Newburyport Public School COVID-19 Scenarios
Health Protocol Summary August 20, 2020

Safety Protocols
Creating a Culture of Health and Kindness- this means that by wearing a mask you are doing it for yourself and others. It means supporting staff and students who honor 6-foot distance should be appreciated. It means respecting the design and structure of cohorting students which reduce exposure, is celebrated among us.

1. **Masks**- All students in grades preschool through grade 12 and all staff will be required to wear two layered tightly woven cloth face coverings with a good seal along the edges, with limited exceptions for students with medical, behavioral or other challenges who are unable to wear masks/face coverings. Masks with a nose bridge are preferred. Two cloth face masks (with nose bridge) will be given to all staff. Neck gaiters/bandanas are not permitted since they offer very little protection. Masks with exhale valves are not permitted. Masks will be available for those who forget their masks. Tolerance training for certain students, as well as medical advice to local physicians to not provide unnecessary medical excuses for mask avoidance, has already begun. Nurses as well as staff with increased potential to be exposed to bodily fluids will be provided with level 2 surgical masks. Nurses will be provided N95 masks. The efficacy of mask wearing can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

2. **Daily Home Symptom Screen**- while other districts are simply asking families to sign a document saying they will symptom screen their children and families daily, the NPS will tie the daily screening results for students attending school to the student information system via a link so that the results can be reviewed as needed. Staff results will be sent confidentially to your school nurse. High School students will show a green check mark upon entrance. The success of a COVID-19 symptom screen is found [here](#).

3. **Six-foot physical distance**- to the greatest extent all student desks and activities are 6 feet apart. As of August 20th, DESE now supports 6-foot physical distance in agreement with the DPH and CDC.

4. **Face Shields**- Face shields will be offered to staff as a way of preventing the ability to touch one’s face, and it also provides teachers with a walking sneeze guard. The efficacy of using a face shield is [here](#). *(We need to thank Sarah Leadbeater, Mike Morris, and Don Skane for their kindness and hard work.)*

5. **Sneeze Guards**- Sneeze guards will be provided as needed at desks where the interactions are mostly stationary and fixed.

6. **Scrub Jackets for certain staff**- staff who have a potential to be exposed to bodily fluids will be provided scrub jackets to reduce exposure. Disposable gowns are available also.

7. **Gloves**- gloves will be provided for those procedures which are periodic and short term in nature. Gloves should not be worn in the hallways.

8. **Handwashing**- handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the best practice and is encouraged upon entrance and exiting the classroom, upon changing programs, after restroom breaks, before lunch, and after recess. A minimum of at least 5 times of handwashing’s should be accomplished during the day and the efficacy of handwashing is found [here](#).

9. **Hand Sanitizer**- at least 60% ethanol alcohol hand sanitizer will be provided to every classroom, at certain entrances and exits, and as needed and should be used when handwashing is not possible. Adults should monitor the hand sanitizer to prevent childhood ingestion.

10. **Cohorting Groups**- Extensive planning has gone into creating cohesive groups to reduce exposure and enhance contact tracing. When at all possible, the teacher and students stay together. When at all possible,
specials such as music, PE, and art will be scheduled to increase group time with specific classrooms for a certain number of weeks and then moving on to a new set of classrooms.

11. **Cleaning Products** - The Newburyport Public Schools use Green Seal certified cleaners and EPA approved disinfectants proven to be effective against the coronavirus. With this in mind, the Newburyport Public Schools has begun transitioning to the use of hypochlorous acid (HOCL), one of the top 5 EPA’s coronavirus disinfectants. HOCL is environmentally friendly, non-toxic, and non-corrosive. An on-site HOCL generator will be installed at the Newburyport High School by the end of September. Using an electrochemical reaction, this unit will produce enough HOCL to supply all schools in Newburyport with the ability to use sprayers/foggers in open areas and large spaces. Additionally, teachers, instructional assistants, and office staff will be provided with a spray version of HOCL disinfectant (Force of Nature) to easily disinfect high touch surfaces and areas in their immediate vicinity. Frequently touched surfaces in open spaces will be disinfected a minimum of 3-4 times per day by the custodial staff when the building is occupied. Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected once during the day while the building is occupied and again in the evening. Each restroom will also be checked and serviced a minimum of two additional times during the day. Classrooms, offices, common areas and other spaces will be cleaned daily as has been done typically, with additional daily disinfecting. Essentially, we are doing a “deep cleaning” every day.

12. **Shared Manipulatives** - In most cases students will have their own set of manipulatives and materials at their desk and if needed, a separate set at home. Special cleaning procedures are currently in place to disinfect shared materials at the youngest grades.

