

## OCS Health & Safety Updates *as of November 17, 2021*

**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

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported (Wed., Nov. 10) that [Orange County's COVID-19 transmission rate](#) is now **MODERATE**. As part of the recent recommendation at our [Board Meeting November 8](#) and because Orange County's COVID-19 transmission rate is MODERATE, **students and staff will not be required to wear a mask when they are outside, effective Monday, November 15**. This also includes all district staff on OCS properties other than a school campus.

### ADDITIONAL REMINDERS:

- ★ Masks are required by all staff and students when they are on a school bus, activity bus, or charter bus for a school-sponsored trip.
- ★ We strongly encourage the CDC's guidance for unvaccinated individuals, "Masks/face coverings are recommended for people who are unvaccinated in crowded outdoor settings that may involve sustained close contact with other people."
- ★ Student athletes and students attending events on other school campuses must follow the host school's outdoor mask requirements.
- ★ The removal of masks outdoors does not change any of the requirements for quarantine in case of exposure to a person with COVID-19.
- ★ We continue to strongly encourage all eligible students and adults to receive a COVID-19 vaccination for the best protection against COVID-19 and possible severe side effects.

### Exceptions:

- ★ Exemptions will be determined on a case-by-case basis for individuals with medical or developmental conditions. While eating indoors, and for individuals that are in a separate room, the location closed off to others.
- ★ Some sports will have mask exemptions due to the safety equipment (e.g., mouthguards).
- ★ Families are encouraged to send their children to school with a mask. Schools will provide masks to students if needed. COVID-19 vaccinations are strongly encouraged, but not required; students must have all other required

	<p>immunizations in order to attend school in-person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ <b>UPDATE:</b> COVID-19 vaccinations have been federally approved for children ages 5-11. Orange County Schools is hosting vaccine clinics on school sites. <a href="#">CLICK HERE FOR DATES, TIMES AND LOCATIONS</a></li> <li>★ Physical distancing by at least 3 feet will be implemented whenever possible.</li> <li>★ Temperature checks and screening questions are <b>no longer</b> required. However, we are asking all staff and students to stay home if they have any COVID symptoms or are awaiting test results.</li> <li>★ <b>All school buildings will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day and every night.</b> Disinfecting supplies are provided to each classroom to support the cleaning of desks and other high touch surfaces <b>as needed</b> for the cleaning of shared program equipment.</li> <li>★ OCS will require the COVID-19 vaccination status of all staff to assist with contact tracing and quarantine protocols. All information will be kept confidential with the Human Capital and Organizational Development Department.</li> <li>★ OCS will follow the NC Department of Public Instruction's guidance for student and staff quarantining - <a href="#">StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit</a> - in coordination with the Orange County Health Department.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Visitors and Volunteers</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ <b>Visitors to schools, including volunteers,</b> will be limited to parents and other individuals with appointments that are necessary to carry out educational functions on the school campus.</li> <li>★ Universal masking is required indoors and outdoors, regardless of vaccination status for all OCS visitors and volunteers.</li> <li>★ As of September 27, 2021, Individuals who are on the <a href="#">approved volunteer list</a>, must show <b>proof of vaccination</b> in order to provide service in OCS schools and worksites.</li> <li>★ Masks should be worn by visitors at all times while on OCS property or transportation.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Instruction</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Full-time (5 days per week) in person instruction will resume for students Pre-K through Grade 12 effective July 15 at Hillsborough Elementary School (OCS year-round school) and August 23 for all other schools.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Remote Learning</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Remote learning option is offered to all K-12 students through the <a href="#">OCS Online Academy</a>. The deadline for applications was August 1, 2021. We are currently full, but adding names to our wait list. Please contact Principal Michelle Fournier at <a href="mailto:michelle.fournier@orange.k12.nc.us">michelle.fournier@orange.k12.nc.us</a> if you would like to be added to the wait list or if you have any other questions.</li> <li>★ Intermittent remote learning options for students with unique health needs may be available per Senate Bill (SB) 654.</li> </ul>



### Arrival, Dismissal & Schedules

- ★ 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:
  - 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, we are asking all staff and students to stay home if they have any COVID symptoms or are awaiting test results.



### Attendance

- ★ 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.
- ★ ***Students that are in quarantine or are in isolation are NOT counted absent.***



### Before- & After-School Care

- ★ OCS will **not** offer before-school care since elementary school will resume beginning at 7:30 a.m.
- ★ OCS will continue to offer after-school care at all elementary and middle schools. [More Information can be accessed here.](#)



### Bus Transportation

- ★ Families with students attending Hillsborough Elementary School, which operates on a year-round schedule, need to complete this [form](#).
- ★ 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](mailto:donnetta.poole@orange.k12.nc.us).
- ★ Masks must be worn on buses. Up to three masked students may sit together on a bus seat.



