

**North Putnam School Corporation**

Back to School Plan  
in Response to COVID-19  
2021-2022 School Year



Board Approved: July 15, 2021

Board Reviewed: August 26, 2021; November 18, 2021; January 13, 25, & 28 2022

## Document Overview

---

Considerations outlined within this document are based on the Indiana Department of Health's *Back to School Guidance*. This document was developed in coordination with other schools in West Central Indiana and the Wabash Valley. It is intended to provide stakeholders with information on how North Putnam Community Schools plans to return to school in the Fall of 2021. The conditions, current medical landscape, and growing body of knowledge surrounding COVID-19 continue to evolve. This is a living document and may change based upon the situation at given moments in time.

In light of this new pandemic environment, please understand two key factors. One, this document was developed on the school's ability to maintain a safe and healthy school environment and the prevalence of COVID-19 in their community. Schools will need to constantly evaluate these two key factors as schools and communities will most likely fluctuate between the various phases of disease transmission over the coming months.

---

## Health Protocol for North Putnam Schools

It is essential for our school community to work together to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the school environment and in the community while still providing a quality education program.

State statute gives public school districts the authority to exclude students who have a contagious disease such as COVID-19 or are liable to transmit it after exposure (IC 20-34-3-9). In addition, the local health department has the authority to exclude students from school and may order students and others to isolate or quarantine (IC 16-41-9-1.6). As such, districts/schools are encouraged to work closely with their local health departments.

### Symptoms Impacting Consideration for Exclusion from School

Students and employees will be trained to recognize the following COVID-19-related symptoms:

- A fever
- Cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea/Nausea
- Fatigue; muscle aches; headaches
- Sore throat, congestion, runny nose
- Loss of taste or smell

Students and employees who have symptoms of COVID-19 as described above and tests positive or does NOT get tested, then siblings and household members should be considered close contacts and advised to quarantine. If the symptomatic person is diagnosed with another condition that explains the symptoms, or tests negative, then no quarantine for close contacts is necessary, but a provider's note with an alternate diagnosis will be needed to return to school or work or the individual will need to remain home for five (5) days from the first day symptoms appeared.

A symptomatic student or employee and anyone living in their household should quarantine while waiting for test results.

The chart at the end of this document will explain returning to school in more detail.

The state website has a list of over 200 testing facilities, their location, and hours of operation. This list is updated frequently.

### Screening

The current CDC guidelines recommend screening all students and employees for COVID-19 if symptoms and history of exposure. Screening can consist of self-screening, school-based screening, and/or medical inquiries. The type and extent of screening is at the discretion of the district/school.

- **Self-Screening**  
Students and employees will be asked to self-screen for signs of COVID-19 illness (see p. 3) each day prior to coming to school/attending school events prior to arriving at the school. Students and employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 without being otherwise explained, are prohibited from coming to school, and if they do come to school, they will be sent home immediately.

- **School-Based Screening**

- *Temperature Screening*

The district/school may take the temperature of students, employees and visitors on school property on a random basis or in situations where there is reason to believe that the person may be ill.

- *Observational/Self-Reported Screening*

Districts/schools are encouraged to provide professional development regarding the recognition of COVID-19 symptoms and screening. Students and employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 without being otherwise explained, are prohibited from coming to school, and if they do come to school, they will be sent home immediately.

### **Medical Inquiries**

Federal law typically limits the type of medical inquiries that can be made, but given the nature of the pandemic more leeway has been given to districts/schools in this circumstance to make additional medical inquiries of staff and students than would otherwise be allowed.

- If a parent tells the district/school that a student is ill, the district/school may ask the parent whether the student is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19.
- If an employee calls in sick or appears ill, the district/school can inquire as to whether the employee is experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.
- If a person is obviously ill, the district/school may make additional inquiries and may exclude the person from school property.

Even without symptoms, if a student or employee has recently had contact with a person with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, has someone in their home been tested for COVID-19, or has recently traveled from somewhere considered to be a “hot spot” by the CDC, the district/school may exclude the student or employee from the school building and recommend that they self-quarantine.

