

**Back to School
Norwood Public Schools
2021-2022**



“Processing Ambiguity”

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

The Delta Variant presents us with additional challenges while changing information continues to rapidly flood our brains.

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 model that included in-person and remote learning.

- ❖ 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...

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 were 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.*

Regulations

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

DESE Guidance

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.

DESE-Updates...

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

Implementation of DESE Mask Requirement August 25, 2021

At the special meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) on August 24, 2021, the Board voted to declare “exigent circumstances” pursuant to 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 5 and above) and staff in all grades through at least October 1, 2021. The mask requirement is an important additional measure to keep students safe in school at this time.

Frequently asked Questions--DESE

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education updates their FAQ page regularly. You can find the link below.

[Updated 8/25/21](#)

NPS continued Areas of Focus for 2021-22:

- ☐ Health and Safety**
- ☐ Social and Emotional Learning**
- ☐ Academic Support**
- ☐ Professional Development**

ALIGNED WITH NPS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES IN OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Priority # 1



Health and Safety of students and staff

SAFETY FIRST



**Safety
Starts
Here**

Think Safe...
Work Safe...
Be Safe

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 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. Newer high school exceeds air flow standards.
4. Open windows- Increased ventilation.
5. Testing for students and staff with 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.

Additional Mitigation Strategies for 21-22

- 1. Promoting vaccination for students 12 and older. NPS sponsored clinics will be offered regularly.**
- 2. The School Committee voted on 9/1/2021 to require all staff to be vaccinated or to participate in regular testing protocols.**
- 3. Masks/face coverings required for all students, staff, and visitors when inside a NPS Building or while on a school bus or van* ; per School Committee Vote, 8/4/21, per DESE vote 8/24/2021.**
- 4. Participating in Routine Covid Pool Testing, “Test and Stay” Program, screening/diagnostic testing to promptly identify cases, clusters, and outbreaks; Contact tracing, quarantine, and isolation (if necessary).**
- 5. Promoting frequent handwashing.**

***Federal Mandate**

Additional Mitigation Strategies for 21-22

5. Encouraging students and staff to stay home when sick.
6. Physical distancing where possible; when other layers of mitigation, including masks, are in place, NPS will wherever possible maintain three feet of physical distancing.
7. Meals: *See Lunch slide below...*
8. Improved ventilation.
9. Ongoing cleaning and disinfecting.



Lunch in the NPS

- ❑ 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 large 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 will get students out to recess as soon as possible after lunch.

As a 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.

Norwood Public Schools COVID Testing

Norwood Public Schools have enrolled in weekly Pool testing and the Test and stay Program. As setting up our testing program is still in process we will be providing updates and revisions.



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

SITUATION	Student identified as SYMPTOMATIC
IMMEDIATE STEPS	Student assessed by the Nurse and placed in a Medical Waiting Room until they can go home. Cannot be sent home by bus.
TEST & RESULT	Student will get a PCR/molecular COVID-19 Test POSITIVE NOT TESTED NEGATIVE
QUARANTINE or ISOLATION	<p>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></p> <p>Return after 24 hours have passed without symptoms and free of fever off fever-reducing medication.</p>

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.

COVID-19 SITUATION CHART

SITUATION

FULLY VACCINATED student identified as **CLOSE CONTACT**

IMMEDIATE
STEPS

Any COVID-19 Symptom
Stay home and get PCR test.

TEST &
RESULT

Student gets a PCR COVID-19 Test

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

QUARANTINE
or ISOLATION

Self-isolation for at least 10 days
AND until 24 hours have passed
without fever or other symptoms.
*Notify your School Nurse and close personal
contacts.*

Symptoms: stay home until improvement
of symptoms. Then, return and follow
Test & Stay (see next slide).
No Symptoms since Exposure: return to
school.

COVID-19 SITUATION CHART

SITUATION	<u>UNVACCINATED</u> or <u>PARTIALLY VACCINATED</u> student identified as CLOSE CONTACT		
IMMEDIATE STEPS	<u>Any COVID-19 Symptom</u> Stay home.	<u>No COVID-19 Symptoms</u> Exposed during Extracurriculars or Outside of School. Stay home.	<u>No COVID-19 Symptoms</u> Exposed during School Day. Remain in school.
TEST & RESULT	Student gets a COVID-19 Test NEGATIVE	Student gets a PCR COVID-19 Test on Day 5+ NEGATIVE	Test & Stay for 7 days in school. NEGATIVE
QUARANTINE or ISOLATION	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">• Student has no symptoms and actively monitors for symptoms through day 14• Student wears mask at all times, other than eating/drinking• Student takes BinaxNOW test on each school day for 7 days• Student quarantines at home for all non school days.
POSITIVE at any point	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.		

Frequently Asked Questions-Testing

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education updates their Testing page regularly. You can find the link below.

[Testing](#)

Priority #2



Social and Emotional Learning



Connecting and/or Reconnecting

- ❖ **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.**
- ❖ **Using the excellent support team members of NPS in support of students (Guidance Counselors, Adjustment Counselors, Nurses, Coaches, others)**
- ❖ **Anticipating some areas of concern; recognizing the individual needs when everyone returns.**
- ❖ **Focusing on MTSS-Multi-Tiered System of Supports**
- ❖ **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 in and out of a pandemic

- ❑ 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 might not be fully together, how do students deal with normal social pressures?
- ❑ Other areas of concern as they are identified.

Priority #3



Academic Support for students

- ❖ Academic Interventionists hired at each building-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 # 4



Staff 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 are participating in Common Planning Time sessions, looking at student data, and creating 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...and some reminders...PAGE 1

- ❑ Athletics will occur in accordance with MIAA Guidelines.
- ❑ In all classrooms students and staff will wear masks and will emphasize strong hand hygiene.
- ❑ Extended Day Programs will occur and operate within Norwood Public Schools safety guidelines.
- ❑ While on a bus or van the driver, student (s) and 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 areas of concern...and some reminders...PAGE 2

- ❑ **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!**

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](#)