or due to a sincerely held religious belief. If a student cannot wear a face covering, they will be required to complete a form to notify transportation services. Students who do not wear a face covering on a bus must remain socially distanced six feet from other people on the bus, which will reduce the bus capacity and require adjustments to bus routes.

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.



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 held in a health waiting area. 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 needed, students and employees may present a dated health screening pass to verify they have successfully passed through the full health screening process, including the symptom screening and temperature check. Anyone with a dated health screening pass will not need additional screening before re-entering a WCPSS facility on that day.

If a student plans to leave campus for any reason and return later in the school day, he or she should get a dated health screening pass before leaving the building so they will not have to go through the health screening again upon his or her return to school.



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. They 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 3 days since they had a fever (without using fever-reducing medicine)?
- > Has it been at least 3 days since the symptoms have improved, including cough and 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 all of 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 all of the criteria for students who have experienced at least one symptom.



Procedure for Report of COVID-19 on Campus

We will report suspected, presumptive, or positive 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, we will coordinate with local health officials to notify employees and families while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with FERPA, NCGS 130A-143, and all other state and federal laws.

In the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a school, the affected areas will be closed for 24 hours, then systematically disinfected.

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 and after 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 middle and high school students when they are or may be within six feet of another person, including:

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

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
- > Cannot wear one due to a sincerely held religious belief
- > 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.

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 and after 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.

To prepare for a return to campus, please review the hand sanitizer best practices on the [CDC website](#) with your child.



Social Distancing

All 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, changes to foot-traffic flow through buildings and on campus pathways, furniture placement in classrooms and much more.

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 thoroughly cleaned and disinfected throughout the day and every evening. Multiple times a day, custodians will perform the following duties, among others:

- > Sweeping, dust mopping, and spot mopping hallways, steps, and stair landings, as well as the cafeteria;
- > Cleaning and disinfecting hall water fountains;
- > Cleaning and disinfecting bathroom floors, sinks, toilets, urinals, and stall handles; monitoring hand sanitizer, soap, and paper products;
- > Wiping and disinfecting touch points in halls, common areas, and classrooms, if accessible.

Our disinfectant is an EPA-approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Current cleaning and disinfecting protocols will continue to be reviewed and enhanced in terms of frequency and intensity.

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

To promote social distancing, no more than one student will be seated on a school bus seat at a time. No more than two students at a time will be seated in a vendor transportation vehicle. Exceptions can be made for family members.

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 cleaned and 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.



The [2020-2021 school year free and reduced-price meal benefits application](#) will be available online in early July.

Our menus will continue to feature student favorites, our signature in-house speed-scratch specialties, 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.

Athletic and Co-Curricular Activities

At this time, no decisions have been made on resuming athletic and co-curricular activities.

There are currently extensive requirements for resuming athletic and co-curricular activities, including daily temperature checks and symptom screenings of every student-athlete and band member prior to allowing them to begin a workout or practice.

Student-athletes and band members are encouraged to work out and practice at home if they can do so safely.

Before- and After-School Programs

Before- and after-school programs will continue to be available. Pricing and schedules may be modified to reflect changes to school schedules. Before- and after-school programs will follow the guidelines from NCDHHS for [child care providers](#).

Field Trips

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



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.
- > If you have questions or comments about returning to school on site, visit wcpss.net/covid19/questions.
- > 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.



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