

# DUPLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

## 2021-22



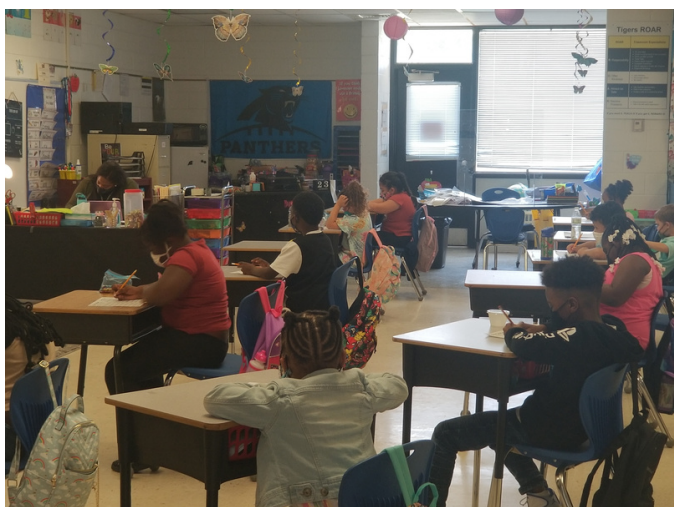
## COVID-19 Regulations



# REGULATION CODE: 4230/7262-R Communicable Diseases (COVID-19)

The Duplin County Board of Education (the "Board") is committed to taking all necessary measures to ensure that students and staff are able to learn and work in a safe and healthy environment.

In accordance with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance and the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12), Duplin County Schools recognizes that students benefit from in-person learning. The district has made it a priority to ensure that students will be safely returning to in-person instruction for the 2021-22 school year. Duplin County Schools will continue to follow and implement layered prevention strategies to protect all students, teachers, staff, and other members of their households while participating in in-person learning.



**Issued by the Superintendent**  
September 15, 2020

**Revised**  
March 2, 2022

It is imperative that all students and staff follow safety protocols and processes outlined by the CDC, the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), the NC Department of Public Instruction, and the Duplin County Health Department. In addition to adhering to recommended infection control and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) guidance, students and staff shall follow the requirements and guidance in this regulation to help ensure the safety and well-being for all Duplin County Schools stakeholders. Pre-K staff and students will also adhere to required guidelines outlined in the ChildcareStrong NC Public Health Toolkit.

## No students or staff should attend school or work if:

- The health department or a healthcare provider has been in contact with them and advised that they quarantine;
- They are awaiting COVID-19 test results; or
- They present any of the following symptoms:
  - Fever (temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher) or chills
  - Cough (for people with chronic cough due to allergies or asthma, a change in their baseline cough)
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (for people with asthma, a change from their baseline breathing)
  - Fatigue
  - Muscle or body aches
  - New onset of severe headache, especially with fever
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Sore throat
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Diarrhea



## DAILY HOME-BASED SYMPTOM SCREENING

When students and staff attend school, employees, parents, guardians and other family members will need to make daily decisions that will be critical for maintaining the health and safety for all students and staff, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. All students and staff should conduct daily home-based symptom screening before reporting to school/work. All parents are required to sign an annual Parent/Guardian Health Attestation Form confirming they will screen their child each day before school and that they will not send their child to school if they would not pass a health screening. All employees are required to attest that they have conducted a home-based screening and they are free of COVID-19 symptoms and/or other contagious disease symptoms prior to signing in to work each day.

# ADMITTANCE GUIDANCE

## STUDENTS

All parents shall be required to sign an annual Parent/Guardian Health Attestation Form confirming they will not send their child to school if they would not pass a health screening. In accordance with this signed form, each day before allowing their child to board a school bus and/or attend school, parents should conduct a home-based screening to assess their child's physical wellness. If it is determined that a child would not likely pass a health screening as listed above, the student should not attend school. Parents should notify their school nurse with this information for further guidance.

## STAFF

Each day before reporting to work, staff shall also conduct a home-based screening to assess their own health to determine if they believe that they would not pass a health screening. If a staff member does not believe that she/he would pass a health screening as listed above, he or she should not report to work and shall notify their immediate supervisor and school nurse as soon as possible for further guidance. All employees are required to attest that they are free of COVID-19 and/or other contagious disease symptoms prior to signing in to work each day.

## SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Substitute teachers must enter only through the main entrance of the school building and will immediately self-screen to include checking their temperature and answering the health screening questions located on the Substitute Teacher Health Screening Log. Substitute teachers unable to pass the health screening shall exit the building and notify the principal or designee immediately. Duplin County Schools Staff will not be required to use the health screening log.

## VISITORS

All visitors must attest that they are free of the symptoms listed above, are not awaiting COVID-19 test results, and have not been advised by the health department or a health care provider to quarantine for COVID-related reasons. All visitors will have their temperature checked prior to entering school or district buildings.

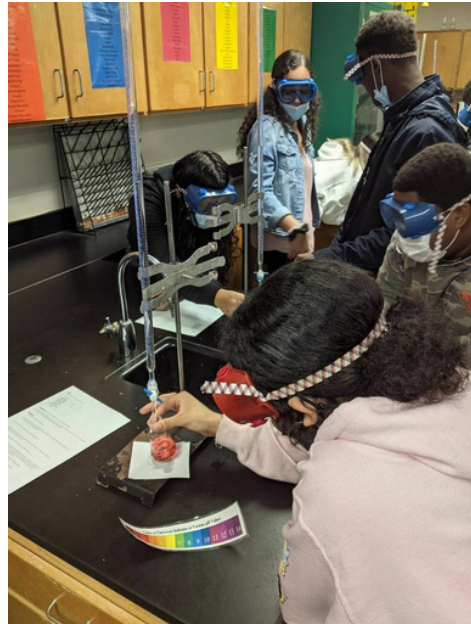


### STUDENTS

Should a student develop symptoms during the course of the school day and/or share that they were diagnosed with COVID-19, the following will occur:

1. The student shall immediately be escorted to the designated supervised isolation area within the school. This area shall not be used for any other purpose.
2. The student's parent or guardian shall be notified immediately to inform them that their child is in supervised isolation, and should be picked up from school as soon as possible (if required by school or health officials).
3. If the child is required to leave school and cannot be picked up, the school will arrange for the child to be taken home. Students who are placed in supervised isolation shall not ride a school bus home from school.

## DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

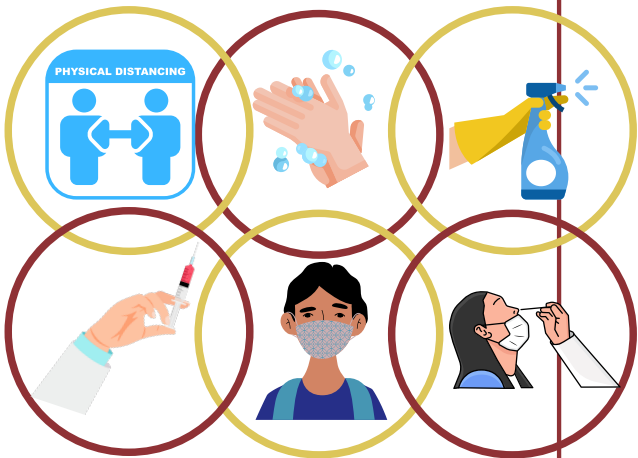


### STAFF

Should a staff member develop symptoms during the course of the school day and/or share that they were diagnosed with COVID-19, the staff member shall immediately inform their supervisor and leave the school system property as soon as possible (if required by school or health officials). Principals shall ensure that a teacher's students are supervised.

# PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Duplin County Schools can play a critical role in slowing the spread of communicable diseases, including COVID-19. Medically-based prevention strategies recommended by the Duplin County Health Department and the CDC are designed to maintain safe and healthy schools. Duplin County Schools will continue to implement layered prevention strategies to include handwashing/sanitizing, physical distancing to the greatest extent possible while indoors, staying home when sick, regular cleaning of schools and buses and other measures as outlined below and in the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12).



