



#EveryChildEveryChanceEveryDay

Dear PQ Families,

We are excited to begin transitioning back to a more normal school setting! Since March 16, 2020, our teachers and staff have shown their commitment to serving the students of Perquimans County Schools. We have faced many challenges through the pandemic, but our students, parents, and staff have overcome these obstacles and experienced a tremendous amount of academic success. A few of those successes include:

- All 4 Schools Met or Exceeded Growth
- All Subgroups Met or Exceeded Growth
- 95.45% of all tested areas K-12 Met or Exceeded Growth

This guidebook is designed to help families understand our operating procedures beginning February 21, 2022. Based on the updated Strong Schools Toolkit, DHHS no longer recommends individual contact tracing and exclusion from school of asymptomatic people after an identified exposure in schools. The school system is still committed to establishing mitigating efforts that aim to keep our students safe while they learn, but due to a significant decrease in positive cases, wearing a mask is now recommended but no longer required in Perquimans County Schools settings. Masks are still required by Federal Law on all school transportation vehicles. Fortunately, there are many additional actions that families, the school and the district staff can take to help lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread such as vaccination, screening, and testing.

The school system will continue to monitor cases and adjust masking procedures as appropriate in consultation with health officials.

We are committed to providing our students with the best possible education and are looking forward to a successful second semester of the school year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tanya H. Turner'.

Tanya Turner, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Perquimans County Schools

PQ COVID Mitigation Plan for 2021-2022



Mission

Perquimans County Schools provide a 21st Century personalized education and ensure career readiness for every child, every day.

PQ Proud!

[StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit \(K-12\)](#)

Table of Contents

Why Wear a Mask?	4
Why Vaccinate?	5
Transportation	6
Screening - Entering the School Building	6
Instructional Spaces	7
Athletics and Extracurricular Activities	7
What to Expect If Your Child Gets COVID or is Exposed?	7

Why Wear a Mask?

Through masking and mitigation efforts last year, Perquimans County Schools had no school clusters. Due to the efforts that were put into place with masks and other mitigating strategies, our district was able to open school on August 26 and keep the doors open the entire school year. An added benefit of universal masking is protection of students and staff against other respiratory illnesses that would take time away from school.

When teachers, staff, and students who are not fully vaccinated consistently and correctly wear a mask, they protect others as well as themselves. Consistent and correct mask use by people who are not fully vaccinated is especially important indoors and in crowded settings when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

The peer-reviewed scientific evidence for the protective effect of face masks and respiratory virus infection in healthcare and community settings is overwhelming. This [link](#) of studies focuses on the usefulness of wearing facemasks during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly all these studies conclude that, outside of the healthcare setting, wearing a face mask reduces one's risk of being exposed to SARS CoV2 virus, and transmitting the virus to others, if infected. Controlled experiments similarly showed that mask wearing reduced the amount of exposure to virus particles. Importantly, countries, states and jurisdictions that imposed mask wearing mandates and encouraged adherence were generally associated with lower disease transmission and overall decreases in disease trends. Despite political controversies surrounding mask wearing, the published scientific evidence strongly supports mask wearing, coupled with hand hygiene and social distancing to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in the community.

Why Vaccinate?

Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Achieving high levels of COVID-19 vaccination among eligible students as well as teachers, staff, and household members is one of the most critical strategies to help schools safely resume full operations. People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are at low risk of symptomatic or severe illness, including hospitalization or death. A growing body of evidence suggests that people who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are also less likely to have an asymptomatic infection or transmit COVID-19 to others than people who are not fully vaccinated.

COVID-19 vaccines are available in North Carolina to everyone ages 5 and older. The Perquimans County Health Department is accepting vaccine appointments for all those eligible (252-426-2100). Parental consent is required. The vaccine is free everywhere in North Carolina, no government ID or insurance is required, depending on where you get your vaccine, you may need to make an appointment, and everyone can be vaccinated, regardless of their immigration status. Getting vaccinated will not affect your immigration status.

More information can be found about vaccinations in the following resources:

- [NC DHHS FAQs](#)
- [CDC Key Things to Know](#)
- [CDC Vaccine Benefits](#)
- [CDC Vaccine Safety & Monitoring](#)
- [CDC Vaccine Safety Publications](#)
- [CDC Adverse Events Reported After COVID vaccination](#)

Transportation

Effective January 29, 2021 the CDC issued a federal "Order" requiring face coverings on all "conveyances" with limited exceptions such as private vehicles. The federal government clearly takes the position that school buses (yellow and activity) are covered by the CDC Order. Federal law takes precedence over any State law, guidance or recommendations and the federal CDC Order does mandate the use of face coverings on school buses.

