

## Updated Covid Guidance

January 2022

NCDHHS has updated the [StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit](#) isolation and quarantine guidance to align with [updated guidance](#) from Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, which outlines what individuals should do if they contract or are exposed to COVID-19 to help slow the spread to others.

The updated guidance changes how long and under what conditions staff and students need to be excluded from school because they have tested positive for or been exposed to COVID-19 (isolation and quarantine).

- 1. Staff and students who have symptoms, regardless of vaccination status should** – get tested and isolate from others while waiting for a result. If testing is not possible, follow the guidance below as if the person is positive.
- 2. Isolation: Staff and students who test positive, regardless of vaccination status, and**
  - a. Do not have symptoms** – should isolate from others for 5 days, then wear a mask for 5 additional days.
  - b. Have symptoms** – should isolate from others until fever-free and symptoms are improving. Individuals should isolate for at least 5 days since symptoms began and then wear a mask for 5 additional days. At this time, additional testing is not required.
- 3. Quarantine: Staff and students who are exposed to someone with COVID-19, and**
  - a. Not vaccinated** – stay away from others for 5 days, get tested on day 5 after exposure, and if they test negative, return to school while wearing a mask for 5 additional days.
  - b. Vaccinated and eligible for a booster, but not yet been boosted** – stay away from others for 5 days, get tested on day 5 after exposure, and if they test negative, return to school while wearing a mask for 5 additional days.
  - c. Vaccinated, and have either received a booster or are not yet eligible for a booster** – individuals do not need to stay away from others, but should wear a mask for 10 days.
- 4. StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit guidance that remains unchanged**  
Individuals who are not fully vaccinated after a close contact in a classroom or other school setting if masks were being worn appropriately and consistently by both the person with COVID-19 and the potentially exposed person do NOT need to quarantine.

**Please note that masking is required beyond just the number of days listed above. Should masks become optional, this will be the masking requirement for each instance listed above.**