



**STERLING
MONTESSORI**
EST. 1997

REOPENING STERLING A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES K-8TH GRADE



“Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment.”



-- Dr. Maria Montessori



Updated March 26, 2021

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE

To Sterling Parents and Guardians,

We have recently learned of a new mandate for all Charter schools. Due to this news, we are having to reassess our plans and we want to share them in order for you to choose what is best for your family.

The Governor stated on March 10th, "Under the plan, elementary schools must return students to classrooms under Plan A — all students in classrooms with minimal social distancing. Districts have the option of having students in grades 6-12 in class under either Plan A or plan B — a hybrid of in-person and remote learning. **The bill DID not apply to Charter schools.**"

Late yesterday afternoon we received a message from the Office of Charter Schools that Charter Schools must follow the "[Lighting our Way Forward](#)" guidebook for all K-5th grade students. This guidance states: "Kindergarten – 5th Grade Students shall return to in-person instruction at least 4 days a week while following all public health protocols in the [StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit](#) with one exception: Schools serving children kindergarten – 5th grade do not need to adhere to the Six Feet Social Distancing Requirements detailed on page 6 of this toolkit. (Plan A)." Additionally all Charters must follow the StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit that was updated on March 15th for 6th-8th grade.

Due to this new mandate, we have reassessed our reopening plans and will be offering our Distance Learners the option to rejoin into our school environment (Full-time for K-5th grades, and blended learning for 6th-8th).

Be sure to read the **Addendum on Page 20 that details the changes that a student may experience if changing from Distance to on-campus learning.** All aspects of Plan A and B, as detailed in this document, remain the same, unless noted.

Once you read over the details of Sterling's Reopening Plan, parents/guardians of ALL DISTANCE LEARNERS MUST complete the included [Registration \(LINK HERE\)](#) and choose either to continue with distance or change to in-person learning for your student.

REGISTRATION IS DUE BY MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2021 at 12:00pm (NOON). We understand the challenges that this decision may add to your family, especially given the short notice and having to make this decision quickly.

We sincerely appreciate your grace and courtesy and the privilege of educating our students and working with you to create a memorable school year.

Sincerely,

Josie Spreher
Executive Director

OVERVIEW



This guide will outline our learning tracks as well as guidelines and protocols to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. It is based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI):

- Health Monitoring & Screening Requirements
 - **Returning from Exclusion**
- Reporting Positive Cases
- Health and Safety Plans
- Social and Emotional Health
- Re-entry Plans
- Timeline Calendar
- Distance Learning Track
- Resources
- **Addendum - March 19, 2021**

This information is subject to change.

Please understand that knowledge about the COVID-19 virus and the best practices to respond to the pandemic continue to evolve. For this reason, guidance, plans, and policies related to returning to school at Sterling will also evolve. Families will be notified via email of any updates. Please ensure the contact information you have provided Sterling is always up to date. We will also keep our website updated with the latest information at www.sterlingmontessori.org.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL



To combat the spread of the virus as a community, the expectation is that all employees, students and families comply with the procedures, protocols and requirements outlined in this document and in any linked documents and websites.

In addition, the Sterling community is expected to comply with state and local regulations.

If state or local requirements differ from the guidance provided in this document, we will reevaluate our procedures and protocols and make necessary adjustments.

HEALTH MONITORING & SCREENINGS

Health Monitoring & Screening Responsibilities

At Sterling, our top priority is the health and welfare of our community. Daily health screenings will help to reduce this risk. Families should assess their student's health at home before arriving to school.

Students must stay home if:

- They have tested positive for COVID-19 and have not met the criteria for returning to school;
- They have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 and have not met the criteria for returning to school;
- They have a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher. A fever is determined by a thermometer reading 100.4 or higher.

Students must be free of any symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 to be on campus. At this time, these symptoms include one or more of the following:

- fever or chills,
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing,
- new cough (persistent dry cough unrelated to allergies),
- new loss of taste or smell.

Anyone who has been exposed to COVID-19 and has not met the criteria for returning to school will not be allowed to attend school on campus.

Regular monitoring for symptoms will take place throughout the day to help reduce exposure.

Campus Health Screening During Arrival

If possible, the same parent or designated person should drop-off and pick-up their child every day. We will provide an extended arrival time from 8:30-9:00am.

