

# STERLING'S COVID PROTOCOLS

## July 2022

Beginning Monday, March 7, 2022, Sterling will become a mask recommended but not required campus for staff, students and visitors.

The relaxed health guidelines do not mark the end of the pandemic, but a recognition of a new phase. As a school community we strive to be an inclusive and respectful community. We know some of our families and employees may be more comfortable gradually removing masks, while others may want to remove them as soon as possible. We recognize all possible scenarios and are committed to supporting all children, families, and employees.

Families should assess their student's health at home before arriving to school and follow our sick protocols as detailed in our [Parent Handbook](#). Students must stay home if:

- They have tested positive for COVID-19;
- They have a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher. A fever is determined by a thermometer reading 100.4 or higher.
- As of February 21, 2022, exclusion from school is not necessary following solely close contact with a person with COVID-19, but will be necessary if symptoms develop;

**Beginning June 23, 2022, NCDHHS has discontinued the specific StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit for school guidance, but has retained the [ToolKit FAQ](#). This, along with the CDC's [Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools](#), outlines information on how to lower the risk of COVID-19 in school settings.**

Students must be free of any symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 to be on campus. At this time, these symptoms include one or more of the following:

- fever of 100.4 degrees or higher
- sore throat
- new shortness of breath or difficulty breathing,
- new cough (persistent dry cough unrelated to allergies),
- new loss of taste or smell
- diarrhea or vomiting
- or the onset of a severe headache

Should you have any of these symptoms, it is best to seek out your health professional for more guidance.

Household members are no longer required to stay home if a student or employee living in the same household is experiencing a symptom of illness, but has not been diagnosed with COVID-19, or is vaccinated and not showing symptoms.

# HEALTH MONITORING & SCREENINGS

## Campus Health Monitoring & Screening Requirements During the School Day

Staff will continue to monitor students for symptoms such as fever, cough, headache or shortness of breath.

If a child develops symptoms while at school, he or she will be immediately isolated to a designated space under the supervision of a staff member and be required to continue wearing a face covering. A parent or guardian will be expected to promptly pick up their child from school.

More information on monitoring symptoms is available from the [CDC](#).

## Exclusion from School Guidance/Post Vaccination

An individual is not considered fully vaccinated with only 1 dose of a 2-dose series or it has not been a full 2 weeks since getting the 2nd dose of a 2-dose series. It is also recommended that those eligible receive a booster dose of the COVID vaccine as well.

Per the CDC Guidance: Those individuals that **have** received the COVID vaccine and are **exposed** to a positive case, **do not need to be excluded from school** if they meet the following **criteria**:

- a. Are **up-to-date** on their COVID-19 vaccines (i.e., at least 2 weeks after getting their second dose in a 2-dose series or one-dose of a single-dose series)
- b. Have had **no symptoms** from when they were exposed to someone with COVID-19.

See following guidelines on the next pages for exclusion timelines, based on guidance from the [NCDHHS](#).

# RETURNING FROM EXCLUSION

Exclusion Category	Scenario	Criteria to return to school
Diagnosis	Person has tested <b>positive</b> with an <b>antigen test</b> but <b>does not have symptoms</b> 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.</p> <p>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 <b>5</b> days after the specimen collection date of the first positive test, as long as they did not develop symptoms. The person <u>must continue to</u> 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 <b>positive</b> with a <b>PCR/molecular test</b> , but the person does <b>not</b> have symptoms.	<p>Person can return to school <b>5</b> days after the specimen collection date of their positive test if they did not develop symptoms. The person <u>must continue to</u> 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 <b>has symptoms</b> of COVID-19 <u>and</u> has tested <b>positive</b> with an <b>antigen test</b> or <b>PCR/molecular test</b>	<p>Person can return to school when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has been at least <b>5</b> days after 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 to</u> wear a mask for 10 days after the first day of symptoms to minimize the risk of infecting others, unless an exemption to mask use applies.</p>
Symptoms	Person has symptoms of COVID-19 but has <b>not</b> been tested for COVID-19 nor has visited a health care provider. 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>Person can return to school when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has been at least <b>5</b> days after 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 to</u> wear a mask for 10 days after the first day of symptoms to minimize the risk of infecting others, unless an exemption to mask use applies.</p>

# RETURNING FROM EXCLUSION

Exclusion Category	Scenario	Criteria to return to school
Symptoms	<p>Person has symptoms of COVID-19 but has received a negative test for COVID-19* or has visited a health care provider and received <b>an alternate diagnosis</b> that would explain the symptoms of COVID-19</p> <p>*In a person with symptoms, a negative test is defined as either (1) a negative PCR/molecular test or (2) a negative antigen test if the person has a low likelihood of SARS-CoV-2 infection. See <a href="#">CDC antigen algorithm</a> for interpretation of antigen tests.</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 care 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).



