

Norwood Public Schools  
Reopening Plan  
2021-2022





## **Introduction**

### **“Processing Ambiguity”**

Leaders and decision-makers need to make thoughtful and informed decisions regarding a safe return to school.

Meanwhile, the Delta Variant and constantly changing guidance from government agencies present us with additional challenges in our planning efforts.

We will continue to do our best to make the very best decisions we can, with the information we have at the time.

### **Background**

During the 2020-21 school year, the Norwood Public Schools kept all schools open to students and staff using a robust, in-person, and remote learning model.

- ❖ A one-to-one device plan was fully implemented and our technology department worked diligently to ensure equity of access to all.
- ❖ Our maintenance team was amazing in keeping our buildings clean.
- ❖ Our nurses were right out in front working on all of the safety protocols for students and staff.
- ❖ Our administrators, teachers and support staff members were extraordinary in supporting our students.

### **School was in session during the 2020-2021 school year...**

A hybrid option of two days in-person instruction and three days of remote learning allowed smaller cohorts of students to learn while ensuring safety protocols were followed. A balance of in-person and remote instruction and a day (Wednesday) between cohorts allowed maintenance staff to clean the buildings to a high standard. By the end of the year most NPS students were back in buildings for at least part of the week.

### **Financial Support...**

The Town of Norwood provided additional funding to the schools to support the education of all students.

Combined with State and Federal funding through ESSR I and ESSR II allocations, the Norwood Public Schools, was able to provide students an optimal educational opportunity under the dire conditions that Covid 19 presented us.



### **For now...Back to School**

Norwood Public Schools remains committed to a safe and healthy reopening for all students, staff, and families in our district. In September of 2021, *we are planning for a full in-person return to school for all students.*

### **What the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) says about school reopening...**

On July 30th, 2021, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) released a joint memo on COVID-19 Guidance for Districts and Schools – Fall 2021. As outlined in the memo, all schools are required to be in-person, full-time, five days a week for the 2021-22 school year, and all previously released DESE health and safety requirements are lifted. In addition to outlining recommendations for school and district policies on masking, the memo also previewed new COVID-19 testing and quarantine response protocols for schools.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) issued some updated/additional guidance on August 13, 2021. If any additional information and guidance are issued by DESE that *impacts our school reopening*, we will communicate that with you as soon as possible.

At the special meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) on August 24, 2021, the Board voted to declare “exigent circumstances” under the Student Learning Time (SLT) regulations, 603 CMR 27.08 (1), and authorized the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education to require masks for public school students (age five and above) and staff in all grades through at least October 1, 2021. The masking requirement is an essential additional measure to keep students safe in school at this time.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education updates their FAQ page regularly. You can find the link here...[Updated 8/25/21](#)

**NPS continued Areas of Focus for 2021-22:**

- Health and Safety of all students, staff, and visitors
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Academic Support
- Professional Development

**Aligned with Strategic Objectives:**

- **Strategic Objective #1**
  - Investment and Resource Allocation: *Create a purposeful and sustainable budget to provide sufficient funds to operate and improve the Norwood Public Schools.*
- **Strategic Objective #2**
  - Facilities and Operations: *Create facilities that are centers for innovation and comprehensive educational experiences, that will foster and promote problem solving and creativity for both staff and students within a safe environment.*
- **Strategic Objective #3**
  - Innovative Instruction and Personalized Learning: *Implement core curriculum through instructional practices that will inspire lifelong curiosity through collaborative problem solving and authentic learning.*
- **Strategic Objective #5**
  - Safe and Supportive Schools: *Through the implementation of social-emotional learning and culturally relevant and trauma-informed practice, create a culture of care, inclusion, and safety for every student and their family in the Norwood Public Schools.*

## **Priority No.1**

### **Health and safety of students and staff**



#### ***Partners in this effort...***

The Norwood Public Schools leadership team is in constant communication with our local Board of Health. We rely on them for local data, including Covid infection and vaccination rates. Along with our NPS Nurse Leader Jill Driscoll, we also look to them for important State and Federal updates, recommendations, and suggestions.

#### **Continuing mitigation strategies from 20-21 into school year 21-22:**

1. Mask Wearing for all students and staff, per DESE vote, 8/21.
2. Distancing (3 feet whenever possible).
3. Air Purifiers (Industrial HEPA)-in elementary and middle school. The Norwood High School building exceeds air flow standards.
4. Open windows- Increased ventilation.
5. Testing for students and staff with a new "Test and Stay" Program designed to keep students in school when possible.
6. Promoting handwashing.
7. Providing hand sanitizer.
8. Cleaning of buildings to a high standard.
9. Using outdoors when possible for recess, lunch, other activities.

