



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Catherine Truitt, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

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Memorandum

Date: August 3, 2021
To: DPI Team
From: Catherine Truitt
Subject: Employee Attestation and Mask Wearing Guidelines

Hello to you all—

First, thank you so much for your patience as we seek to continue plans to resume “normal” operating procedures at NCDPI! Our delay in returning to the building this week was disappointing but necessary. I was hoping to start walking the floors today to meet those of you whom I have not yet met!

Also, please know that my deputies and I continue to work with HR to put together a teleworking plan that most of you will be able to exercise if you choose.

Last week, Governor Cooper issued Executive Order 224 which, among other things, directs Cabinet agencies in State government to require State employees to provide proof of a COVID vaccine and weekly proof of a negative COVID test in the absence of a vaccine by September 1st, and requires non-vaccinated employees and visitors to wear face coverings in indoor settings as of today. Executive Order 224 **does not apply** to Council of State Agencies, of which NCDPI is one.

Vaccines for COVID-19 are effective, safe, free, and readily available. Recent spikes in cases and hospitalizations across North Carolina are almost 100% among the unvaccinated population. Additionally, NC counties with a higher rate of new infections are generally counties with lower vaccination rates. The message is clear: COVID-19 is a preventable disease and if you have not gotten your vaccine, we encourage you to do so as soon as possible. Ultimately, however, everyone must make the decision about vaccination that is right for them.

Senior leadership and I have determined that DPI will take the following actions:

- 1) Beginning tomorrow, Wednesday, August 4 all employees will be asked to attest whether they have or have not received a COVID vaccine. A copy of the attestation is attached. Please complete and send to HR at HRdocs@dpi.nc.gov, put “DPIencrypt” in the subject line to send a confidential encrypted document. You may also come by the HR department and turn in your hard copy form. Employees who do not respond by close of business Friday, August 6 will be considered unvaccinated.

OFFICE OF THE NORTH CAROLINA SUPERINTENDENT

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

- 2) Effective August 4th all employees are required to wear a mask in the building if they are not vaccinated.
- 3) Vaccinated employees and contractors who have completed an attestation form are not required to wear face coverings.
- 4) DPI reserves the right to modify mask wearing requirements or implement employee testing for COVID-19 to ensure the safety of employees.
- 5) When visiting other facilities, LEA's, or locations on behalf of DPI or as a part of your job duties, you must follow whatever guidance or additional requirements are applicable at that facility, LEA, or location.
- 6.) When visiting a student's home, you must wear a mask if you are not vaccinated.
- 7.) Non-compliance or falsifying proof of a vaccine will subject employees to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- 8.) It is anticipated that these actions will remain in effect for as long as Executive Order 224 remains in effect.
- 9.) Unvaccinated employees who decide to get a COVID vaccine will be afforded every opportunity to do so, including applicable leave provisions. If you receive the COVID vaccine after you have attested that you are not vaccinated, you will be given the opportunity to notify your supervisor so that you can fill out a new attestation form.
10.) Anyone who wants to wear a mask for their protection or for the protection of others, even if vaccinated, may continue to do so.

As has been the case throughout this pandemic, this is a fluid situation and recommendations and guidance change. Please stay abreast of the latest information and go and get your vaccine if you have not already done so.

Requests for exceptions may be made through your director.

Thank you for your patience and for continuing to serve the students and educators of our great state. It's a privilege to serve alongside you.

Best,
Catherine