## VACCINATIONS

The CDC advises that achieving high levels of COVID-19 vaccinations among all eligible individuals is one of the most critical strategies to help reduce the cases of COVID-19 and help schools safely resume full operations. The CDC and NCDHHS highly recommend that all eligible individuals receive and stay up to date on COVID-19 vaccines and boosters. Vaccines and boosters are widely available and help protect against severe illness, hospitalization, and death

## DIAGNOSTIC TESTING PROGRAM AVAILABILITY

Duplin County Schools will not require staff or students to participate in the optional COVID-19 Diagnostic Testing Program. Participation in the program is on a voluntary basis. Duplin County Schools will offer free, optional school-based diagnostic COVID-19 testing for staff and students through a third-party vendor. The diagnostic testing program will be available when requested by staff or parents/guardians, or when recommended by a health care official. Before a student is tested for COVID-19 through this program, parents/guardians must provide consent.

## FACE COVERINGS/MASKS

The following will apply for all students, staff, and visitors:

- Masks are optional at any location and at any time for students, staff, and visitors while on school system property, including buses, vans, and other school transportation. Those who choose to wear masks will be supported.
- Pre-K staff and students will adhere to required mask guidelines outlined in the ChildcareStrongNC Public Health Toolkit.
- Masks are recommended in indoor settings for people at high risk for severe diseases and who are not up to date on vaccines.
- Duplin County Schools will follow NCDHHS guidelines as it relates to COVID-19 symptoms, infections, and exposures.



## HANDLING POSSIBLE, SUSPECTED, PRESUMPTIVE, OR CONFIRMED CASES

### STUDENTS

1. The parent or staff member with knowledge of the possible, suspected, presumptive, or confirmed case of COVID-19 shall notify the school nurse for further guidance.
2. The school nurse in conjunction with the principal shall notify the Duplin County Health Department.
3. If there is any issue causing significant disruption to a school, the principal shall immediately notify the Superintendent's Office.
4. The school nurse shall notify the DCS Nurse Supervisor.
5. As per its standard practice, the Duplin County Health Department has indicated it will begin the Case Investigation for Contract Tracing according to established protocol.
6. The Duplin County Health Department shall contact the DCS Nurse Supervisor with official guidance and will collaborate with schools to communicate with families when an excluded student may return to school.
7. The DCS Nurse Supervisor will regularly monitor and provide the Superintendent's Office with a daily summary of students who have been in isolation, placed under quarantine, or tested positive.

Each possible, suspected, presumptive, and/or confirmed case of COVID-19 and the circumstances discovered in each contact tracing investigation are unique and complex. Guidance for handling possible, suspected, presumptive, and confirmed cases of COVID-19 can be found in the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12), to be used in conjunction with medically-based guidance provided by the Duplin County Health Department Communicable Disease experts.



## HANDLING CASES cont...

### STAFF

1. The staff member with a possible, suspected, presumptive, or confirmed case of COVID-19 shall contact their immediate supervisor and school nurse for further guidance.
2. If the employee is assigned to a school, the school nurse, in conjunction with the principal shall contact the Duplin County Health Department that there is a suspected/presumptive case. If the employee is assigned to the Central Office, the supervisor shall contact the DCS Nurse Supervisor.
3. If there is any issue causing significant disruption to a school, the principal shall immediately notify the Superintendent's Office.
4. The school nurse shall notify the DCS Nurse Supervisor, if the employee is assigned to a school.
5. As per its standard practice, the Duplin County Health Department has indicated it will begin the Case Investigation for Contract Tracing according to established protocol.
6. The Duplin County Health Department shall contact the DCS Nurse Supervisor with official guidance and will collaborate with schools to communicate when an excluded staff member may return to work.
7. The school nurse, for school-level cases, or the DCS Nurse Supervisor, for district-level cases, will follow the steps to begin the staff leave process for absences due to COVID-19.
8. The DCS Nurse Supervisor will regularly monitor and provide the Superintendent's Office with a daily summary of staff who have been in isolation, placed under quarantine, or tested positive.





