

Below you will find guidance provided by the NC Strong Schools Handbook (last updated August 18th) and recommendations from the CDC on guidance for Covid-19 prevention in K-12 schools. The italicized and highlighted areas, explain what measures SeA is taking to comply with these guidelines and recommendations.

Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in fall 2021 is a priority.

SeA is trying to keep students and staff safe and in school. Last year's testing data shows that students need to be on campus to ensure the best possible learning environment. Teachers and staff are doing their very best to make sure that your child's education continues in the safest conditions possible.

Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to prevent hospitalization and severe illness. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports.

The majority of teachers and staff at SeA have been completely vaccinated or received their first dose. Vaccination is encouraged for students and families ages 12 or older.

The NC Strong Schools Toolkit states K-12 schools should make masks universally required while indoors regardless of vaccination status given that most of the student population in those grades are not yet eligible for vaccination.

SeA requires face masks indoors for all students, staff, and visitors regardless of vaccination status. Masks are worn throughout the day with the exception of snack, lunch and recess. Masks are also required while on the school bus. We ask that parents reinforce with their child(ren) the importance of properly wearing masks at all times.

In addition to universal masking, the Strong Schools Toolkit recommends schools maintain a minimum of 3 feet of physical distance between K-12 students who are not fully vaccinated within classrooms to reduce transmission risk. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, such as when schools cannot fully re-open while maintaining these distances, it is especially important to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as screening testing, proper hand washing and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing, and cleaning and disinfection.

SeA is fully re-opened, therefore maintaining 3 feet of physical distance at all times is a challenge within classrooms. SeA does layer multiple other prevention strategies, most importantly, requiring masks. We also strongly encourage at home screening and testing when exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms, enforce proper hand washing and respiratory etiquette, contact tracing, and cleaning and disinfecting of classrooms and all high contact surfaces.

To further reduce exposure, SeA has changed how classes move throughout the building. Grades 5/6 and 7/8 will no longer switch classrooms. Instead, teachers will rotate among classes.

Because students cannot mask consistently during mealtimes, students should maintain physical distancing of a minimum of 3 feet to the fullest extent possible when actively eating. Consider having meals outside where risk of virus transmission is low.

Mrs. Stone has instituted changes to snack breaks and lunch schedules to minimize exposure. Snack time in the classroom is no more than 10 minutes long and is timed by teachers. The lunch schedule has been changed so that there is only one class at a time in the café, beginning August 25th. This will enable students to sit at least 3 feet apart during lunch and minimize exposure.

Testing for Covid-19 can help quickly identify those who are infected and those who have been exposed, but not yet developed symptoms.

SeA asks families to please be diligent by screening your children daily BEFORE coming to school. If your child has any questionable symptoms, please keep your child at home and get him/her tested. If someone in your household has symptoms, please keep your child/children at home and get him/her tested. Students should not return to school until they have been cleared by a physician and completed the recommended quarantine guidelines. This will greatly help in our efforts to minimize exposure and keep students and staff healthy and in school.

Contact tracing is essential in K-12th grade schools in protecting students, families, and staff by letting individuals know they may have been exposed to Covid-19 and should monitor their health for signs and symptoms of Covid-19 and get tested.

If a possible direct exposure occurs in your child's classroom, you will be notified. Please keep in mind that SeA does not have a school nurse, so Kristen Stone, with the help of teachers, is handling contact tracing at SeA. Please be patient as we work to answer

your questions and address your concerns. The first priority will be notifying the families of those who may have had a direct exposure.

CDC Guideline's for Exposure in the K-12th Grade Indoor Classroom Setting:

Per the CDC's guidelines for **exposure** in the K-12th grade indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory confirmed or clinically compatible illness) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.

CDC/NC Strong Schools Toolkit Guidelines for Quarantine:

Isolation is required for all presumptive or confirmed cases of Covid-19. Quarantine is required for an individual who has been a close contact of someone who is determined positive with Covid-19 either through testing or symptom consistent diagnosis, **WITH THE FOLLOWING THREE EXCEPTIONS:**

- Individuals who are **fully vaccinated and do not have symptoms DO NOT** need to quarantine after a close contact. The individual should get tested 3-5 days after exposure and wear a mask around others until receiving a negative test result.
- Individuals who have **tested positive for Covid-19 within the past 3 months and recovered and do not have symptoms DO NOT** have to quarantine.
- **Students 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. *Based on CDC guidance and studies.
- An additional potential exception to quarantine are persons who are **not fully vaccinated and have tested antibody positive within 3 months before or immediately following a close contact** may not need to quarantine IF they have limited or no contact with persons at high risk for severe Covid-19 illness.

The CDC continues to recommend quarantine for 14 days after last exposure. However, as of December 2, 2020, the CDC has offered options to reduce the duration of quarantine in either of the following two scenarios:

- 10 days of quarantine have been completed and no symptoms have been reported during daily at home monitoring.
- 7 days of quarantine have been completed, no symptoms have been reported during daily at home monitoring, and the individual has received results of a negative antigen or PCR/molecular test on a test taken no earlier than day 5 of quarantine.