

Policy Code: 4231/5021/7263 Face Coverings

The Caldwell County Board of Education is committed to providing a safe, orderly, and inviting learning environment and is implementing a layered mitigation strategy to lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread in schools.

The board recognizes that COVID-19 is an evolving situation in our schools and across our school system. The decision to make face masks either optional or required will be based on the review of timely data. The masking determination will be made by the Superintendent using a calculated weekly percentage representing students and staff in the Caldwell County Schools who tested positive for COVID during a given week. This percentage will be reported weekly, and a three-week rolling average of this percentage will serve as the face masking metric to determine the face masking status for the following week. This data and the face masking status for the coming week will be announced by the Superintendent and reported on the Caldwell County Schools website (www.caldwellschools.com). Social media announcements and phone call notifications will be initiated each Friday to announce the face masking status for the coming week. **Face masks will be required when this metric (the positivity rate for CCS students and staff) exceeds 0.5% for a three-week rolling average. Face masks will be optional when the positivity rate for CCS students and staff is 0.5% or lower, based on a three-week rolling average.**

Sample Mask Status Table for Website

Caldwell County Schools Face Masking Status

| Calculation Method | | |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a three-week rolling average of the positivity rate of CCS staff and students Announced each Friday for following week | Face masks are optional when three-week rolling average \leq 0.5% | Face masks are required when three-week rolling average $>$ 0.5% |
| Current Data | | |
| Three-Week Rolling Average of CCS Student & Staff Positivity Rate | Current Face Masking Status Week of November 8-12 | Face Masking Status for Upcoming Week |
| To Be Determined | To Be Determined | To Be Announced To Be Determined |

In addition, the following will apply:

- A federal mandate requires face masks on all school buses, including activity buses.
- School system leaders will communicate regularly with local health officials.

- A testing protocol will be established to test symptomatic staff members and students, with parent permission. The Superintendent will be responsible for developing a testing protocol.
- Metrics within the school system and across Caldwell County will be monitored, with other action to be taken in the discretion of the Superintendent or the Board. When conditions warrant, in the discretion of the Superintendent or the Board, decisions regarding face masks, quarantines, associated absences, remote learning, school operations, and other preventative measures may be made about specific classes, grade levels, and specific schools.

Cluster

For the purpose of this policy, a cluster is defined as a minimum of five confirmed diagnostic cases with illness onsets or initial positive results within a 14-day period and plausible epidemiologic linkage between cases.

- When a cluster is identified at a school, students and staff are required to wear face masks until ten school days have passed from the initial identification of the cluster.
- After ten school days have passed and while a cluster is active in a school, face masks will be required if the daily school positivity rate exceeds 0.5%, as defined by the metrics of this policy.
- A cluster is considered over if there is no evidence of continued transmission within the setting. This is measured as 28 days after the latest date of onset in a symptomatic person or the latest date of specimen collection in an asymptomatic person, whichever is later. If another case is detected in a child care or school setting after a cluster is declared over, the cluster is not reopened. If additional cases are subsequently reported and a new cluster exists, it will be reported as a second, new cluster in that setting.

Source: [//covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard/outbreaks-and-clusters](https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard/outbreaks-and-clusters)

This policy will remain in effect for the 2021-2022 school year.

Legal References: S.L. 2021-130, sec. 10

Cross References:

Other Resources: *COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools*, updated July 18, 2021, American Academy of Pediatrics, available at <https://www.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>; *ED COVID-19 Handbook, Vol. 1: Strategies for Safely Reopening Elementary and Secondary Schools*, updated April 2021, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, available at <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening.pdf>; *Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention*

in K-12 Schools, updated August 5, 2021, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>; *Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace*, updated August 13, 2021, Occupational Health and Safety Administration, available at <https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/safework>; *Requirement for Persons to Wear Masks While on Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs*, Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services (February 3, 2021), available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-02-03/pdf/2021-02340.pdf>; *StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12)*, *Interim Guidance*, updated August 26, 2021, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, available at <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/guidance/Strong-Schools-NC-Public-Health-Toolkit.pdf>

Adopted:

Caldwell County Schools