



OCS COVID-19 Safe Return to Work Guide

Updated August 6, 2020

Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

As we prepare for the first day of school for students on August 17th, I want to assure you that we are here to support you so that you can support our students. Beginning the school year in a pandemic is a new path for all of us and, together, we will engage in this work deliberately and thoughtfully to ensure our students receive the education they deserve--an education focused on equity, excellence and access. Please know that the health and safety of our staff and students is our top priority and we will continue to utilize all of the preventive measures recommended by the health department in the wake of COVID-19. I ask that you remain flexible as this situation continues to evolve. While we will have to expect the unexpected, I remain confident that we will get through this together.

Best regards,

*Monique Felder, Ph.D.
Superintendent*

Overview

The 2020-2021 school year begins August 10th for year round employees and August 12th for traditional employees. Please know that the safety of OCS staff and students remains our top priority during these unprecedented times. This Guide was developed to outline the procedures, protocols, and requirements (collectively referred to as “requirements”) that OCS employees are expected to follow in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure to OCS employees, as well as students, visitors, and the community.

As you know, in order to provide the safest plan for staff, the OCS is modifying its opening plans starting August 10th to minimize the number of staff onsite within the district and limit maximum hours onsite for staff. This is referred to as Plan C or the remote learning period. Plan C is currently scheduled to begin August 10th and continue through October 2nd. Unless the remote learning period is extended, OCS will then transition into Plan B (the blended learning period).

The first section in this Guide includes requirements for all staff during Plan C *and* Plan B. Additional requirements during Plan C are included at the end of the Guide. All of the requirements are based on guidance from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), and North Carolina State Board of Education (NCSBE). All OCS employees – including 10, 11, and 12-month employees – are expected to review and comply with the requirements outlined in this Guide, as well as any other documents or web pages that are referenced in it.

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The Guide is effective August 10, 2020, and will continue to be in effect until replaced or rescinded. This document and its requirements are subject to change at any time to ensure public health and safety and/or to comply with newly issued guidance or requirements from applicable local, state, and federal agencies. In addition to this Guide, employees are expected to comply with applicable state and local emergency and other regulations, even if not specifically referenced in this document.

Section 1: Requirements for All Staff

The following requirements apply to ALL staff during Plan C and Plan B. Additional requirements for staff who will be working onsite during Plan C can be found at the end of this Guide.

Social Distancing

All employees are expected to maintain a distance of at least six (6) feet of space from other individuals. This applies in any indoor setting where people congregate, including during staff meetings, planning periods, in break rooms, lunch rooms, restrooms, cafeterias, reception areas, offices, and while waiting in line. It also applies in outdoor settings when people are stationary.

Consistent with applicable DHHS requirements, schools will, e.g., place signs and floor markings in school buildings to remind individuals of social distancing requirements, arrange furniture or block off seats so individuals are separated by at least 6 feet, and limit building capacity (when under Plan B) to ensure appropriate social distancing can be maintained. All other applicable DHHS requirements for social distancing will also be followed.

Face Coverings

All employees *must* wear a cloth face covering inside district buildings and anywhere on school grounds, including outside. Face coverings are also required on buses and other school transportation vehicles. A cloth face covering is different from a surgical mask, N-95 mask, or other medical PPE designed for healthcare settings. A face covering can be made out of a variety of materials and can be store-bought or home-made, provided that it securely covers the mouth and nose. Face coverings will be available in the site reception area to employees (and visitors) who do not have one.

Cloth face coverings are not required if an exception applies (e.g. due to a medical or behavioral condition), while actively eating or drinking, or while actively engaged in strenuous physical activity. Please notify your supervisor if you would like to request an exception to the face covering requirement.

For general guidance and information on how to properly use, wear, remove, and clean cloth face coverings, please see the NCDHHS COVID-19 webpage and CDC website.

[Department of Health and Human Services FAQ:](#)
[How to wear and take off a face mask safely:](#)

Personal Hygiene

Personal hygiene practices and behaviors are important to everyone's safety at work. Employees must wash their hands using soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible and avoid touching their

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eyes and face. If soap and water is unavailable, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Employees should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer immediately:

- Upon reporting to work.
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
- After close contact (defined as within less than 6 feet for 15 minutes or more) with other individuals.

Employees must also cover coughs and sneezes, and refrain from direct physical contact with other employees (e.g., handshakes and hugs are prohibited).

[CDC Guidance Document on Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility Symptom Screenings and Temperature Checks](#)

All employees must conduct a self-symptom screening prior to their arrival for work. The symptom screening checklist is available here for your assistance: [COVID-19 Symptom Checklist](#). Once arriving at work, **ALL staff** will sign into Timekeeper. By clocking in, staff is attesting that they have read and understand all of the following questions and that the answer to all of the questions is “no”. These statements will be visible on the sign in screen of Timekeeper.