# RETURNING FROM EXCLUSION

## EXPOSURE

IF STAFF OR K-8th STUDENTS ARE EXPOSED TO SOMEONE WITH COVID-19 WITHIN THE LAST 2 WEEKS, and the student/staff is:

- Not vaccinated or have not received booster (if eligible)
  - As of February 21, 2022 exclusion from school for exposure only is no longer recommended
  - Complete 10 days of strict mask use and continue to watch for symptoms, with immediate testing if symptomatic.
- Vaccinated and eligible for a booster, but not yet been boosted
  - As of February 21, 2022 exclusion from school for exposure only is no longer recommended
  - Complete 10 days of strict mask use and continue to watch for symptoms, with immediate testing if symptomatic.
- Vaccinated, and have either received a booster or are not yet eligible for a booster
  - You do not need to be excluded from school (stay away from others)
  - Complete 10 days of strict mask use and continue to watch for symptoms, with immediate testing if symptomatic.

Following [NCDHHS SafeSchool for Childcare](#), **Children's House students** must be excluded from school for 5 days after diagnosis of COVID-19. Students may return to school after exclusion if symptoms are improving or they are asymptomatic, but must continue to wear a mask for an additional 5 days, for a total of 10 days after diagnosis. If the student cannot wear a mask for the remaining 5 days, they must continue to be excluded from school for 10 days after the day of last diagnosis. The mask can be removed during napping, eating and drinking.

Exposure to COVID no longer requires exclusion from school, unless symptoms develop. Students should test on day 5, if possible. If symptoms occur, students should immediately isolate until a test either confirms COVID-19, or a negative result rules it out.

COVID-19 Screening protocols from North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services - [Public Health Toolkit K-12 FAQ](#) (link). Please refer to this document for more details, as Sterling will continue to follow NCDHHS guidelines for our school.



# REPORTING COVID-19 CASES



## Procedure for Reporting COVID-19 on Campus

Each individual's health information is a private matter. No one should publicly declare another employee or student as sick. In the event others need to be notified of a suspected or positive case of COVID-19, local health officials will notify them and provide them further instructions. To protect individual privacy, notifications will not identify anyone by name or contain information that could be used to identify them.

Sterling will report positive cases of COVID-19 to Wake County Public Health authorities and work with them for follow up and contact tracing. Families are notified through our messaging system when there is a positive case in their student's classroom. Sterling will also summarize any cases during the Executive Report at each monthly LHU Board meeting and provide updated Board minutes for review..

If any person with COVID-19 was on Sterling's campus, while infectious, we will coordinate with local health officials to notify employees and families who were in close contact with the positive person while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with FERPA, NCGS130A-143, and all other state and federal laws.

Close contact is defined as being within six feet of someone with COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes over a 24-hour period.

In the event of a case of COVID-19 at Sterling, the affected area will be systematically disinfected. Our disinfectant is EPA-approved for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

# HEALTH & SAFETY PLANS

## STUDENT HEALTH & SAFETY

### MAIN OFFICE/ VISITORS

- All visitors, as visitors, will be allowed on campus and must adhere to all COVID protocols.

### MASKS & CLOTH FACE COVERINGS

- In accordance with the approved measure to follow WCPSS mask mandate recommendations, beginning **Monday, March 7, 2022**, Sterling will become a mask recommended but not required campus for staff, students and visitors.

### PHYSICAL DISTANCING

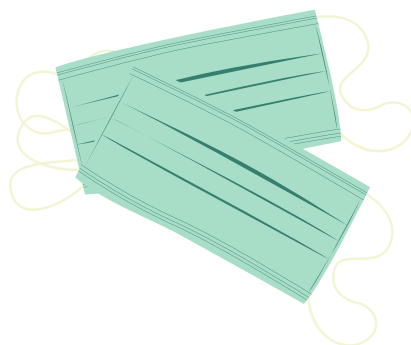
- When possible, Sterling will continue to maintain physical distancing in the classroom.
- For lunchtime, students will have the opportunity to eat outside, when possible. When eating indoors, screens will be provided, when necessary.

### HAND WASHING

- We will continue hand washing during key times: Upon arrival to classroom, before and after food, after restroom, after blowing nose or coughing/sneezing, after touching objects used by multiple people and after recess.
- If soap and water are not readily available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer 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.

### CLEANING

- Sterling's buildings and classrooms, especially high-touch areas, will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day and every evening with the use of EPA-approved disinfectant for SARS-COV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Current cleaning and disinfectant protocols will continue to be reviewed and enhanced in terms of frequency and intensity.



# Emergency Plans

Should an **individual student** need to be excluded from school, teachers will provide individual work plans and all absences will be excused.

If a **K-8th whole classroom** needs to be excluded from school due to a positive case of COVID-19, temporary virtual plans will be emailed to all families by the classroom teacher:

- Schedules will be provided for Zoom lesson times each day
- Work plans to be provided
- EC will be prioritized
- No Specials will be offered
- Devices will be available for those that need it

Should there be a **statewide mandated closure**, all K-8th Sterling students will go into a virtual learning classroom with their current teachers (all rosters will remain the same):

- Schedules will be provided for Zoom lesson times
- There will be optional Specials classes available
- EC will be prioritized
- Devices will be available for those who need it

