



## NEW PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DISTRICT

DAVID M. MICELI, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools  
908-464-9050 (ext. 4225)

JAMES E. TESTA  
School Business Administrator/  
Board Secretary  
908-464-9050 (ext. 4223)

Lauren Zirpoli  
Assistant Superintendent of  
Educational Services  
908-464-9050 (ext. 4222)

JAY RICHTER  
Director of Curriculum, Instruction  
& Supervision  
908-464-9050 (ext. 4221)

356 ELKWOOD AVENUE • NEW PROVIDENCE, NJ 07974 • FAX (908) 464-4813 • [www.npsd.k12.nj.us](http://www.npsd.k12.nj.us)

August 17, 2020

Dear Staff, Students, and Parents/Guardians,

In preparation for our upcoming return to our school district buildings, this letter will serve to provide all of the necessary information as it pertains to our district developed “health and safety” procedures and protocols. Please read through this letter in its entirety to ensure that you understand the expectations and requirements for all staff, students, and their parents/guardians.

In addition to the health and safety plan detailed below, the New Jersey Department of Health released a 19-page document entitled, [“Covid-19 Public Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools”](#) on Thursday, August 13th. Upon initial review of this newly released documentation, the NPSD Health and Safety plan meets all minimum standards outlined therein. However, this document also provides new and important information as to specific scenarios and guidance (i.e. more detailed information on contact tracing procedures with the local board of health). Furthermore, the document identifies a ‘Covid-19 Regional Health Matrix’ (see pages 2-3) “for local health departments and schools to consider based on the level of COVID-19 transmission in their region.” The risk factor of our particular region (“Central East”) will play an important role in the local health decisions and determinations made by the Westfield Regional Board of Health in collaboration with the New Providence School District throughout the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic. **We strongly recommend that all staff, students and parents/guardians review this document in its entirety.**

***In the spirit of caring for one another, it is also critical that all of our staff, students, and parents/guardians continue to be vigilant outside of school and school related activities. Now more than ever, potential exposure outside of school will have significant ramifications on our ability to offer in-person programs and services.***

Using the NJDOE [“Road Back”](#) as our guiding document, “Health and Safety” were broken into ten critical areas of operation needing to be addressed for a return to our district buildings:

1. General Health and Safety Guidelines
2. Classrooms, Testing, and Therapy Rooms
3. Transportation
4. Student Flow, Entry, Exit, and Common Areas
5. Screening, PPE, and Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms
6. Contact Tracing
7. Facilities Cleaning Practices
8. Meals
9. Recess/Physical Education
10. Field Trips, Extra-curricular Activities & Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours

## Critical Area #1: General Health and Safety Guidelines:

- In addition to the “anticipated minimum standards” highlighted on the Road Back document, it will be important for the district to communicate its health and safety procedures and expectations with all stakeholders prior to the start of the new school year, as well as throughout. Many communications regarding the health and safety of students and staff will be disseminated by the nursing department, with consultation from the Department of Health.
  - The Nurses will put out a district-wide communication (by 8/28/20) highlighting the importance of behaviors that reduce risk and updating all stakeholders on mitigation tactics that will be in place within their offices (i.e. students taking once a day prescription medication should be taking these at home, thereby limiting non-essential trips into the nurses office, nebulizers will not be given as routine treatment so as to limit aerosolization concerns - this will only be used in an emergency situation, parents should be reminded that if there is any doubt about their child being ill, they should be keeping them home, etc.).
- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 in children may be similar to those of common viral respiratory infections or other childhood illnesses. The overlap between COVID-19 symptoms and other common illnesses means that many people with symptoms of COVID-19 may actually be ill with something else. This is even more likely in young children, who typically have multiple viral illnesses each year. Individuals with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild to severe illness. There is not a single symptom that is uniquely predictive of a COVID-19 diagnosis. A COVID-19 viral test is needed to confirm if someone has a current infection. *Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus and include the following:*
  - Fever or chills;
  - Cough;
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
  - Fatigue;
  - Muscle or body aches;
  - Headache;
  - New loss of taste or smell;
  - Sore throat;
  - Congestion or runny nose;
  - Nausea or vomiting;
  - Diarrhea.
- ***Parents should not send students to school when experiencing any of the above symptoms.***
- **EXCLUSION CRITERIA\*:** The NJDOH recommends that students and staff with the following symptoms be promptly **isolated** from others and **excluded from school**:
  - At least TWO of the following symptoms: fever (measure or subjective), chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion or runny nose; **OR**
  - At least ONE of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder (loss of smell), new taste disorder (loss of taste).
- \*Exclusion also varies based on the [risk rating of our region \(“Central East”\)](#). The criteria to be followed varies both by symptomatic and testing status and by the risk rating. For example, a student with fever and runny nose under our [current ‘moderate’ risk status](#) would need to follow COVID exclusion criteria (stay home 10 days from onset of symptoms and 24 hours after resolution of symptoms and improvement of symptoms). If our risk status were to drop to low, the same student would only need to stay home until 24 hours after resolution of fever.

- School nurses will be responsible for contacting ill faculty/staff and the parents/guardians of ill students to advise them of any particular exclusion criteria.
- Students who are sent home or are home sick (*who meet the exclusion criteria listed above*) will be required to have a doctor's note upon reentering the school, or may return to school under the following conditions:
  - At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, **AND**
  - At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, **AND**
  - Other symptoms have improved.

#### **Critical Area #2: Classrooms, Testing, and Therapy Rooms:**

- This area relates to many of the other Reopening Committees plans, please reference these plans for further information (Curriculum and Instruction, SEL, etc.).
- The district will plan hybrid models to limit capacity and allow for social distancing in classrooms.
- Work with maintenance and custodial staff to ensure that all rooms have adequate ventilation and that filter(s) for A/C units are maintained and changed regularly.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be available around the hallways, as well as available within each classroom (where applicable).
- Facilitation of student hand washing at frequent intervals, or use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available

#### **Critical Area #3: Transportation:**

- For the small population of students that are bused to school each day, bus route aides (where applicable) will be tasked with screening these students prior to getting on the bus (see screening procedures in Sections #5 & 6).
  - **District Owned Buses:**
    - Students and adults will be separated to the maximum extent possible.
    - All are required to wear a mask unless medically unable to (see exceptions in Section #6).
    - Students will be loaded from the back to front and unloaded front to back.
    - Buses will be cleaned and disinfected including seats, rails, and high touch surfaces before each bus run.
- As a non bussing district, transportation is mostly a concern during athletics and co-curricular activities. Currently, we must be prepared to operate these at full capacity. With this being the case, buses will be mandated to have students in masks for the duration of all trips, as social distancing to the fullest extent (6-feet apart for all, which would allow only 11 passengers to ride on a 54 passenger bus) will generally not be possible.
- Parents will be given the option to drive their children to these events/activities (should they choose) utilizing the school [district form](#) and policy sign off when doing so. This will help to lower total numbers on buses when applicable.

#### **Critical Area #4: Student Flow, Entry, Exit, and Common Areas:**

- Health Screenings are a necessity for each day's opening - for both staff and students alike:
  - Staff: Completion of required mandatory self-screening form prior to leaving home each morning. This form must be completed prior to entering the building. Staff should not report to school if exhibiting any of the symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (any answer of "Yes" on the pre-screening form). *Any staff member experiencing symptoms consistent with the exclusion*

*criteria (see Critical Area #1) will require that the staff member has a doctor's note upon reentering the school, or may return to school under the following conditions:*

- At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, **AND**
- At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, **AND**
- Other symptoms have improved.
- Students - Screening stations set up for each of the three schools:
  - SB/AWR: Screening via Student Drop-Off Circle. Verbal response to questions and physical temperature check. "Walk-to-school" station set up to do the same with those students who walk or ride bikes.
  - NPHS/NPMS: Screening via six locations (one per grade level). Verbal response to questions and physical temperature check. One entrance designated for each grade level (7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12). Verbal response to question and physical temperature check.
- Utilize one-way hallways and/or directional floor arrows to reduce flow of traffic and students passing in hallways.
- Install physical barriers (sneeze guards) where appropriate (i.e. offices, nurse's office).
- Limit use of common areas and adjust these areas physically so as to ensure proper social distancing at all times when in use (i.e., media center, cafeteria, etc.).
- Avoid unstructured student gatherings.
- Limit shared equipment. Students should be responsible for bringing in necessary materials to be used from home whenever possible. If equipment must be shared, proper CDC disinfectant cleaner must be used prior to the use of said equipment by another student or staff member.

#### **Critical Area #5: Screening, PPE, and Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms:**

- Students and employees who test positive for COVID-19 will not be permitted back in school until they have satisfied all of the following conditions:
  - At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, **AND**
  - At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, **AND**
  - Other symptoms have improved.
- Students and staff may be asked to leave school if they exhibit one or more of the symptoms of COVID-19, based on NJDOH and CDC guidance:
  - 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
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Fatigue
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Diarrhea

- As mentioned in Critical Area #1: The CDC and NJDOH recommends that students and staff with the following symptoms be promptly **isolated** from others and excluded from school (**EXCLUSION CRITERIA**):
  - At least TWO of the following symptoms: fever (measure or subjective), chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion or runny nose; **OR**
  - At least ONE of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder (loss of smell), new taste disorder (loss of taste).
- \*Students who exhibit an elevated temperature may need to be held in a cool-down area and re-checked in 15-20 mins. This might be particularly applicable on a hot day and/or if they walked/biked to school.
- **If someone in the household tests positive, the student should follow the quarantine protocol of 14 day school exclusion.**
- (See above) Health Screenings are a necessity for each day's opening - for both staff and students alike:
  - Staff: Completion of required mandatory self-screening form prior to leaving home each morning. This form must be completed prior to entering the building. Staff should not report to school if exhibiting any of the symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (any answer of "Yes" on the pre-screening form). *Any staff member experiencing symptoms consistent with the exclusion criteria (see Critical Area #1) will require that the staff member has a doctor's note upon reentering the school, or may return to school under the following conditions:*
    - At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, **AND**
    - At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, **AND**
    - Other symptoms have improved.
  - Students: Screening stations set up for each of the three schools
    - SB/AWR: Screening via Student Drop-Off Circle. Verbal response to questions and physical temperature check. "Walk-to-school" station will be set up to do the same with those students who walk or ride bikes.
    - NPHS/NPMS: Screening via 6 locations. One entrance designated for each grade level (7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12). Verbal response to question and physical temperature check.
- Students with symptoms will be screened prior to entering the building. Upon failing a screening, the school nurse will be contacted and the parent/guardian will be called to immediately pick up the student (if the screening occurs in the drop-off line, the student will just be taken home immediately). Students sent home *who meet the exclusion criteria* must have medical clearance from a doctor to return to school, or must satisfy the following conditions prior to returning:
  - At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, **AND**
  - At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, **AND**
  - Other symptoms have improved.
- If a staff member or student begins to exhibit symptoms consistent with the exclusion criteria for COVID-19 *during* the school day, the school nurse will utilize an isolation space in their offices for these purposes.
  - NPHS/NPMS - use of the back left office area (separate room) for isolation as needed.
  - AWR/SB - modified spaces in each nurse's office to be utilized as an isolation area.
  - Symptomatic students meeting the exclusion criteria must remain in isolation until picked up by a parent/guardian. Symptomatic students (or symptomatic staff) may not return until a doctor's note is on hand clearing them to return to the building, or may return to school under the following conditions:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, **AND**
    - At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, **AND**
    - Other symptoms have improved.
  - Symptomatic students/staff in isolation must wear a mask throughout the duration of their isolation.
- In the case of a positive COVID-19 test the following steps must be taken:
  1. The school nurse will notify the building principal
  2. Building principal will notify central administration
  3. The school nurse will report necessary information with the appropriate health authorities
  4. The building principal - in consultation with the superintendent - will be responsible for all communication of positive tests with parents/guardians and staff
  5. All media contact or news releases concerning the student or the event will be handled by the Superintendent. All information concerning the student/staff member will be considered strictly confidential
  6. Any student or staff member who tests positive for COVID-19 must remain in isolation until the following circumstances are met in their entirety:
    - i. At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, **AND**
    - ii. At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, **AND**
    - iii. Other symptoms have improved.
  7. Stakeholders will be informed of potential exposure in a timely manner as information becomes available
- School staff, students, and visitors are required to wear a face covering at all times.
  - Exceptions:
    - When doing so would inhibit the individual's health.
    - When a student is in extreme heat outdoors.
    - If a student's documented medical condition, or disability as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP), precludes the use of a face covering.
    - If a student is under the age of two (2), due to the risk of suffocation.
    - When a student is eating or drinking (must be at least six (6) feet apart from all other students/staff).
    - If or when anyone has trouble breathing or is unconscious, is incapacitated, or is otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance (e.g., face coverings should not be worn by Pre-K students during nap time).
    - The student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.
    - During gym and music classes when individuals are in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of at least six feet apart.
    - When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task (for example, students operating machinery in which face coverings may get caught).
- Face coverings for staff, students, and visitors are to be cloth face coverings as recommended by the CDC and NJDOH. Face shields are not a replacement for a face covering (as per the current CDC and NJDOH guidelines).
- All screeners will be given proper PPE prior to beginning this process each day (mask, gloves, face shield).

### **Critical Area #6: Contact Tracing:**

- Upon notification of a positive test, the school nurse will report necessary information with the appropriate health authorities (see Section #5 for complete steps to be taken upon positive test notification).
- If individuals have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, meaning they are within 6 feet of someone for at least ten minutes, they should self-quarantine for 14 days from the date of last exposure before returning to school.
  - In the case of a positive COVID test, local health departments, working in coordination with the NPSD, will conduct contact tracing to determine whether or not an individual has been in close contact with a student and advise any affected individuals, via trained contact tracers, to self-quarantine for 14 days.
  - The local health department in coordination with the school will assess the specific circumstances of the individual with the positive test to determine those individuals that have been in close contact and need to self-quarantine – this may or may not include all students in the class.
- Adhere to all applicable federal and state requirements regarding privacy of educational records (e.g. FERPA).

### **Critical Area #7: Facilities Cleaning Practices:**

- See plan produced by facilities/cleaning committee for detailed district procedures.
- In respect to the school nurse's offices:
  - Deep cleaning to be provided nightly by custodial staff.
  - Nurses to clean all high-touch surfaces and shared equipment (chairs, beds, etc.) routinely following use of each student.
  - Custodial staff will be on hand should a deeper cleaning be required during the day in the event of a particularly ill student (i.e. physical symptoms such as vomiting, etc.).
- In the case of a student or staff member exhibiting symptoms consistent with the exclusion criteria during the school day (or a student testing positive having been in school that day): Immediately close off areas used by the person who is sick, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area and **wait 24 hours before cleaning or disinfecting**.
  - \*The 24-hour window may result in particular classrooms, bathrooms, office spaces, hallways, and/or school buildings being temporarily closed until sufficient time has passed to begin - and subsequently complete - cleaning and disinfection.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick as outlined in the cleaning and disinfection section of NJDOH guidance, including the isolation area. Once an area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be opened for use.
  - *If the number of ill students exceeds the number of isolation areas and the areas cannot be closed for 24 hours, clean and disinfect between ill persons.*

### **Critical Area #8: Meals:**

- Current guidance from the Westfield Regional Board of Health indicates that lunch is a “risky” activity and “is not condoned.”
- In-person instruction will be single session days without serving lunch.\*
  - \*Exception: certain pre-identified student groups will remain in school for full days. These students will eat utilizing the maximum amount of social distancing space available (never to be less than six (6) feet).

**Critical Area #9: Recess/Physical Education:**

- Stagger Recess (Not applicable during hybrid model. Virtual recess activities to be communicated to the students via PE teachers).
- Use cones, flags, tape, other signs to create boundaries between groups.
- Wash hands immediately upon concluding outdoor playtime.
- Designate zones/stations to ensure separation of students.
- PE - close all locker rooms:
  - Students are required to come to school in clothes and shoes that are appropriate and safe for physical activity each day.
- Limit or eliminate direct contact with equipment (whenever possible build lessons that do not require usage of equipment, i.e. physical fitness, cardiovascular activities, high intensity interval training, dance, yoga, etc.). If any equipment must be used, clean and disinfect equipment properly and completely prior to next usage.

**Critical Area #10: Field Trips, Extra-Curricular Activities, and Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours:**

- Ensure social distancing extends to beyond school hours for extracurricular activities.
- When social distancing is not possible (i.e. athletics), follow all state and local guidelines as it pertains to these activities (see previously communicated [Athletic Department Letter](#) dated August 10th for specific athletic guidelines for the upcoming Fall Season).
- In-person field trips are not permitted. This decision will be reevaluated on January 1, 2021.
- Assemblies that require large gatherings of staff and students are not permitted. This decision will be reevaluated on January 1, 2021.
- Limit use of school/district facilities so as to provide ample time for nightly disinfection and cleaning.

The procedures described in this correspondence were developed with the New Providence School District's main guiding principles for reopening its schools, particularly "Health & Safety" and "Empathy/Caring for One Another," in mind at all times. The above plan was developed in consultation with the district nurses and the local department of health. All procedures therein have been approved by the Westfield Regional Board of Health.

It is important to note that all of the above procedures and guidelines are subject to change, as guidance from the Governor, NJDOE, NJDOH, and/or Westfield Regional Board of Health may adjust due to the fluidity of the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, as we continue to review and vet the newly released (8/13/20) NJDOH guidance (linked above) in correspondence with the Westfield Regional Board of Health, particular aspects of our health and safety plan may be impacted. Should any potential changes in national/state/local guidance necessitate the above procedures changing in any manner, those amendments will be communicated to all stakeholders.

Respectfully,



Vincent Carangelo  
Director of Athletics  
Supervisor of Nurses, Health, and Physical Education  
New Providence School District