

Updated Return to In-Person Instruction Plan

2022-2023

Plan Reviewed and Updated:

9/1/21, 12/9/21*, 1/6/22, 6/9/22

*no changes to plan

What is required in the return to in-person instruction plan?

An LEA must include specific information that addresses how it will maintain student and staff health and safety and how it will ensure continuity of services for academic and social emotional needs, as well as how it meets CDC guidance, to the extent practicable, regarding the following:

- Universal and correct wearing of masks. (p. 6)
- Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing.
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette. (p. 12)
- Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation. (p.13)
- Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the state, local, territorial, or tribal health departments. (p. 6)
- Diagnostic and screening testing. (p. 4-5)
- Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities. (p. 5)
- Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies. (p.16-18)
- Coordination with state and local health officials (p.2)

*At this time, we do not know the community spread of COVID-19 at the beginning of the 22-23 school year. This plan contains “may” provisions in order to allow for adjustments. As required by the US Department of Education, this plan will be reviewed and may be updated at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year and at least every six months thereafter.

Northwestern School Corporation Return to In-Person Instruction Plan 2022-2023

INTRODUCTION

For the 2020-2021 school year, Northwestern School Corporation developed a Return to School Task Force Committee to create, communicate, and implement a comprehensive reopening plan. Teachers representing each building, district and building administrators, the athletic director, lead nurse, school board member, and parents contributed to the reopening plan. The guidelines referenced in this plan are based on guidance from the IN-CLASS document [“Indiana’s Considerations for Learning and Safe Schools \(IN-CLASS\)”](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), and applicable federal, state, and local agencies.

Addressing Community Spread in Northwestern School Corporation		
Substantial Spread	Minimal or Moderate Spread	Low to No Spread
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID spread is such that rolling closures are needed (could be short term or long term) • Substantial <u>active exposure cases or absences at school buildings</u> impacting in-person attendance and staffing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain communication with Local Health Department Officials • Minimal or moderate <u>active exposure cases or absences at school buildings</u> impacting in-person attendance and staffing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain communication with Local Health Department Officials • Low to few known <u>active exposure cases at school buildings</u>

Northwestern School Corporation understands that the level of community spread may change and require adjustments to our initial plans. Conditions will be monitored weekly with communication from the state and county health departments, with adjustments as needed.

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Health Protocols:

(modified from IDOE's In-Class document)

Screen for symptoms every day.

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

- A fever of 100.4° F or greater
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Fatigue
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Runny nose/congestion
- New loss of taste or smell

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 Howard County 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).

Students and staff should be excluded from school if they:

- Test positive for COVID-19, or
- Exhibit two or more of the symptoms of COVID-19 based on CDC Guidance that is not otherwise explained, or
- If they have knowingly been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

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 will 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 will inquire as to whether the employee is experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.
- If a person is obviously ill, the district/school will 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 his/her home being 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 he/she self-quarantine for 10 calendar days.

Sick student, staff, or family member:

1. Contact the office to report your child’s absence. You may be connected to the school nurse for documentation and follow-up. Staff members need to contact their direct supervisor.
2. If a student or staff member has symptoms of COVID-19, they should be presumed to be positive and quarantine for 5 days until they are 72 hours fever free without the use of fever reducing medications unless they have a provider’s note that determines the symptoms were caused by something other than COVID-19, the student is fever free for 24 hours, and the provider feels it is appropriate for the student to return to school.
3. COVID-19 usually involves multiple symptoms. If the student or staff member has known allergies and is experiencing side effects of the allergies, with no other symptoms, or a headache with no other symptoms in an individual who is known to suffer migraines, you do not need to treat them as if they have COVID-19. Still contact the office for notification of illness and absence.
4. Any student, teacher, administrator, or staff who is symptomatic for infection should stay home and consult their primary care provider or seek testing.

Making Vaccinations Available to Students and Staff: In an effort to provide COVID vaccinations for our students and staff, Northwestern will communicate Howard County Health Department and area shot clinics to students and staff.