Bus

- Masks are required on the school bus, activity bus, or any form of school transportation..
- No more than two students will be allowed to sit per seat when feasible.
- Buses will be cleaned and sanitized after completing the morning run to prepare for the afternoon run. They will be cleaned and sanitized again after completing the afternoon run to prepare for the next day.
- Hand sanitizer will be available as appropriate on the bus.
- 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.
- If an individual becomes sick during the day, they will not be allowed to ride the bus.
- Parents are asked to screen their students for symptoms before putting them on the bus each day and to keep their children home if they are experiencing any symptoms.
- Failure to wear a mask appropriately may result in a child being removed from the bus.
- Masks can be provided for any child that needs it.

Screening

Daily health screenings can help reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19. All students and employees who are sick or not feeling well must stay home. If a student or staff member begins to not feel well while on campus, shows signs of illness, or becomes sick during the day, they have the option to be tested at school to stay on campus or they must leave campus until symptoms improve. On site COVID testing will be made available to students whose parents consent for their child to be tested.

School Entry

- Masks are optional but recommended for all students, staff, and visitors. We recommend masks in all circumstances where social distancing cannot be achieved.
- All students, staff and visitors will pass through a temperature checkpoint.
- Parents are asked to screen their students for symptoms before sending them to school each day and to keep their children home if they are experiencing any symptoms. Please call the school nurse to inform them if your child has symptoms.
- Staff members are asked to self-screen for symptoms daily and test and/or stay home if they are experiencing any symptoms.

- Parents and/or Guardians will have the option to sign a consent form to have their child COVID tested at school. COVID-19 rapid antigen tests will be used in the testing program. These tests will use a small nasal swab to collect a sample from the lower part of the nose. The tests give results in about 15 minutes.

Symptomatic Students

Individuals who exhibit any symptoms of illness will be isolated (with adult supervision) in a preselected room and required to wear a mask. A parent or guardian will be required to pick the child up from school. Students will not be allowed to ride the bus.

Instructional Spaces

When working in collaborative groups, students and staff will be highly recommended to wear their masks.

Requirements

- Desks will be placed at least 3 feet apart to the extent possible in order to lower the risk of transmission of any illness.
- Students and staff will be recommended to wear masks during small group instruction.
- Hand sanitizer will be available to students as they enter and exit the classroom during the day.
- Classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized at the end of each day.

Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

Requirements

Perquimans County Schools will follow the North Carolina High School Athletic Association's guidance and school guidelines and procedures for athletic participation. This includes safety precautions for our student-athletes as well as our spectators.

What To Expect If Your Child Gets COVID Or Is Exposed?

Symptoms: Students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19, should stay home and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care. Staying home when sick is essential to keep infections out of schools and prevent spread to others.

For students, staff, and teachers with chronic conditions, symptom presence should represent a change from their typical health status to warrant exclusion from school. Occurrence of any of the symptoms below while a student, teacher, or staff member is at school suggests the person may be referred for diagnostic COVID-19 testing or evaluation.

- Fever (temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher)
- Sore throat
- Cough (for people with chronic cough due to allergies or asthma, a change in their cough from baseline)
- Difficulty breathing (for people with asthma, a change from their baseline breathing)
- New loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

More information on [how to monitor for symptoms](#) is available from the CDC.

Diagnosed: People presumed to have or are diagnosed with COVID-19 must stay home until they meet the criteria for return to school. Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keeping COVID-19 infections out of schools and preventing spread to others.

CONFIRMED POSITIVE COVID CASE

Isolation is required for all presumptive or confirmed cases of COVID-19. **Isolation separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.**

You can stop isolating yourself when you can answer YES to ALL THREE of the following questions:

- Has it been at least 5 days after the first day of symptoms; AND
- Has it been at least 24 hours since the person had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); AND
- Are other symptoms of COVID-19 improving? The person is not required to have documentation of a negative test in order to return to school.

The person must continue to wear a mask for 10 days after the first day of symptoms to minimize the risk of infecting others, unless an exemption to mask use applies. Asymptomatic positives need to quarantine at least 5 days since their positive test and then mask for the remaining 5 days.

*If you are not sure if you have COVID, it is better to isolate using these guidelines.

Quarantine is no longer required or recommended 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.

PQ COVID Information for 2022-2023

Perquimans County Schools follows the guidelines from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), Albemarle Regional Health Services (ARHS), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Our district remains committed to keep students and staff safe and provide in-person instruction in a safe learning environment. Health Services are located at each school in the district and will monitor and respond as necessary to keep students and staff safe.

* At-home COVID-19 test kits are provided to staff and students as requested. The individual rapid antigen test kits each contain two tests - each kit is intended for a single person to use at home. COVID-19 tests are offered to schools to increase access to testing for North Carolina's children and educators.

*Access to health/sanitation/PPE supplies for school staff/students and to properly sanitize school buildings throughout the district will be available as conditions warrant.