

COVID-19 Guidance for Parents/Guardians

Coordinated School Health

Public Health Hotline
980-314-9400

What happens if someone tests positive for COVID-19?

Any positive test for COVID-19 is reported to the health department in the county where the patient lives. When someone tests positive, the health department will contact the person to ensure they are aware of their diagnosis, review home isolation requirements and assess their social service needs. Contact tracing will be conducted to identify anyone who was **in close contact to the patient for up to 48 hours before they showed symptoms or tested positive. Close contact includes household members and anyone who was within 6 feet of the patient for more than 15 minutes during the time period they were infectious.** For school-related exposures, the Mecklenburg County Public Health Department works directly with CMS to identify close contacts and notify anyone who may have been exposed.

How will our schools be maintained to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

- All buildings have enhanced cleaning/disinfection protocols in place, including frequent routine cleaning of high-touch areas.
- If an individual was in a CMS School within two days of symptoms developing or testing positive, a specialized disinfecting cleaning process will be performed, focusing on areas of the building in which the individual spent significant time.

How will I be notified if someone tests positive for COVID-19 in our school?

- Any notifications must maintain confidentiality in accordance with state and federal laws.
- If someone tests positive but has not been in the school building for over 14 days prior to symptoms starting or at least 14 days prior to symptoms or test (if asymptomatic), then no notification will be provided.
- If someone who tested positive was in the school within 14 days of symptoms developing or the date of the test, if no symptoms, notification will be provided to all staff and students assigned to the school. School-wide students and staff receive a non-exposure communication (letter or Connect5 message) that someone tested positive and if you or your child were in close contact and need to take further action, you would receive additional information and further communication.
- Principals will work with the Mecklenburg County Public Health Department to determine if the individual was in the school while infectious, and if so, identify who they may have been in close contact with and provide specific notification to those individuals.
- Investigation will include classmates or class schedules, proximity of others based on the school day routine of the individual, transportation, etc.
- Close contacts will receive an exposure letter and/or a phone call instructing them to quarantine for 14 days after the date of exposure.

What should we do after travel?

- The CDC recommends that you avoid non-essential travel at this time. Any travel increases your risk of being exposed to COVID-19. Anyone traveling internationally by air is required to have a negative COVID-19 test upon return to the US. Please remember if you travel: avoid crowds and be sure to social distance and continue to wear face coverings. CDC recommends that if you travel that you get tested 1–3 days before travel, then test 3–5 days after travel and continue to quarantine for 7 days after traveling.

What should I do if my student tests positive for COVID-19?

- Notify the school principal via phone or e-mail.
- Make sure your student and any household members are not in any school buildings. Household members must quarantine for 14 days from the last date of close contact with the individual who tested positive during the timeframe in which that individual is considered to be contagious.
- Student must stay isolated until they are released back to school by their physician and/or the Mecklenburg County Public Health Department's order.
- If the student was in the school within 48 hours of experiencing symptoms and/or being tested, make note of any individuals they may have been within six feet of for more than 15 minutes and notify the Mecklenburg County Public Health Department.

When can my student return to school in-person after a positive COVID-19 test?

- The student must isolate until all three of the below items are true:
 1. It has been at least 10 days since symptoms started, or 10 days since the test if no symptoms are experienced.
 2. It has been at least 24 hours since running a fever with no fever-reducing medications used.
 3. All symptoms are showing improvement.

What should I do if my student develops COVID-19 symptoms?

Symptoms include: fever of 100.4 or higher, chills, new cough, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell.

- Notify your student's school by phone or email.
- Remove your student and any household members from the school buildings or do not allow the student to report to school.
- Consult with your healthcare provider and/or access available testing from the **[Mecklenburg County COVID-19 Testing Site Locator website](#)**.

When can my student return to school in-person after developing symptoms?

- If the student tests positive, see the procedures for what to do if the student tests positive.
- If the student receives a negative COVID-19 PCR* test, the student can return to school once there is no fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines and the student felt well for 24 hours. **Documentation of the negative PCR test must be given to the school.**

PCR is a Polymerase Chain Reaction test. If the student was tested with a rapid **antigen test or rapid **Abbot ID NOW** test, a follow up PCR test must be done before the student can return to school.*

- If the student receives confirmation of an alternative diagnosis from a healthcare provider that would explain the COVID-19 like symptom(s), the student can return to school following normal illness procedures or policies once there is no fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines and the student has felt well for 24 hours.
- Please provide documentation of alternative diagnosis to your student's school nurse.
- If the student has symptoms, does not get tested, and no alternative diagnosis is documented, the student must remain out of school until the student meets the criteria to end isolation.

What should I do if my student was a close contact to someone who tested positive for COVID-19?

- Notify your student's school that they will be absent to quarantine.
- Ask to receive information regarding remote learning.
- Student must quarantine for 14 days from the last exposure to the person who tested positive.
- Consult with your healthcare provider and/or access available testing from the **Mecklenburg County COVID-19 Testing Site Locator website.**
- Monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 and contact your healthcare provider if your student develops symptoms.
- If your student has symptoms, you should be tested for COVID-19.
- If your student does not develop symptoms, the recommendation is to be tested 5-7 days after exposure.
- If your student tests negative, they should remain in quarantine for 14 days since the date of last exposure.
- A test is currently recommended for anyone who had known close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19. However, a negative test is not required to return to school after the 14-day quarantine period as long as the student remains asymptomatic.
- Teachers and classmates do not need to be informed unless the student tests positive or develop symptoms. In that case, see "What to do if your student tests positive" above.
- If someone has previously tested positive for COVID-19 and is identified as a close contact, they do not need to quarantine if it has been within 3 months of the infection and there are no symptoms present. If symptoms develop or it has been more than 3 months since the infection, the individual must follow usual quarantine requirements.
- If someone has been fully vaccinated for at least 2 weeks, vaccinated within 3 months of exposure, and not having any symptoms, they do not need to quarantine.

What else should I keep in mind?

- Please do not send your student to school if they are sick. Anyone who develops any symptoms should stay home until further evaluation.
- Every person who enters a CMS school must complete a symptoms screening on-site or prior to arrival and a temperature check upon entry.

- If a student develops COVID-like symptoms (fever of 100.4 or higher, chills, new cough, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell) during school, they will be sent to an isolation room and parents/guardians will need to bring the student home and seek medical attention to rule out COVID.
- Remind your student to wash their hands regularly, wear their face covering correctly and consistently and maintain social distance.
- Consult your healthcare provider and/or access available testing from the **Mecklenburg County COVID-19 Testing Site Locator website**. The decision to get tested is up to the individual.
- CMS will systematically monitor and report cases in our schools.
- If you have additional questions, call the Public Health Hotline at 980-314-9400.
- Anyone who is a close contact will be notified directly that they may have been exposed and instructed to self-quarantine.
- Staff or students who are **NOT** identified as close contacts do **NOT** need to self-quarantine, even if they were in the building at the same time. They should self-monitor for symptoms and stay home and seek evaluation if any symptoms develop.
- Based on privacy regulations, we are unable to provide any identifying information about the individual who tested positive.