



COVID - 19 Guidance Document

2021-2022 School Year

October 2021

Vaccinations:

Newport Independent Schools promote and offer opportunities for vaccination to help increase the proportion of students (12 years of age or older), teachers, staff, and family members who are vaccinated. We encourage teachers, staff, and family members to get vaccinated by hosting community-wide-vaccination clinics at school. Newport Independent also provides information to families about vaccine safety and availability in the community.

School partnered vaccination clinics are scheduled prior to planned days off from school and work (usually a Friday afternoon, day before a break, days when school is not in session). Vaccination appointments are staggered and include controlled entry/exit, social distancing guidelines are followed, and masks are required.

Masks

Newport Independent requires masks for all persons while indoors in all classrooms, non-classroom settings, and while moving unless otherwise exempted. The decision to wear masks is made based on guidance from public health, the incidence and positivity rate of community and state, and the population of students not eligible for vaccination. As these factors change school leadership will communicate with the school and community.

Students are provided with instruction on correct mask usage and mask breaks through their classroom procedures. Consistent and correct mask usage is reinforced throughout the school day and year. Students and staff should arrive at school with masks in place. Students and staff with medical exemption will be encouraged to wear shields and alternate options as a reasonable accommodation.

Mask Breaks- Each school will provide daily breaks to all students. Outdoor activities are encouraged, weather permitting.

Masks should:

- ☐ Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face;
- ☐ Be secured with ties or ear loops;
- ☐ Include multiple layers of fabric;
- ☐ Allow for breathing without restriction;
- ☐ Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape;
- ☐ Cover both nose and mouth; and
- ☐ Meet school standards for appropriate messaging and images aligned with the school dress code.

Transportation

All students riding the school bus must wear masks per CDC's public health order. All students riding TANK public transit must wear masks per President Biden's Executive Order. Hand sanitizer will be available on each public school bus operated by Newport Independent.

Physical & Social Distancing

Newport Independent utilizes 3 feet of physical distancing space between students in classrooms and learning environments in conjunction with universal masks. When possible, all desks will face the same direction. Students will not be excluded from in-person learning to maintain distance. Physical distancing of at least 6 feet will be utilized between students and unvaccinated teachers/staff. All classrooms will utilize assigned seating.

Screening & Illness

Parents should complete a quick health assessment, including a temperature check, **before** sending their student to school. If there are no symptoms observed, the student should proceed to school as normal regardless of transportation mode. If symptoms are observed, parents should keep their student home and contact the school nurse for guidance.

If a student/staff member is **symptomatic at home** (fever, chills, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, new cough, new loss of taste or smell, gastrointestinal symptoms or other COVID identified symptoms), they should stay home and must contact their school nurse for potential quarantine guidance.

If a student is **symptomatic at school** (fever, chills, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, new cough, new loss of taste or smell, gastrointestinal symptoms or other COVID identified symptoms), the student will be escorted by a staff member or the school nurse to the on-site nursing office. In the event of multiple students, students will maintain six feet of social distancing that is supervised. Each school has identified isolation areas. Areas the ill student has occupied will be cleaned and disinfected. The student's primary guardian will be contacted via the telephone number provided to the school, by a school staff member. If the primary guardian is unavailable the secondary contact, any emergency contacts, and potentially work numbers will be contacted to locate an adult. Students must be collected from school within a reasonable time and no more than one hour from the time of the initial call.

If a staff member is **symptomatic at school** (fever, chills, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, new cough, new loss of taste or smell, gastrointestinal symptoms or other COVID identified symptoms), regardless of vaccination status, they will be directed to the school nurse for potential quarantine instructions. The School-Based Health Center (SBHC) will have PCR testing available. Test results from outside lab-based testing centers will be accepted as well.

Testing

Newport Independent offers CDC approved non-invasive COVID PCR testing at Newport Primary, Newport Intermediate, Newport High, and the School Based Health Center for students and staff who are symptomatic and/or exposed upon written consent of the guardian/staff member. COVID testing will be available at the SBHC during school hours for students/staff kept home from school. School nurses and other trained staff complete the PCR test through a partnership with Ethos Labs (Newport KY). Newport Independent also provides, through a partnership with Ethos Labs, Rapid Testing for Test to Stay Option.

COVID testing at Newport Independent is a voluntary program, supported by the State, and at no cost to staff, students, nor parents. Guardians/staff may unenroll from the program at any time. Registration may be completed at: <https://www.ethosbacktoschool.com/>

Test for Symptoms: Students and staff with potential symptoms, may test at school for free or at another location of their choice. Students and staff with a **negative** test may return to school after the result has been confirmed by the nursing staff and symptoms are improving.

A parent, legal guardian, or other person or agency responsible for a student must notify the student's school nurse within 24 hours if a student tests positive for COVID.

Tests for Exposures: Students and staff who have been exposed to a positive COVID case have the opportunity to test due to exposure.

1. Exposure occurred **outside** of school:

- ❖ **Vaccinated**, asymptomatic students and staff who have been exposed to a positive COVID case, do not need to quarantine but are recommended to test 3-5 days after exposure.
- ❖ **Unvaccinated**, asymptomatic students and staff who have been exposed to a positive COVID case, are recommended to be tested on or after the 5th day of their quarantine. Students and staff with a negative test may return to school

after the result has been confirmed by the nursing staff and symptoms are improving.

2. Exposure occurred **inside** of school: If an exposure has been confirmed inside of school/bus, the **Test to Stay** program option below may be utilized with staff/parental permission.

- ❖ Students and staff who are unvaccinated, asymptomatic, with a known exposure originating from school may choose the Test to Stay option at a school location.
- ❖ Students and staff must test prior to the start of the school day and must test for five consecutive days. Those receiving negative results may attend school.
- ❖ School transportation is not available at this time for students choosing this option for those five days.
- ❖ Extracurricular activities are not available to students participating in Test to Stay during the five days.

Those choosing not to participate in the Test to Stay program must quarantine following the standard quarantine procedures.

Contact Tracing

Upon identification of a positive COVID case at school, contact tracing shall be initiated. Each classroom utilizes the seating chart feature within Infinite Campus to assist in identification of close contacts. Educators of the students confirm/deny the contact tracing list based on classroom activity, all potential close contacts in conjunction with class rosters, cafeteria seating, intervention group rosters, etc. Should close contact occur on a Newport Independent School Bus, bus seating charts will be utilized to determine close contacts.

The school nurse or a staff member under direction of the school nurse contacts each identified close contact's guardian to explain quarantine needs. Families and staff may request to speak with the school nurse should they have concerns or need additional support.

School Building Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting, and Ventilation

Multiple hand sanitizing stations and dispensers are located throughout all schools. (Handwashing is still the recommended best practice.) Newport Independent will utilize frequent cleaning of all aspects of schools and district buildings throughout the instructional day and evenings. These cleanings will include frequently touched surfaces, high traffic areas such as restrooms and hydration stations.

Students will receive instruction and reinforcement of learning in proper handwashing. Students will be provided opportunities for hand hygiene.

Newport Independent has increased facility ventilation to the greatest extent possible to increase circulation of air. Custodial staff are equipped with cleaning materials to address all surface types. Each teacher has also been provided with sanitizing and disinfecting materials.

Food and Nutrition Services

Students enrolled in Newport Independent Schools are served breakfast and lunch at no charge through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). Under the CEP provision, families no longer need to complete a Free or Reduced Price Meal Application but are required to complete a Household Income Form (HIF). These forms provide the school district with information for other income based funding, such as our Family Resource and Youth Services Center.

Food service is available to students who are quarantined. Families may request this service at the time of contact with school staff at the start of quarantine or may contact the school at any time during the out of school time period to submit a request.

Attendance

Newport Independent has resumed in person learning 5 days per week for students. It is imperative that guardians contact the school team as soon as a potential illness is identified, so students may be provided with the appropriate absence event type and ensure the student's access to learning. The school's instructional team will collaborate with guardians and students to ensure learning opportunities are provided.

Students who must quarantine from school may miss valuable instruction. Students have the opportunity to earn attendance by participating in instruction via Google Classroom. Teachers post instructional videos, lessons, learning links, and assignments for students who are working from home that mimics the traditional school day. When students participate in learning their learning attendance is not impacted and the days do not count toward absent events.

Students who quarantine from school and choose not to participate, do not receive credit for the day and this is an absent event. The Healthy at School team will collaborate with the school instructional team to determine absent event type. *If a child is ill and unable to participate in instruction there are options available to families to protect the student's attendance including Home/Hospital instruction at the advice of the child's medical provider or the potential for a nurse excused event.*

Students with a positive COVID diagnosis, symptomatic, and at the direction of the child's medical provider will be provided instructional services through the Home/Hospital Instructional Program by means of a virtual model when too ill to participate daily. Any student absent due to illness for consecutive days may be eligible for Home/Hospital Instruction. Please reach out to your school if your child is going to miss multiple consecutive days.

Learning Plan

Students who are required to quarantine will be assisted by the school instructional team on an individual basis to determine a learning plan.

Newport Independent Schools utilize Google Classroom as a Learning Management System (LMS) in grades K-12. The Quarantined Continuation of Learning plan is implemented when students have been quarantined based on health or safety reasons. Schools are required to provide instruction and learning to students during this time to encompass the six hour instructional/learning day. Students must have access to instruction, learning links, and assignments as they would during the normal school day and setting.

Delivery shall include a variety of the following:

- ☐ Instructional videos (by teacher or reviewed online materials)
- ☐ Links to learning activities, videos, and materials needed for learning
- ☐ Google Meet with teacher(s) for instruction, phone contact, or email contact
- ☐ Usage of online digital approved programs (IXL, Lexia, USA Test-Prep, etc.)

Documentation on file at the school shall include a variety of the following:

- ☐ Google Classroom assignment submission
- ☐ Graded assignments
- ☐ Log of student access in digital resources
- ☐ Other: any format that shows student progress through learning targets for the time out of school, when combined, accounts for the instructional learning day.

Newport Independent offers virtual learning options for 5th - 12th grade students and families through the (NSOI) Newport School of Innovation. NSOI offers remedial, on grade level, and accelerated learning options. Newport High School also offers virtual learning for students in grades 7-12 who are interested in on-line learning. Those interested in learning more may contact Jennifer Stewart, Director of Pupil Personnel at 859-292-3001 or via email at Jennifer.Stewart@newport.kyschools.us

Newport Independent may utilize Non-Traditional Instruction based on guidance from public health, positivity rates within the community, and for the safety of students,

families, and staff. District and school leadership will communicate this information to families, staff, and community as early as possible should the need arise.

Newport Independent's Covid Guidance Plan should be considered a living document. Information contained within is subject to change throughout the school year. We will update the plan as guidance is received from the Kentucky Department of Education, Kentucky Board of Education, Centers for Disease Control, KY Department of Public Health, and the Northern Kentucky Department of Public Health.

Common Terms

Exposure (aka Close Contact): Is defined as being within 6 feet of an infectious person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes in a 24-hour period. Exception: In the K-12 classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were at least 3 feet away from an infected student if both students were correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time and other K-12 prevention strategies were in place. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

Isolation: Applies to individuals, regardless of vaccination status, with a positive Covid diagnosis.

Quarantine: Applies to individuals that were either exposed to a person with a positive Covid diagnosis OR that are displaying symptoms that *could be* consistent with Covid.