## 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!



## Meal Procedures

- ★ Meals will continue to be consumed outdoors (weather and space permitting). In some cases, meals may need to be consumed indoors. Regardless of where meals are consumed--outdoors, in classrooms or in larger spaces (i.e., gym, cafeteria, etc.)--please be reminded that *masks should only come off to eat, meal time is 15 minutes, and there should be no talking while students are unmasked*. Follow the district’s meal procedures located [here](#).
- ★ High school meal time has increased from 15 to 30 minutes.
- ★ At this time, we would like to clarify that there is not a shortage of funds or food, but rather the timely *delivery* of these food items that we have already purchased/procured. The “shortages” are in the supply chain. Therefore, the Child Nutrition Department will need to serve alternate food items that are not on current menus. We will do this by working with vendors other than the contracted suppliers to get these high-demand items for our meals. In the meantime, Child Nutrition is very grateful for the offers and suggestions to provide food for Orange County Schools. But at this time, it is not necessary. We do welcome volunteer assistance. If you are interested in volunteering with the department, please call the office at 919-732-8126 for more details. We look forward to continuing to provide free, nutritious breakfast and lunch meals to the students of OCS.
- ★ **PEST CONTROL:** Efland-Cheeks Global Elementary and Gravelly Hill Middle schools recently underwent a full campus wide treatment of fire ants on 10/22 and 10/23. The pesticides on the campuses were used on days without concern for students or staff entering the treated areas. Additional treatments and campus coverages at other locations for fire ants will continue. Based on an anticipated mild winter, we will continue to approach the fire ant treatment plan by treating mounds and ground pesticides in order to keep the spring return of ants to a minimum.



## Recess

- ★ Regardless of vaccination status, and even though students are outside, ALL students need to wear masks for recess. Mask breaks are allowed only if students are outdoors and greater than six feet apart. To the extent possible, groups of students should not mix/intermingle.



## 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 Screening at Schools, Facilities & Buses



### **NEW!!**

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

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

- They have symptoms of COVID-19,
- They or someone in their home has tested positive for COVID-19,
- They have been in close contact with anyone that has been diagnosed with COVID-19,
- They are awaiting test results, or
- They have been advised by the health department or a healthcare provider to isolate or quarantine.

Staying home when sick is essential to keep infections out of schools and prevent spread to others. **If you have any one of the following symptoms, please stay home and call your school nurse.**

- Fever or Chills (temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or higher)
- Sore throat, Runny Nose, or Congestion
- Cough (for people with chronic cough due to allergies or asthma, a change in their cough from baseline)
- Shortness of breath or Difficulty breathing (for people with asthma, a change from their baseline breathing)
- Muscle or Body aches
- Fatigue
- New loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea, Vomiting, or Nausea
- Headache

Quarantining  
& Isolation  
Protocols  
for Students

**NEW!!**

- ★ The school nurse will determine if a student needs to quarantine/isolate.
- ★ If a student is required to isolate they will need to be on isolation for 10 days. They may return to in person learning sooner if they have a proof of a negative PCR COVID 19 Test.
- ★ If a student is required to quarantine, the quarantine dates will be provided to the parents, principals, and teachers.
- ★ \*Per our local health department there is no test/testing accepted to get out of quarantine early.\*
- ★ OCS will continue to follow guidelines by [NCDPI](#), [NCDHHS](#), [OCHD](#) & [ABC Science Collaborative](#) including quarantine decisions for vaccinated staff and students.
- ★ **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 until a confirmed positive COVID-19 test is received. If a parent refuses to test their child or seek an alternate diagnosis or does not produce COVID-19 test results after 3 days\* of onset of symptoms then that child is a presumptive positive and their siblings will be considered a household member exposure, and will need to quarantine for 10 days. The quarantine period will begin after the last known close contact. (the child may be out for a total of 20 days)
- ★ \*School nurses may extend this timeline in cases where the results are still pending after 3 days.



COVID Notifications

- ★ Close contacts will continue to be notified.
- ★ OCS will continue to inform the public of positive COVID cases via our [online dashboard effective Friday, July 15 for HES; Friday, August 27 for all other schools](#)



Middle and High School

- ★ **NEW!!** 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.
- ★ **Testing:** Students who participate in athletics, club sports or extracurricular activities will be required to complete bi-weekly COVID-19 testing unless they are vaccinated (not applied to students who are too young to be vaccinated). Unvaccinated students who do not have parental permission to complete testing as outlined above will be ineligible to participate until they: show proof of vaccination or complete the parental permission

**Extracurricular Activities  
(Including Athletics)**

form for COVID-19 testing.