### **Wearing Masks**

Schoolbus: Per CDC guidance face coverings are required on school buses at the time of adoption. If the restrictions are lessened by the CDC after adoption, the school will respond accordingly with the guidance. [This link](#) explains more about masking.

Classroom, Hallways, and Other Common Areas: If students and staff are not vaccinated, wearing a face covering is recommended, but not required.

If a student or staff member prefers to wear a mask, regardless of their vaccination status, they will be allowed to do so.

### **Clinical Space COVID -19 Symptomatic**

There will be a room or space separate from the nurse’s clinic where students or employees who are feeling ill are evaluated or wait for pick up. All waiting staff and students should wear a cloth face covering. Only essential staff assigned to the room may enter. Prior to sending a student to the clinic, teachers will call the clinic to determine if it is appropriate to send the student for what might be considered a minor injury.

A record will be kept of all persons who entered the room and the room will be disinfected several times throughout the day. Strict social distancing is required and staff must wear appropriate PPE. Students who are ill will be walked out of the building to their parents.

Additionally, all staff and students with fevers or symptoms associated with COVID-19 should be encouraged to seek medical attention for further evaluation and instructions. Students and staff may return before the 72 hour window has elapsed if they are approved to do so in writing by their healthcare provider.

#### **Clinic Space Non-COVID-19 Related**

Students who do not display symptoms of COVID-19 can be seen and treated in the nurse's clinic. Teachers will call the clinic to determine if it is safe to send the child to the clinic prior to releasing them from the classroom. This would include students who are injured during the school day or students with special health care needs such as those with chronic health conditions (i.e. - diabetes or seizures), those requiring medical treatments (i.e. - suctioning, tube feeding, or nebulizers), and those with individual health plans.

#### **Confirmed Case of COVID-19 on School Property**

When there is confirmation that a person infected with COVID-19 was on school property, North Putnam Schools will contact the local health department immediately. It is important to also notify the Indiana Department of Health of the confirmed case and any close contacts. Unless extenuating circumstances exist, the district/school will work with the local health department to assess factors such as the likelihood of exposure to employees and students in the building, the number of cases in the community, and other factors that will determine building closure.

It is the responsibility of the local health department to contact the person confirmed with COVID-19, inform direct contacts of their possible exposure, and give instructions to those involved with the confirmed case, including siblings and other household members regarding self-quarantine and exclusions. The individual who tested positive will not be identified in communications to the school community at large but may need to be selectively identified for contact tracing by the local health department.

If a closure is determined necessary, North Putnam School Corporation will consult with their local health department to determine the status of school activities including extracurricular activities, co-curricular activities, and before and after-school programs.

As soon as the North Putnam School Corporation becomes aware of a student or employee who has been exposed to or has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the custodial staff will be informed, so that impacted building or bus areas, furnishings, and equipment are thoroughly disinfected.

#### **Regular Immunizations**

Immunization requirements will remain in place. Assistance through local health departments and health systems will be provided. Please ensure your child receives all required vaccinations for school attendance and are administered on time. We will continue to monitor immunizations as we normally do and will provide reminders to parents.

Staff and students are encouraged to consider obtaining the vaccination for COVID-19, but will not be excluded from school or work unless guidance changes for schools and this becomes a vaccination required for school attendance or work. Fully vaccinated students and staff members will experience greater latitude if they are identified as a close contact.

### **Preventative Measures**

The priority for preventing the spread of disease in the school setting is to insist that sick employees and students stay home. Additionally, students and employees should remain home if someone in the household has COVID-19 symptoms or is being tested for COVID-19.

Some people can be infected with COVID-19, but show no signs of illness even though they are contagious and can spread the disease to others. It is also unknown how contagious people are the day or two before they begin to exhibit illness symptoms. Thus, these employees or students may be present at school, will show no signs of illness, but be capable of transmitting the disease to others. In these situations, the three most important mitigation strategies are social distancing, frequent handwashing, and appropriate PPE.

