



Northwestern Local Schools

2021-2022 School Year Plan

(Revised 9-20-2021)

The Ohio Dept. of Health, Wayne County Health Dept., and Governor DeWine continue providing parameters and guidance for schools. This Northwestern plan is open to ongoing revisions per directives, mandates, and clarifications from them.

This is a summary of the Northwestern Schools COVID Fall Restart Plan. It is by no means comprehensive and will continue to be amended as new situations and information occurs. The plan has evolved greatly and as of this time the district's tentative plan is:

- All Students **began school** on August 24th in the buildings per the approved 2021-2022 school year calendar, 5 days per week, with normal hours.
- In summary the same protocols are in place as last spring - with a few exceptions:
 - ✓ **Face coverings are not required by students, staff, or visitors in the buildings. However, they are recommended (note that we will continue to restrict visitors during the school day). However, in addition to the superintendent's inherent authority to close a grade, school building, or district for a short-term period of time (with a possible temporary shift to online learning) the superintendent also has the discretion and authority to either require masks for up to a 10 school day time period for students, staff, as well as visitors when quarantine levels and student absences have surpassed 25% as a school district.**
 - ✓ We are maintaining 3-ft social distancing
 - ✓ Currently there are no athletic or extracurricular restrictions for students or spectators
 - ✓ The duration of quarantines ~~has been updated~~ **is** per the Ohio Dept. of Health flow chart. **However, students who are on quarantine, who have not tested positive, can return to school immediately during the 7 dates of quarantine if ALL of the following conditions are met: evidence of a negative COVID test result, the student remains symptom-free, the student wears a mask throughout the school day and while at school (with the exception of when eating lunch), and a second negative COVID is obtained on day 7. With this situation a student would continue quarantine outside of the school day for any contact sports as well as any extracurricular events involving students from another school district in which they participate.**

- ✓ **Northwestern has a new partnership with Battelle for COVID Testing available.**

This will be available in cases of symptomatic and/or suspected cases

- **Northwestern Schools will continue with our COVID Dashboard with information updates.**
- **What is to come as we move throughout this school year is yet to be determined as we together discover how we will proceed and receive more information regarding the COVID pandemic.**

Safety Protocol:

The state of Ohio, Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Department of Health, and The Wayne County Health Department have provided rules and guidance regarding the re-start of schools with safeguards in place. Much of what we have included in our plan is based upon their restrictions and/or recommendations as well as ongoing monitoring of the COVID outbreak over the past 18 months.

Know that Northwestern Schools take seriously our responsibility to provide a quality education as well as to ensure the safety of our students and staff. Bringing in many people in a common space is challenging in the midst of the pandemic. We continue educating students safely to the best of our ability.

Transportation:

- School buses, as usual, will have a seating chart of assigned seats.
- Buses will be disinfected after each route on high touch surfaces.
- Face coverings (defined as face-shield and/or face-mask) are required for drivers.
- Face Masks are required for all students and adults riding a bus or other school transportation (unless a specific exemption has been issued by a principal and transportation supervisor **for medical or other qualifying reason**). If a student refuses to wear a mask, the district has the right to refuse to transport the student.
- Note that it is a parent responsibility to provide a face-mask. However, Bus drivers will have disposable masks on the bus for those students who are at their stop who have forgotten or do not have their facemask.

Classrooms:

- Class capacity will be determined to maximize safety considerations of 3-ft social distancing by classroom square footage. However, realize that every school district, building, and classroom is different – so this will vary somewhat and may not always be achievable.
- Seating charts required and adhered to in EVERY classroom. This will assist with contact tracing in the event of a positive, verified case from Health Dept. Seating charts could save from having to close an entire building or wing by only addressing those students in their classroom, grade, or 3-ft area throughout the day - if there would be a positive COVID case.
- Classrooms will be sanitized whenever a new group of students enters the classroom.

- Restrooms, handrails and other areas of the buildings will be cleaned regularly throughout the day. The Building Principal will create a date, time, initials sanitizing/cleaning posted check sheet for each classroom, library, work room, restroom, etc. All rooms utilized by groups of people – children and/or adults.
- Classrooms and other areas throughout the building will be sanitized nightly.
- Partitions will be used for some classroom areas in some situations and add further protection as determined by building.
- Attendance procedures will be the same as listed in our student handbook. Parents will continue to call-off their student when absent.
- Supports for both social emotional/mental health will continue with students as needed.

Contingency Plans:

- It is a priority that the academic needs of students and those of unique circumstances are all supported “regardless of the school setting.” The district has been meeting and discussing administratively and has been working with the Ohio Department of Education, Wayne County Health Department, and Governor DeWine’s office. Northwestern has also been meeting regularly with other area superintendents to discuss and develop our reopening plan and contingencies. These are subject to change and may well need to be adjusted throughout the year depending on new information and changes as a result of changing situations and new information. Northwestern feels that there is no substitute for the quality, in-person, problem-based learning that our extraordinary Northwestern Teachers provide.
- According to recent studies shared by the American Academy of Pediatrics, keeping children physically out of school could have long term detrimental effects on academic progress, mental and emotional well-being, and behavior. There is no question that in-person instruction is the best learning environment. The Northwestern school district will not be providing an on-line learning option for those not participating in our regularly scheduled school day.
- However, in temporary instances of quarantining of a class, grade level, building, or possibly school district teachers will be prepared to shift to online instruction for support of our students during the possible instances.
- The contingency plan is based upon collaboration with and the directives of the Wayne County Health Department and could follow a variety of scenarios. It includes the possibility of a temporary closure of schools by classroom, grade, building, or district. Such an event would include online communication and instructions as explained later in this document.

There will be one Point of Contact for each building to streamline school communication. Communication will take place only with point of contact person (likely the school nurse), principal, superintendent, and the student/guardian.

Contact Tracing and Quarantine:

- This will be done very similarly to last school year, although there is a rapid test available and the school has some available, there is potential that they would not be available through the

school. The Wayne County Health Dept. can be contacted by an individual seeking a COVID rapid test. They are also currently available in area libraries. ~~through a partner, which we anticipate~~ These rapid tests can help with a quicker return to the classroom. Please refer to the flow chart for more information. Process of a student or employee positively diagnosed with COVID (Northwestern does not determine this, as it is a Health Dept. determination):

- The Wayne County Health Department (WCHD) is notified of positive cases and will notify the school district.
- Parents will receive a general communication in the event of a COVID positive in their building.
- A nurse from the WCHD (or school point of Contact Person) will notify individual families that are at risk, with specific Instructions and information.
- The school district will coordinate with the WCHD for contact tracing, to supply the names of those individuals. Names will not be disclosed to any individual per HIPAA and privacy rights. WCHD are trained in & will handle contact tracing & demographic information for students/families that are identified as being at risk.
- Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 and their contacts will be contacted by a nurse at the WCHD. The length of time for isolation is determined by the individual case/circumstances and will be determined by the Wayne County Health Department. The WCHD nurse will also provide education and resources. Follow-up is provided to the positive COVID-19 client and their contacts.
- If a student is symptomatic and awaiting results of a COVID test, that student should be excluded from school and extracurricular activities until we get a negative test result and the student feels better. **SYMPTOMATIC STUDENTS SHOULD BE KEPT HOME FROM SCHOOL AND A MEDICAL OPINION SOUGHT!**
- For close contacts of potential cases, we will recommend and ask that parents of those students exclude their child from classes and extracurricular activities until we receive a negative test result. If a close contact student exhibits symptoms this exclusion will be required.
- **Students who are on quarantine, who have not tested positive, can return to school immediately during the 7 dates of quarantine if ALL of the following conditions are met: evidence of a negative COVID test result, the student remains symptom-free, the student wears a mask throughout the school day and while at school (with the exception of when eating lunch), and a second negative COVID is obtained on day 7. With this situation a student would continue quarantine outside of the school day for any contact sports as well as any extracurricular events involving students from another school district in which they participate.**

There will be one 'Point of Contact' for each building for continuity of care. This Point of Contact for each building will serve to streamline communication. Communication will take place only with the WCHD disease nurse or school point of contact person

(likely the school nurse), principal, superintendent to the student/guardian.

MASKS & FACE COVERINGS:

Employees

- Face coverings (defined as face-shield and/or face-mask) are recommended, but not required for employees, students, or visitors.

Students

- Face Masks are required for all students riding a bus or other school transportation. If a student refuses to wear a mask, the district has the right to refuse to transport the student (WCDH).
- Per the Governor's order exclusions to student face-mask rules (each individual case must be verified and principal approved):
 - ✓ Any child unable to remove the face covering without assistance
 - ✓ A child with a significant behavioral/psychological issue undergoing treatment that is exacerbated specifically by the use of a facial covering (e.g. severe anxiety or a tactile aversion)
 - ✓ A child living with severe autism or with extreme developmental delay who may become agitated or anxious wearing a mask
 - ✓ A child with a facial deformity that causes airway obstruction
- Note that it is a parent responsibility to provide a face-mask. However, Bus drivers will have disposable masks on the bus for those students who are at their stop who have forgotten or do not have their facemask
- Each principal will make every effort to spread students and/or reassign staff in order to maximize the amount of space between students and minimize the student numbers.
- Student Athletes shall practice all face-mask requirements as set forth by OHSAA. At this point in time there are no OHSAA restrictions of student athletes or of spectators.

Visitors

- Visitors will be permitted beyond the office by appointment only.
- Masks are recommended, although a mask requirement for visitors may be determined by the superintendent for each building and/or restriction of visitors on a temporary basis.
- Efforts will be made to maintain the appropriate amount of social distancing.
- Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis for medical reasons with preapproval of the building principal, athletic director, or superintendent.
- While visitors or spectators at any activity or event that is inside or on campus is no longer required to wear a mask or face-covering, each spectator should practice safe social distancing of 3 feet (unless residing in the same household).

Classrooms

- Every effort will be made to create a distance greater than 3-feet between students or put in place a partition between them. Each principal will make every effort to spread students in order to maximize the amount of space between students and minimize the student ratios.

Precautions

- It is a parent responsibility to check the temperature of each student prior to sending to school each day. If a child has a temperature of 100 degrees or above or has other COVID or general symptoms of illness DO NOT SEND THE STUDENT TO SCHOOL.
- Currently there is no requirement for schools to check the temperatures of all students.
- If a student has a fever or other COVID symptoms he/she will be immediately quarantined either in a separate room (set-aside for this purpose in each building) or in the clinic - until such time that the student's parent can retrieve the student or he/she can be transported home.
- Areas where the student had been (classrooms, etc.) will be thoroughly disinfected.
- Principals are organizing processes and locations with social distancing in the mornings prior to school.
 - Students and Employees will receive constant reminders of social distancing, proper handwashing, refraining from touching their face, coughing or sneezing in the shoulder, proper hygiene, etc. This will include signage, times for verbal reminders, and ongoing reminders.
 - If students feel they have a temperature or where it is suspected and the temperature is over 100 or if a student has other symptoms of COVID or any illness students should be checked, then they will be isolated and/or sent home. Isolation may be in the clinic, special room, or in the district office until the parent is able to take the child home or the school is able to transport the student home.
 - Staff monitoring of temperatures will be the honor system of checking themselves, each other, or go to the nurse or clinic to be checked. Temperatures over 100 degrees or other symptoms of COVID or illness will be referred to the School Nurse.
 - Restrooms, cafeterias, handrails and other high touch areas of the buildings will be sanitized regularly throughout the day.
- In any instance of symptoms, the classroom and other areas visited by the individual will immediately be thoroughly sanitized.
- Seating charts required and adhered to throughout the building. Locations such as: classroom, lunchroom, and library. This will assist with contact tracing in the event of a positive, verified case from Health Dept. Seating charts could save from having to close an entire building or wing by only addressing those students in their classroom, grade, or 3-ft area throughout the day - if there would be a positive COVID case.
- In the event of a positive test additional precautions will occur as recommended by the Superintendent who will make this determination in consultation with the Building Principal, School Nurse, and Wayne County Health Dept. which may include:
- If a student is sent home with a high fever, the district will inform parents and will quarantine those students who may have been in contact until the student is confirmed positive or negative, symptoms have subsided, or after 7 days from initial symptom(s). This will be situational depending on what symptom(s) occur and in what context.
- The Health Dept. will do the contact tracing of students or staff - they have people trained in this. They will only do contact tracing after a confirmed positive result.
- The Wayne County Health Department, recommended that districts do not communicate beyond that individual and those who may have been in contact. Also that only after confirmed

positive results (because symptoms could be the common cold, influenza, and infection, etc.) will general parents be contacted. In the case of a positive result, this communication will come directly from the Health Dept. to the school district. Parents of children and those staff as part of the contact tracing will initially be contacted. After contacting these individuals, a general communication will go out such as "We have had exposure in (_____ class or grade). Everybody who may have been exposed has previously been contacted."

- If a student is sent home with a COVID symptom (such as fever over 100) the student cannot return until fever free for 24 hours (without Tylenol or other fever reducers) at the minimum, have taken a test and results are negative, or return after 7 days. If other symptoms would also show-up after a student is on home quarantine, we will quarantine until a negative test or 7 days from initial symptoms.
- If a positive result, when the Wayne County Health Dept. does the contact tracing they will then quarantine all students within 3 ft. of the student for more than 15 min per day and any other students or staff they desire may have been able to contract COVID. Additional protocol include:
 - Complete immediate sanitization of all relevant areas
 - Quarantine days for a designated group of students and staff by group, class, grade level, building, or district.

NORTHWESTERN LOCAL SCHOOLS **2021-2022 BUILDING GUIDANCE**

This document was designed to give parents and students additional information regarding what to expect in specific areas of the specific buildings.

DROP OFF, PICK UP, & VISITORS

- When possible, prop doors open at arrival and dismissal to reduce the need to touch door handles. School entrances will be designated at each building.
- At the elementary level, the entry door for students in Pre-K-Gr 1 will be at the Kindergarten wing. For students gr 2-3, they will use the main entrance area. Students in grades 4-5 will enter the front gym entrance.
- At the middle school, we will be utilizing the front entrance only. Please drop students off on the north side of our building (near the baseball fields and football practice field). Students will enter the front doors of the building.
- At the high school, the front and north doors (at the student lot) will be open for student arrival.
- Students are encouraged to have their temperatures taken PRIOR to them leaving home each morning. Parents are encouraged to keep their child home if their child's temperature is 100 or higher.
- Limit the number of visitors and volunteers as much as possible to help ensure the health and safety of the staff and students. All permitted visitors are to complete a wellness self-check, including temperatures and following current face shield/mask policies. Visitors will need to utilize our school buzzer system upon arrival. They will be asked to remain in the school breezeway until admitted into the office by a staff member.
- For visitors that need to pick up students for any reason, they will be asked to utilize the buzzer system to indicate their arrival. Students will then be sent out to meet the parents/guardians, with the

office personnel recording the date and time students leave and return. This will help to limit the number of people in and out of our buildings.

- Utilize staggered dismissal times to allow for maximum physical distancing.
- At the elementary school, loop and cafeteria dismissal will begin at 3:20pm. Parents are able to pick up their students in these areas, at this time. Students will be dismissed from the cafeteria doors by staff members. Parents will be asked to remain on the sidewalk while staff member radios for the student.
- At the middle school, we will dismiss students riding the bus. After the buses are released, we will send students to the parking lot who are getting picked up.
- At the high school, students riding the bus will be dismissed first. Once the hallways are cleared, remaining students will be dismissed.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

- Students and drivers will be required to wear face coverings while on the bus. If students forget their face covering, buses will have masks available.
- Have students maintain maximum physical distances while waiting at the bus stop and while entering the building.
- Load the bus by filling the back seats first and moving forward, following a seating chart. Empty the bus by dismissing front seats first and moving backward.
- If possible, leave the front seat directly behind the driver empty, to allow for physical distancing from the driver. If you need the front seat, fill it when the bus is 15 minutes from the school.
- Sanitize seats and hand rails before each route.
- Provide hand sanitizer to students that they can apply themselves upon entering the bus.
- Allow for fresh air (crack windows) during routes when weather permits.
- We will be trying to assign seats where siblings sit together as much as possible. If there is a need to seat more than 2 students that are not siblings together, place the 3rd students into seats as late into the bus route as possible.

CLASSROOMS

- Classroom surfaces will be disinfected between classes.
- Hand sanitizer and wipes will be available in classrooms for student use.

RECESS AND ACCESS TO OUTDOORS

- It is highly encouraged that all students get fresh air daily, when weather permits.
- Use of hand sanitizer or washing hands before exiting and reentering the building for recess or outdoor activities will be encouraged.
- Encourage structured recess activities (nature walks, non-contact games, scavenger hunts, etc.)
- Students at the elementary school will be utilizing the playground.
- Students at the middle school will be able to walk the track, weather permitting. If weather prevents us from going outside, students will be asked to remain in the cafeteria for the duration of the lunch time, seated at their lunch tables.

LUNCHES AND CAFETERIA

- Encourage students to wash their hands and/or sanitize before eating lunch. Students will be asked to sanitize hands upon returning to the classrooms.
- Elementary students will have breakfast in the classrooms.
- Ensure staff clean and disinfect serving areas and tables between lunches.
- Encourage physical distancing as much as possible.
- No guests or visitors will be able to join students for lunch.

- Assigned seating in the lunchroom will be practiced.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

- Meetings can be held in-person, by phone, or virtually.
- In-person meetings should be conducted in an area large enough (i.e.: classroom) to allow for physical distancing, when possible.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in meeting areas.

LIBRARIES (SCHOOL & CLASSROOM)

- Books may be distributed to students, but upon returning books to the library the books will be disinfected before being re-shelved and placed back into distribution.

FIELD TRIPS

- Field trips are allowed this year, pending the approval from administration. All field trips will follow current health and safety guidelines for transportation and travel.

NURSE/CLINIC AREA

- Ensure the workspace, door handles, countertops, seating areas, restrooms are kept clean and disinfected between students.
- Ensure physical distancing is followed and/or utilize plexiglass dividers when more than one student is in the clinic area when practical.
- Students with temperatures of 100°F or more must stay home/be sent home.
- Isolate students that are exhibiting symptoms.
 - At the elementary school, the clinic will be utilized.
 - At the middle school, there will be a room in the office, separate from the clinic.
 - At the high school, room 200 will be utilized.
- Students exhibiting symptoms are required to keep facial covering or a face shield on until they are picked up by a caregiver.
- The School Nurse and office staff must wear facial covering and proper PPE when caring for students with COVID-like symptoms
- Testing location sheets and advice for care with the child's primary care physician is to be given to the ill child's guardian.

HALLWAYS/COMMON AREAS

- Students will be moving through the hallways at the same time; therefore, social distancing rules may not be possible. We will be discouraging groups of students congregating in close proximity to one another for social reasons.
- Students at the middle and high schools will be encouraged to carry their belongings with them in a backpack. They will be encouraged to go to their lockers in the morning, at lunch, and at the end of the day to eliminate congestion in the hallways. Individual students will be permitted to go to their lockers during classes and study halls, with permission from staff.
- When possible, students will be encouraged to follow traffic flow patterns, staying to the right when traveling down hallways and stairs.
- Prop doors open, when possible, to discourage high touch points. Clean doors and rails frequently.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles (labeled clearly with their name).

ASSEMBLIES/OPEN HOUSE

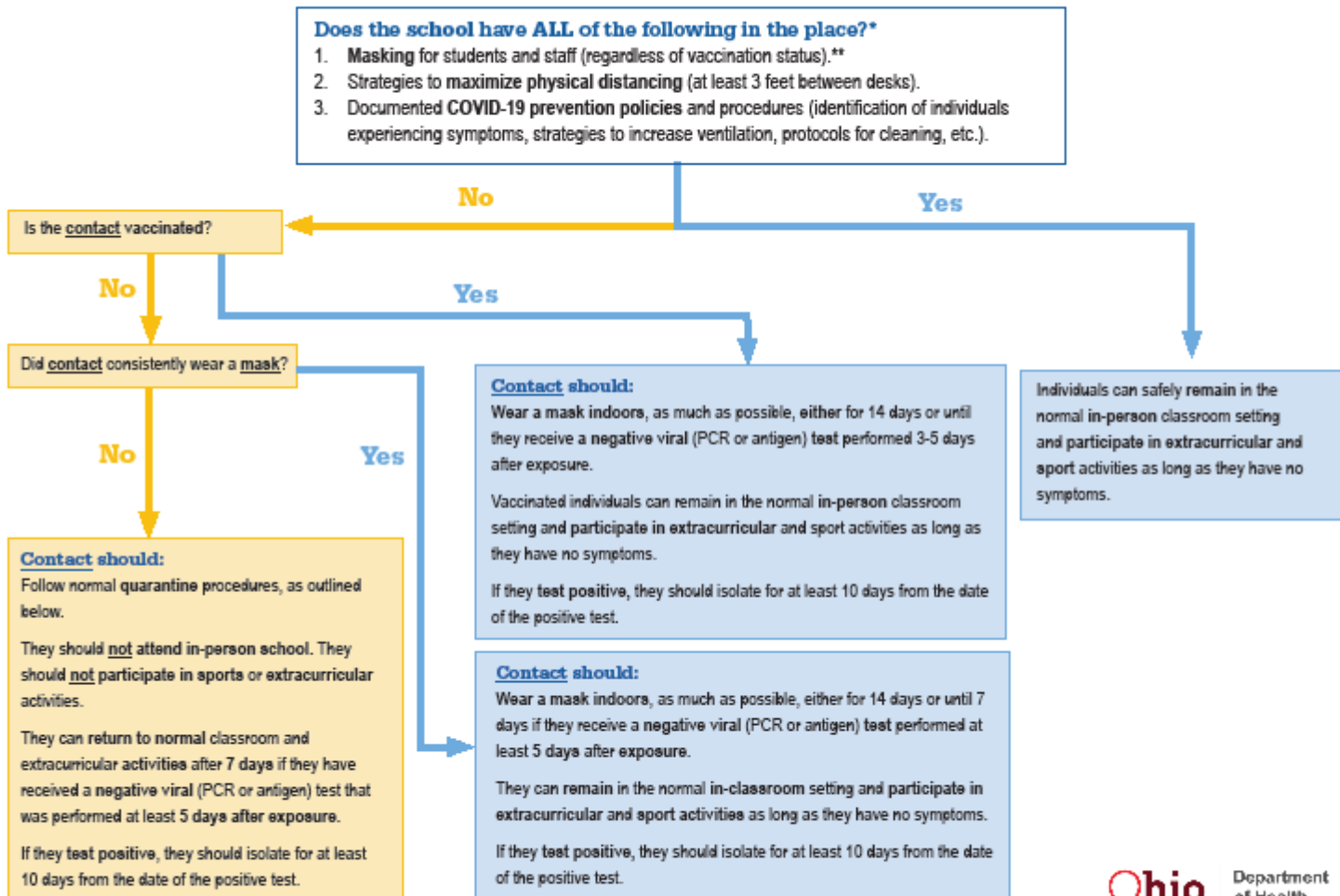
- Assemblies, meetings, open house, parent-teacher conferences will be permitted with the approval of administration.

ATHLETIC EVENTS, PROGRAMS and EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- The Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) has control over athletic programs. Northwestern Local Schools will continue sharing information that is released to schools.
- Parents will be permitted to transport their players to and/or from competitions or events off campus per written liability waiver form. This will reduce numbers of students on buses and help with social distancing on the buses. Please communicate with head coach/director of program.

Guidelines for Quarantine After Exposure in K-12 Classroom Settings

This chart can help guide quarantine decisions after a student or adult contact is exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the classroom setting.



*This flowchart applies only to COVID-19 exposures that occurred within a K-12 classroom setting. It is not applicable to exposure in the community, extracurricular, or sports environment.

**The person who tested positive for COVID-19 should follow standard isolation procedures.