

**NORTH PLATTE R-I SCHOOL DISTRICT
BACK TO SCHOOL PLAN**



2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

During our preparations for the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, we have been working with our staff, parents, students, community members, and the county health department to enable a safe environment for our students and staff members. We have attempted to outline below our guidelines and protocols for this upcoming year. These guidelines in this document are subject to change, given the dynamics of the current global pandemic.

HEALTH GUIDELINES

We are taking every precaution we can to ensure the safety of our students and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidelines that are described below are subject to change, as we continue to follow the guidelines of our federal, state and county health departments.

- **Screening for Symptoms:**

Students and staff must stay home if sick. We will provide information for our families and staff to enable them to screen for illness before coming to school each day by assessing the following potential symptoms:

- Fever
According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, a fever is 100.4 F or greater.
- Cough
- Rash
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Lack of appetite
- Loss of taste or smell

- **Exposure to COVID-19:**

If students or staff members feel healthy but have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19, they need to stay home and monitor their health until 14 days after their last exposure. Families should notify their child's principal, and staff should notify their supervisors of the exposure.

- **Social Distancing:**

District staff will take steps to promote social distancing, when possible. This may include adjusting passing period times, arranging desks and equipment to provide

distance, adjusting recess and lunch time frames, modifying arrival and dismissal protocols, and other modifications deemed appropriate by district staff.

- **Masks:**

Mask usage will adhere to the mandates and regulations provided by state and county departments. The district **may** also require additional mask usage.

- **Cleaning/Handwashing:**

Throughout the day, we will encourage hand washing, and we will also supply hand sanitizer in every classroom. Students and staff members must wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after meals and recess. District staff will also regularly disinfect high-touch surfaces.

- **Transportation:**

Please consider taking your child to school instead of sending them on the bus. We will not be able to provide social distancing on the buses, but we will take as many precautions as possible:

- Drivers will wear masks when students are boarding and getting off the bus.
- Student mask guidelines will adhere to state and county mandates.
- The district will provide hand sanitizer.
- Bus windows will be open when weather allows.
- Cassity Bus Company will train drivers about health and safety precautions for COVID -19.
- Cassity Bus Company will disinfect surfaces on the bus at end of each route.
- Students will sit in assigned seats, with family members together when possible

- **Visitors:**

During this time we will not allow visitors to the building during the school days. If you need to bring something to the school, you will need to stay in the front office, and we will ask you to follow physical distancing rules. We will also work with families when we need to have meetings for students' individual education programs (IEPs), 504 plans and individual health plans (IHPs). If you need to drop off medication, please make an appointment with the office before coming to the school. All visitors must adhere to state and county mask mandates.

- **Food Service:**

District and OPAA! staff members are staying current with the latest federal, state and local guidelines for preparing and serving meals. Students will be served meals instead of having several self-serve options. Students will only be allowed to serve themselves on pre-packaged items. To create more social distancing, each school will work to spread students out and may alter meal schedules.

- **Sharing Supplies:**
Staff members will attempt to limit the sharing of items and equipment, when possible. Shared supplies will be disinfected between use, when possible.
- **Water Fountains:**
The water fountains will not be in use at this time. Students and staff will need to bring their own water bottles and may refill them throughout the day at the bottle filling stations.
- **Large Gatherings:**
The district will attempt to have no large gatherings such as full-school assemblies, carnivals, etc. during this time. We are developing precautions for large classes, such as PE, band, and choir.
- **Extra-Curricular Activities, Athletics and Clubs:**
We will continue offering extra-curricular activities, including athletics and clubs, while taking as many safety precautions as possible. We will follow MSHSAA guidelines and recommendations for safety whenever possible.
- **Student Training:**
We will help students understand how school will look different during this pandemic, teaching them about health and safety. This will include information from public health officials about handwashing, physical distancing, covering coughs, staying home, wearing face masks and avoiding face-touching.
- **Attendance:**
If you select Panther Online for your child, this will not count as an absence. If you select the in-person option but then your child must quarantine for 14 days, these will be excused absences. If you have any questions about attendance, please contact your child's school so we can work with you.

WHEN A STUDENT OR STAFF MEMBER HAS SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

In case a student or staff member shows COVID-19 symptoms, we have a plan in place, based on the best information from public health officials and experts at Children's Mercy Hospital.

