

2021-22

COVID-19 Handbook

Revision date: 3/1/2022



How to Use This Handbook

This COVID-19 Handbook serves to address the unique circumstances of the 2021-22 school year. School policies and procedures have been implemented to safeguard the health of our community. Please read this handbook in its entirety. The NGFS community will be notified about updates to this handbook.

We are committed to helping each family navigate this challenging time. Please feel free to pass it along to anyone who might be helping care for your children. **If you have questions at any time, please contact us at health@ngfs.org and a member of the health team will be in touch.**

Ongoing Health and Safety Monitoring

Members of the NGFS COVID-19 health team convene regularly to monitor health indicators reported by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, the Guilford County Health Department, the CDC, the Harvard Global Health Institute, and other organizations. We will continually monitor the metrics defined as relevant and/or predictive by the CDC and NCDHHS. A host of data points will factor into our community's health status and inform any actions New Garden Friends School will take.

Our goal is to keep our school operations and instruction calibrated to public health conditions in NC, specifically in Guilford County. We will continue to rely on the guidance, consideration, and mandates established by local, state and national health experts and leaders. Regular monitoring of the overall health and well-being of our school community will be considered independently.

We carefully watch trends as well as CDC and state and local guidelines and are aware that guidance is adjusted frequently. As a school, we take a conservative "wait and see" approach; you will typically see a lag between the time local guidelines change and when school policy is updated. This is intentional.

The Important Roles That Families Play

The partnership between NGFS and our families is critical to keeping our community healthy and safe. Here at school, we have gone to great lengths to layer multiple risk mitigation strategies. For these strategies to be effective, our students, staff, and families must consistently adhere to personal behaviors outside of school that reflect best practices for limiting the spread of infection. These best practices include vaccination, the use of well-fitted face masks when appropriate, physical distancing, and frequent and thorough handwashing and hygiene.

Families play a vital role in maintaining safety at school. **The number one safety measure is to keep a student home when sick.**

How you can help at home

Get vaccinated. We strongly encourage all eligible household members to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. As a school, we believe in the efficacy of COVID vaccines and encourage all eligible individuals to be vaccinated. For more information about vaccination, visit the [NC DHHS website, to "Find your spot to take your shot."](#) Please follow these links for [CDC guidance on vaccination](#) and [what we know about the Omicron variant](#).

We do not require vaccines for eligible students as a condition of attendance at this time. We recognize and respect that this is a confidential medical decision involving many factors and fully support all of our families in making the decision they and/or their medical provider believe is in the best interest of their student.

NGFS uses a layered approach to risk mitigation

These strategies include:

- Vaccination
- Basic sick policy that individuals stay home when sick
- The appropriate use of well-fitted face masks ([CDC mask guidance](#))
Masks are currently required indoors until after spring break. Face masks are optional outdoors. After spring break, we plan to go [mask optional](#) if trends continue as expected.
- Physical distancing
- [Handwashing and respiratory etiquette](#)
- Maximizing time spent outdoors
- Increased ventilation of indoor spaces whenever possible
- COVID-19 testing at school for K-12 students as needed (may not be available in summer)
- [Cleaning](#) and maintaining healthy facilities

Staying home when sick

We understand that some students may experience chronic symptoms. If a student falls into this category, please send a note from the student's healthcare provider to health@ngfs.org so that we may be aware of ongoing situations.

If your student needs to see a health care provider for an issue that keeps your student out of school, please have the provider complete our [Return to School form](#) and send it to health@ngfs.org. The family fills out one side and the provider completes the other side.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS*
may include any of the following:

Runny nose or Congestion, a change from baseline
Sore throat
New or worsening headache, a change from baseline
New or worsening cough, a change from baseline
Nausea, Vomiting, Diarrhea
Fever/Chills (100.4 or greater)
Fatigue (extreme)
Muscle aches/body aches
Loss of taste or smell
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

When a Student Develops Symptoms

This applies to BOTH fully vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals

- A student with SYMPTOMS should stay home or go home if they have any symptom from the COVID-19 symptom list and should be tested for COVID-19.
- If a symptomatic student has a positive rapid antigen or PCR test, the student must stay home for a minimum of 5 days. On Day 6 (day 0 is the date of the positive test) the student may return to school if:
 - symptoms have improved
 - they are fever free for 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication and
 - an at-school rapid antigen test is negative on the morning of their return
- If a symptomatic student has a negative rapid antigen test, the student must have a negative PCR test, as well as improved symptoms before being cleared to return to school by the Health Team.
- If symptoms have not improved, the student must stay out and may need to seek guidance from the primary health care provider.
- If tests are negative and the student is vomiting or has diarrhea, they may be cleared to return to school by the Health Team when it has been 24 hours since the last incident of vomiting or diarrhea.

When a Student has a known EXPOSURE

This applies to BOTH fully vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals

- A student that has been exposed to a COVID positive person should have a PCR test on Day 5 after exposure (Day 0 is the date of exposure).
- If the student develops symptoms, see above.
- If the known exposure is a member of the same household and complete isolation from the COVID positive person is not possible, the student must quarantine for 5 days, regardless of vaccination status.
- Please reach out to the health team at health@ngfs.org for specific guidance about the exposure.