- ★ **COVID Vaccine Clinics:** OCS will continue to offer pop-up COVID vaccination clinics at schools.
- ★ **NEW!!** With the Orange County transmission rates shifting from high to substantial, fans at **all** athletic events and extracurricular performances at all middle schools and high schools will also be able to experience relaxed health/safety guidelines. For fans at any **outdoor** OCS athletic event and extracurricular performance (middle and high schools) effective Wednesday, October 27:
  - Optional masking **outdoors**. Masks are recommended.
  - Optional physical distancing **outdoors** for non-household members. Recommended 3 ft.
  - Capacity limits are removed for **outdoor** venues.
  - Selling concessions are approved for **outdoor** athletic events.
  - The Superintendent has authority to change Health & Safety Requirements for indoor state playoff games at the high school level only.
- ★ **NEW!!** The new, more relaxed outdoor mask updates **FOR HIGH SCHOOLS ONLY** do not apply to student athletes on the sidelines or students who are participating in close proximity to other students during extracurricular activities at this time.
- ★ The Superintendent has authority to change Health & Safety Requirements for indoor state playoff games at the high school level only.



**Facility Use &  
Safety Drills**

- ★ Due to high transmission of COVID in the community right now, all individuals renting facilities must follow established health and safety guidelines including masking requirements, physical distancing, and contact tracing. The district also reserves the right to cancel scheduled events based on the closure of schools, health or safety concerns, or to protect the school environments from transmission of COVID-19. Email [OCS.facilities@orange.k12.nc.us](mailto:OCS.facilities@orange.k12.nc.us) for more details.
- ★ **NEW UPDATE:** Issues with two vendors have led the district maintenance team to secure rental tents on school campuses (as opposed to permanent structures) for now. The district will continue to seek qualified vendors to provide temporary *and* permanent shade structures on campuses. The zoning department and fire marshal have both approved temporary use of tents following identified restrictions in order to allow for partial shade such as pop-up tents and umbrellas.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ 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.</li> <li>★ 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.</li> <li>★ <b>NEW UPDATE:</b> There is <b>not</b> a shortage of consumable soap, paper towels or toilet paper in the schools. Our custodians will continue to check restrooms throughout the day to make sure restrooms are fully stocked with soap, paper towels and toilet paper. Students will be reminded to let the office staff or a custodian know if supplies are out in restrooms so they can be restocked.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Field Trips &amp; Travel</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ <b>NEW UPDATE:</b></li> <li>★ <b>Student field trips</b> in grades K-8 will be allowed outside the county to areas <b>without</b> High Community Transmission for COVID-19 and also while following regular field trip procedures. Students will be required to wear masks <b>indoors and outdoors</b> while attending all out-of-county field trips at this time.</li> <li>★ Student field trips for <b>grades 9-12</b> are now authorized for in-state travel regardless of the community transmission rate for COVID-19. Students in grades 9-12 will be expected to follow the health and safety measures that are in place.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Water Fountain Usage</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ 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.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Sharing Items</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ 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.</li> <li>★ 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mask Breaks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Mask breaks are allowed if students are outdoors and <u>greater than</u> 6 feet apart with <b>no</b> talking among students. The minimum is 6 feet separation between students. Mask breaks should last no longer than 5 minutes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>K-5 General Music</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ PK-5 cannot use wind instruments inside due to no specialized wind instrument masks or bell covers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Chorus/Choir</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Specialized singers' masks will be worn. Bipolar Ionization machines have been put in the ductwork in addition to the HEPA filtration unit in all classrooms. Limit singing/performing to 15 minutes per hour while indoors.</li> <li>★ <b>NEW!!</b> Following diminishing community transmission rates and no secondary transmissions within these</li> </ul>

	<p>classrooms, the district recommendation is to allow for 50 minutes of playing, singing or performance time while following previous safety protocol for wearing masks and using bell covers for wind instruments. (This was an increase of 50 minutes from 40 minutes of playing.) This recommendation follows best practices identified by the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation.</p>
<p><b>Band</b></p>	<p>★ Bell covers and masks used indoors and outdoors. Masks worn at all times unless exception applies. Limit playing of wind instruments to 15 minutes per hour while indoors. Exception: Band students may take off masks while on the field marching for wind instrument players so long as they are spaced 10 ft apart.</p> <p>★ <b>NEW!!</b> Following diminishing community transmission rates and no secondary transmissions within these classrooms, the district recommendation is to allow for 50 minutes of playing, singing or performance time while following previous safety protocol for wearing masks and using bell covers for wind instruments. (This was an increase of 50 minutes from 40 minutes of playing.) This recommendation follows best practices identified by the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation.</p>
<p> <b>How to Report Non-Compliance Issues or Concerns</b></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"> <li>1. Contact your child's principal.</li> <li>2. Submit an email to <a href="mailto:covid.hotline@orange.k12.nc.us">covid.hotline@orange.k12.nc.us</a>.</li> <li>3. Leave an anonymous message at 919-245-4150 (internal extension 13333).</li> </ol>