

The Exploris School Covid Reopening Considerations

Date of Checkpoint: February 22, 2021

Date of Next Checkpoint: March 15 , 2021

Overview: Due to the global pandemic, Exploris has been in remote learning (Plan C) since March 2020. A task force consisting of staff, board members, and parents has been meeting regularly to review a variety of metrics and plan for a safe return to on-campus learning. Below you will find the general framework and indicators that have guided our decision making process. In an effort to increase communication, we will review the indicators, color code the readiness level, and publish our decision to our community at each designated checkpoint. If you have questions please email leadership@exploris.org

How to Use this Document: Review the different categories that help determine whether or not students and staff can safely return to a regular schedule of in-person learning. Each category has descriptions of the specific items and then is color-coded for whether we have minimal readiness (red), moderate readiness (yellow), or substantial readiness (green.)

Summary of Decision: With careful consideration of the new CDC guidelines and after evaluating whether we can “strictly implement all mitigation strategies” as recommended, the Reopening Task Force is recommending a transition to our Plan B hybrid model beginning March 8th based on the rubric below. We will be reviewing all expectations with both staff and families, and asking families to sign strict agreements that their student(s) will abide by the safety measures of masking, distancing, and washing if they choose to come to campus for in-person learning activities.

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Public Health & School Metrics			
<i>Exploris enrollment includes staff and students from Wake, Johnston, Durham, Edgecomb, Chatham, and Granville counties.</i>			
Indicator	Substantial Readiness	Moderate Readiness	Minimal Readiness
<p>Test Positivity % for NC & Wake (7 Day Average)</p> <p>Metrics based on CDC Indicators and Thresholds (Updated thresholds released on 2/12/21 See Indicators of Community Transmission Section)</p> <p>New Metric from CDC: Total new cases in Wake County per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days using CDC Tracker</p>	<p><3% Lowest risk of transmission in schools—Updated to <5% Low Risk</p>	<p>3%-8% Lower/moderate risk of transmission in schools—Updated to Moderate Risk 5%-7.9%</p> <p>NC State 5.9% Wake 6.0%</p>	<p>>8% Higher/highest Risk of transmission in schools Updated to Substantial/High Risk > 8%</p> <p>Total new cases in Wake is 182.59 /100k</p>
<p>Covid 19 County Alert System- uses a combination of three metrics: case rate, the percent of tests that are positive, and hospital impact within the county</p>	<p>Yellow: Significant Community Spread</p> <p>Follow the requirements in existing Executive Orders and NCDHHS guidance</p>	<p>Orange: Substantial Community Spread</p> <p>Do even more to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the community</p>	<p>Red: Critical Community Spread</p> <p>Do even more to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the community</p>
<p>Wake County Covid Metrics Information (14 day Trend)</p>	<p>Metrics tracked by the county are trending downward</p>	<p>Metrics tracked by the county are flat</p>	<p>Metrics tracked by the county are trending upward</p>

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<p>Trends in Comparable NC Districts/Charter Schools Dashboards from other districts:</p> <p>Wake County Johnson County Durham County Lee County Orange County Harnett County NC K-12 School Clusters Harvard Global Health Institute (Used by Outward Bound)</p>	<p>Comparable Districts/Schools open under Plan A (In-Person) with minimal evidence of clusters and secondary spread</p>	<p>Comparable Districts/Schools open under Plan B (Hybrid) with minimal evidence of clusters and secondary spread</p>	<p>Comparable Districts/Schools open under Plan A or B with evidence of clusters and secondary spread</p>
<p>Notes related to public health & school metrics: On 2/12/21 the CDC updated the indicators and threshold based on most recent research and provided recommendations by grade band. We updated our rubric to reflect these changes which included shifting percent positive thresholds and adding cases per 100,000 people. These two metrics indicated a recommendation to open K-5 in hybrid and 6-8 in hybrid <i>only if we have the ability to follow strict mitigation strategies</i> (masks, distancing, hand washing, cleaning, and contact tracing). There was conversation about making a different recommendation K-5 and 6-8 but in the end the team agreed the decision should be K-8. Teachers become eligible for the first dose of vaccines this week however actually getting appointments for all has been challenging. While our return to campus is not dependent upon vaccination it is a factor that will decrease teacher stress and allow us much greater flexibility with staffing.</p>			

