

Employee Accountability Plan and Required Safety Protocols



Draft COVID-19 GUIDANCE | Last updated 09/29/2020

Introduction

WCPSS employees have a collective responsibility to create a safe learning and work environment for the approximately 160,000 students and 20,000 employees across all District schools and worksites. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this responsibility includes every employee taking affirmative steps to help slow the spread of COVID-19 by strictly adhering to the health safety protocols set forth below.

Every employee also has a responsibility to serve as a role model for students and their colleagues by complying with COVID-19 safety protocols. Strict adherence to these protocols will foster a districtwide culture of safety and ensure a successful return to our school buildings and worksites. This plan outlines required health safety protocols, provides links to key health guidance, and reminds employees of relevant Board policies.

Health experts serving on the [ABC Science Collaborative](#) and providing guidance to the school system have repeatedly stressed that **the single most critical factor in a successful return to in-person instruction during the pandemic is the development of and strict implementation of health safety protocols**. This plan may be updated as public health guidance and conditions change.

Understanding of Health Safety Guidance

Employees Must Have a Thorough Understanding of COVID-19 Health Guidance

All employees should have already completed the [Required Training Modules](#) and reviewed the [WCPSS Return to the Workplace Guide](#). Because this information is updated frequently, employees should regularly review these resources for updates and remain knowledgeable of the following health and safety guidance:

- ❑ [Strong Schools NC Public Health Toolkit](#)
- ❑ [North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Health Guidance for Schools](#)
- ❑ [WCPSS Return to the Workplace Guide for Employees](#)
- ❑ [Return to the Workplace Site on WakeConnect](#), including videos from the [Required Training Modules](#) on [Wearing a Face Covering](#), [Healthy Hygiene](#), and implementing other healthy practices.

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Follow All Health Protocols

Employees **Must** Strictly Abide By Protocols

(Key protocols are listed below but all protocols from guidance documents must be followed.)

Complete a Daily Symptom Screening

Employees must complete a daily health screening and temperature check before entering the work site, per the [Health Screening](#) guidance. Symptoms to monitor are listed in the guidance.

Employees must stay home or return home if:

- They have tested positive for COVID-19 and have not met criteria for returning to work;
- They have had close contact with a person with COVID-19 and have not met criteria for returning to work;
- They have a temperature of 100.4°F or higher; or
- They are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

Wear a Cloth Face Covering

Properly wearing a face covering is a critical measure to protect against the spread of COVID-19. Employees must wear cloth face coverings while at District worksites, including:

- Inside school buildings and anywhere on school grounds, including outside;
- While traveling on buses, vendor transportation, or other WCPSS vehicles;
- At all WCPSS worksites; and even when employees are six feet or more apart from other individuals.

The employee's face covering should fit properly and must be secured safely over the nose, mouth, and under the chin, [per CDC guidelines](#). Employees should wash reusable face coverings after each use.

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There are temporary exceptions to the face-covering requirement (e.g., eating, drinking, alone in an enclosed room). These are outlined in the [Face Covering Guidance](#).

Unless an employee has been granted an [exception to the face-covering requirement](#) from Human Resources because of a medical condition, employees are expected to strictly adhere to the face-covering requirement.

Disposable face coverings should be used if an employee unexpectedly needs a replacement face covering while at work.

Maintain Social Distance

Employees should stay six feet apart from other employees, students and visitors when feasible. While some job duties may require an employee to come within six feet of another employee or student, employees should take care to minimize opportunities for sustained close contact with others and, whenever possible, complete their duties while keeping social distance.

Employees should discourage students from congregating during arrival/dismissal and in stationary settings. Employees should remind their colleagues, students and visitors to maintain social distance. Additional information is included in the following guidance:

- ❑ [Social Distancing - Elementary](#)
- ❑ [Social Distancing - Middle](#)
- ❑ [Social Distancing - High](#)
- ❑ [Social Distancing - Central Services](#)

Wash Hands Frequently

Employees should wash their hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Employees should avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands, and remind students of this safety measure. When soap and water is not readily available, employees should use hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer should be available in each classroom and throughout all worksites. Employees should notify their site supervisor if they are running low on soap or hand sanitizer in their workspace. For additional information, see the [Healthy Hygiene](#) guidance.

