

2021-2022 School Year COVID-19 Guidance

- Schools in Transylvania County should adopt and enforce the guidance outlined in the StrongSchoolsNC toolkit starting July 30.
 - Based on recommendations from CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics
 - Prioritizes strategies shown to be most effective in lowering risk
 - Actions not supported by evidence have been removed
- *If these prevention strategies are not consistently implemented, anticipate spread of COVID-19 in classroom and extracurricular settings*
 - *More isolation and quarantine for students and staff*
 - *Additional missed instructional time*
 - *Possible staffing shortages*



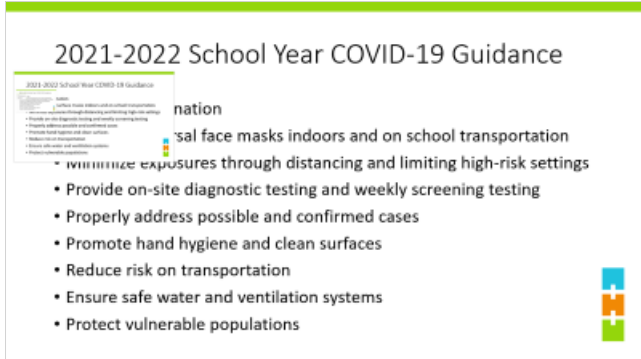
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Students/staff who are placed in isolation or quarantine will be excluded from school until they meet the following criteria:

Positive COVID-19 test or symptoms and no test:	10 days + 24 hours without fever and symptoms improving
Symptoms of COVID-19 and negative test result or alternative diagnosis:	24 hours with no fever and feeling well (unless in quarantine or told otherwise by a medical professional)
Unvaccinated with close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes) to someone with COVID-19:	Up to 14 days, beginning after the last known day of exposure (may be released sooner but must closely monitor symptoms and wear a mask for full 14 days)
Unvaccinated students with close contact in classroom setting:	<i>Do NOT need to quarantine IF masks were worn appropriately and consistently by person with COVID-19 and potentially exposed student (does not apply to adults or during athletics/extracurricular activities)</i>
Fully vaccinated with close contact and no symptoms:	<i>Do NOT need to quarantine (but should be tested 3-5 days after last exposure and must wear mask until negative test results received)</i>



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sal face masks indoors and on school transportation

- Minimize exposures through distancing and limiting high-risk settings
- Provide on-site diagnostic testing and weekly screening testing
- Properly address possible and confirmed cases
- Promote hand hygiene and clean surfaces
- Reduce risk on transportation
- Ensure safe water and ventilation systems
- Protect vulnerable populations



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PROMOTE VACCINATION

- Require staff to report COVID-19 vaccination status.
 - Require staff who are not vaccinated or do not disclose vaccination status to participate in regular screening testing.
- Encourage staff, eligible students, and families to be vaccinated.
 - Provide information to staff and families about vaccination.
 - Offer flexible sick leave/excused absences for vaccination and possible side effects.
 - **Consider** partnering to offer vaccines at schools.



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REQUIRE UNIVERSAL FACE MASKS INDOORS

- Require all children and staff in schools K-12 to wear face coverings consistently when indoors.
 - Provide masks to students who need them.
- Ensure 3 feet of distance at mealtimes when students cannot consistently wear masks.
 - Consider holding mealtimes outdoors if possible.
- Require that all passengers and staff wear a face covering on buses and other school group transportation.



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MINIMIZE EXPOSURES

- Maintain 3 feet of distance between all K-12 students to the greatest extent possible without excluding students from full-time in-person learning.
- Maintain at least 6 feet of distance between adults and students and between adults who are not vaccinated to the extent possible.
- Follow guidelines for youth sports (<https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/media/582/open>).
- **Consider** steps to minimize exposure in areas where staff may congregate (staff meetings, planning periods, lunch, recess, break rooms, etc.).
- **Consider** choosing physical education activities that limit close contact.
- **Consider** allowing visitors and volunteers as long as they follow the same protocols as staff and students.



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PROVIDE TESTING

- Require staff to report vaccination status.
 - Require staff who are not vaccinated or do not disclose vaccination status to participate in regular screening testing.
- Offer free rapid testing on-site at school for students/staff with symptoms or close contact to someone with COVID-19 (or refer to testing).
- Offer screening testing:
 - Weekly for unvaccinated staff and students.
 - Recommended weekly for unvaccinated students in sports/extracurricular activities.
 - Recommended twice-weekly for students in high-risk activities in areas with substantial community transmission.
 - (High-risk activities should be cancelled or held virtually in areas with high transmission unless all participants are vaccinated.)



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PROPERLY ADDRESS POSSIBLE AND CONFIRMED CASES

- Have staff and families self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Enforce that staff and students disclose symptoms and stay home (or go home) if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or a positive test for COVID-19.
- Immediately isolate symptomatic individuals at school in dedicated space.
 - Require them to wear a face covering while waiting to leave campus or be tested.
 - Plan for transportation for sick individuals.
 - Provide visual supervision by staff at least 6 feet away and wearing a face mask.
- Ensure that nurses or staff who provide direct patient care wear appropriate PPE.
- Report any suspected or confirmed cases to local public health. Assist local public health with contact tracing.
- Do not allow individuals to enter school or other activities until they are released from isolation/quarantine.



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PROMOTE HAND HYGIENE AND CLEAN SURFACES

- Provide adequate supplies for handwashing and hand sanitizing.
- Teach and reinforce handwashing.
- Clean surfaces once a day, prioritizing high-touch surfaces.
- If a sick person has been in the facility in the past 24 hours, clean and disinfect the area according to CDC guidance using an EPA-approved disinfectant. Ensure safe and correct storage of cleaning products.



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REDUCE RISK ON TRANSPORTATION

- Ensure that all students ages 5 or older and all staff/adults wear face coverings on school buses/transportation, unless exception applies.
- Plan for getting sick students home without group transportation and for substitutes for sick drivers.
- Open windows when the vehicle is in motion to increase circulation.
- Clean vehicles regularly. Clean frequently-touched surfaces prior to morning routes and afternoon routes.
- Provide hand sanitizer.
- ***Consider*** creating distance between individuals if possible.



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ENSURE SAFE WATER AND VENTILATION SYSTEMS

- Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible.
 - Increase total airflow
 - Improve air filtration
 - Reduce unfiltered recirculation
- Position fans carefully to not blow air directly from one person across another (use to exhaust air out open windows).
- Ensure that all water systems and faucets/drinking fountains are safe for use after prolonged shutdown.



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PROTECT VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

- Include accommodations on health-related plans to limit risk of exposure for students with special health needs.
- Enable staff who self-identify as high risk for severe COVID-19 illness to:
 - Minimize face-to-face contact and maintain 6 feet of distance from others
 - Modify job responsibilities to reduce exposure
 - Telework if possible.
- Create a plan to address requests for alternative learning arrangements.
- Offer remote or other learning options for students not in school due to isolation or quarantine.