Parents have been given a login to the **GREENLIGHT | ED application** that provides a daily symptom monitoring and check-in application for the parent to complete for the student. Each day, the **CLEARED** check-in screen should be shown to staff when taking a student's temperature. If a parent does not have a Greenlight login, they will be provided with a questionnaire to remind themselves of COVID-19 symptoms for clearance.

A staff member will greet students at the car as they arrive, take temperatures, and check the Greenlight status or health questions with parents. All parents must remain in the car and wait until their child has been checked before driving off campus.



HEALTH MONITORING & SCREENINGS

Campus Health Monitoring & Screening Requirements During the School Day

Staff will monitor students for symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

If a child develops symptoms while at school, he or she will be immediately isolated to a designated space under the supervision of a staff member and be required to continue wearing a face covering. A parent or guardian will be expected to promptly pick up their child from school.

More information on monitoring symptoms is available from the [CDC](#).

Quarantine Guidance/Post Vaccination

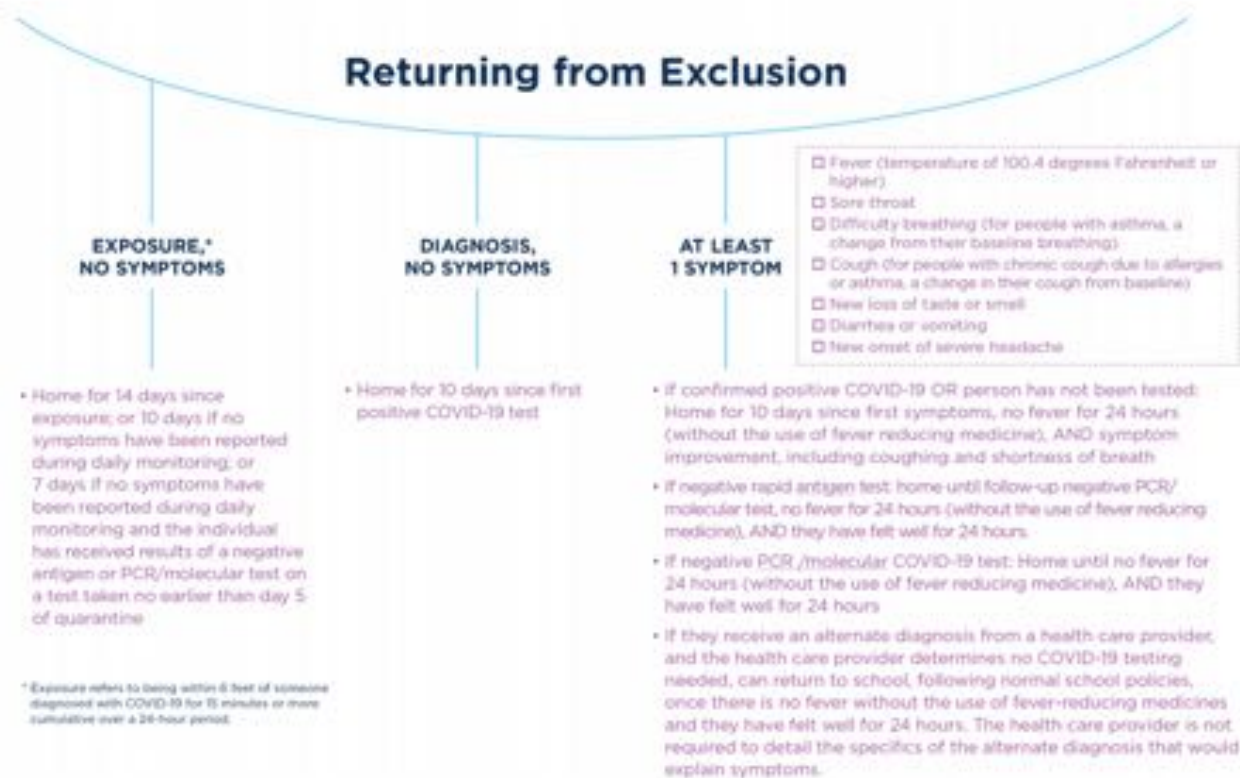
An individual is not considered fully vaccinated with only 1 dose of a 2-dose series or it has not been a full 2 weeks since getting the 2nd dose of a 2-dose series. Therefore you will need to complete a 14 day quarantine from the date you were exposed to a positive case.

