

OCS Health & Safety Updates as of March 8, 2022 - 4:02 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE: Orange County Schools continues to collaborate with [NC Department of Instruction](#), [NC Department of Health and Human Services](#), [Orange County Health Department](#), and [ABC Science Collaborative](#). This guidance will continue to be updated as best practices evolve to reduce the spread of COVID.

***** [Click HERE for School Nurse contact information!](#) *****



Safety & Health: Masking,
COVID Vaccinations,
Screenings, Cleaning &
Disinfecting Protocols

NEW UPDATES - Effective March 8, 2022:

MASKING

- ★ All students and staff are welcome to continue wearing a mask whenever they choose to do so, but **wearing a mask will be optional in Orange County Schools indoors or on school buses**. Staff will create an environment where all students'/families' and staff's choices about masking are respected.
- ★ Removal of restrictions on bell covers and amount of time performing or playing instruments in band, music or chorus classes.
- ★ The Board authorizes the Superintendent to implement additional health and safety measures at individual schools in consultation with the Orange County Health Director as necessary to keep schools open for in-person learning.

The following instances where masks will be required are for:

- ★ Students with health conditions that require masking (i.e., students with ADA/504/Medical Plans);
- ★ Students in PreK programs when state or federal guidelines require masking;
- ★ Students and staff who return to school after testing positive for COVID or are presumptive positive for COVID. In these cases, the individual would be required to stay home for 5 days and then return to school with a mask (both indoors & outdoors per NCDHHS and OCHD) for 5 additional days; and
- ★ Students who have to go to the "care room" at school due to potential COVID symptoms.

PLEASE NOTE: When there is more than 2% ([slide 32](#)) of in-school secondary transmission cases in a school's student population, individual schools will move back into "required in-door masking" for a minimum of five days in an effort to avoid clusters and/or the need to close classrooms or schools. When masking is required indoors, students will also be required to wear masks on school buses and on school provided transportation. Bell covers would also be required and time limits playing musical instruments and in chorus

will be reinstated. The district will review in-school cases each week and will notify families and staff on Sundays prior to 6:00 p.m. if there is a need to require masks at individual schools for the upcoming week. We will continue to make updates as required and/or recommended by the Centers for Disease Control, N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Orange County Health Department.

Parents of students that have a 504, ADA Medical Accommodation Plan or are documented to be Medically Fragile requiring mask wearing, the parent can request the school to have their child continue to wear a mask in the school setting when masking is optional. These requests will be processed following established written procedures at the school level. These requests will be received at the school level in the same manner as face covering exemptions for students that have documented ADA accommodation needs, written 504 plans or other medical conditions that allow for a mask exemption.

Parents may continue to request High Filtration Masks for students.

[High Filtration Mask Request Form](#)

For your information:

How Effective Are Cloth Masks: [English](#), [Spanish](#)

Should I Double Mask: [English](#), [Spanish](#)

Visitors and Volunteers







VOLUNTEERS:

- ★ Follow all standards and requirements in place for employees (fully vaccinated or test for COVID-19). Volunteers will follow the same mask requirements as staff. Volunteers may not be in schools until at least 21 days being symptom free following a positive COVID-19 test. Volunteers that are unvaccinated may test at a local community site or participate in the weekly COVID-19 surveillance testing on the school campus.
- ★ Individuals who are on the [approved volunteer list](#), must show **proof of vaccination** in order to provide service in OCS schools and worksites.



Instruction

- ★ Full-time (5 days per week) in person instruction is continuing for students Pre-K through Grade 12.
- ★ **TEACHING & LEARNING WHEN STUDENTS ARE IN QUARANTINE OR IN ISOLATION:** Should your child have to be in isolation or choose to quarantine and is well enough to do school work, please know your child's teacher will assign work so she/he can keep up with the class. Because the teacher will be teaching students in the classroom,

