

# **Hartington-Newcastle Public Schools**

## **Return to School Plan**

*August 5, 2020*

### **Return to School**

This document outlines the plan for returning to school in the 2020-2021 school year. The first day of school is August 17, 2020. The current plan is based on current conditions in our area, however, this situation is ever-changing and may cause the plan to be updated frequently. We will do our best to communicate changes to the plan as they occur using the school messaging system, the school website, and the HNS app. Changes will be made based on updated health measures in conjunction with state and local health departments and local medical professionals.

### **Educational Procedures**

- **Tier I--No to Minimal Community Spread**
  - All students and staff will participate in traditional in person school. The planned 2020-2021 calendar will be utilized. Additional safety measures will be taken. Parents are encouraged to use at home screening procedures. Face coverings are recommended but not required.
- **Tier II--Minimal to Moderate Community Spread**
  - Enhanced physical distancing will be used. Gatherings may be limited and reduced in size. Face coverings may be required when physical distancing is not possible.
- **Tier III--Moderate Community Spread**
  - Alternative scheduling will be considered to limit the number of students in the building. A hybrid model of instruction may be used. Face coverings will be used when feasible.
- **Tier IV--Significant Community Spread**
  - Students and staff will participate 100% remotely.
- The decision to move from one status to the other will be made by district officials in consultation with state and local health officials.

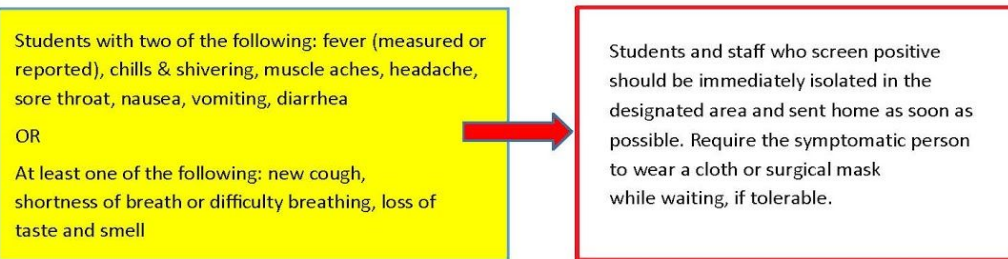
## Safety Measures

- Screening & Symptoms
  - The following chart will be used as a guide as to whether or not staff and students should be in school. We ask that parents screen students each morning for symptoms. We will screen any students or staff members who present symptoms.

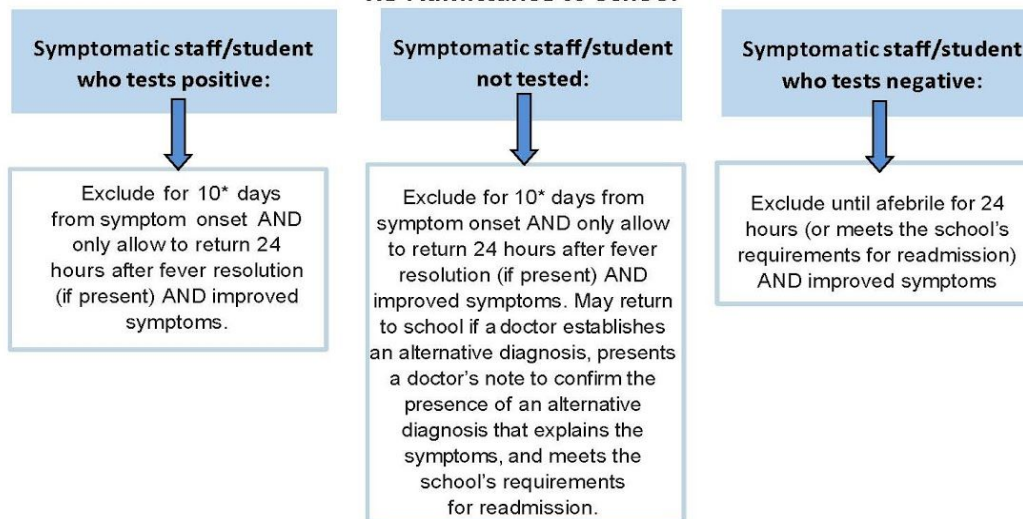


### Public Health Recommendations for the Screening, Exclusion, and Re-Admittance of Ill Students and Staff for COVID-19 in Schools

The following symptom screening criteria for ill students and staff is based on the most current research. Because people with COVID-19 have reported a wide range of symptoms – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness, the following criteria has been developed to assist schools in identifying presumptive positive COVID-19 cases.