Per the CDC Guidance: Those individuals that have received the COVID vaccine and are exposed to a positive case do not need to quarantine if they meet the following criteria:

- a. Are fully vaccinated (i.e., at least 2 weeks after getting their second dose in a 2-dose series or one-dose of a single-dose series)
- b. Have had no symptoms from when they were exposed to someone with COVID-19
- c. Live outside of a group setting. Individuals in group settings such as group homes, jails, etc., still need to quarantine following an exposure.

RETURNING FROM EXCLUSION

Returning from Exclusion Flow Chart



StrongSchoolsNC: Public Health Toolkit (K-12) Interim Guidance • Published June 8, 2020; Updated March 24, 2021

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UPDATED FEBRUARY 2021:



If exposure to COVID is **within your household**, all members of the household must quarantine for the **full 14 days if isolated** from the COVID-positive person. If the COVID-positive person is not able to isolate, all members of the household must quarantine for **24 days**.

COVID-19 Screening protocols from North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services - [Public Health Toolkit K-12](#) (link). Please refer to this document for more details, as Sterling will continue to follow NCDHHS guidelines for our school.



REPORTING COVID-19 CASES



Procedure for Reporting COVID-19 on Campus

Each individual's health information is a private matter. No one should publicly declare another employee or student as sick. In the event others need to be notified of a suspected or positive case of COVID-19, local health officials will notify them and provide them further instructions. To protect individual privacy, notifications will not identify anyone by name or contain information that could be used to identify them.

Sterling will report positive cases of COVID-19 to Wake County Public Health authorities and work with them for follow up and contact tracing.

If any person with COVID-19 was on Sterling's campus, while infectious, we will coordinate with local health officials to notify employees and families who were in close contact with the positive person while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with FERPA, NCGS130A-143, and all other state and federal laws.

Close contact is defined as being within six feet of someone with COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes over a 24-hour period.

In the event of a case of COVID-19 at Sterling, the affected area will be systematically disinfected. Our disinfectant is EPA-approved for SARS_CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

HEALTH & SAFETY PLANS

STUDENT HEALTH & SAFETY

PLAN A/ MODIFIED PLAN A

PLAN B

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Minimal social distancing

- Moderate social distancing
- Limit density of people in class to ensure 6 feet of social distancing.

CLOTH FACE COVERINGS

As stated in Executive Order No. 180, in all public and nonpublic schools, all workers, teachers, guests, other adults and **children five (5) years or older** must wear **good fitting and clean face coverings** when indoors, **at all times**, unless an exception applies, **and when outdoors and within six (6) feet of another person**, unless an exception applies.

Face coverings are **not required** to be worn by an individual who:

- Should not wear a face covering due to any medical or behavioral condition or disability (including, but not limited to, any person who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious or incapacitated, or is otherwise unable to put on or remove the face covering without assistance);
- Is under five (5) years of age
- Is actively eating or drinking;
- Is seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing-impaired in a way that requires the mouth to be visible;
- Is giving a speech for a broadcast or to an audience;
- Is working at home or is in a personal vehicle;
- Is temporarily removing his or her face covering to secure government or medical services or for identification purposes;
- Would be at risk from wearing a face covering at work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulations or workplace safety guidelines;
- Has found that his or her face covering is impeding visibility to operate equipment or a vehicle; or
- Is a child whose parent, guardian, or responsible person has been unable to place the Face Covering safely on the child's face.

Documentation for all medical exemptions must be provided from a medical professional prior to coming to campus.

Parents should **provide students with a clean face covering each day** and two spare face coverings to be held at school in case it is needed. Face coverings will be provided for students who do not have access to one.

HEALTH & SAFETY PLANS

STUDENT HEALTH & SAFETY	PLAN A/ MODIFIED PLAN A	PLAN B
COMMON AREAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students and staff will utilize patio doors Minimize the number of students in hallways Directional reminders and required signs are posted where needed Playground schedules will reflect fewer classes together 	
RESTROOMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent reminders to stay 6 feet apart. No more students in a bathroom than number of toilets. Use floor markers in the bathroom and outside the bathroom waiting areas to designate physical distancing. All bathrooms to be cleaned every 3 hours and when needed according to NCDHHS guidelines. 	
LUNCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of screen dividers. We will utilize the outdoors as much as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be moderately socially distanced for lunch, using outside areas as much as possible. Screen dividers provided.
CARPOOL/ ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended arrival schedule 8:30-9:00am, with new Carpool Routes - Carpool procedures may change and will be communicated prior to the start date. Every parent needs to show their Greenlight CLEARED status or answer health questions Students will receive temperature checks. Entryways are marked to designate appropriate distancing. Late arrivals must park in the Main Parking lot and parents will escort their child to their student's classroom patio door for health screening and temperature check. For early pickups, email classroom teacher and main office with time of arrival. All parents/guardians picking up early must wear a mask and receive a health screening outside the main office. Bring drivers license for proof of identity. 	