#### **Health and safety protocols:**

1. Promoting vaccination for students 12 and older and for all staff.
2. Requiring masks/face coverings for all students, staff, and visitors when inside an NPS

Building or while on a school bus\*; *per School Committee Vote, August 2021, per DESE vote 8/24/2021.*

3. Participating in State testing programs.
4. Promoting frequent hand washing.
5. Encouraging students and staff to stay home when sick.
6. Providing physical distancing where possible; when other layers of mitigation, including masks, are in place, NPS will maintain three feet of physical distancing wherever possible.
7. Providing free meals and promoting safety at lunch: *See Lunch slide below...*
8. Improving ventilation; this includes the use of air purifiers in all elementary and middle school classrooms (purchased and used last year) and the decision to purchase larger air purifier units for the school cafeterias (ordered).
9. Ongoing cleaning and disinfecting.

\*Federal Mandate

### **Lunch in the Norwood Public Schools**

- Students and staff will wear masks in classrooms, take them off to eat lunch.
- Students will be required to keep masks on while in lunch lines.
- The District is purchasing air purifiers for all cafeterias.
- Where possible, schools will stagger student seating at cafeteria tables.
- Where possible, schools will encourage students to get outside for lunch or get students out to recess as soon as possible.

### **Reminder...**

Breakfast and lunch will be provided to all students this year at no cost. The only exception, at the high school level, students will be able to purchase special menu items (while still getting a free regular lunch).

### **School Committee adopts vaccination/testing policy:**

On 9/1/2021 the Norwood School Committee adopted a policy that would require all NPS employees to be vaccinated or submit to weekly COVID-19 testing. The purpose of this policy is to minimize exposure to, and transmission of the COVID-19 virus within the District.

### **NPS TESTING INFORMATION**

**\*\*\* Please note that our "Pool Testing" as well as our Test and Stay program are being developed. Not all options may be immediately available. These programs will evolve as the state support becomes more available. Please look for updates\*\*\***



# DEFINITION OF A CLOSE CONTACT

## Definition

All of the following criteria must apply to be considered a Close Contact:

- Within 6 feet of a Covid-19 positive individual or within 3 feet in a classroom
- For a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or for asymptomatic people, 2 days before the test date)
- While indoors

## Exempt from Quarantine/Testing

If a student meets any of these criteria:

- Recovered from COVID-19 in the last 90 days
- Exposed in a classroom while both individuals masked and at least 3 feet apart
- Individuals on bus, masked, and windows open

...then they are exempt from quarantine and testing.



# COVID-19 SITUATION CHART

<b>SITUATION</b>	<b>Student identified as <b>SYMPTOMATIC</b></b>
<b>IMMEDIATE STEPS</b>	<b>Student assessed by the Nurse and placed in a Medical Waiting Room until they can go home. Cannot be sent home by bus.</b>
<b>TEST &amp; RESULT</b>	<b>Student will get a PCR/molecular COVID-19 Test</b> <b>POSITIVE</b> <b>NOT TESTED</b> <b>NEGATIVE</b>
<b>QUARANTINE or ISOLATION</b>	<b>Self-isolation for at least 10 days AND until 24 hours have passed without fever or other symptoms. <i>Notify your School Nurse and close personal contacts, if tested positive.</i></b> <b>Return after 24 hours have passed without symptoms and free of fever off fever-reducing medication.</b>

**If an individual is symptomatic with COVID-19 WHILE AT HOME, they should stay home, call their healthcare provider, and get tested. Contact your School Nurse.**



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# COVID-19 SITUATION CHART

<b>SITUATION</b>	<b>FULLY VACCINATED</b> student identified as <b>CLOSE CONTACT</b>
<b>IMMEDIATE STEPS</b>	<u>Any COVID-19 Symptom</u> Stay home and get PCR test.
<b>TEST &amp; RESULT</b>	Student gets a PCR COVID-19 Test <b>POSITIVE</b> <b>NEGATIVE</b>
<b>QUARANTINE or ISOLATION</b>	<p><b>POSITIVE:</b> Self-isolation for at least 10 days AND until 24 hours have passed without fever or other symptoms. <i>Notify your School Nurse and close personal contacts.</i></p> <p><b>NEGATIVE:</b> <u>Symptoms:</u> stay home until improvement of symptoms. Then, return and follow Test &amp; Stay (see next slide). <u>No Symptoms since Exposure:</u> return to school.</p>



# COVID-19 SITUATION CHART

SITUATION	<b>UNVACCINATED or PARTIALLY VACCINATED student identified as CLOSE CONTACT</b>		
<b>IMMEDIATE STEPS</b>	<b>Any COVID-19 Symptom</b> Stay home.	<b>No COVID-19 Symptoms</b> Exposed during Extracurriculars or Outside of School. Stay home.	<b>No COVID-19 Symptoms</b> Exposed during School Day. Remain in school.
<b>TEST &amp; RESULT</b>	Student gets a COVID-19 Test <b>NEGATIVE</b>	Student gets a PCR COVID-19 Test on Day 5+ <b>NEGATIVE</b>	Test & Stay for 7 days in school. <b>NEGATIVE</b>
<b>QUARANTINE or ISOLATION</b>	14 days of strict quarantine	7, 10, or 14 days of strict quarantine, based on <u>DPH quarantine guidelines</u> . Actively monitor symptoms through day 14.	Remain in school if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student has no symptoms and actively monitors for symptoms through day 14</li> <li>• Student wears mask at all times, other than eating/drinking</li> <li>• Student takes BinaxNOW test on each school day for 7 days</li> <li>• Student quarantines at home for all non school days.</li> </ul>
<b>POSITIVE at any point</b>	Isolate at home for at least 10 days AND until 24 hours have passed without fever or other symptoms. Notify your School Nurse and close personal contacts.		