Quarantine Guidelines

1. If a student tests positive for COVID-19:
 - a. Stay home for **5 days** from the onset of symptoms or date of test results if asymptomatic.
 - b. If you are symptom-free or your symptoms are resolving, you may choose to return to school or you may choose to continue your isolation at home for 5 additional days. **If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.*
 - c. If the student returns to school on day 6, the student must check in with the nurse prior to reporting to class.

Additional Information:

- ❖ Parents are expected to monitor their students before each school day for the symptoms of COVID. Children with fever, cough, runny nose, congestion, shortness of breath, headache, loss of taste or smell, nausea, fatigue, muscle or body aches and sore throat should not be sent to school without a different diagnosis.

Mask Guidance

For the 22-23 school year, masks are not required.

How to safely wear and take off a cloth face covering:

1. **Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before putting on your mask.**
2. **Put the mask over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.**
3. **Fit the mask snugly against the sides of your face, slipping the loops over your ears or tying the strings behind your head.**

Return to school after testing for COVID-19:

After testing negative for COVID-19:

1. Return when the fever has been gone for 24 hours without the use of medicine that reduces fevers or if no fever was present, upon feeling better.

After testing positive for COVID-19:

1. Notify the school immediately of any positive test.
2. Isolate for 5 days.
3. No fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers); **and**
4. Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved).

Return to school after someone in my home has symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19:

Someone else in my home has symptoms or is being tested for COVID-19:

1. Contact the school nurse.

What if the test results are positive for someone else in my household?

1. Notify the school if someone in your home has tested positive for COVID-19.
2. If an individual in one's home has COVID-19 and is unable to isolate, those in the household should also stay home for a minimum of five days. This could be longer if the student becomes symptomatic.

Instructional Options Based on Level of COVID-19 Spread

<p>Low to No Spread Traditional Learning (In-person)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 100% Traditional Learning Students participate in-person every day. School buildings are open with additional cleaning, safety, and protective measures in place. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 100% Virtual Learning option for grades 7-12 with an online provider (non-Northwestern teachers). Virtual option will only be available for students in grades 7 -12 with a documented medical condition where COVID-19 would prevent in-person instruction. Students MAY NOT participate in extracurriculars or athletics.
<p>Minimal or Moderate Spread</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 100% Traditional Learning Implement more intensive mitigation strategies, encourage enhanced social distancing. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 100% Virtual option continues for students with documented medical necessity.
<p>Substantial Spread:</p> <p>Short term closures for cleaning</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Extended closures for community spread</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 100% Live Instruction via Google Meets until community spread decreases and then transition back to the Traditional Learning option. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students will receive live instruction on a modified daily schedule from Northwestern teachers. Attendance will be taken. Students will be expected to participate in all sessions and complete all work. Teachers will provide weekly office hours. Counselors are available for students. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 100% Virtual option continues for students with documented medical necessity.

What is Virtual Learning? (Offered in all 3 scenarios for only 7 - 12)

- Instruction is delivered through the internet, software, or both. (Edgenuity)
- Can be used inside or outside the physical building of the educational organization.
- Uses the computer and an online program or software to enhance the learning experience.
- Can be used in a self-pacing format (individualized) or live web conferencing between students and instructors.
- Students have remote access to content and instructors.

What is Live Instruction via Google Meets? (Offered in Substantial Spread)

- Live instruction via Google Meets utilizes digital tools for teaching and learning, and the technology facilitates the learning process.
- Students take a course from a Northwestern teacher, but only interact with the teacher online.
- Students have unlimited access to the content with lessons posted to Google Classroom.
- Students will be provided a modified version of their daily schedule.

What is Distance Learning? (Offered to quarantined students)

- Students may participate in live instruction via Google Meets

What is eLearning? (Offered during inclement weather and emergency closings)

- Like Distance Learning, eLearning utilizes digital tools for teaching and learning, and the technology facilitates the learning process.
- Can be used online or in a classroom setting.
- Students continue their in-person courses from a Northwestern teacher, but instruction moves to only interact with the teacher online.
- Students have unlimited access to the content.
- The term *eLearning* will be utilized for closure related to inclement weather and emergency closings unrelated to COVID-19.

Teaching and Learning

Low to No Spread Traditional Learning (In-person)

All Buildings:

Screening:

- All staff self-screen daily before providing instruction.
- All students self-screen at home before arriving at school.