HEALTH & SAFETY PLANS

STUDENT HEALTH & SAFETY

PLAN A/ MODIFIED PLAN A

PLAN B

MAIN OFFICE/ VISITORS

- Physical barriers - Plexiglass at desk
- Only essential visitors will be allowed and must be pre-arranged. All will go through the same screening process as students and employees.
- Late drop-offs will go straight to the class, as defined above

HAND WASHING

- The CDC recommends everyone wash their hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Teachers will be teaching hand washing in the classroom and reinforcing it during key times.
- Hand washing during key times: Upon arrival to classroom, before and after food, after restroom, after blowing nose or coughing/sneezing, after touching objects used by multiple people and after recess.
- If soap and water are not readily available, individuals are encouraged to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol). We will provide hand-sanitizing stations and bottles throughout the school where necessary. If your child has sensitivities to hand sanitizer, please communicate this with your child's teachers so they can provide your child other opportunities to clean their hands.

WATER FOUNTAINS

- In response to COVID-19, students will be prohibited from drinking directly from water fountains.
- All students are encouraged to bring their own bottled water or reusable water bottles.
- All water bottles should be clearly labeled with the student's name.
- It is the student's responsibility to keep track of their water bottles and take them home for regular cleaning

CLEANING AND SANITIZING

- Cleaning of objects/materials/classroom supplies used by multiple people as needed and at the end of the day
- Frequently used student items are kept separately and individually labelled (pencil pouches, scissors, etc.)
- Removal of soft items or those which cannot be sanitized or easily cleaned.
- Increased cleaning of tables and high touch surfaces by adults: morning, before and after lunch, in between work cycles, and end of the day.
- Use of EPA-approved disinfectant for SARS-COV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Current cleaning and disinfectant protocols will continue to be reviewed and enhanced in terms of frequency and intensity.
- All classrooms will be professionally sprayed and disinfected between each group attending, typically on Fridays, with an electrostatic spray which is electrically charged, allowing the disinfectants to wrap around and evenly coat all surfaces for a more complete clean.

HEALTH & SAFETY PLANS

Consequences for Violation of Health Protocols

Face covering requirements and other health protocols are **critical tools** for creating and maintaining a healthy environment in our schools and limiting the spread of COVID-19.

As part of our return to in-person instruction, teachers will **educate** and **support** students and families on the importance of health and safety guidance to support, encourage and model the behaviors we expect of all students.

In instances where a student inadvertently violates health safety guidance, the staff will remind the student of proper protocol.

When reminders, support and non-disciplinary interventions are not enough to change student behavior that may risk the health and safety of the school, it could result in an involuntary **transfer** to the **Distance Learning** environment.



SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH

There is a lot of information in the media about COVID-19 and we know this can cause concern for parents and students. Here are some tips to help address your family's social and emotional needs:

- Share age-appropriate information with students and correct any misinformation.
- Reassure children that they are safe and that adults are working to keep them safe.
- Emphasize ways children and families can be "germ-busters" and reduce the spread of illness.
- Try to keep routines as normal as possible.
- Limit the amount of exposure to television and social media regarding COVID-19.



We are thoughtfully planning now to support all students' mental and emotional well-being upon their return to school. We will continue to use existing team structures in our Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) as needed.

If you have any concerns about your child, please contact your child's teacher at any time and/or our [school counselor](#).

APRIL RE-ENTRY PLANS

SECTION

CHILDREN'S HOUSE - KINDERGARTEN

PLAN A

Blended Learning Track changes to daily on campus, each week.

- **Maximum number of students in class is possible (25)**
- Enhanced health protocols
- Masks worn by all
- Minimal social distancing
- Screen dividers provided when needed

Distance Learning track (possible changes - see page 20)

LOWER ELEMENTARY

PLAN A

Blended Learning Track changes to daily on campus, each week.

