

## Governor Cooper Recommends K-8 Students Wear Masks In Classroom

By Administrator  
Friday, 23 July 2021 10:52 -

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Governor Roy Cooper and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D. shared updated public health guidance for K-12 schools to follow in the upcoming school year. “The most important work our state will do next month is getting all our school children back into the classrooms safely for in-person learning,” said Governor Cooper. “That’s the best way for them to learn, and we want their school days to be as close to normal as possible, especially after a year of disruption.”

The updated StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit is aligned with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and American Academy of Pediatrics guidance, which urges that everything possible be done to keep students in schools and emphasizes continued masking. The Toolkit says schools with students in kindergarten through eighth grade should require all children and staff to wear masks indoors, regardless of vaccination status. Schools with students in 9th through 12th grades should ensure that anyone who isn’t fully vaccinated, including students, wear a mask indoors.

This guidance is effective July 30th and local school leaders are responsible for requiring and implementing protocols in the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit in consultation with their local health departments.

The Toolkit also updates additional measures for schools related to quarantining after COVID exposure, physical distancing, testing, transportation, cleaning and other considerations.

State health officials continue to urge unvaccinated people to follow CDC and NCDHHS guidance and wear a mask indoors. When Executive Order 220 expires at the end of July, North Carolina businesses and other entities where masks are required will make their own decisions about requiring masks, with strong guidance provided by NCDHHS. Everyone, regardless of vaccine status, should still wear a mask in certain places such as public transportation and healthcare facilities.

“Get vaccinated right now if you haven’t. We are seeing the impact of the very contagious Delta variant of COVID-19 and it’s hitting those who are unvaccinated hard,” said Secretary Cohen. “Schools need to use the additional safety protocols outlined in the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit to continue to protect students and staff as we enter the new school year.”

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To date, North Carolina has administered more than 9.5 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, with 56 percent of the adult population fully vaccinated. 60 percent of adults have received at least one dose of the vaccine, including 86 percent of people 65 and over.

Learn more about the state's vaccine distribution at [myspot.nc.gov](https://myspot.nc.gov) (English) or [Vacunate.nc.gov](https://vacunate.nc.gov) (Spanish). Details on the Your Shot at \$1 Million Summer Cash Drawing can be found at [covid19.ncdhhs.gov/summervaxcash](https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/summervaxcash). Use NCDHHS' online tool Find a Vaccine Location to find a nearby vaccine site. Call the state's COVID-19 vaccine hotline at 888-675-4567.