- **Notifications about Cases:**
As we work to keep students and staff safe during this pandemic, we will share as much information as possible with you, while still following legal and ethical privacy rules.

When we see students and staff with illness symptoms, as we often do each year with allergies and illnesses like strep and bronchitis, we will send them home when appropriate and sometimes encourage them to get tested for COVID-19.

While privacy laws keep us from sharing each of these cases with you, please take precautions as if everyone has COVID-19, including you and your family. Please use the list of symptoms we gave you to screen before coming to school, and please stay home if you know you or your child have been exposed to COVID-19.

If a student or staff member has been in direct contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 or someone whose medical provider diagnosed them with a presumed case of COVID-19, we will contact you.

- **Assessing Symptoms:**

The school nurse will use their nursing judgement to evaluate the person's symptoms. Even if a student or staff member's fever does not reach the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendation of 100.4 F, the nurse might send the student or staff member home after considering all symptoms.

- **Safety Precautions:**

Our school nurse will use CDC-recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) when working with a student or staff member with COVID-19 symptoms, and the nurse will try to keep the person with symptoms separated from everyone else until they can carefully leave the school.

- **Guidelines:**

The nurse will send home guidelines to the student's family or staff member, including information about the rules for returning to school.

- **Medical Care:**

The nurse may recommend the person with symptoms follow up with a licensed medical provider or the health department.

- **Cleaning:**

We will block off the areas the student or staff member has been until our custodian can clean and disinfect them.

PLAN FOR POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST BY STUDENT OR STAFF MEMBER

If a student or staff member has a positive COVID-19 test or a healthcare provider diagnoses presumptive COVID-19, we will follow these guidelines:

- If your child has been in direct contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 or whose medical provider diagnosed them with a presumed case of COVID-19, we will contact you.
- We will work with our local health departments to determine what precautions we must take and whether we need to close.

- The person's family members should self-quarantine for 14 days after the last day of exposure. Nurses will contact buildings where family members attend to ensure that they are observing the self-quarantine.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER ILLNESS

If the School Nurse Sends a Student or Staff Member Home:

If a school nurse sends a student or staff member home with COVID-19-like symptoms, they will use these guidelines to decide about the student or staff member's return to school:

- Must be fever-free a minimum of 48 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol or ibuprofen
- Must have an improvement in COVID-19-like symptoms
- Might be asked to stay home at least 10 days after symptoms first appeared
- Might be asked to bring medical clearance to return to school signed by their licensed health care provider

If a Student or Staff Member Gets Diagnosed with COVID-19:

If a student or staff member has a positive COVID-19 test or gets a diagnosis of presumptive COVID-19 from their health care provider, we will follow these guidelines to decide about the return to school:

- Must be fever-free a minimum of 48 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol or ibuprofen.
- Must have an improvement in COVID-19-like symptoms.
- Must stay home at least 10 days after symptoms first appear OR until receiving two negative COVID-19 tests completed 24 hours apart or clearance from a physician.
- Might be asked to provide documentation from a licensed health care provider stating clearance to return to school.

ACADEMIC OPTIONS FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

Leading up to the 2020-2021 school year, we have sent surveys out to parents and students to determine preferences for educational delivery methods for the upcoming year. We plan to offer two options. One option will be traditional in-person classes and the other will be Panther Online.

In person:

Students who choose this option will return to their school in the fall, taking health and safety precautions.

If we need to close down a classroom, a school or the entire district because of a COVID-19 outbreak, our in-person students and teachers would move together to distance learning

This would look similar to the distance learning program we used when we shut down after spring break, although we have been hard at work this summer to improve it based on the feedback we received from students, teachers and families.

Online Panther Learning:

Students who choose not to return in person will use our Online Panther option. This is an online-only option we are offering during the COVID-19 pandemic for students from across the North Platte School District. It may include both direct teacher instruction and independent student work, with a combination of virtual one-on-one meetings, virtual group meetings, live class sessions and pre-recorded videos. These students will not be on campus during the school day for activities like celebrations.

Students who choose this option during the COVID-19 pandemic must commit to attend Online Panther for the entire semester. They will not be able to switch back to in-person learning until the next semester.

Please keep in mind that this document is subject to change at any time during the 2020-2021 school year. Changes may and likely will occur due to shifting federal, state, and county guidelines. We will notify students, parents, and staff members when changes are made.