Additional Protective Measures:

- Teach and reinforce good hygiene practices like hand washing, covering coughs, etc.
 - Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette
 - Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
 - Use tissues and throw them away.
 - Wash your hands or use a hand sanitizer every time you touch your mouth or nose.

Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community—from your home and workplace to childcare facilities and hospitals.

- Follow these five steps every time.
 1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
 2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
 3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
 4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
 5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hands should be washed/sanitized at the start of school, prior to eating, after using the restroom, after blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing, and after using shared equipment. ● Hand sanitizer stations are available in every classroom. ● Minimize the use of shared supplies and materials. Sanitize between each use if shared as feasible. ● Protocols established for students who begin to feel sick at school, including isolation rooms in each building. ● Students may bring water bottles from home. Bottle filling stations will be available in each building. ● Isolation room is established for students/staff with COVID symptoms. <p>Attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students who are out of school for an extended period of time due to COVID-19 will be required to utilize Google Meets/Classroom for live instruction and/or assignments. ● Absences due to COVID-19 quarantining will be excused. If the student is able to participate in distance learning during the quarantine period, the attendance will be recorded as Virtual Learning due to COVID-19.
<p>Low to No Spread 100% Virtual Option</p>	<p>Elementary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No virtual option for elementary. <p>Middle/High School:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For grades 7-12 with an online provider (non-Northwestern teachers) facilitated by Coordinator of Online Learning. Virtual option will only be available for students in grades 7 -12 with a documented medical condition where COVID-19 would prevent in-person instruction. Students MAY NOT participate in extracurriculars or athletics.
<p>Minimal or Moderate Spread</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Traditional Learning or Virtual Learning (if previously enrolled). ● Provide educational content on Google Classroom on the days students are not in school (with support) until they come back the following scheduled day.
<p>Substantial Spread</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No students in buildings. ● All students participate in Distance Learning* or Virtual Learning (if previously enrolled). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ *Students will receive live instruction on a modified daily schedule from Northwestern teachers. Attendance will be taken. Students will be expected to participate in all sessions and complete all work. Teachers will provide weekly office hours. Counselors are available for students. ● Staff may be in classrooms for delivery of Distance Learning.

Social-Emotional Wellness

Low to No Spread Traditional Learning (In-person) & Online Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Counselors will work with students individually or in small groups to address any well-being needs. ● Counselors will build a tool box of resources for teachers to facilitate teacher-student relationship building and address SEL concerns. ● Counselors will facilitate trauma informed care training for teachers/staff to support teacher-student relationships.
Minimal or Moderate Spread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Counselors will work with students individually or in small groups to address any well-being needs. ● Counselors will develop videos and resources for parents and teachers to access. ● Teacher structured time to check in with students weekly, counselors will provide optional SEL lesson plans to help facilitate teacher-student time. ● Counselors will facilitate trauma informed care training for teachers/staff to support teacher-student relationships.
Substantial Spread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School buildings are closed ● Counselors will meet virtually with students one-on-one and in small groups via Google Meet. ● Counselors will post SEL lessons, videos, and resources on Google Classroom to support parents, students, and teachers. ● Counselors will post trauma-informed care teacher training and tips to support teacher-student relationships. ● Counselors will administer SEL surveys virtually to students as a regular wellbeing check. ● A survey will be administered to staff and students. The survey will allow for feedback on how to develop a stronger outreach program and support their needs. ● Teacher structured time to check in with students weekly, counselors will provide optional SEL lesson plans to help facilitate teacher-student time. ● Create a COVID-19 Wellness page on the corporation website for parents with public resources to support students.

Protecting Vulnerable Populations

- Provide 100% Virtual Learning option for students with a documented medical condition where COVID-19 would prevent in-person instruction.
- Create Individual Health Plans for vulnerable students and staff as needed.
- Provide vulnerable students and staff appropriate accommodations/PPE.
- Provide hand sanitizer for students and staff.
- Establish a process for regular check-ins with vulnerable students and staff.
- Allow an early transition for vulnerable students to go to classes.
- Limit large group gatherings/ Interactions for vulnerable students and staff.
- Face coverings and/or face shields will be available for students and staff upon request.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

- Soap and hand sanitizer are available throughout the building and in each classroom.
- Specialized cleaning procedures, equipment, and EPA registered chemicals in use.
- Routine cleaning is performed on a regularly scheduled basis by district custodial staff assigned to that building or area.
 - Routine cleaning includes daily cleaning and disinfecting of all restrooms, scheduled sweeping of all floors, sanitizing of cafeteria tables, emptying trash and other building based tasks.
- Supplemental cleaning is performed by custodial staff over and above what is considered routine.
 - Supplemental cleaning is focused on cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces, specifically for the purpose of preventing spread of COVID-19.

