

New Hanover County Schools COVID-19 Q & A for Families

Q: What is COVID-19?

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a disease that was identified in late 2019 and was declared a pandemic on March 11. COVID-19 is an international, national, and North Carolina public health emergency. More information can be found on the [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention website](#) and the [NC Department of Health & Human Services website](#).

From the CDC website: COVID-19 and children

Q: What is the risk of my child becoming sick with COVID-19?

A: Based on available evidence, children do not appear to be at higher risk for COVID-19 than adults. While some children and infants have been sick with COVID-19, adults make up most of the known cases to date. You can learn more about who is most at risk for health problems if they have COVID-19 infection on CDC's current [Risk Assessment](#) page.

Q: How can I protect my child from COVID-19 infection?

You can encourage your child to help stop the spread of COVID-19 by teaching them to do the same things everyone should do to stay healthy.

- Clean hands often using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid people who are sick (coughing and sneezing)
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily in household common areas (e.g. tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles, desks, toilets, sinks)
- Launder items including washable plush toys as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people's items.

You can find additional information on preventing COVID-19 at [Prevention for 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#) and at [Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Communities](#). Additional information on how COVID-19 is spread is available at [How COVID-19 Spreads](#).

Q: Are the symptoms of COVID-19 different in children than in adults?

A: No. The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar in children and adults. However, children with confirmed COVID-19 have generally presented with mild symptoms. Reported symptoms in children include cold-like symptoms, such as fever, runny nose, and cough. Vomiting and diarrhea have also been reported. It's not known yet whether some children may be at higher

risk for severe illness, for example, children with underlying medical conditions and special healthcare needs. There is much more to be learned about how the disease impacts children.

Q: Should children wear masks?

A: No. If your child is healthy, there is no need for them to wear a facemask. Only people who have symptoms of illness or who are providing care to those who are ill should wear masks.

Q: Why is NHCS currently closed?

NC Governor Cooper issued Executive Order 117 to close K-12 public schools statewide through May 15, 2020. In addition, on Friday, March 27, Governor Cooper signed Executive Order 121 placing North Carolinians under stay at home restrictions. Executive Order 121 also identifies public schools such as New Hanover County Schools as COVID-19 Essential Businesses and Operations.

Q: What is the district doing to continue instruction?

The NHCS Division of Instruction and Academic Accountability has developed a plan for learning continuity, including online resources and print materials for supplemental and new learning in grades K-12, Career Technical Education, Special Education, and Early Childhood Services. Resources can be found on the [NHCS Social Distance Learning website](#).

March 24-March 31 have been designated training and development dates for teachers. April 1 has been designated as a launch date for all courses, with teachers focusing on assessing student access, orientation, and reconnecting with students and families through April 3.

Q: When will electronic devices be available for pick up?

Electronic device distribution begins on Monday, March 30, 2020 for high school students and will roll out for middle and elementary students soon. Pick-up procedures vary by school. School principals and staff will be in touch with families with school-specific instructions.

Q: Where can my student get access to Wi-Fi?

Charter Communications is offering [free access](#) to Spectrum broadband and Wi-Fi for 60 days.

Q: What does the closure mean for Spring Break?

NHCS will continue to follow 2019-2020 instructional calendars with respect to Spring Break for all 2019-2020 school calendars.

Q: Will free meal service continue to be offered?

The NHCS Meal Service Program will continue to be offered and has expanded to 20 drive-through school sites and 48 neighborhood delivery sites. Visit [NHCS Child Nutrition](#) for details and program updates. Free lunch for that day and breakfast for the following morning are available for children 18 years or younger through the program. Parents and/or guardians may pick up meals. Meals can be pre-ordered up to a week in advance online, through the Web Menus app, and by calling 910-254-4212.

Q: Do all meal orders need to be pre-ordered?

No, single families needing to pick up meals for the day of may continue to still walk/drive up for their meals.

Q: Will meal service be available over Spring Break?

Yes, the NHCS Meal Program will continue to operate through Spring Break except on Good Friday, April 10 when no meal service will be available.

Q: Are schools and administrative buildings open to the public?

Schools remain closed through May 15 except to essential NHCS staff. All NHCS schools and facilities are closed to the public except by appointment and at the discretion of the principal. Drive-through meal services will continue at designated school sites from 11:00 a.m-1:00 p.m.

For essential personnel, in-person meetings and facility use is limited to less than 10 people and social distancing requirements will be maintained to the greatest extent possible. Social distancing requirements as outlined in Executive Order 121 mean maintaining at least six feet distancing from other individuals; washing hands using soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible or the use of hand sanitizer; regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces; and facilitating online or remote access by customers if possible.

Q: Can my kids still use school playgrounds and fields?

Unfortunately, no. All NHCS playgrounds, athletic fields, and play structures are closed to the public to promote social distancing. This includes athletic fields at Edwin A. Anderson Elementary and athletic fields and softball and baseball complexes at Eugene Ashley High School.

Q: Will the Board of Education continue to hold meetings? If so, how can I view these meetings?

In practice with safe social distancing guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), attendance at all meetings of the NHCS Board of Education is currently strictly limited to no more than 10 people. The general public will have the option to view meetings remotely via live streaming on Roku, Apple TV, and online at NHCS-TV.

NHCS knows that many families do not have access to home internet and want to remind the public that Charter Communications is offering free internet service to student households. The district will air the meetings on Spectrum cable channel 5.

There will be no Call to the Audience during the Interim Board Meeting as is the case with all Interim Board Meetings.