



Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. Can you shorten the school day?

No, we cannot shorten the school day. There is not a specific law or legislation mandating the student release time, but there is state law mandating a minimum number of student instructional days and/or hours. If a school releases students 30 minutes early, they would need to begin the instructional day earlier, meaning buses would also need to run earlier. Many districts prefer not to begin the instructional day until after 7:30AM to ensure students who ride the bus are not waiting in the dark to be picked up, or in the severe cold during early winter mornings.

Q2. Can you increase disinfecting and sanitizing?

Yes, as the year progresses, we will be looking at how the district can sanitize on off days (ex. early release, holidays, and weekends). Click on the “[reopening of schools](#)” tab on our district page to see our cleaning and sanitation process maps.

Q3. What is the difference between isolation and quarantine?

Isolation separates sick individuals with a contagious disease from people who are not sick. Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.

Q4. What are class sizes and remote instruction requirements?

Currently, Halifax County Schools are operating under normal class size requirements and the latest version of the [NC Public Health Toolkit](#). NC Public Health Toolkit does recommend 3 feet of social distancing, if possible, but it also states, “Because of the importance of in-person learning, schools where not everyone is fully vaccinated should implement physical distancing to the extent possible within their structures, but not exclude students from in-person learning to keep a minimum distance requirement”. Further, Senate Bill 654, which has been signed by Governor Cooper, contains limits on the district’s use of remote instruction. Under the bill, schools without a good cause waiver may use up to five remote instruction days or 30 remote instruction hours when schools are unable to open due to severe weather conditions, energy shortages, power failures, or other emergency situations and may use that time towards the required instructional days or hours for the school calendar.



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Q5. What happens when one sibling tests positive for COVID-19?

If your child tests positive for COVID-19, any sibling(s) that resides in the same home must quarantine. Students who are quarantined must be tested after the 5-day window. If the student does not test positive for COVID-19, that student who was quarantined may return back to school if they are able to quarantine from the family member in isolation due to a positive COVID-19 diagnosis.

Q6. Can HCS switch to full virtual learning like we did last year?

No, Halifax County Schools did not elect to provide virtual instruction for the 2021-2022 school year. Federal, state and local authorities agree that students learn best in person. Additionally, last year while HCS was fully remote, connectivity was a major issue. In many cases, the majority of our children could not connect virtually even with a hot spot that was provided by the district. Our students learn best face to face. Everyone must work together and follow the plan to keep us safe. For more information, please visit our web page. Click on the [reopening of school's link](#). Review the processes being implemented to keep us safe.

Q7. How are you reducing possible exposure during eating periods and bus rides?

Our practices are aligned with the [NC Strong Schools Toolkit](#). We are still exploring safe ways for our students to eat. We are in the process of purchasing outdoor sitting mats and picnic tables where students can enjoy their meals outside. We are also seating student's face-to-back to limit the exposure of droplets. As a practical matter, more social distancing typically requires more teachers and staff to ensure students are still being adequately monitored as they are more spread out. In regards to social distancing on school buses, placing less students on a bus requires more buses and bus drivers. Unfortunately, the majority of school districts in our state continue to have shortages of bus drivers and educators, and the ongoing pandemic has only exacerbated these shortages.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q8. Has Halifax County Schools administration considered the possibility of mandating vaccinations for all teachers, faculty, staff and students?

At this time Halifax County Schools has not considered the possibility of mandating vaccinations for all teachers, faculty, and students over 12 years old. We currently have mandatory face coverings, social distancing to the greatest extent possible, and regularly disinfecting and sanitizing to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Furthermore, we are doing weekly surveillance COVID testing. As the year progresses, we will continue to look into other options that will ensure the health and safety of our students and staff.

Q9. What do I do when the school reports a positive case for my student after a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test and then tests negative with a follow up test?

The first question you will be asked is if the 2nd test was a PCR test and if it was done 5 days after the 1st test. According to the CDC and our local Health Department, a positive test is a positive test and a minimum 10-day isolation is required, even if you receive negative PCR test results after 5 days. If there are no symptoms after 10 days, your student may return back to school. Our local public health authorities make the final decisions about how long quarantine should last, based on local conditions and needs. Follow the recommendations of your local public health department if you need to quarantine or isolate.