### Re-Admittance to School



There is no reason for a student or staff member to get a "negative test" to be cleared for the return to school. A COVID-19 positive individual does not need a repeat COVID-19 test or a doctor's note in order to return. If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, please call Northeast Nebraska Public Health Department at (402) 375 – 2200.

Northeast Nebraska Public Health Department  
Adapted from the Douglas County Health Department

\*This length of time may need to be extended for people who have severe illness or are immunocompromised, please consult NNPHD or the health care provider for further guidance on those situations. 07.24.2020

- The support of families is vital during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students who exhibit any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (or are sick in any way) should not be sent to school. Sending sick students to school is unsafe for that student and for everyone else in the building. In the past, the idea of being able to “tough it out” made sense in certain situations. At this point in time, that thought process is unhealthy and unsafe.
- Classroom Arrangement
  - Social distancing guidelines will be followed as much as possible while students are in school/classrooms. Teachers will arrange classrooms in the safest way possible. Students will be grouped in the classroom only when necessary (guided reading, math groups, etc.).
  - Individual student desks have been purchased for each of the rooms in the high school so that students can more adequately distance.
- Facial Coverings
  - As of August 1, 2020, masks/facial coverings will not be required for all staff and students, but are recommended. Face shields will be provided to staff and students if requested.
  - Facial coverings may be required during passing periods and before and after school. This will be called “Masks on the Move.”
  - If social distancing guidelines cannot be maintained, students and staff members may be asked to wear facial coverings.
  - If masks are required, the school district will provide them.
  - District provided masks will be collected at the end of the school day for washing.
  - Students may provide their own facial covering, but it should be plain and must be school appropriate. A plain mask of any color without a design would be best. If a student’s mask becomes a distraction, they may be asked to use a school-provided mask. The administration and classroom teachers will judge the appropriateness of a students’ mask.
- Classroom Cohorts
  - Elementary: As much as possible, students will be cohorted, and the mixing of students will be limited. Students will be separated by grade level and classroom during lunch and recess times.
  - Secondary: It is very difficult to cohort students in secondary grade levels. Social distancing in the classroom and in the school is the first line of defense. When social distancing is not possible, face coverings will be required.
- Handwashing/Hand Sanitizing
  - Students and staff will wash or sanitize their hands upon entering the building each day. A strong emphasis will be placed on washing hands throughout the day. Washing hands for 20 seconds will kill the virus and help minimize the spread.
- Drinking Water
  - The drinking fountains will be disabled, so students will not be able to drink directly from them. The bottle filler component of the drinking fountains, however,

will be functional and available. Students should bring their own refillable water container to school each day. If it is full when they arrive, nothing other than water and ice should be in it.

- Environmental Safety & Cleaning Procedures
  - High-traffic surfaces will be sanitized frequently (door knobs, pushes, handles, automatic openers, light switches, handrails, drinking fountains, tables, chairs, bathroom surfaces, etc.).
- Visitors
  - No unnecessary outside visitors will be permitted
  - All visitors must have an appointment
  - Visitors may be asked to wear a mask when in the building
  - Until further notice lunch/classroom guests will not be allowed
- The list of safety measures above is not all inclusive. Other safety measures will be utilized on a daily basis. All implemented safety measures (listed or not) could be changed or ceased at any point in time. Also, additional safety measures could be implemented at any point in time. Changes or additions will be communicated as quickly as possible.

### **Entering and Leaving School**

- PK-6: Parents, please do not drop off your elementary students until 7:40 in the morning. Students who sign up for breakfast may enter the school for breakfast at that time. All other elementary students should wait at the elementary playground.
- 7-12: Students should not arrive until 7:45 unless they have made prior arrangements. Students should go to their classrooms immediately after they enter the building. There will be no congregating in the hallways. Students will be allowed to go to lockers, the restroom, or to get breakfast before school starts at 8:00 a.m.