## RETURN TO SCHOOL/WORK FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF



Students and staff members who have been excluded from school/work based on the outcome of official COVID-19 procedures may return to school/work in accordance with guidance found in the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12), to be used in conjunction with medically-based guidance provided by the Duplin County Health Department Communicable Disease experts. A negative COVID-19 test is not required for an individual to return from exclusion. The Duplin County Health Department and/or physician's orders make the final determination for when students and staff members may return to school or work.

**Guidance for Students/Staff Members to Return to School/Work**  
*(based on NCDHHS and Duplin County Health Department recommendations)*

Exclusion Category	Scenario	Criteria to Return to the School
Diagnosis	Person has tested positive with an antigen test but does not have symptoms of COVID-19 and is not known to be a close contact to someone diagnosed with COVID-19.	<p>If the person has a repeat PCR/molecular test performed in a laboratory within 24-48 hours of their positive antigen test, and that PCR/molecular test is negative: the positive antigen test can be considered a false positive and the person can immediately return to school; OR</p> <p>If the person does not have a repeat PCR/molecular test, or has one within 24-48 hours and it is also positive, the person can return to school 5 days after the specimen collection date of the first positive test, as long as they did not develop symptoms. The person <u>must continue</u> to mask for an additional 5 days to minimize risk of infecting others, unless an exemption to mask use applies.</p> <p>The person is not required to have documentation of a negative test in order to return to school.</p>
Diagnosis	Person has tested positive with a PCR/molecular test but the person does not have symptoms.	<p>Person can return to school 5 days after the specimen collection date of their positive test as long as they did not develop symptoms. The person <u>must continue</u> to mask for an additional 5 days to minimize risk of infecting others, unless an exemption to mask use applies.</p> <p>The person is not required to have documentation of a negative test in order to return to school.</p>
Symptoms	Person has symptoms of COVID-19 <u>and</u> has tested positive with an antigen test or PCR/molecular test.	<p>Person can return to school when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has been 5 days since the first day of symptoms; AND</li> <li>• It has been at least 24 hours since the person had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); AND</li> <li>• Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving.</li> </ul> <p>The person is not required to have documentation of a negative test in order to return to school.</p> <p>The person <u>must continue</u> to mask for 10 days after the first day of symptoms to minimize risk of infecting others, unless an exemption to mask use applies.</p>

Symptoms	<p>Person has symptoms of COVID-19 but has <b>not</b> been tested for COVID-19 nor has visited a health care provider.</p> <p>Therefore, the person who has symptoms is presumed positive for COVID-19 due to the presence of a clinically compatible illness in the absence of testing.</p>	<p>Person can return to school when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It has been 5 days since the first day of symptoms; AND</li> <li>It has been at least 24 hours since the person had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); AND</li> <li>Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving.</li> </ul> <p>The person is not required to have documentation of a negative test in order to return to school.</p> <p>The person <u>must continue</u> to mask for 10 days after the first day of symptoms to minimize risk of infecting others, unless an exemption to mask use applies.</p>
Symptoms	<p>Person has symptoms of COVID-19 but has received a negative PCR/molecular test for COVID-19 or has visited a health care provider and received an alternative diagnosis that would explain the symptoms of COVID-19. (As recommended by the Duplin County Health Department)</p>	<p>Person can return to school when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It has been at least 24 hours since the person had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); AND</li> <li>They have felt well for at least 24 hours.</li> </ul> <p>Note: The health provider is not required to detail the specifics of the alternate diagnosis.</p>

\*For individuals exposed, day of exposure is considered day zero (0). For cases, day of symptom onset is day zero (0) or for individuals without symptoms, day of specimen collection is considered day zero (0).

#### NOTES:

- Duplin County Schools will follow quarantine recommendations provided by the Duplin County Health Department.
- Results from a home-based COVID-19 test will not be accepted when making quarantine determinations for staff. However, any staff member with a COVID-19 diagnosis or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should contact their supervisor and/or school nurse.