Testing

NGFS is pleased to offer on-site testing for staff and K-12 students in collaboration with the State of North Carolina. These tests are the COVID-19 Nasal (anterior nares) Swab Collection PCR tests supplied by NCDHHS. Results are typically available in 24-48 hours.

In certain circumstances we offer on-site rapid antigen tests. To request any testing for your student, first complete the consent form [here](#) (it only needs to be completed once), then contact health@ngfs.org to arrange for testing.

The School Day

When students are on campus, the student must adhere to all COVID-19 policies.

If a student refuses to comply with COVID safety measures, the student will be sent home immediately. A second incident of refusal may result in the student being prohibited from being at school.

Face masks

Face masks are currently required indoors until after spring break. Face masks are optional outdoors. After spring break, we plan to go mask optional if trends continue as expected. (For details please refer to [this 2/25/22 email](#).) If your student is wearing a mask here are some best practices about masks.

- Face masks should have two or more layers and should [fit properly](#).
- If you want your student in a mask, the student must have 5 clean face masks (labeled with name) as well as a receptacle for soiled coverings. (We recommend a sealable container or bag that your child can manage without help.)
- [Face Mask guidance from the CDC](#)

If your student will be wearing a face mask, please teach your student how to properly use and remove a face mask.

Wearing Masks:

(great for younger students)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Srig59LN6ik>

How to Put On and Remove A Face Mask:

(more detailed explanation, great for 1st grade and up)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1eeQeAe80A>

Students will bring used face masks home daily. Please wash the face masks and have your child return them to school in order to keep an adequate supply on hand.

School Access for Parents and Visitors

We plan to gradually bring families back to campus at designated times as conditions allow.

If you would like to visit campus or speak with a school staff member in person, please email the person directly or call the office at 336-299-0964 to discuss arrangements.

Emergency Contacts and Medical Information

Parents must complete and submit all required student medical forms prior to the first day of school. Please consider your emergency contacts carefully.

Parents must provide at least 3 emergency contacts (parents can be included as part of the three contacts) who are able to pick up your student from school **within 30 minutes of receiving a call from the school if your student presents with a temperature, becomes ill during the school day, or is sent home for another reason.** If your student must go home, stay in your car and they will be escorted to the car. This year, if a student needs to be picked up from school for any reason, not just health related, we are asking that all authorized pick-ups adhere to the 30-minute window.

Late Arrival

Lower school parents/guardians should pull up to the front entrance of the school and call the main office at 336-299-0964 to arrange for a staff member to escort your student to their classroom. Middle and Upper School can be dropped off at the entrance of Building A.

Early Pick-up

When you arrive on campus to pick up your student, please park in front of the school and call the main office at 336-299-0964. On the lower campus, a staff member will escort your student to the car. If this early pick-up is for a scheduled appointment, please coordinate with school staff in advance so they will have their belongings packed and ready to go at the designated time of pick-up.

If the parent or guardian is not picking up, please make sure the person you send is on your authorized pick-up list in [ParentsWeb/FACTS Family Portal](#). When they call to pick up, a school staff member may verify identity if the person is unknown to them. Please make sure that person has a valid ID with them.

Hand Hygiene & Respiratory Etiquette

All students will be instructed in proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette techniques. Handwashing will be required at numerous times during the day, such as upon arrival; before and after eating; after toileting, sneezing, or coughing; before and after outside break times; before and after mask removal/replacement; and as needed. Hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) will be available at building entrances and in every classroom for safe use by staff and older students. Please reinforce these behaviors at home.

Sports and Activities

NGFS Sports protocols:

Face Masks

- Face masks are required indoors until after spring break. Face masks are optional outdoors. After spring break we plan to go mask optional if trends continue as expected.
- All coaches, athletes, officials, spectators, and all others from all participating schools must adhere to the health protocols in place.
- Masking is optional outdoors but students are welcome to wear masks if that is most comfortable for them.

Stay Home if sick

- All NGFS students and staff are required to stay home if sick. If the student has not been cleared to return to school by the Health team the student may not participate in practice or games.
- Visitors are expected to comply with this expectation. The NGFS Athletic department shares these guidelines with other teams before play.

Post-COVID Clearance

- At the recommendation of The American Academy of Pediatrics and the [NCISAA](#), it is our policy that if a student has been COVID positive at any time, the student's health care provider must specifically clear the student prior to participation in sports. Forms are available on the NGFS website [here](#). Completed forms should be sent to Dwon Clifton, Director of Athletics, at dclifton@ngfs.org.
- If you have questions about athletics, please contact Dwon.

Resources

- [Covid-19 Is A Vaccine-Preventable Disease For Kids Aged Five And Older](#)
- [Vaccine for 5-11 year olds](#)
- [Answers to Parents Top Concerns Regarding Vaccination](#)
- [Separating Fact from Fear \(Video\)](#)