- **Maximum number of students in class is possible (28)**
- Enhanced health protocols
- Masks are worn by all
- Minimal social distancing
- Screen dividers provided when needed

Distance Learning track (possible changes - see page 20)



APRIL RE-ENTRY PLANS

SECTION

UPPER ELEMENTARY

PLAN A - 4th & 5th Grade

- Blended Learning Track changes to **daily** on campus, **each** week.
- **Maximum number of students in class is possible (30)**
- Enhanced health protocols
- Masks are worn by all
- Minimal social distancing
- Screen dividers provided

Distance Learning track (possible changes - see page 20)

PLAN B - 6th Grade

- 6th grade students will split into two groups
- Each group will alternate 1 week in-class and 1 week at home with work plans
- Enhanced health protocols
- Masks worn by all
- Moderate social distancing
- **Distance Learning track (possible changes - see page 20)**
- All students will be 6 feet apart for lunch and screen dividers used

MIDDLE SCHOOL

PLAN B

- MS students in each pod will split into 2 groups
- Each group will alternate 1 week in-class and 1 week at home
- Enhanced health protocols
- Masks worn by all
- Moderate social distancing
- All students will be 6 feet apart for lunch and screen dividers used

Distance Learning track (possible changes - see page 20)



RE-ENTRY PLANS

SECTION	PLAN A/ MODIFIED PLAN A	PLAN B
EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN (EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place students together from same groupings as best as possible Enhanced health protocols Minimal social distancing for all students K-5th grade and Moderate social distancing 6-8th grade Students with disabilities may require modifications to the general health guidelines in order to provide required services and maintain healthy practices. We are committed to working closely with students with disabilities and their families to address individual concerns and needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place students together from same groupings as best as possible Enhanced health protocols Masks worn by all unless an exemption Moderate social distancing
SPECIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All classes can attend outdoor PE Spanish 4th-8th grade will continue to be remote even if on campus Music class will be remote or in class Chorus will meet remote and/or outdoors Art resources will be provided <p>Specials programming may change due to numbers returning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All classes can attend outdoor PE Spanish 4th-8th grade will continue to be remote even if on campus Music class will be remote or in class Chorus will meet remote and/or outdoors Art resources will be provided <p>Specials programming may change due to numbers returning</p>
BEFORECARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To begin at 8:00am and students go to the general education classroom. <p>There are no additional registrations available for Beforecare.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To begin at 8:00am and students go to the general education classroom. <p>There are no additional registrations available for Beforecare.</p>
AFTERCARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No aftercare provided for kindergarten through 8th grade at this time with exception of staff children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No aftercare provided for kindergarten through 8th grade at this time with exception of staff children.
CLUBS/ PROGRAMS/ AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indoor clubs remote only Band will meet remotely or outdoors Outdoor sports programs allowed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indoor clubs remote only Band will meet remotely or outdoors Outdoor sports programs allowed

6th-8th GROUP CALENDAR

ALL In-Person KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 5th GRADE

K-5th grade students signed up for in-person learning will be on campus 5-days/week EVERY WEEK following our school calendar.

ALL 6th through 8th GRADE Blended Learning Track

6th-8th grade students will continue on the Blended Learning in two Groups (Assigned Group 1 or Group 2)

Week of April 5th- Group 2 (April 5th- NO SCHOOL- PD Day)

Week of April 12th- Group 1

Week of April 19th- Group 2

Week of April 26th- Group 1

Week of May 3rd- Group 2

Week of May 10th- Group 1 (May 13th- NO SCHOOL- PD Day)

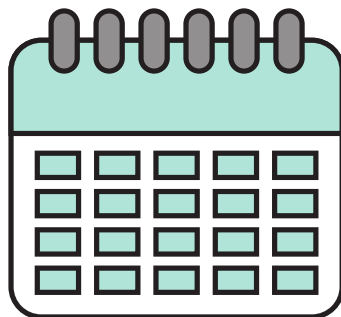
Week of May 17th- Group 2

Week of May 24th- Group 1

Week of June 1st- Group 2 (May 31st- NO SCHOOL- Memorial Day)

June 7th- Group 2's last Day

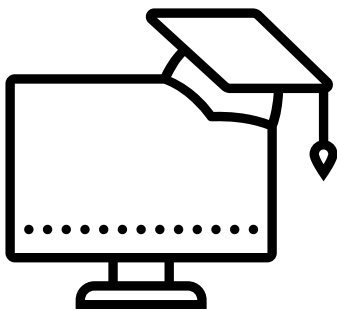
June 8th- Group 1's last Day



DISTANCE LEARNING TRACK

Overview: Our Goals and Values

At Sterling, we are committed to creating a Montessori-based Distance Learning framework that serves the development of children in all areas: academic, social and emotional. It is important to us that the work that we provide students during this time be thoughtful, challenging, and rewarding. Knowing that we can't replicate what happens in our classrooms, we want to continue to nurture a culture of learning, while also considering, encouraging and accommodating the individual needs and interests of our students. We will strive to connect subject and concepts so that students feel connected to their learning and are not simply completing busywork.



