

Guidance on PPE for North Carolina Schools

COVID-19 Response Resource Center: Timely Counsel for your Business

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On July 14, 2020, Gov. Roy Cooper outlined a plan for K-12 school openings. Under Plan B, schools are required to follow certain guidelines issued by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS). Schools may also choose to reopen under Plan C—remote learning only—and school districts are encouraged to allow families to opt-in to all-remote learning.

North Carolina issued guidance regarding what Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) school districts will receive from the state through a two-month PPE Starter Pack, as well as what PPE school districts should plan to purchase.

Each school building should be equipped with hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol), hand soap and paper towels. Each classroom and bus should be equipped with hand sanitizer, EPA-registered disinfectants effective against coronavirus and tissues. Teachers, students and school staff must wear cloth face coverings. Custodial staff and nutrition services staff must wear gloves in addition to cloth face coverings. School staff who may need to make home visits or visits to multiple schools must be equipped with hand sanitizer.

Nurses and other school staff asked to perform medical tasks should be equipped with PPE—surgical masks, gowns, gloves and face shields—temporal touchless screening thermometers and disinfectants. The guidance notes that PPE should be used with discretion, meaning it should not be used all the time but should be used when:

- Monitoring or assisting a symptomatic person and it is not possible to remain six feet apart;
- Completing certain breathing-related health care procedures; and
- Completing health care procedures for a symptomatic person while the person is awaiting transportation to go home.

To meet these requirements, North Carolina will provide five cloth face coverings per student, teacher and staff member in public schools across the state. North Carolina will also provide a two-month supply of PPE items intended for use by school nurses and delegated staff including:

- Temporal touchless thermometers for screening (one per 100 students)

- Disposable surgical masks (two per day per nurse and delegated staff, plus masks for 1% of the school's student population)
- Reusable face shields (two per school nurse plus two per school for delegated staff)
- Disposable gloves

More information regarding the timing of distribution is forthcoming.

When schools run out of the state-purchased PPE, they should purchase more supplies. Schools should also plan to purchase hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol), hand soap, facial tissues, gloves for infection control, paper towels and EPA-registered disinfectants effective against coronavirus.

Further guidance, including how to use the PPE and infection control items, is included in the Infection Control and PPE Guidance.

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Tags: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, personal protective equipment