

OCS Health & Safety Updates *as of September 27, 2021*






PLEASE NOTE: After months of decline, North Carolina is experiencing a rapid increase in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations among those who are unvaccinated. The Delta variant, which is now the predominant strain of the COVID-19 virus in North Carolina, is significantly more contagious than the original virus. While the original virus spread from one person to an average of two or three people, the Delta variant is spreading from one person to an average of six people. 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**

- ★ Due to the recent impacts of the Delta variant of COVID, effective immediately, masking is required indoors and outdoors regardless of vaccination status for all OCS students, staff, and visitors/volunteers.
- ★ Masks should be worn indoors and outdoors while on OCS property or transportation.
- ★ 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 immunizations in order to attend school in-person
- ★ Physical distancing by at least 3 feet will be implemented whenever possible.
- ★ Temperature checks and screening questions are **no longer** required. However, we are asking all staff and students to stay home if they have any COVID symptoms or are awaiting test results.
- ★ **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 **as needed** for the cleaning of shared program equipment.
- ★ 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.
- ★ OCS will follow the NC Department of Public Instruction's guidance for student and staff quarantining - [StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit](#) - in coordination with the Orange County Health Department.

<p>Visitors and Volunteers</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Visitors to schools, including volunteers, will be limited to parents and other individuals with appointments that are necessary to carry out educational functions on the school campus. ★ Universal masking is required indoors and outdoors, regardless of vaccination status for all OCS visitors and volunteers. ★ As of September 27, 2021, Individuals who are on the <u>approved volunteer list</u>, must show proof of vaccination in order to provide service in OCS schools and worksites. ★ Masks should be worn at all times while on OCS property or transportation.
 <p>Instruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ 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.
 <p>Remote Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Remote learning option is offered to all K-12 students through the <u>OCS Online Academy</u>. 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 <u>michelle.fournier@orange.k12.nc.us</u> if you would like to be added to the wait list or if you have any other questions. ★ 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, we are asking all staff and students 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>



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.
- ★ 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](#).



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](#).



Quarantine Protocols

- ★ OCS will continue to collaborate with the Orange County Health Department for contact tracing and quarantine protocols.
- ★ OCS will continue to follow guidelines by [NCDPI](#), [NCDHHS](#), [OCHD](#) & [ABC Science Collaborative](#) including quarantine decisions for vaccinated staff and students.
- ★ **NEW COVID-19 Update by Orange County Health Department:** New guidance for schools and school settings (classroom, meals, physical education, bus, and afterschool - it **does not** apply to extracurricular activities and athletics) states that quarantine and exclusion from school/work can be avoided for close contacts under the following circumstances:
 - ★ Staff, teachers, and students who are fully vaccinated and do not have symptoms.
 - ★ Students who were exposed by another student, IF no symptoms and masks were used appropriately.
 - ★ Staff, teachers, and students who have been COVID-positive in the past 90 days and who do not have symptoms.
 - People who do not meet the above exceptions must quarantine and/or be excluded from school/work in accordance with current CDC recommendations and NC law, governing control measures.



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 Extracurricular Activities (Including Athletics)

- ★ Universal masking indoors and outdoors, both on and off the field, regardless of the sport AND regardless of the vaccination status. As of September 13, 2021, the only exception at this time is football, since it requires the use of mouthguards as safety equipment. Students who participate in football are exempt from masking while on the field of play, but must wear a properly fitting mask anytime they are off the field.
- ★ **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 form for COVID-19 testing.
- ★ **COVID Vaccine Clinics:** OCS will continue to offer pop-up COVID vaccination clinics at schools.
- ★ **NEW!! - Revised health and safety measures:** OCS is appreciative of our students, staff, and families adherence to health and safety guidelines at athletic events. Therefore, revised health and safety measures that will allow for increased fan participation at events while maintaining mask and physical distancing requirements are effective immediately. These measures apply to all OCS athletic and extracurricular events. [MORE DETAILS](#)



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 for more details.
- ★ District administration is working to extend outdoor learning spaces on school campuses to include the use of large tents, more picnic tables, canopies, and shade structures.
- ★ 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.
- ★ 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 as needed for the cleaning of shared program equipment.





Field Trips & Travel

- ★ **NEW!!** - ALL field trips are currently suspended until further notice.

Water Fountain

- ★ Students should bring water bottles from home and are allowed to use the water bottle filling stations in schools.

Usage	Alternatives for students that do not bring water bottles, such as disposable cups, will be provided.
 Sharing Items	<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.
Mask Breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Mask breaks are allowed if students are outdoors and <u>greater than</u> 6 feet apart with no talking among students. The minimum is 6 feet separation between students. Mask breaks should last no longer than 5 minutes.
K-5 General Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ PK-5 cannot use wind instruments inside due to no specialized wind instrument masks or bell covers.
Chorus/Choir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ 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.
Band	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ 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.
 How to Report Non-Compliance Issues or Concerns	<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).