

COVID-19 Guidance for Parents/Guardians Rev. 1/12/22

**Public Health
Hotline 980-314-9400**

What happens if someone tests positive for COVID-19?

Positive COVID-19 tests are reported to the health department in the county where the person lives. When someone tests positive, the health department attempts to contact the person to ensure they are aware of their diagnosis, review home isolation requirements and assess their social service needs. Contact tracing is completed to identify close contacts to the patient for up to 48 hours before they showed symptoms or tested positive. Close contacts include anyone who was within 6 feet of the patient for more than 15 minutes during the contagious time period. For school-related exposures, the Mecklenburg County Public Health Department (MCPH) 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.
- **CMS will no longer provide on-going communication notifications regarding identified cases in the building without exposure. Please check the [COVID-19 data dashboard](#) for cases listed by school.**
- Principals will work with the MCPH 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 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 be notified; **however, if the close contact does not have symptoms and is able to strictly wear a mask upon return to school, in a mask-required school setting, the individual can return to school and is not required to quarantine.**
 - **This includes unmasked exposures (e.g. during lunch).**
 - **It is recommended that the individual get tested on the day of notification and as close as possible to day 5 after exposure. The individual MUST wear a mask in school to avoid quarantine. This does not include household close contacts.**
- **If a close contact is unable to wear a mask in the school setting or develops symptoms, they must leave school and quarantine for 10 days from the last exposure.**

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 unvaccinated household members are not in any school buildings. Fully vaccinated (all doses and booster, if eligible) household members can return to school if they are not experiencing any symptoms. It is recommended for vaccinated close contacts to get tested 3-5 days from exposure.
- 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 for more than 15 minutes and notify the school.
- **If there are household members who are not fully vaccinated, they must quarantine for at least 5 days**

from the last exposure and continue to wear a mask for 5 days. Fully vaccinated individuals for ages 5-17 are those who have completed the primary series of the vaccine and for 18 and older they have received the primary series and booster, if eligible.

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 5 days since symptoms started, or 5 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 and student feels well enough to return.
 4. The student must be able to continue to mask for 5 days after return. If unable to mask effectively, the student would need to remain out for at least 10 days.

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

Symptoms include but not limited to: fever of 100.4 or higher, chills, new cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell.

- Notify your student's school by phone or email.
- Remove your student 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**.
- Siblings or household members do not need to leave school unless the person with symptoms tests positive and the sibling or household member is not fully vaccinated (completed the primary series of vaccines if ages 5-17; boosters are required if 18 or older and eligible).

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 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 test must be given to the 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 for at least 5 days and after symptoms improved with no fever.

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 if student needs to quarantine.
- If a student is exposed in the classroom and both students were wearing their masks at all times during exposure, they are not required to quarantine.
- If the student is fully vaccinated and not having any symptoms, **the individual does not need to quarantine from school if:**
 - They are 18 years of age and have received their primary series AND booster, if eligible.
 - They are between the ages of 5-17 and have completed a primary series of COVID-19 vaccines. Boosters are not required to meet this exception for this age group.
- It is recommended that they get tested 3-5 days after exposure and continue to wear their mask around others for 10 days.
- If student has previously tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 3 months and is identified as a close contact, they do not need to quarantine if they are not experiencing any symptoms. If

symptoms develop or it has been more than 3 months since the infection, the individual must follow usual quarantine requirements.

- If a student is a close contact and not able to wear a mask when they are in the school setting, they must quarantine for 10 days from the last exposure to the person who tested.
- 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, your student should be tested for COVID-19.
- If your student does not develop symptoms, the recommendation is to be tested 5-7 days after 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 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.

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 and you are not fully vaccinated 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 else should I keep in mind?

- Consider getting anyone who is eligible vaccinated.
- 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 wear a face covering indoors. Face coverings should be at least dual layered (2-3 ply) and must be worn properly, covering the nose and mouth. Face coverings include cloth masks or gaiters. Face shields are not considered a substitute for face coverings, and valve masks are not permitted.
- If a student develops COVID-like symptoms (fever of 100.4 or higher, chills, sore throat, 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.
- 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.