	<p>the instructional materials will include asynchronous remote materials such as assignments on Canvas or Google Classroom and other online platforms your child is used to working on at school like Reading Eggs or Desmos. Please contact your teacher or principal with any questions or concerns and if you do not have access to the internet. They will let you know when and where you can pick up hard copies of the school work.</p>
 <p>Remote Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Intermittent remote learning options for students with unique health needs may be available per Senate Bill (SB) 654.
 <p>Arrival, Dismissal & Schedules</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ OCS will hold in-person instruction, Monday - Friday. ★ Students will arrive and dismiss using procedures set forth by school principals. ★ Bell schedules for the 21-22 school year are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elementary: 7:50-2:50 ○ Middle: 8:30-3:45 ○ High: 9:00-4:15 ★ Temperature checks and screening questions are no longer required at this time. However, all staff and students are required to stay home if they have any COVID symptoms or are awaiting test results.
 <p>Attendance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ On any regular school day, a student must be physically present in the building (or at an approved school activity) at least half the instructional day to be counted present, same as always prior to COVID-19 closed schools for in-person learning. When schools close due to inclement weather it is possible that the inclement weather days may be full or partial remote learning days. ★ <i>Students that are in quarantine or are in isolation are NOT counted absent.</i>
 <p>Before- & After-School Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ OCS will not offer before-school care for the 2021-2022 school year. ★ OCS will continue to offer after-school care at all elementary and middle schools. More Information can be accessed here.



Bus Transportation

- ★ If you need school bus transportation, please call Ms. Donnetta Poole with the OCS Department of Transportation, at 919-732-2531 or email her at donnetta.poole@orange.k12.nc.us.
- ★ **Wearing a mask is now optional in Orange County Schools indoors and on school buses.**
- ★ Dress students appropriately as windows will be open on school buses even in the winter months to increase the ventilation on the bus.



Lunch Forms

Your participation matters!

- ★ We need every OCS family, regardless of income, to complete a [USDA Lunch Application](#) because doing so:
 - Helps schools receive federal money for programs that support and impact **all** students
 - High School students can receive the following benefits plus many others from College Board: • Waived and/or reduced fees on the following exams – SAT, PSAT, ACT & AP • Unlimited score reports to send to colleges • College application fees waived at participating college
- ★ Please send completed forms to your child's teacher. More information can be found on the [OCS Child Nutrition webpage](#).
- ★ For students who are NEWLY enrolled in OCS, lunch applications needed to be completed by **August 31** in order to be eligible for future P-EBT benefits! **Families can reapply at any time during the school year if your income or family situation changes.**



Meal Procedures

MEALS:

Starting March 1, 2022 - No additional pandemic or COVID-19 restrictions will be in place in schools (starting with the removal of guidelines on student meal times, locations, talking, etc.). Schools will begin the process of normalizing pre-pandemic lunch and meal procedures to include increasing the amount of time students can eat unmasked. Students continue being able to talk during the time their masks are removed to eat their meals and may begin eating meals in the cafeteria if possible. The goal is to normalize the experience for lunches and meals on the campus as much as possible for the 4th nine weeks. Schools will continue to eat meals outdoors when the weather is above 40 degrees and it is not raining outdoors, use of air purifiers and opening of windows when eating meals indoors.



Recess

- ★ **No time limitations. Masks are optional indoors and outdoors. Exception: Masks required indoors and outdoors for those returning under special rules from the Health Department that mandate masks to be worn at all times for additional days.**



Required Immunizations

- ★ [NC G.S. 130A-152](#) defines immunizations required for any individual who attends school. Please review the [required immunizations by grade level](#) and ensure your child is up to date. All immunizations **must be** completed 30 days after the first day your child attends school.
- ★ Please contact your child's primary care provider or local health department, or feel free to reach out to your [School Nurse](#).

Daily Attestation



OCS will not facilitate daily attestation/screening for students or staff. **Daily attestation should occur before students or staff leave home.**

- ★ **Staying home when sick is essential to keep infections out of schools and prevent spread to others.**

Students and staff must stay home and call the school nurse if:

- They have been advised by the health department or a healthcare provider to isolate or quarantine.
- They have symptoms of COVID-19
 - Fever or chills (temperature of 100.0 degrees fahrenheit or higher),
 - Cough,
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing,
 - Fatigue,
 - Muscle or body aches,
 - Headache,
 - New loss of taste or smell,
 - Congestion or runny nose,
 - Sore throat,
 - Nausea or vomiting, diarrhea

Exemption on a case by case: For those with chronic conditions, symptom presence should represent a change from their typical health status.

Quarantining

- ★ The school nurse will determine if a student needs to be isolated.
- ★ If a student is required to isolate the school nurse will provide the return-to-school date to the family. **And**

**& Isolation
Protocols
for Students**

if a medical provider recommends a longer isolation period, OCS will follow the longer recommendation.