- 1) Have you had close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) in the last 14 days with someone diagnosed with COVID-19?
- 2) Has any health department or health care provider been in contact with you and advised you to quarantine?
- 3) Since you were last at work, have you had any of the following symptoms: fever (temperature of 100.4 °F or greater), chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, new cough, new loss of taste and/or smell?
- 4) Since you were last at work, have you been diagnosed with COVID-19?

(IF YOU ANSWER “YES” TO ANY OF THE QUESTIONS ABOVE, DO NOT CLOCK IN, AND DO NOT BEGIN WORK. YOU MUST IMMEDIATELY GO HOME AND CONTACT YOUR SUPERVISOR. IF AT ANY TIME DURING THE WORK DAY, YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS, YOU ARE TO CONTACT YOUR SUPERVISOR.

Employees must stay home if they have any of the following symptoms:

- have had close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) in the last 14 days with someone diagnosed with COVID-19;
- have been contacted by any health department or health care provider and advised to quarantine;
- have a fever (defined as a temperature of 100.4 or higher), chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, new cough, or new loss of taste or smell since they were last at work; or
- have been diagnosed with COVID-19 since they were last at work.

In addition, staff will have their temperature checked, every day, upon arrival at their worksite or upon boarding school transportation. Employees will be immediately isolated and sent home if they arrive at work and screen positive (meaning answer “yes” to a temperature of 100.4 or higher or any of the above symptoms).

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Finally, staff should not report to work if they have taken a COVID-19 test and are still awaiting results.

Positive Screening Protocols and Return to Work

OCS will follow the positive screening protocols required by NCDHHS, which are described in detail here:

[Reference Guide for Suspected, Presumptive, or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19](#)

These protocols include steps for infection control, notification to the local health department, communication with other individuals, cleaning, and closure (if determined necessary in consultation with the health department). The protocols address situations in which an individual screen positive upon arrival or develops symptoms during the day.

Staff should report symptomatic individuals to their supervisor or to Human Resources. Employees must follow applicable DHHS requirements for returning to work, which are described in detail on Page 9 of the DHHS StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit:

[Stay Strong NC Health Toolkit:](#) **[OCS Return to Work forms -](#)**

General Worksite Safety Requirements

The following is general guidance for different worksite locations and issues:

- To the extent practicable, employees should refrain from using common areas (kitchen, break room, copy room). If use of a common area is unavoidable and a distance of six (6) feet or greater cannot be maintained, wait to enter the area until the previous occupant has left.
- If you bring your lunch, you must pack it in your own cooler or other container. Sharing of communal food items is prohibited, including as part of office events such as birthdays or other celebrations.
- Copy rooms/areas will be limited to single occupant use only.
- Use of water fountains is prohibited.
- Personal items and supplies should not be shared. If it is necessary to share items and supplies, they must be disinfected between uses. In addition, sharing of communal food items is prohibited, including as part of office events such as birthdays or other celebrations.
- For buildings with elevators, no more than three (3) individuals may ride together in an elevator car.
- To the extent practicable, supervisors should work with employees to increase space between workstations in shared areas and otherwise adjust workspace arrangements.

Staff Meetings

Remote meetings (video-conference, conference call) are required to the greatest extent practicable. If an in-person meeting is unavoidable, it must be held in a space large enough for participants to remain at least 6 feet apart.

Leave

For employees who become sick or otherwise unable to work, there are several new leave options available. These are in addition to “traditional” leave options.

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Families First Coronavirus Response Act Leave

If employees are currently unable to work or telework due to COVID-19 related or other reasons, they may be eligible for two limited and temporary types of leave created by the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA): Emergency FMLA and Emergency Paid Sick Leave. FFCRA leave expires December 31, 2020

Emergency FMLA is available to employees who are unable to work or telework and need to take leave to care for their son or daughter because the child's school or childcare provider is closed or unavailable due to a COVID-19 related emergency as declared by a local, state, or federal authority. Note that any Emergency FMLA that an employee takes will be deducted from the employee's entitlement to 12 weeks of "regular" FMLA. Similarly, if an employee has taken "regular" FMLA within the past 12 months, that prior leave will reduce the amount of Emergency FMLA that is available.

Emergency Paid Sick Leave is available to employees who are unable to work or telework because they are:

1. Subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19.
2. Have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.
3. Experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis.
4. Caring for an individual who is subject to an order as described in subparagraph (1) or has been advised as described in subparagraph (2).
5. Caring for a son or daughter of such EE if the school or place of care of the son or daughter has been closed, or the child care provider (paid or unpaid) of such son or daughter is unavailable, due to COVID-19 precautions.
6. Experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Labor.