Handwashing and avoiding touching your face, eyes, nose, or mouth are also important steps a person can take to avoid becoming sick or spreading germs to others. School administrators will insist that employees and students wash their hands often and if soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. School administrators will incorporate key times into the school day when all persons should wash their hands.

Students may bring water, ONLY, from home. If water is brought to school in a recyclable water bottle, it should be taken home and cleaned each evening before returning to school. Water bottles will be available for purchase or as a milk substitute at breakfast and lunch, if meal requirements are met.

### **Shared Resources at School**

Thorough and frequent cleaning for shared resources will occur when individual resources are not able to be provided.

## **Social Distancing at North Putnam**

---

The following are measures that North Putnam School Corporation will take to increase social distancing while still maintaining a level of face-to-face instruction.

### **Educational Programming:**

- Students will attend school each day, as normally as possible.
- We know that students perform better, academically and socially-emotionally when they attend school in person. Therefore, North Putnam School Corporation will offer in-person instruction.

### **Classroom and Learning Space:**

- Seating charts will be utilized.
- Three feet of social distancing is recommended and will be in place to the extent possible.

### **Breakfast and Lunch:**

Breakfast will be served as 'grab-n-go' for all students. They will pick up their lunch and eat either in the classroom or large areas such as the cafeteria, gym, or library at the middle and high school. Elementary students may eat in their classrooms.

Prior to any meal service, hand washing and sanitizing will be available to ensure safe eating practices.

The Food Service Provider (FSP) will develop and follow internal guidance from their corporate office.

### **Recess:**

When lining up, social distancing will be encouraged. Students will wash hands upon returning from recess prior to entering the classroom.

### **Arrival and Dismissal:**

Entry doors to the building will be held or propped open during arrival and dismissal.

### **Visitors in the Building:**

Visitors will enter through the main door of the school, sign in, be issued a badge, and may be subject to additional screening questions. It is possible, depending on the time of year, visitors may be reduced or not allowed in the building.

### **Athletics**

North Putnam Middle & High Schools Athletics are following the most recent guidelines distributed by the IHSAA and Indiana Department of Health. We work closely with our athletic training provider to provide a Return to Play protocol.

<b>TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 (ISOLATION)</b>	
<b>EVERYONE</b> regardless of vaccination status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Stay home for 5 calendar days</li> <li>*If you have no symptoms or they are resolving after the 5 days, return to school.</li> <li>*Must continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional calendar days (Days 6-10).</li> <li>*Failure to comply with wearing the mask will result in being sent home until Day 11 (Unexcused absence).</li> <li>*If you wish to remain home Days 6-10, this will be considered an excused absence.</li> <li><b>*If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves and are fever free for 24 hours with no OTC medication.</b></li> </ul>
<b>EXPOSED TO COVID-19 (QUARANTINE)</b>	
<b>IF YOU:</b>	<b>THEN:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Completed the primary series of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines</li> <li>*Completed the J&amp;J vaccine</li> <li>*Are not vaccinated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Stay home for 5 calendar days</li> <li>*Return to school on Day 6. Must continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional calendar days (Days 6-10). Testing on Day 5 is recommended.</li> <li>*Failure to comply with wearing the mask will result in being sent home (unexcused absence) until Day 11 unless a test result is negative. The test cannot be an at-home test.</li> <li>*If you wish to remain home Days 6-10, this will be considered an excused absence.</li> <li><b>*If you develop symptoms, get tested and stay home (see above).</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Are boosted</li> <li>*Have a documented positive COVID-19 test within the previous 90 days.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Remain at school and wear a mask around others for 10 calendar days. Testing on Day 5 is recommended.</li> <li>*Failure to comply with wearing the mask will result in being sent home (unexcused absence) until Day 11 unless a test result is negative. The test cannot be an at-home test.</li> <li>*If you wish to remain home for 10 days, this will be considered an excused absence.</li> <li><b>*If you develop symptoms, get tested and stay home (see above).</b></li> </ul>