



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

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

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TO LEA Superintendents
Charter School Directors

FROM Catherine Edmonds *CE*
Deputy Superintendent, Office of Educational Equity

Tammy L. Howard *TLH*
Director, Division of Accountability Services

REQUEST FOR TESTING EXCEPTIONS BASED ON SIGNIFICANT MEDICAL EMERGENCIES AND/OR CONDITIONS

There may be rare instances in which a student is unable to participate in a state assessment during the testing window, including makeup dates, because of a significant medical emergency and/or condition. Examples include, but are not limited to, circumstances involving students who are (1) in the final stages of a terminal or degenerative illness, (2) comatose, or (3) receiving extensive short-term medical treatment due to a medical emergency. Under these circumstances, a school may request from the Division of Accountability Services a testing exception for the student. If a medical exception is granted, the student remains enrolled in the school during this period; however, the student does not take the assessment(s), and the student is not included when calculating participation rates.

Attached to this memo is the process for requesting testing exceptions based on significant medical emergencies and/or conditions for the 2021–22 school year. Failure to adhere to this process or include all requested information may result in the need to resubmit the request or cause a delay in the response. All requests must be submitted for consideration through the Online Medical Exception Request System in NC Education's NCTest Admin. The requests must be submitted by the public school unit test coordinator and be approved by the superintendent or school director.

Thank you for your continued cooperation in adhering to the policies and procedures concerning requests for testing exceptions based on significant medical emergencies and/or conditions.

CE:TLH:whw

c: Catherine Truitt, State Superintendent
Sherry Thomas, Director, Exceptional Children
Trey Michael, Director, Career and Technical Education
Angie Mullennix, Director, K–12 Standards, Curriculum and Instruction
Dave Machado, Director, Office of Charter Schools
LEA Testing Directors/Coordinators
LEA Exceptional Children Program Directors
Regional Accountability Coordinators
Exceptional Children Regional Consultants

Attachment

DIVISION OF ACCOUNTABILITY SERVICES

6307 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-6307 | (984) 236-2710

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Process for Requesting Testing Exceptions Based on Significant Medical Emergencies and/or Conditions

The following steps outline the process for requesting testing exceptions based on significant medical emergencies and/or conditions for the 2021–22 school year. Failure to adhere to this process or include all requested information may result in the need to resubmit the request and/or cause a delay in response.

1. Public school unit superintendents or directors must support the appeal and submit an online request to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) through the Online Medical Exception Request System in NC Education’s NCTest Admin. The parent must be notified that such a request is being submitted and must give consent.
2. The online request must include the following information:
 - **Semester**
 - **School Name**
 - **Student Name**
 - **Administration Type** (e.g., Regular or NCEXTEND1)
 - **Test(s) Requested** (multiple tests may be requested)
 - **Student Type** (indicate if the student has a current Individualized Education Program (IEP), current Section 504 Plan, transitory impairment documentation, or Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP))
 - **Test Window** (school test window)
 - **Date of Onset** of the emergency and/or condition
 - **Expected Duration/ and/or Recovery Period**
 - **Days of Instruction Missed** (all requests must include an attendance record)
 - **Homebound** (indicate if the student is homebound)
Students receiving homebound services are expected to test. If a student is homebound and unable to test because of a significant medical emergency and/or condition, the medical exception justification and supporting documents must clearly detail why the student is unable to be tested in a homebound setting (include attendance records for homebound sessions and a letter from the homebound teacher). Assessments can be administered to students in a homebound setting, provided that test administrators and proctors are appropriately trained.
 - **Medical Issue**
Briefly describe the student’s current medical condition(s).
 - **Description of how the medical issue/condition prevents participation in the respective assessment(s)**
Briefly describe how the medical issue/condition impacts daily instruction/classroom participation and prevents participation in the respective test administration(s). This explanation should include sufficient details and documented data (scanned attachments) that provides the review committee a thorough understanding of the implications of the emergency and/or condition on the student’s learning.
 - **Parent Notification** (indicate yes or no if parent has been notified)
 - **Affirmation** (approval by the public school unit superintendent or director to submit the request)

- **Supporting Documents**

All requests must be accompanied by supporting documentation. If a student has an IEP, current Section 504 Plan, transitory impairment documentation, and/or BIP, the most recent version of the full documentation must be scanned and accompany the request. Supporting documentation is required in the event the NC Testing Program is audited.

- **IEP:** scan and attach a complete copy of the current DEC 4 IEP form (including present levels of performance, IEP goals, special education services, etc.) to this request.
- **BIP:** scan and attach a complete copy of the current BIP as well as the Functional Behavioral Assessment.
- **Section 504:** scan and attach a copy of the current Section 504 documentation.

Additionally, current school year substantiating documentation to support a request for medical treatment or hospital confinement, etc. such as medical documentation, concussion form, statements of treatment or release from medical facilities, seizure logs, and/or doctor's notes must be scanned and accompany the request. These documents need not violate the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Notes from doctors and medical professionals should address and/or explain the impact of the condition on the student but should not provide a testing recommendation.

If information is missing in the request, a resubmission may be required.

Accountability Services and the North Carolina Testing Program do not process the following medical exception submissions:

- Requests for field test administrations. It is a local decision as to how requests for medical exceptions are to be processed for field tests.
- Requests for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Proofs of Learning (POL). These include: CTE state assessments, third party assessments, local assessments, CTE indicator POL assessments, credentials, and performance-based measures. The CTE Division, Reporting and Assessment section determines special exceptions for these courses. Contact Misty Wolfe, misty.wolfe@dpi.nc.gov or 919.715.2632 for questions or concerns about CTE POL medical exceptions

Medical Exceptions Submission Timeline for 2021–22

Medical Emergency/Situation	Deadline for Submission
Fall testing window	March 4, 2022
Spring testing window	End of spring testing window but no later than July 6, 2022

3. Submit requests for consideration through the Online Medical Exception Request System in NC Education's NCTest Admin. Do not email, mail, or fax requests.

4. The NCDPI will provide an email response with a statement of the decision to the public school unit test coordinator. This email will only identify the student by the assigned "Request ID #" in the Online Medical Exception Request System.
5. Students who are approved for a testing exception are coded for data analysis purposes by the NCDPI.
6. Any exception granted by the NCDPI is limited to the testing period for the specific test(s) for which it was requested and does not carry forward to future test administrations, unless noted in the NCDPI decision.

It is the expectation of the NCDPI that only those students who the public school unit believes are unable to participate in a state assessment are submitted for a medical exception request. Students who are granted a medical exception shall not be reported or counted in the school, district, or state test scores and will not be included in the calculation of the 95 percent tested rule. In addition, students who are granted an exception are required to meet all state and local graduation requirements before receiving a high school diploma.

Please be reminded that any written material containing identifiable student information shall not be disseminated or otherwise made available to the public by any member of the State Board of Education, any employee of the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, any employee of the NCDPI, any member of a local board of education, any employee of a local board of education, or any other person, except as permitted under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.

If you have questions regarding requests for testing exceptions based on significant medical emergencies and/or conditions, please contact Wendy Wooten at 984.236.2729 or wendy.wooten@dpi.nc.gov.