Employees who would like to request Emergency FMLA or Emergency Paid Sick Leave may complete the following form: [COVID-19 Request for Leave](#)

Employees may also request traditional leave (e.g., sick leave, annual vacation leave, shared leave, and FMLA) by completing the following form: [Traditional Leave Form](#)

If an employee is sick or has other concerns with returning to work, please contact OCS Human Resources. Additional information about leave options is available here: [Summary of COVID-19 Leave Options](#),

Individuals at Increased Risk From COVID-19

Employees who self-identify as at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, as defined by the CDC, and would like to request an accommodation may submit an accommodation request form. The CDC currently includes the following in its list of individuals who are or might be at increased risk:

- People who are 65 years of age or older
- People with underlying medical conditions, including:



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- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant, blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines
- Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher)
- Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Sickle cell disease
- Type 1 and type 2 diabetes mellitus
- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Cerebrovascular disease (affects blood vessels and blood supply to the brain)
- Cystic fibrosis
- Hypertension or high blood pressure
- Neurologic conditions, such as dementia
- Liver disease
- Pregnancy
- Pulmonary fibrosis (having damaged or scarred lung tissues)
- Smoking
- Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder)

Examples of accommodations may include additional or enhanced PPE, heightened social distancing measures, modified job responsibilities or work schedules, alternate work locations, increased cleaning and sanitation, and telework.

The request form is available here: [Staff Intranet Request Form](#)

Emotional Support

[EAP Brochure](#)

[Wellness and mental health resources](#)

[Coping with Stress](#)

[Mental Wellness Support During a Pandemic](#)

Visitors

To protect the health and safety of our staff and students, only essential visitors will be permitted to enter a district building. All visitors entering OCS buildings must wear a face covering, complete a symptom screening and temperature checks, in the secured vestibule/office, before being allowed to enter the building. Visitors should have an appointment and wait in their car until their designated appointment time.

[OCS Visitor Sign In Procedure](#)

Any visitors entering OCS buildings must wear a face covering and must complete symptom screening and temperature checks before being allowed to enter. Visitors should have appointments and wait in their car until their appointment time

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Section 2: Additional Requirements for Plan C

This Section is for 12-Month Administrators, Office Staff, and Support Staff, and any others who will be on-site during Plan C (remote learning). It applies beginning August 10th through October 2nd unless extended or otherwise modified by the OCS Board of Education. These requirements are in addition to all of the requirements in Section 1 of this Guide.

Telework/Remote Working

During Plan C, remote work (also referred to as “telework”) continues to be strongly encouraged to the greatest extent practicable. School principals, central office leaders, and other supervisors are encouraged to work with the staff they supervise to determine whether staff members can continue to effectively perform some or all of their essential work responsibilities through remote work, or whether the staff members will need to report to District-operated worksites in order for them to effectively complete their duties. The Superintendent has adopted remote work procedures to permit and govern teleworking. Those procedures remain in effect for any teleworking arrangement and are available here:

[Work From Home Procedures](#)

If remote work is not practicable, supervisors are encouraged to work with employees to determine arrangements for return to work. These arrangements must include an agreed-upon schedule (days, hours on-site), an agreed-upon and designated workspace for each staff member, and must comply with the procedures and requirements in Section 1 and 2 of this Guide. In consultation with the principal, teachers may elect to teach remotely from the school building. If a supervisor has questions or concerns regarding the prospect of an employee returning to the worksite, the supervisor should contact the Chief Human Resources Officer for assistance. Due to concerns about liability, staff cannot bring their kids to work.

Work Hours, Coverage Plans

Employees who will be working on-site during Plan C are limited to working no more than 8 hours per day onsite and should consult their supervisor and/or principal regarding access to the building while in Plan C. OCS buildings will close at 5pm daily to allow for evening cleaning and sanitation. Extended hours for maintenance staff may be needed for cleaning, disinfection, or maintenance emergencies. To the extent possible, all employees should work from home on Friday.

A coverage schedule shall be developed by all building supervisors for site reception areas to be staffed for phone calls/public with appointments, and deliveries. Supervisors should work with employees to have a coverage schedule to minimize the number of employees onsite to no more than 50% of staff to the extent possible. For critical or essential tasks, employees may be asked to spend more time or days onsite. Supervisors must submit plans to Operational Services for review and approval. The coverage plan, for all employees working in the building routinely or on specific days, shall be provided to the building custodian, so each room utilized can be cleaned and disinfected daily as needed.

Questions

Questions about this Guide may be directed to Teresa Cunningham-Brown, Chief Human Resources Officer Teresa.cunningham-b@orange.k12.nc.us

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