13. **Ventilation** - Based on guidance from DESE, EPA, CDC and ASHRAE the mechanical systems are being reprogrammed to supply the buildings with as much outside air as mechanically possible, while also exhausting directly to outside and minimizing or eliminating recirculated air. Space temperatures between 72 and 77 degrees, and humidity levels between 40% and 60% are the target for all interior spaces. Staff will be allowed and encouraged to open windows when outside air temperature and humidity levels are not so extreme that they will negatively affect interior conditions. Currently, all mechanical equipment is being cleaned, tested and serviced. New filters are being installed in all equipment, including MERV 13 filters where guidance indicates and equipment can accept them. A consultant has been contracted to assist with some of the more difficult control and mechanical modifications that need to be completed. Energy conservation measures, such as demand control ventilation, will be discontinued to assure that outside air is introduced into the building continuously through all mechanical systems while the building is occupied. Over 70 air purifiers with HEPA filters have been ordered and will be deployed into spaces where they will be most effective. All mechanical equipment will be run 24/7 for at least a week prior to the start of school to flush out the systems. Once school reopens all equipment will be programmed to start a minimum of 2 hours prior to the start of the school day, and run at least two hours after the buildings close.

14. **Isolation Rooms** - Isolation rooms (Medical Waiting Rooms) have been established in each school building.

15. **Transportation** - Masks are required for all students upon entering a bus. Physical distancing rules apply which limits the number of students on a bus. All students will have an assigned seat. Cleaning processes are in place after each run.

16. **Outdoor spaces** - areas surrounding the school buildings are being prepped with physical distancing prompts so that teachers can take classroom size breaks outside as needed.

17. **Signage** - signs and graphics to enhance compliance with physical distancing, mask wearing, and following safety protocols will be throughout the buildings.

18. **Visitors** - At this time, visitors will not be allowed in the school buildings.

19. **Testing Options for School Staff** - we are currently working on a process of obtaining antigen testing for school staff with occupational related exposure. We also have access to limited PCR tests through Anna Jaques Hospital.

20. **List of available test sites.** A list of test sites is available here, and Massachusetts also has an interactive testing map. Staff and students who have symptoms should also contact their primary
care physician for further instructions. More information related to the availability of testing will be provided later this summer.

21. **Confidentiality/Privacy** - NPS will not disclose personally identifiable information from a student’s education records, including health records, without the consent of a parent/guardian or adult student except: (1) when an threat exists to the health or safety of any student or staff due to COVID-19; and (2) sharing of the information is necessary to protect health and/or safety. In such cases, NPS will only disclose the minimum amount of information required to address the immediate threat caused by COVID-19.

22. **Confidentiality/Privacy** - Communicate with families and staff of close contacts (per DPH guidelines):

   a. The school should identify the student’s or staff member’s possible “close contacts” based on the assigned seating charts and proximity related to class activities. Close contacts will be defined as only those who have been within 6 feet distance of the individual for at least fifteen minutes, while the person was infectious. This definition is for students, teachers and other staff. The infectious period begins two days before symptom onset (or two days prior to the date of the positive test if asymptomatic) and includes up until the time the student/staff/teacher was isolated. Consider students and staff members who were close contacts in class, other school spaces, on the school bus, or at extracurricular activities.

   b. Send a communication to the staff/teachers and families of students of close contacts that there has been a positive test without naming the individual student or staff member who tested positive.

   c. Communications sent to families/staff should:
      
      i. Inform them there was a positive test (not the specific individual) in the student’s class/bus or other activity.
      
      ii. Explain that since the student/staff were within 6 feet of the person with a positive test for 15 minutes or more, they are considered a “close contact” and therefore should be tested. Having assigned seating and keeping up-to-date seating charts will help identify who should be instructed to be tested: specifically, those who were sitting next to the student, plus any others who also had close contact with the student.

      iii. Instruct close contacts to isolate prior to their test and while waiting for the results. In general, as the highest yield test will be a few days after the exposure, ideally, the test should occur no sooner than day 4 or 5 after the last exposure. (In other words, if an exposure lasted several days, the best time to test is 4 or 5 days after the end of the exposure period.)

      iv. Close contacts should be tested for COVID-19 at one of Massachusetts’s test sites. Sites may require pre-screening, a referral, and/or an appointment.

      v. Close contacts are asked to communicate their test results to the school. They should not return to school until they have quarantined for 14 days. This includes close contacts who receive a negative test result or who choose not to be tested.

      vi. Remind families and/or staff of the importance of not having contact with higher-risk individuals (e.g., grandparents and those with underlying medical conditions).

      vii. Remind families and/or staff of the list of COVID-19 symptoms for which to monitor. (Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios in School, on the Bus, or in Community Settings, rev. 8-20-20)

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**Definition of Terms**

- **Close Contact** - is a person who has been within 6 feet of distance of the positive case for at least 15 minutes while the person was infectious. If a student or household family member is determined to be Covid-19 positive, the other siblings and/or household members will also be considered close contacts and siblings will be asked to quarantine also.