Key Components of Online learning at Sterling:

- Students will experience a consistent schedule, daily lessons, and individual feedback similar to their peers who will be engaging in in-class instruction.
- Students will be provided with opportunities to practice independence and learn time management skills.
- Students will be required to complete daily and weekly work.
- Demonstrations (some live, some recorded) using materials to show concepts (when possible). Additional resources may be used.
- Instruction will be provided through a common online learning platform.
- Social Emotional support will be integrated into lessons, meaningful group experiences and opportunities for student connection.



RESOURCES

We will continue to keep our website (www.sterlingmontessori.org) updated with any latest information. If you have questions or comments about returning to school on site, please email reopening@sterlingmontessori.org.

For Wake County information, including drive-through testing sites, visit covid19.wakegov.com.

For information about North Carolina's response, visit the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Resources website at covid19.ncdhhs.gov.

For federal guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), visit cdc.gov/coronavirus.

CDC's Guidance on wearing and removing face masks can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

<https://www.astate.edu/a/hr/forms/COVID-19%20Accommodation%20Request%20Form.pdf>

<https://www.irm.ucla.edu/covid-19-accommodation-request>



ADDENDUM - March 19, 2021

On March 10, 2021, Governor Cooper approved a Reopening Plan for schools: Under the plan, elementary schools must return students to classrooms under Plan A — all students in classrooms with minimal social distancing. Districts have the option of having students in grades 6-12 in class under either Plan A or Plan B — a hybrid of in-person and remote learning. The bill does not apply to charter schools. Today, the Office of Charter Schools announced that we must follow the "[Lighting our Way Forward](#)" (link) guidebook for all K-5th grade students, which states the following: "Kindergarten – 5th Grade Students shall return to in-person instruction at least 4 days a week while following all public health protocols in the [StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit](#) with one exception: Schools serving children kindergarten – 5th grade do not need to adhere to the Six Feet Social Distancing Requirements detailed on page 6 of this toolkit. (Plan A)." Additionally all Charters must follow the StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit that was updated on March 15th for 6th-8th grade.

Beginning April 6, 2021, Distance Learners will have the option to opt back in to in-person learning through the remainder of the year. How this looks will vary by grade/level:

- Distance K-5th Grades have the option to remain in the distance learning track or opt in to full time in-person learning
- Distance 6th-8th Grades have the option to remain in the distance learning track or opt in to the Blended Learning Track (alternating one-week on campus and one-week remote learning)

For all K-8th grade distance learners opting into in-person learning:

- A classroom teacher and schedule **change is likely**, and **possible grouping change** as well.
- **Transition periods** are to be expected as students adjust to new learning environments
- At this time COVID vaccinations are not required and therefore, we **cannot guarantee** all teachers will be vaccinated
- K-5th grade may have the max number of students in the class
- **Social distancing will be minimal** (this does not apply to 6th-8th grade who will maintain 6 feet social distancing on campus)
- **Masks and cleaning** protocols in place
- **Specials programming** (PE, Music, & Spanish) likely to change
- EC schedules and teachers may have to change, but only if necessary
- In classrooms, the number of students may change, allowing for the maximum number of students per class (changes shown in **green** in plan descriptions above)
- There will be no additional registrations available for Beforecare and Aftercare.

Those remaining on the Distance Learning Track:

- A classroom teacher and schedule **change is likely**
- **Transition periods** are to be expected as students adjust to new learning environments
- Specials programming (PE, Music, & Spanish) likely to change
- EC schedules and teachers may have to change but only if necessary
- In classrooms, the number of students may change, allowing for the maximum number of students per class (changes shown in green in plan descriptions above)

Any changes described above will be per student and per level. Sterling is committed to maintaining a healthy and safe environment for all.

Once you read over the details, parents/guardians of **ALL** Distance Learners **MUST** complete the included [registration](#) (link) and chose either to continue with distance or change to in-person learning for your student. **REGISTRATION WAS DUE BY MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2021 at 12:00pm (NOON). After this time, we will be unable to make track changes for students. If you did not complete the registration, your child will remain in the Distance Learning Track.**