Readiness of Classrooms and PPE			
Indicator	Substantial Readiness	Moderate Readiness	Minimal Readiness
<p>Facilities Buildings meet safety standards including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Clearly defined and distanced work spaces for every adult and student within the buildings 	<p>>90% of areas within the buildings meet safety standards</p>	<p>60-90% of areas within the buildings meet safety standards</p>	<p><60% of areas within the buildings meet safety standards</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Visual marking for traffic flow that meet distancing guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Signage in place <input type="checkbox"/> Protective Shields in place <input type="checkbox"/> Designated Temperature/screening areas with ample supplies near each entrance 			
<p>HVAC Ventilation/Filtration Each learning space has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Air filters changed on recommend schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Air Handler w/ directions <input type="checkbox"/> Windows that can stay opened as often as possible 	<p>>90% of areas within the buildings meet ventilation standards</p>	<p>60-90% of areas within the buildings meet ventilation standards</p>	<p><60% of areas within the buildings meet ventilation standards</p>
<p>Infection Control & PPE Supplies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitizer pumps in every space <input type="checkbox"/> Clearly designated and stocked cleaning/PPE area in each space <input type="checkbox"/> Backup cleaning supplies and PPE to replenish for at least 60 days <input type="checkbox"/> Screening procedures in place with designated and trained staff <input type="checkbox"/> Robust processes and resources in place to ensure effective reporting, contact tracing, and quarantining <input type="checkbox"/> Robust processes and resources in place to respond to potential outbreaks/clusters <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing partnership with DHHS/Other Health Experts 	<p>>90% of criteria meets infection control standards</p>	<p>60-90% of criteria meets infection control standards</p>	<p><60% of criteria meets infection control standards</p>

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Notes related to readiness of classrooms and PPE: Due to the physical limitations of our buildings (smaller classrooms, crowded hallways, lack of office spaces, and lack of larger spaces where we might spread out) it is likely that space and physical distancing will be an ongoing issue for us to creatively problem solve. Need to think through back-up plans if issues with heating/air arise and impact the usability of any spaces. We have cleared out some storage and janitor closets to create additional workspaces. A counseling support plan and locations have been finalized. Duty schedules that include designated staff for screening are drafted. A health attestation for families is being created. Sandwich board signs with reminders have been ordered to display in carpool lines.

Staffing & Scheduling			
Indicator	Substantial Readiness	Moderate Readiness	Minimal Readiness
Family Readiness- Return to In-Person Commitment form completed by families & cohorts formed	All Forms & Cohorts Complete	Forms & Cohorts in Progress	Forms & Cohorts Not Completed
Staff Health Accommodations & Modifications	Adequate staffing available to cover all qualifying exemptions & modifications without requiring additional duties from others	Inadequate staffing available to cover all qualifying exemptions & modifications without requiring additional duties	Information not yet known
Staffing- Adequate staff available to support in-person, remote learning, and cover absences/quarantines	Adequate staff available	Adequate staff available if some current positions are repurposed and/or substitutes are utilized	Inadequate staff available

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<p>Instructional Schedule</p> <p>A hybrid schedule has been developed with the following considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> In-person numbers adhere to spacing and occupancy guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Maintains as much flexibility for grade levels as possible <input type="checkbox"/> EC Services & Interventions <input type="checkbox"/> Reducing exposure as much as possible for staff especially those that work with multiple grade levels (GA, EC, counselors, support staff, administrators etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Balances academics and social-emotional needs <input type="checkbox"/> Allows for adequate planning time <input type="checkbox"/> Addresses the needs of students that remain fully virtual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Food Insecurity <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Working Families Schedules 	<p>Schedule adequately addresses >90% of the considerations</p>	<p>Schedule adequately addresses 60-90% of the considerations</p>	<p>Schedule adequately addresses <60% of the considerations</p>
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Notes related to staffing & scheduling: Our current staffing plan would likely result in reverting back to virtual if the need for staff quarantines arises. We have been approving health accommodations as they have been received from doctors. This has required hiring staff/sub for additional hours. We anticipate Covid Vaccine appointments potentially impacting teacher absences as well. Our potential sub pool has decreased, but we will work to recruit more candidates. Interested parties should email mparkerson@exploris.org. We have come up with some solutions to creatively address staff childcare issues that may arise from their own child being on a different school rotation. Our solutions around food insecurity have become unsustainable, so we are looking at new ways to address the issue.

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