- ★ Schools are providing diagnostic testing onsite for those that become symptomatic during the school day. Parents must have pre-registered their student for onsite diagnostic testing to be eligible, to ensure testing supplies are available. [OCS COVID TESTING REGISTRATION PAGE](#)
- ★ OCS will continue to follow guidelines by [NCDPI](#), [NCDHHS](#), [OCHD](#) & [ABC Science Collaborative](#).
- ★ **INFORMATION REGARDING SIBLINGS OR OTHER STUDENTS LIVING IN THE SAME HOUSEHOLD:**
 - Siblings of students sent home with COVID-19 like symptoms **do not** have to be sent home unless they are also symptomatic.



COVID Notifications

- ★ With the removal of individual contact tracing, per Strong Schools Toolkit, schools will no longer send letters home each day for positive reports, they will instead be reflected on a district web-based dashboard. However, when there are 3 or more linked cases of secondary transmission in a classroom or on a school bus, more targeted information will be sent home in order to ensure parents know if their child was exposed in order to assist with making informed decisions to have their child tested. Please do not call the school or the school nurse to inquire about possible exposures based on updated information on the dashboard. **The district will review in-school cases each week and will notify families and staff on Sundays prior to 6:00 p.m. if there is a need to require masks at individual schools for the upcoming week.** [NEW COVID-19 NOTIFICATION DASHBOARD LINK](#)



**Middle and High School
Extracurricular Activities
(Including Athletics)**




- ★ Masks/face coverings are recommended for individuals outdoors that are attending sporting, athletic or extracurricular events outdoors on the high school campus only. Student athletes are not required to wear face coverings on the sidelines on their school campus and must follow the requirements in place for the event hosting site per NCHSAA procedures when attending away events.


OCS will end testing for unvaccinated athletes and non-graded/non-curricular extracurricular programs.

Testing for athletics and extracurriculars was suspended Tuesday, Feb. 22.

ATHLETICS & EXTRACURRICULAR COVID-19 TESTING:

Weekly testing of unvaccinated student-athletes and non-graded/non-curricular extracurricular programs will

	<p>now be optional. Link to more information.</p> <p>These changes will remain in effect until further notice.</p> <p>OCS will continue to monitor the community transmission for COVID-19. We will continue to follow guidance from our local health professionals and requirements from the NCDHHS StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit in order to keep our schools open, protect in-person learning and continue the athletic seasons with minimal interruptions. Additional modifications may take place based on COVID-19 conditions or restrictions.</p>
 <p>Facility Use & Safety Drills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ EFFECTIVE JANUARY 11: Prohibition on any new facility rental applications through February 28, 2022. ★ Fire Drills are conducted on a monthly basis. Tornado drills are practiced during tornado awareness season. Emergency drills will be held at least once a school year using established procedures and guidance. Scheduled lockdown and other safety drills will continue in schools. ★ All school buildings will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day and every night. Disinfecting supplies are provided to each classroom to support the cleaning of desks and other high touch surfaces <u>as needed</u> for the cleaning of shared program equipment.
 <p>Field Trips & Travel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Field Trips for Grades PK-8: Student trips allowed outside the county to areas without High Community Transmission for COVID-19 following regular field trip procedures. Out of an abundance of caution, students in grades K-8 will be required to wear masks indoors and outdoors while attending all field trips regardless of vaccination status. Field trips that are taking place in communities with High Community Transmission will be reviewed on a case by case basis. ★ Field Trips for Grades 9-12: Field trips and events would be authorized across the state. Students will follow the same health and safety procedures in place on the school campus while participating in field trips or events off the campus.
<p>Water Fountain Usage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Students should bring water bottles from home and are allowed to use the water bottle filling stations in schools. Alternatives for students that do not bring water bottles, such as disposable cups, will be provided.
 <p>Sharing Items</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Shared classroom items are allowed such as paper, pencils, etc. with frequent use of hand sanitizer and washing of hands after handling common items touched by another individual. ★ No additional sanitation is required unless there is a COVID-19 positive exposure in the classroom in which a more enhanced cleaning would be required.
<p>K-5 General Music</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Removal of restrictions on bell covers and amount of time performing or playing instruments in band, music, and/or chorus classes.

<p>Chorus/Choir</p>	<p>★ Removal of restrictions on bell covers and amount of time performing or playing instruments in band, music, and/or chorus classes.</p>
<p>Band</p>	<p>★ Removal of restrictions on bell covers and amount of time performing or playing instruments in band, music, and/or chorus classes.</p>
<p>  How to Report Non-Compliance Issues or Concerns </p>	<p>There are three ways to report any concerns you may have regarding non-compliance with any OCS health and safety measures in place.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact your child's principal. 2. Submit an email to covid.hotline@orange.k12.nc.us. 3. Leave an anonymous message at 919-245-4150 (internal extension 13333).