DESE has provided significant information on testing protocols. Updates are being made weekly. Please look for updates.

## Priority No. 2

### Social and Emotional Learning

- ❖ Norwood Public Schools staff members are sensitive to the varying needs that students will bring back to school this year. In addition to our health and safety protocols, Norwood Public Schools is prepared to meet students' social and emotional needs as they return to school buildings full-time.
- ❖ We will rely on the excellent support team members of NPS in support of students (Guidance Counselors, Adjustment Counselors, Nurses, Coaches, others)
- ❖ We are anticipating some areas of concern; we will be identifying students' individual needs when everyone returns.

- ❖ Focusing on MTSS-Multi-Tiered System of Supports.
- ❖ We will be working with outside partners to provide additional supports to NPS students:
  - Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth, Inc.
  - McLean Hospital
  - William James College-Counseling and Behavioral Health Department

**Addressing student needs:**

- ❖ Recognizing signs of anxiety, when anxiety is good/helpful, and when it becomes more of a concern. Strategies to deal with anxiety - especially the physical symptoms.
- ❖ Time management and organization
- ❖ Managing stress/resiliency
- ❖ Motivation: students who once had no problem getting work done and now cannot motivate themselves to get started
- ❖ Managing social relationships- now that we are back together, but still not fully together, how do students deal with normal social pressures?
- ❖ Other areas of concern as they are identified.

**Priority No. 3**

**Academic Support**

- ❖ Academic Interventionists hired at each building will focus on numeracy/literacy.
- ❖ Improving data collection and using data more strategically and intentionally to improve student learning outcomes for all students
- ❖ Continue Acceleration Academies immediately preceding the start of school.
- ❖ Provide more robust summer opportunities in addition to NPS programs, look to outside partners.
- ❖ Continue Credit Recovery for promotion or graduation.
- ❖ Continue expanded vacation week programs for acceleration.

**Priority No. 4**

**Professional Development**

Professional Development comes in all shapes and sizes. Much of it centers around staff training, introducing staff to new ideas, skills, and programs.

Professional Development also occurs while staff members participate in Common Planning Time sessions, look at student data, and create individual and group lessons.

Here are some of the outside partners our staff will work with this year and beyond.

- World Savvy
- Highlander Institute-Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth, Inc.
- McLean Hospital

- ❑ Wilson Training

**Other areas of concern:**

- ❑ Athletics will occur in accordance with MIAA Guidelines.
  - ❑ In all classrooms, students and staff will wear masks and will emphasize vital hand hygiene.
  - ❑ Extended Day Programs will operate within Norwood Public Schools' safety guidelines.
  - ❑ While on a bus or a van, the driver, student (s), and a monitor will be required to wear a mask.
  - ❑ Outside service providers and student teachers/interns that are part of our educational programs will be permitted in schools. They must follow our established health and safety guidelines.
  - ❑ Other outside organizations will be allowed to rent space in Norwood Public School buildings as they have in the past. All participants will have to follow health and safety guidelines established by NPS.
  - ❑ Please...stay home when sick- fever, coughing, sneezing, stomach issues, etc.... PLEASE stay home and CALL the school nurse for guidance (students displaying symptoms in school will be sent home).
  - ❑ Regular cleaning and disinfecting of classrooms will take place frequently.
  - ❑ Ask your school nurse about our testing program.
  - ❑ Masks are NOT required during outdoor recess or outside events. THERE WILL BE MASK BREAKS THROUGHOUT THE DAY!
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**Additional funding through ESSR III will help:**

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Public Law 117-2, was enacted on March 11, 2021. The ARP Act provides additional funding for school districts to respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Education portion of ARP is known as the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds.

**ALLOCATIONS**

Similar to the earlier CARES and ESSER II, States received ESSER III funds based on their total Title I funding share. Then States allocate and distribute 90 percent of funds to districts based on each district's share of Title I in FY21.

**Norwood Allocation: \$3,059,236**

**ESSR III spending goals:**

- ❖ Align spending with NPS Strategic Objectives
- ❖ Align spending with student, family, and staff needs as we return to school and beyond.
- ❖ Get stakeholder input as we determine spending goals.

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**RESOURCES**

- ❑ **[Norwood Board of Health Covid 19 page](#)**

- ❑ [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Covid 19 information](#)
- ❑ [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
- ❑ [American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
- ❑ [Massachusetts Department of Public Health Covid 19 information](#)
- ❑ [World Savvy](#)
- ❑ [Highlander CRSP \(Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Pedagogy\)](#)
- ❑ [MassInsight Framework & Scope of Work](#)
- ❑ [UDL \(Universal Design for Learning\)](#)
- ❑ [ESSR III](#)

Questions or concerns; please reach out to the School Nurse, Principal or the Superintendent's Office.