Examples of frequently touched surfaces and objects that will need routine disinfection following reopening are:

- tables, • doorknobs, • light switches, • countertops, • handles, • desks, • phones, • keyboards, • toilets, • faucets and sinks
- Emergency cleaning: The emergency cleaning plan will be implemented at the direction of the Superintendent or designee in response to an actual infection located at or attributed to a particular school or location or when directed by County or State health authorities.
- Upon direction to implement an emergency cleaning plan, the facility will be evacuated and plans for the length and scope of facility closure will be communicated to the public and staff. This may only affect a portion of the facility.

Transportation

- Parents may transport children to and from school as they feel most comfortable.
 - All student pick-up and drop-off will be curbside. For the safety of everyone, all drivers will remain in their vehicles and students will be loaded and unloaded on the curbside by Northwestern staff.
- All staff self-screen each day before starting routes.
- Parents are to conduct health screening (page 2) prior to placing students on the bus and have students wash hands prior to getting on the bus. Do not send children to school if they have any symptoms (see page 2).
- Bus is cleaned and disinfected.
- Students may wash hands or utilize hand sanitizer upon arrival at school.
- Parents will submit the transportation form if seeking busing to and/or from school for their student;
- Bus drivers will contact parents to inform them of their student(s) specific bus arrangements;
- Students will be assigned a single school bus number and bus stop;
- Bus seat assignments may be designated on a “bus stop basis” meaning students may be grouped together in bus seats;
- Students will not be permitted to change bus arrangements;
 - If a parent/guardian needs to change a child’s transportation method on a given day, s/he will only be allowed to change to a car rider. Students are not permitted to switch to a different bus as all seats are assigned ahead of time in an effort to limit student contact as well as enhance contact tracing, if necessary.
- Students will not be permitted to eat or drink on the bus unless medically necessary with a physician’s documentation;
- Students will be required to remain in their assigned seats for the duration of the school bus trip. All students must remain facing forward and remain seated. Failure to comply with seating requirements will result in the loss of bus privileges for a student.
- Buses will be filled as minimally as possible with ideally no more than 2 students per seat.

Serving Meals

- Students will continue to eat lunch by grade level (K-8) and as scheduled in the high school.
- All students wash hands prior to breakfast and lunch.
- Hand sanitizer and/or soap is provided for students and staff.
- Food service staff may wear face coverings as they prepare and serve food (Chartwells guidelines).
- Disposable utensils are utilized.
- Cafeteria is cleaned between each meal service.
- In the event of a school closing, food distribution will be available for students.

Special Services

Case Conferences and Annual Case Reviews

Northwestern School Corporation will continue to conduct annual case reviews within the one-year timeline, regardless of school closure status. As school reopens, case conference meetings with parents may be scheduled to review the provision of services and the educational progress of each student. These discussions will determine whether or not there is a need for an IEP revision.

Educational needs will be measured by considering:

- Whether the student participated in continuous learning opportunities provided by the school and district during the COVID-19 school building closure.
- Parent observations of the student's learning during the continuous learning opportunities provided by the school.
- Teacher observations of the student's learning in the continuous learning opportunities provided by the school.
- Whether there were services identified in the student's IEP prior to the school closure that the school or district was unable to provide during the building closure due to restrictions on in-person services.
- Whether the student continued making progress toward meeting his/her IEP goals.
- Whether the student experienced any additional or new social-emotional health issues during building closure.
- Whether the student experienced any regression during the period of school building closure.

Future Services/Compensatory Services

Northwestern School Corporation will be required to make an individualized determination as to whether compensatory services are needed under applicable standards and requirements. This does not mean that the school must immediately offer compensatory services to all students with IEPs; rather, it requires the case conference committee to lead a discussion on the educational needs of the student, including the potential loss of skills. Based on these individual needs, the CCC may consider the appropriateness of collecting data for an agreed-upon time following the student's return to school and subsequently reconvening to discuss the need for future services at that time.

Transition IEPs:

Transition assessments will continue to be updated annually. When updating transition assessments, teachers of record (TORs) may conduct assessments virtually or in person. Assessments may be administered prior to or during the meeting. In all cases, assessment information will be documented within the Summary of Findings utilizing the SPIN method -Strengths, Preferences, Interests, and Needs. Transition services will be created with both in-person and remote ways to accomplish objectives and goals to accommodate for the fluidity of the COVID-19 situation.

Evaluations:

Requirements for evaluations remain unchanged. Evaluations may be conducted virtually if the evaluator has been appropriately trained in conducting virtual assessments and has access to the digital assessments.

Medically Fragile Students:

The determination of the services to be provided must be made by the CCC (Case Conference Committee) based upon the individual student's medical and educational needs. Special education and related services determined by the CCC for a student with a physician's statement could be provided online or in a virtual instructional format, through instructional telephone calls, or through other curriculum-based instructional activities (511 IAC 7-42-10). If the services are to be delivered through online or virtual instruction, technological competency and the need for additional assistive technology will be considered.

Homebound Services:

Students who were receiving services in a homebound placement pursuant to their IEP will remain in that placement until the CCC determines that a different placement is appropriate. Whether the location of the homebound services identified in the student's IEP is in the student's home or an out-of-school location other than the student's home, school personnel will follow appropriate health guidelines to assess and reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Homebound Timelines:

The CCC will continue to reconvene at least every 60 instructional days (this instructional day count includes remote learning days used pursuant to our Continuous Learning Plan) when a student is receiving services in a homebound setting. Changes to the IEP related to a safer service delivery method during school closures and re-entry may be considered by the CCC at these 60 day reconvenes.

Special Transportation:

If a student is being provided in-person services and requires transportation, then the IEP will reflect this service. Administrators will collaborate with the school transportation director to implement a busing plan that meets social distancing recommendations (including pick-up, in-transit, and drop off).

Extracurriculars and Athletics

- All State and local guidelines for group limitations will be followed.
- First-time athletes are required to have an IHSAA pre-participation physical.
- Returning athletes are not required to obtain a new physical, but must provide a 2021-2022 IHSAA Health History Update Questionnaire and Consent and Release Certificate.
- Adhere to all social distancing guidelines as required.
- Coaches may wear face coverings.
- When not participating in vigorous activity, and social distancing cannot be achieved, athletes may wear face coverings.
- All equipment must be sanitized before and after every use.
- Students must supply water bottles and no sharing of water bottles will be allowed.
- If receiving treatment from the trainer, both the student and the trainer may wear face coverings.
- Students must wash hands for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer before and after all workouts.
- Free weight lifts may be conducted. Spotters may wear face coverings while spotting a lift.
- Contact is limited to only contact necessary to compete as defined by the IHSAA.
- Schedules may be adjusted to reduce the number of events, duration, and participants present.
- Spectators, media, and vendors may be present at competitions. Spectators may be limited.
- Events, activities, and crowd attendance continually evaluated with the county health department.
- Cleaning schedules will be created and implemented for all facilities and equipment to mitigate any communicable diseases.
- If equipment must be shared, including sports balls, weight room facilities, non-wind instruments, etc., this equipment must be cleaned prior to use and immediately following usage.
- Water fountains will be closed. Individuals should bring their own drink from home. Water bottles will be available to those who need one.

All students and staff will be required to self-screen for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participating in workouts, rehearsals, or practices.

- Any person with COVID-19-related symptoms will not be allowed to take part in workouts, rehearsals, or practices and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate healthcare professional.
- Any person with a positive COVID-19 test must report to their school.
- Coaches must track COVID-19 impacted attendance and report to district/school administration.
- Follow specific return-to-school protocol in reference to participation for student athletes or staff members who no longer test positive and/or no longer display symptoms of COVID-19 (see Return to School After Exclusion).