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Implement Safety Protocols with Fidelity

These requirements are in place to protect the health and safety of all employees, students and visitors in our schools and worksites. Employees must answer screening questions truthfully, report health or safety concerns promptly, and follow protocols consistently and correctly. (For example, face coverings should properly cover the nose, mouth and chin, and should not be pulled down for conversations.)

Model Compliance

All employees should model compliance with face-covering and other protocols to create a school and workplace culture aligned with safety.

Address Student and Co-Worker Noncompliance with Protocols

Employees should regularly remind students of protocols and immediately address any student's noncompliance with safety protocols. For continued instances of student noncompliance, the employee should refer the student to the school administration.

If an employee observes a co-worker not complying with protocols, the employee should report the issue to the principal or the employee's immediate supervisor. Ensuring widespread compliance with protocols is essential. The District will not tolerate any retaliation against an employee who reports instances of noncompliance.

Consequences for Violation of Health Safety Protocols

The face-covering requirement and other health and safety protocols are critical tools in protecting against the spread of COVID-19. **Student and employee noncompliance with these requirements and protocols will be taken seriously.**

Principals and supervisors have been provided instructions regarding actions that should be taken to address employees who are not following safety requirements and health guidelines.

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In instances where a supervisor determines the employee seemed unaware that their conduct did not comply with health and safety rules or the noncompliance was inadvertent, the supervisor may address the issue by explaining the proper protocol to the employee and/or through a warning.

Serious, intentional or willful instances of noncompliance or repeated instances of noncompliance will be referred to Employee Relations and will be addressed through more serious discipline actions up to, and including, dismissal.

Other Board Policies Regarding Safety

Employees should also be familiar with Board policies that align with the protocols and responsibilities outlined in this plan. These policies and their relevant provisions include the following:

[Policy 4230 Communicable Diseases-Students \(New Manual\)](#)

"Employees are **required** to notify the principal if they have reason to believe that **any student is suffering from a communicable disease**," such as COVID-19.

Employees "**shall implement measures, including the appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE), to control the spread of communicable disease**" as directed. PPE includes face coverings worn to limit the spread of COVID-19.

[Policy 1510/4200/7270 School Safety \(New Manual\)](#)

"Staff and students **share the responsibility** for taking reasonable precautions and **following established safety measures** to create and maintain safe schools."

School employees "**shall enforce school rules pertaining to wearing personal protective equipment.**"

School employees "**shall wear and use appropriate personal protective equipment** as required for the safe performance of their specific job assignments," which, during the COVID-19 pandemic, is at all times while present at District sites.

[Policy 4201/7271 Injury and Loss Prevention \(New Manual\)](#)

"All employees are expected to follow safe work practices, **use appropriate personal protective equipment as instructed by their supervisors**, and attend safety education programs as assigned. Employees **must report unsafe** conditions or **work practices**, accidents, or injuries as soon as practicable, in accordance with established procedures."

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[Policy 5021 Prohibited Conduct on School Property and at School Events \(New Manual\)](#)

Individuals, including employees, are prohibited from engaging in conduct "threatening the health or safety of others" while on school property or at school-related events.

[Policy 2333/3033/4033 Reporting Information to the Principal and External Agencies \(Old Manual\)](#)

"Any employee who has reason to believe that a **fellow employee has a reportable communicable disease** and is not following safe practices **shall report the situation to his/her principal or supervisor.**"

[Policy 3031/4031 Communicable Diseases or Conditions / Employees \(Old Manual\)](#)

"**Failure to follow** these universal precautions **may result in disciplinary action** against the offending employee. Instances of an employee's failure to follow the universal precautions **shall be reported to the school principal or the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources...**"

[Policy Code: 3005/2305/4005 Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct \(Old Manual\)](#)

"All school system employees hold positions of public trust; they are responsible for the education of students and also serve as examples and role models to students. Each employee is **responsible for both the integrity and the consequences of his or her own actions ... Failure to comply** with this policy **will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.**"

[Policy Code: 3000 Responsibility for Compliance with Board Policy \(Old Manual\)](#)

"All school employees shall be held responsible for familiarizing themselves with the printed policies of the Board and **shall be held accountable for compliance.**"

Compliance is Critical to Our Health and Safety

Attention and strict adherence to the health safety protocols we have in place in our school district are among the most important actions we can take to support the successful return of students and employees to our school buildings and worksites.