- **Elementary Close Contact Considerations** - previous guidance recommended all students in an elementary classroom would be defined as close contacts. The new guidance provides a narrower definition of a close

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contact which mirrors DPH guidance (Joint Memo Clarifying Health and Safety Requirements for Schools, August 18, 2020). Evaluating close contacts will always be done with a sense of caution and the Newburyport Public Schools will recognize and consider age and developmental levels of children as well as classroom cohorts when determining close contacts.

- **Middle and High School Close Contact Considerations** - consideration of close contacts will be determined by grade, class, cohort, team, and activities throughout the day with a sense of caution. All close contacts will be asked to quarantine for 14 days.

- **Infectious Period** - The infectious period begins 2 days prior to symptom onset. If someone is asymptomatic, the infectious period is considered to begin 2 days prior to the collection of their positive test.

- **Quarantine** - Close contacts must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive, regardless of the test result (even negative test results require 14 self-quarantine due to the fact that the virus may take up to 14 days to cause illness. (DPH/DESE Joint Statement, August 18, 2020)

- **Isolation** - Typically, individuals who present with COVID-19 like symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19 self-isolate for at least 10 days from the start of their symptoms. They can return to school as long as symptoms have improved and are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.

- **Public Health Metrics** - DPH uses the daily number of positive cases per 100,000 residents over the past 14 days to determine their color-coded map by city and town. Additionally, looking at the total positive test rate over a 7-day average are the two basic metrics to follow for determining infection rate of disease in an area.

### Public Health Metrics in our School Buildings

- **Health Care Professionals Determination for Transitioning to a Remote System from a Hybrid Model:**
  - A state mandate to transition to remote learning.
  - A 7-day average test positive rate of 4.0% in Newburyport or specified surrounding towns on the North Shore. (Looking at the percentage of those tested.)
  - **Towns in Essex county that are excluded:** Salem, Marblehead, Nahant, Lynn, Saugus, Andover, Lawrence, Methuen.
  - A 3-week upward COVID-19 positive trend in Newburyport or specified surrounding towns on the North Shore.
  - These parameters will continue to be updated based on evolving recommendations from experts such as the Harvard Global Health Institute: [https://globalepidemics.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/key_metrics_and_indicators_v4.pdf](https://globalepidemics.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/key_metrics_and_indicators_v4.pdf)

### Guidelines for Building Based and Classroom Based Closure Decisions

- **Elementary Close Contact Considerations** - previous guidance recommended all students in an elementary classroom would be defined as close contacts, the new guidance provides a narrower definition of a close contact which mirrors DPH guidance (Joint Memo Clarifying Health and Safety Requirements for Schools, August 18, 2020). Evaluating close contacts will always be done with a sense of caution and the Newburyport Public Schools will recognize and consider age and developmental levels of children as well as classroom cohorts when determining close contacts.
• **Middle and High School Close Contact Considerations** - consideration of close contacts will be determined by class, cohort, and activities throughout the day with a sense of caution. All close contacts will be asked to quarantine for 14 days.

• **Managing Symptoms at Home** - when Covid-19 like symptoms arise - please stay home and documentation of positive or negative Covid-19 test results or a differential diagnosis is required for re-entry to school (see school scenarios). Testing is free for symptomatic individuals. Use the links in this document to find the closest test site.

• **Student who tests positive** - Students who develop COVID-19 symptoms or who are close contacts should be tested by their healthcare provider or at a COVID-19 testing site. Testing for symptomatic individuals and close contacts is covered by insurance with no out-of-pocket costs. If an individual does not have insurance testing, it is the responsibility of the health care provider to bill through the federal portal. (DPH, August 20, 2020)

• **Staff who test positive outside of school work** - Staff who develop COVID-19 symptoms or who are close contacts should be tested by their healthcare provider or at a COVID-19 testing site. Testing for symptomatic individuals and close contacts is covered by insurance with no out-of-pocket costs. If an individual does not have insurance testing, it is the responsibility of the health care provider to bill through the federal portal. (DPH, August 20, 2020)

• **Staff Testing options** - are being developed for occupational exposures related to COVID-19

• **School Exposure** - School Administrators, Health Services, and Medical Advisors confer with DPH and the BOH to determine if a request for mobile testing (Stop the Spread Initiative for Schools) should be made and if closure is advised. The mobile response team would be deployed if the following minimal conditions applied:

  - if two or more students/staff within the classroom group develop COVID-19 within 14 days and transmission/exposure occurred in the classroom
  - if more than 3% of the cohort/grade (at least 3 individuals) develop COVID-19 within 14 days and transmission/exposure occurred in the school
  - if more than 3% of the school develops COVID-19 within 14 days and there is evidence of transmission within the school
  - if 3 or more staff within the same school develop COVID-19 within 14 days and there is evidence of transmission among the staff
  - if two or more students on the bus develop COVID-19 within 14 days (DPH Guidance “Rapid Response Testing,” August 20, 2020)

(A list of test sites is available here; this is Massachusetts’s interactive testing map.