### **Curriculum / Lesson Presentation**

- HNS is moving forward with new learning this fall. Teachers are analyzing concepts that may have been missed last spring and working on plans to integrate those concepts into their regular curriculum throughout the year.
- When students are not able to attend school, they will be able to use their school issued devices to continue the educational process remotely.
- Depending on the circumstances, focus and priority may need to be placed on core courses (ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies)

### **Meals**

- Lunch will be served daily. Lunch will be served in the commons, but students may eat in their classrooms or in the commons depending on grade level and capacity at the time students eat. No self-serve items will be available, including the ala carte station or the salad bar. All items will be served by cafeteria staff.
- Breakfast will be served in the commons. High school students will eat breakfast in their classrooms. Elementary students will eat their breakfast in the commons area.

### **Recess**

- Recess will be held on the playground, but students will be socially distanced and will be grouped by classroom cohorts. Class playground locations will be rotated daily.
- If indoor recess is necessary, students will rotate between the gym and passive activities in their classrooms.

### **Physical Education**

- Social distancing rules will be applied to physical education activities as best possible.
- Any equipment used will be sanitized between classes.

### **Transportation**

- When riding in school transportation, students will sit in assigned seats with family members.
- Masks are required for bus routes. Masks for transportation should be provided by the parents. If parents are unable, the school will provide.
- Hand sanitizer will be available for use when students enter and exit the van/bus.
- Vehicles will be sanitized between each use.
- Activity transportation may have different requirements depending on the amount of social distancing possible in the vehicle.
- A change in conditions may warrant a change in transportation plans.

### **Field Trips**

- Field trips have been suspended until further notice.

### **School Activities**

- All school sponsored activities will be operational at this time. Changes may be made based on changing conditions.
- HNS will follow the guidelines set forth by the Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA).
- Events (music concerts, theatrical productions, athletic competitions, etc.):
  - Modifications may be necessary for safety reasons.
  - Attendance at these events may be modified:
    - Limiting guests
    - Limiting the number of students that perform / participate
    - Virtual attendance (YouTube or Hartelco)
  - No final plans have been made, but measures to keep everyone safe may be necessary. We will communicate any restrictions via the school website and the school notification system.
  - Concessions will include only prewrapped items.
  - Different schools will have different restrictions on their events. We will follow the restrictions of the home school. Some schools will only be allowing immediate

family members into events. We will communicate these restrictions on the school website.

### **Use of Facilities**

- School facility use by outside groups may be limited. This will be done on a case by case basis.

### **Positive Case / Exposure Response**

- It is vital for positive COVID-19 cases to be reported to HNS officials immediately. Public health will communicate positive COVID-19 cases to school personnel, but that communication is delayed. To keep everyone as safe as possible, families are asked to report positive COVID-19 cases to school personnel immediately.
  - Privacy and confidentiality will be maintained.
  - Personally identifiable information will not be shared with students, parents, or the general public, but it will be shared with staff members who need that information.
  - In an effort to keep everyone as safe as possible, necessary information will be shared with staff, students, and parents.
- Students may participate in the educational process remotely if possible while on quarantine if well enough to do so.
- Those determined to have had close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more) with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19, will not be allowed to attend school for 14 days from their last contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19.

### **Concerns?**

If you are concerned about your child's safety, please contact your child's principal at 402-254-3947. The 7-12 principal is Corey Uldrich. The PK-6 principal is Sarah Edwards.

### **General Health and Well-Being**

We need your help! In order to keep kids in school as many days as possible, everyone must do their part to keep themselves and their family members healthy. This must happen not just in school, but in everyday life. A significant outbreak can be prevented, but only if everyone does their part to stop the spread.

We also ask that you be as understanding, compassionate, and flexible as possible. The decisions we are making are in the best interest of not only keeping our students and staff healthy but of having the best chance of staying with in-person schooling for much of the year. Some decisions will have to be made that will not be popular, but the safety of everyone and the continuity of school must be our top priorities.

We will do our best to communicate changes to the plan as they arise. This will undoubtedly be a year unlike any other. Together we can do this. Go Wildcats!