# ABSENCE MANAGEMENT



## STUDENTS:

If a student is not allowed to attend school due to COVID-19 reasons as outlined above or if the parent/guardian chooses for the student to quarantine when deemed a positive COVID-19 exposure, the following attendance procedures will be utilized:

1. The school nurse will notify the impacted student's teacher(s) and the school data manager with the affected dates via email. The student will then be marked Present Off-Site (Attendance Code 1R) for the affected dates within PowerSchool by the impacted student's teacher(s). No confidential health information will be shared in this notification.
2. If the impacted student fails to complete school work or have two-way communication with teachers during the exclusion period, the teacher will change the Present Off-Site attendance code to an absence. The teacher will also need to make the data manager aware of this change, and the data manager will mark the absences excused (i.e. 1A - Illness or Injury) since the absences are COVID-19 related.
3. Since the impacted students aren't marked absent in PowerSchool, the school nurse records for COVID-19 related isolations and quarantines will be the official data source if this information is requested.

## STAFF:

The following process shall apply for all employees requesting leave due to COVID-19 symptoms, diagnosis, or verified exposure to a positive COVID-19 case:

1. The school nurse, for school-level cases, or the DCS Nurse Supervisor, for district-level staff, shall notify the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources who will provide the school/employee with the Duplin County Schools COVID-19 Leave Form.
2. The employee will return to the Human Resources Department the completed form and required supporting documentation prepared by a healthcare provider or school nurse who is acting in conjunction with the Duplin County Health Department.
3. The Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and the Finance Officer shall review the form and documentation to determine what, if any, leave for which the employees qualifies.
4. If the employee does not qualify for applicable leave, and doesn't have leave, they will be required to use leave without pay.
5. If an employee chooses to self-quarantine and does not choose to see their healthcare provider for diagnosis/testing or utilize the school-provided testing option, the employee shall use applicable leave as outlined in Policy 7510 Leave. If the employee does not have available leave, they will be required to use leave without pay.

In accordance with the NC Department of Health and Human Services, schools and departments must notify the Local Health Department of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 case(s) among students or staff (as required by NCGS § 130A-136).

Duplin County Schools is committed to providing effective and timely communication to all parents and staff during this pandemic consistent with existing laws and procedures. DCS will provide notification of confirmed clusters of COVID-19, while school is in session.

The notification process is as follows:

1. When a COVID-19 cluster is confirmed by the Duplin County Health Department, the Health Department will contact the DCS Nurse Supervisor.
2. The DCS Nurse Supervisor will notify the Superintendent's Office and the school nurse.
3. The school nurse will notify the principal.
4. Duplin County Schools will notify parents and employees when there is a confirmed COVID-19 cluster in their school or department, while school is in session. A cluster is defined as five or more linked cases. Contact tracing efforts will continue and individuals with possible exposure will be notified. As always, parents, guardians, and staff members are encouraged to ensure they have provided the school and department with current contact information.

## NOTIFICATION

By law, Duplin County Schools shall not divulge personally identifiable health information or information that can inadvertently lead to an identification. Confidentiality shall be maintained in accordance with NCGS§ 130A-143. If exposure to a student or employee meets the NC Department of Health and Human Services' and/or the Duplin County Health Departments requirements for mandated precautionary quarantine, the student's parents/guardians and staff members will be immediately advised by the Duplin County Health Department. A precautionary quarantine does not mean that an employee or student is sick or will become sick, but may be required by the Duplin County Health Department based on case-by-case circumstances.

The NCDHHS publicly reports ongoing clusters (i.e. minimum of five cases) through an online dashboard to include childcare facilities and school settings. The COVID-19 Ongoing Clusters in Child Care and School Settings Report will be updated every Tuesday by 4:00 PM.



## PROTECTING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Duplin County Schools recognizes that some vulnerable populations that are at high-risk from COVID-19 may require alternative/remote learning arrangements. Parents and guardians of eligible participants will work directly with school personnel to apply for the COVID-19 High Risk Program through the Center of Opportunity. To ensure the safety of participants and their families, students will not participate in extracurricular activities, which includes athletics, clubs and other school events. Also, due to the remote learning environment, course offerings will be limited. Students enrolled in the COVID-19 High Risk Program will remain enrolled for the duration of the school year.

**This regulation shall be used in conjunction with the latest guidance provided by health and safety officials, which may supersede any procedures outlined here.**



The complete Regulation Code 4230/7262-R is located under Board Policies.