**School Nurse COVID-19 Triage Visit Decision Logic**
## Key Actions for Individual COVID-19 Events

**Individual is Symptomatic at Home**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Testing Result</th>
<th>Actions to be Taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual is symptomatic at home (displaying symptoms - no known record of exposure to a COVID-19 case)</td>
<td>Individual Test is Negative</td>
<td>Return to School after a negative test, have improvement of symptoms, and have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. If provider makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19 like symptoms the individual may return to school based on the alternative diagnosis (i.e. strep throat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Tests Positive</td>
<td></td>
<td>Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from the local Board of Health (BOH) or MA Community Tracing Collaborative. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days from the start of symptoms and 3 days have passed with no fever (without the use of fever reducing medication) and improvement in other symptoms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual is not tested</td>
<td></td>
<td>Remain home self-isolate for 10 days from symptom onset. May return to school once symptoms resolve for 24 hours and are fever free without fever reducing medication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Action</td>
<td>Test Results</td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Individual is symptomatic on the bus or while in school | | **Students and Staff will be dismissed from school if they have any one (1) of the following symptoms:**  
  - Fever (100. or greater)  
  - Breathing difficulty  
  - New loss of taste or smell  
  - New or worsening cough  
  - Diarrhea/Abdominal Pain  
  - Nausea/Vomiting  
  - Rash (not explained)  
**And any (2) of these symptoms:**  
  - Sore Throat  
  - Muscle Aches or body aches  
  - Chills  
  - Fatigue  
  - Congestion or runny nose  
**Students may be sent home based on the severity of any single symptom based on nursing assessment and discretion.**  
**Note:** Any child with any of these symptoms should consider not attending school regardless of meeting dismissal criteria.  
If these symptoms are explainable by an underlying condition (such as shortness of breath or cough for an individual with asthma/known allergies) dismissal may not be necessary. |
| | Negative Test-Return to school once improvement in symptoms and fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication | |
| | Positive Test | Parents/Guardians or Emergency Contact must pick up a student within 1 hour of phone call for safety.  
**Remain home** (except to get medical care), **monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts**, and answer the call from the local Board of Health (BOH)or MA Community Tracing Collaborative. **Most people will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days from the start of symptoms**, 3 days have passed with no fever (without the use of fever reducing medication), and improvement in other symptoms. |
| | Not Tested | Remain home in self-isolation and may return to school 10 days from the start of symptoms, as long as symptoms have improved and fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication. |
### Individual Exposed to a Positive COVID-19 Positive Case

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Test Result and Action</th>
<th>Quarantine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual is exposed to a positive COVID-19 Positive Case</strong></td>
<td><strong>Negative Test</strong>&lt;br&gt;Close contacts will be defined as those who have been within 6 feet of the individual for at least 15 minutes, while the person was infectious. The infectious period begins 2 days prior to symptom onset. Entire classrooms will not have to be defined as close contacts with this definition which mirrors the DPH recommendation (August 18, 2020). Regardless of test result, must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive. Virus can cause illness from 2-14 days after exposure and even asymptomatic individuals can transmit the virus.</td>
<td><strong>Must self-quarantine for 14 days</strong> after the last exposure to the person who tested positive, regardless of test result.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NPS is working on providing immediate testing for school staff exposed at school.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Positive Test</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Remain home</strong> (except to get medical care), <strong>monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts</strong>, and answer the call from the local Board of Health (BOH) or MA Community Tracing Collaborative.</td>
<td><strong>Remain home. Most people will need to stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days from the start of symptoms</strong>, 3 days have passed with no fever (without the use of fever reducing medication), and improvement in other symptoms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not Tested</strong></td>
<td><strong>Close contacts will be defined as those who have been within 6 feet of the individual for at least 15 minutes, while the person was infectious. The infectious period begins 2 days prior to symptom onset. (Entire classrooms will not have to be defined as close contacts with this definition which mirrors the DPH recommendation (August 18, 2020).</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Must self-quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive. Virus can cause illness from 2-14 days after exposure and even asymptomatic individuals can transmit the virus.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Must self-quarantine for full 14 days</strong> after the last exposure to the person who tested positive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>