

2021-2022 MICS COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols

Updated March 14, 2022.

In accordance with the recommendations of the North Carolina Strong Schools Toolkit updated on March 4, 2022, MICS will implement updated protocols in support of maximizing learning while maintaining student and staff safety. These protocols will be reviewed throughout the school year in response to state and county updates regarding recommended practices.

Physical Distancing and Minimizing Exposure

The school will...

- Maintain a minimum of three (3) feet of distance between K-12 students within school settings to the greatest extent possible without excluding students from full-time, in-person learning.
- Maintain a minimum of six (6) feet between adults (teachers/staff/visitors) and students and between adults (teachers/staff/visitors) within school settings to the greatest extent possible.
- Allow visitors and volunteers to resume normal activities if they follow the same protocols as staff and students.

Testing and Handling Possible, Suspected, Presumptive, or Confirmed Positive Cases of COVID-19

The school will...

- Refer individuals to diagnostic testing who have symptoms of COVID-19 or disclose recent known close contact to a person with COVID-19.
- Have staff perform self-monitoring of symptoms.
- Have families conduct home-based symptom screening for students, following typical school policies to keep children at home when ill. Recommend that families refer children to diagnostic testing who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19.
- Immediately isolate symptomatic individuals to a designated area at the school.
- Require symptomatic persons to wear a mask while waiting to leave the facility or be tested.
- Require school nurses or dedicated school staff who provide direct patient care to wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and perform hand hygiene after removing PPE.
- Ensure symptomatic students remain under visual supervision of a staff member who is at least 6 feet away. The supervising adult should wear a face covering.
- Have a plan for how to transport an ill student or staff member home or to medical care.
- Implement cleaning and disinfecting procedures following CDC guidelines.
- Utilize NCDHHS and the CDC quarantine guidance.
- Require use of a face covering at the discretion of the Executive Director in the following circumstances:
 - In accordance with guidance from the Strong Schools Toolkit, the NCDHHS, and/or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”)
 - Where an individual tests positive for COVID-19
 - Where an individual has symptoms of COVID-19
 - In accordance with state or federal law, including but not limited to the Americans with Disabilities Act and Amendments.

The MICS Board of Directors will review any sustained and systematic required use of face coverings extending beyond circumstances involving positive test results or symptoms of COVID-19 in the course of regular board review and approval of the face covering policy.

- Enforce that staff and students disclose and stay at home or go home if:
 - They are showing COVID-19 symptoms, until they meet criteria for return described in the NC Strong Schools Toolkit

- They have tested positive for COVID-19, until they meet criteria for return described in the NC Strong Schools Toolkit
- Report to local health authorities any suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases among children and staff (as required by NCGS § 130A-136).
- Investigate instances of potential COVID-19 exposure and notify potentially exposed students or staff so they can receive appropriate public health guidance, testing, and access to any resources that might be needed.
- Adhere to the procedures for Exclusion and Criteria to return to school included in the NC Strong Schools Toolkit for allowing a student or staff member to return to school.

Cleaning and Hygiene

The school will...

- Provide adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol for safe use by staff and older children, paper towels, and tissues).
- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol by staff and older children.
- Clean surfaces once a day, prioritizing high-touch surfaces. If there has been a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, clean and disinfect the space using an EPA approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19). Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including securely storing and using products away from children, and allowing for adequate ventilation when staff use such products.

Transportation

The school will...

- Enforce that if an individual becomes sick during the day, they do not use group transportation to return home and follow protocols outlined above.
- Enforce if a driver becomes sick during the day, they follow protocols outlined above and not return to drive students until they meet criteria to return.
- Keep windows open while the vehicle is in motion to help reduce spread of the virus by increasing air circulation, if appropriate, safe, and weather permitting.
- Clean transportation vehicles regularly. Children should not be present when a vehicle is being cleaned.
- Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children and adequate ventilation when staff use such products.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces in the vehicle (e.g., surfaces in the driver's cockpit, hard seats, arm rests, door handles, seat belt buckles, light and air controls, doors and windows, and grab handles) prior to morning routes and prior to afternoon routes.
- Keep doors and windows open when cleaning the vehicle and between trips to let the vehicles thoroughly air out.
- Clean equipment including items such as car seats and seat belts, wheelchairs, walkers, and adaptive equipment being transported to schools.
- Create a plan for getting sick students home safely if they are not allowed to board the vehicle.
- Provide hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) to support healthy hygiene behaviors on all school transportation vehicles for safe use by staff and older children.

Ventilation Systems

The school will...

- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods.