



# REOPENING

Nassau County Schools



**A SAFE AND HEALTHY RETURN TO TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**NASSAU COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**2021 – 2022**

**RETURN-TO-SCHOOL SAFETY PROTOCOLS**

**and**

**LEARNING OPTIONS**

**Superintendent**

**Dr. Kathy Burns**

# **INTRODUCTION**

2020-2021 will most certainly go down as the most challenging school year in modern history. Despite being amid the worst pandemic in decades, our schools were able to remain open, keep everyone safe, and provide high quality educational experiences for our students. Our success was due to the commitment and support shown by the people who make up our school community. Staff, students, parents, and community partners came together and made many sacrifices to ensure our students had a successful school year.

Through the summer and up until just a couple of weeks ago, we didn't foresee COVID-19 affecting the upcoming school year like it did in 2020-2021. However, the current resurgence of the virus in our community has raised many of the same concerns we faced last year. Our number one priority remains the safety and well being of our students and staff members. This plan outlines the measures being taken to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus in our schools as we begin the 2021-2022 school year.

## **Part 1: Reopening Healthy Learning Environments**

### **Screenings**

Schools will employ a combination of self-screening and observational screening protocols for universal screening of illness of staff and students. The district and schools will communicate information to parents and staff about the symptoms of COVID-19 and require them to self-screen before coming to school. Students and staff exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 without being otherwise explained, are prohibited from coming to school, and if they do come to school, they should be sent home immediately.

In addition, the district/school may take the temperature of students and staff on a random basis or in situations where there is reason to believe that the person may be ill. Touch-free thermometers will be utilized and will be provided for use in clinics, at front desks, to food service staff, and any other

school/district area where a team has determined a specific need.

### **Masks**

As we begin the 2021-2022 school year, the wearing of masks by students and staff will be recommended and highly encouraged, but not mandated, when social distancing cannot be maintained or in mixed groups of vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.

The need for wearing masks will continue to be evaluated.

### **Classrooms**

Good hand hygiene will play a huge role in our ability to prevent spread of the virus. The importance of washing hands frequently and using hand sanitizer will be emphasized on an ongoing basis. Hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms.

While six feet of distance between students will not be possible in most classrooms, desks and other furniture will be arranged to allow for as much distance as possible between students.

Classrooms and high touch/high traffic surfaces/areas will be cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected daily.

- Include after-hours disinfection with hand-held, misting machine for high touch surface disinfection conducted by school custodial staff.

Elementary cohorts of students will remain together throughout the day to reduce the number of interactions. All efforts will be made to keep small groups consistent, to minimize the number of students each student interacts with.

- There are some support services for education, related services, and mental health that will require students to leave or join other cohort groups during the school day. These student groupings will be tracked, and attendance will be kept.

Limit the use of classroom materials to small groups and disinfect between uses.

Limit the use of water fountains that are not fill stations; students and staff will be strongly encouraged

to bring water from home or use individual disposable water bottles.

## **Cafeteria**

There are many safeguards being implemented to help reduce the chances of the virus being spread during breakfast or lunch. For breakfast “grab and go” will be utilized to decrease the number of students in the cafeteria.

Social distancing will be difficult in the cafeteria at lunch due to the number of students and limited space and seating. Every effort will be made to maximize the distance between students. Outdoor areas and other spaces will be utilized as much as possible to increase social distancing and close contact.

Schools will increase the amount of space between tables to the greatest extent feasible. Tables, seats, and contact points will be cleaned and sanitized between service with assistance from custodians.

The Department of Food & Nutrition Services will be making extensive changes to day-to-day operations to help ensure the safety of students and staff:

- All food service personnel will be pre-screened and strongly encouraged to wear a mask and face shield while at work and will receive additional training related to COVID-19 and proper cleaning, sanitation, and hand washing.
- Additional cleaning & sanitation in the kitchen and common areas were added.
- Signage is posted in the kitchen and cafeteria for COVID-19 prevention and to encourage social distancing.
- Social distancing will be practiced in the kitchen as much as possible.
- Hand sanitizer available at start of serving line/entry doors of cafeteria.
- Sanitize tray slide/counter in between classes and/or groups.
- Simplified menu and choices as needed for breakfast and lunch.
- No self-service bars or shared utensils or condiment stations for students. All pre-

packaged cutlery and disposable trays will be used.

- All food items will be individually portioned or packaged or handed directly to the student from the food service employee.
- Minimize cash transactions in the cafeteria. We will encourage pre-payments or online payments for staff and parents. Cash will not be handled by food service staff during meal service unless necessary.

## **Buses**

- The bus will be deep cleaned, disinfected, and/or misted with a viricide at the end of each day.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be located at the entrance of each bus. Students will clean hands with hand sanitizer before entering the bus.
- Students will be assigned seating.
- Students who become sick during the day will not use group transportation to return home.
- Drivers will receive specific training on cleaning/disinfection procedures, the safe usage and storage of cleaning/disinfection products, and COVID-19 safety.

## **School Clinic**

- Enhanced training will be provided to Clinic Staff.
- Clinic Staff must wear a mask and/or face shield and gloves when interacting with students and staff. Sanitizing Stations will be set-up outside the Clinic.
- The area where students interact with the health staff will be cleansed after each student visit.
- Teachers will call the Clinic or Front Desk before sending a student to the Clinic to ensure availability and quick response. Exceptions to this rule: Any emergency may send a student to the Clinic or call the Health Aide/Nurse for services.
- Students who are scheduled for regular Clinic visits, such as those who must have their

glucose checked at designated times, do not need to have someone call ahead.

- A waiting room will be established with required social distancing.
- A room will be designated for students who are awaiting parent pick-up due to COVID-19 symptoms or other reasons.

### **Hallways, Restrooms, and Common Areas**

- Hallway traffic will be one way, with arrows on the floor.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be available throughout all buildings.
- Students and staff will be discouraged from gathering in common areas.
- The number of students in restrooms will be limited.
- Restrooms will be disinfected throughout the day.
- Signage will be installed in appropriate areas with CDC or local health department safety recommendations.
- Provide frequent reminders to staff and students to stay at least 6 feet apart when possible.
- Limit capacity in break rooms/conference rooms to allow for social distancing.
- Schedule routine cleaning and disinfection of school facilities daily.
- Custodial staff will conduct after-hours disinfection with hand-held, misting machine for high touch surfaces.

### **Arrival and Dismissal**

Upon arrival, PreK-5 students will go straight to class, cafeteria, or other designated areas as determined by the school.

Campus opening times for schools have been adjusted as needed to minimize the number of students arriving on campus prior to the start of school. The Principal will communicate the appropriate arrival times for the campus based on the ability to get students in class on time and to provide adequate supervision for students before the start of classes.

At dismissal, there will be increased supervision to maintain directional flow and reduce mass gatherings.

Dismissal will be staggered when possible. If the Principal can stagger dismissal, the plan will be communicated to parents. Parents who are picking up their student(s) from school should remain in their vehicles.

### **Responding to a Positive Case of COVID-19**

Our ability to keep our schools up and running will hinge greatly on our vigilance in following the safety measures outlined in this plan. There is growing evidence that strict adherence to these practices greatly enhances an organization's ability to control the spread of the virus. Once an individual is confirmed positive for COVID-19, the Health Department will be notified, and contact tracing will be conducted. If an employee tests positive for COVID-19 they will not return to work or school until cleared by the Health Department.

A Health Department letter will be sent home with all students having close contact with a confirmed case. In consultation with the Health Department, a decision will be made regarding which individuals should quarantine and for how many days.

### **Isolation from School and Protocols to Return to School After Home Isolation**

Students and staff should be isolated from school if they test positive for COVID-19. Determinations about the need for home isolation and the length of the isolation period will be made in collaboration with families, the school-based administrator, the health services team, and the Nassau County Health Department. Once a student or employee is isolated from the school environment, he/she may return if he/she satisfies the recommendations of the Nassau County Health Department. The district and the Nassau County Health Department will continue to collaborate to refine and implement COVID-19 protocols to assess risk and respond to school-specific matters based on all relevant factors and current information.

### **Confirmed Case of COVID-19**

When there is a confirmed positive COVID-19 test result for a student, the parent will contact the school Principal.

When there is a confirmed positive COVID-19 test result for an employee, he/she will contact their Supervisor.

The Principal or Supervisor will contact the Office of Intervention, Prevention and School Safety. The Principal or Supervisor will immediately determine the areas of school that need sanitization. If needed, they will work with the Director of Facilities for assistance with the cleaning of large areas.

The Office of Intervention, Prevention and School Safety will work with the Nassau County Health department to begin contact tracing.

It is the responsibility of the Nassau County Health Department to contact the person confirmed with COVID-19, inform direct contacts of their possible exposure, and provide 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 will be identified to the Nassau County Health Department for contact tracing.

As soon as the district/school 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. If possible, based upon student and staff presence, the custodial staff will wait 24 hours or as long as possible prior to disinfecting. However, if that is not possible or school is in session, the cleaning and disinfection will occur immediately.

### **Visitors, Volunteers, and Vendors**

Visitors, volunteers, and vendors will be approved on a very limited basis until further notice. Approved volunteers, visitors, and vendors will be required to sign in via RAPTOR for entry. All vendors will be vetted via the front office.

To minimize outside influence into the school, any person entering campus will be escorted to their destination. All will complete a COVID-19 questionnaire.

All parent visits for the purpose of having lunch with their children will be suspended until further notice. PreK– 5 parents may escort their student(s) to the door of their classroom for the first two weeks of school.

### **Athletics, Extracurricular Activities, and Clubs**

Our school sponsored athletic teams, clubs, and other extracurricular activities serve a vital role on our school campuses. Our ability to allow these activities during this time will require careful adherence to the safety protocols put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread.

#### **Athletics**

- Nassau County athletics will adhere to the Florida High School Athletic Association guidelines.
- Coaches will conduct daily screenings and random checks.
- Hand sanitizer stands will be placed at the entry/exit of all venues and concession stands.
- Schools will establish sanitization procedures for shared equipment.
- If spectators are permitted to attend events, limitations may apply based on social distancing guidelines as issued by state and local officials.

#### **Band and Fine Arts**

- Schools will explore alternative indoor/outdoor facilities to hold classes to promote social distancing.
- Rehearsals will be outdoors when appropriate.
- Hand sanitizer stands will be placed at the entry/exit of all venues and concession stands.
- Band Booster parents will be encouraged to wear masks, practice social distancing, and volunteer with the same small group every time to limit exposure.
- Band uniforms will be cleaned and sanitized following the manufacturers' guidelines.
- As feasible, students will limit the sharing of materials and equipment.

## **Part 2: LEARNING OPTIONS for 2021 – 2022**

### **Medically Vulnerable Students**

All medically vulnerable students and those students who live with medically vulnerable family members should consult with their family doctor and develop a plan for their safe participation in schooling. For medically vulnerable students who come to school, school health staff will develop school health plans in consultation with the county health department. Our schools will consider accommodations for these students on a case-by-case basis.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If a parent of a student(s) with a disability believes the established procedures are not appropriate for their student(s) they should contact their healthcare provider to discuss their child's health risk in school. After the parent consults with their health care provider, they should contact the school to arrange a meeting to address their child's specific needs.

### **Student Attendance**

Our current attendance policy states, after fifteen (15) days of absence, whether excused or unexcused, a student must present verification from a licensed doctor for all subsequent absences due to illness. COVID-19 related absences will be excused and not count toward the 15 days of absences for the 2021-2022 school year.

### **Traditional School (Brick and Mortar)**

K-12 students will go to school as normal, five days a week. PreK students will go to school as normal, four days a week. Early release days will continue to occur every Wednesday.

### **Nassau Virtual**

Students who attend Nassau Virtual full-time are withdrawn from their zoned school and enrolled in Nassau Virtual. Enrollment involves a semester commitment. In this fully virtual model, students often work on assignments during non-traditional hours. Students and parents are supported by teachers who offer office hours.