




PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA


DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Mark Johnson, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

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TO LEA Superintendents
Charter School Directors

FROM David Stegall, Ed.D. 
Deputy Superintendent of Innovation

Tammy L. Howard, Ph.D. 
Director of Accountability Services

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

There may be rare circumstances in which a student is unable to participate in a state assessment during the entire 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/North Carolina Testing Program 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 2019–20 school year. Failure to adhere to this process or include all requested information may result in the need to resubmit the request or may 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 LEA/charter school test coordinator and be approved by the Superintendent or Charter 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. Your services and contributions to the education of all children in North Carolina are appreciated.

DS:TLH:whw

c: Mark Johnson, State Superintendent
Sherry Thomas, Director, Exceptional Children
Trey Michael, Director, Career and Technical Education
Christie Lynch Ebert, 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 | (919) 807-4060 | Fax (919) 807-3772

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 2019–20 school year. Failure to adhere to this process or include all requested information may result in the need to resubmit the request and may cause a delay in response.

1. The local education agency (LEA) superintendent or charter school director 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/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 detail 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/no if parent has been notified)
 - **Affirmation** (approval by the LEA superintendent or charter school director to submit the request)

- **Supporting Documents**

If a student has an IEP, current Section 504 Plan, transitory impairment documentation, and/or BIP, the most recent version of the 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, substantiating documentation to support a request for medical treatment/hospital confinement, etc. such as medical documentation, concussion form, statements of treatment/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.**

Letters from the principal/charter school director, teacher of record/homebound teacher, or parent are not required, but often helpful in having a clear understanding of how a student’s medical condition limits participation in instruction and testing.

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 CTE Post Assessments. The Career and Technical Education Division of Instructional Services (CTE) makes decisions regarding special exceptions for these courses. Contact CTE at (919) 807-3933 for questions or concerns about CTE Post Assessment medical exceptions.
- Requests for NC Final Exams (NCFE). Requests for NCFEs are not to be sent to the NCDPI. It is a local decision as to how requests for medical exceptions are to be processed for the NCFEs. However, if a student has been granted a medical exception by the NCDPI for the current school year’s testing window(s), it may be extended to include the NCFEs at the discretion of the LEA/charter school.

Medical Exceptions Submission Timeline for 2019–20

| Medical Emergency/Situation | Deadline for Submission |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Fall testing window | March 6, 2020 |
| Spring testing window | End of spring testing window but no later than July 6, 2020 |

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 LEA/charter school 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 LEA/charter 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 (919) 807-3855 or wendy.wooten@dpi.nc.gov.