



NEW PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

We would like to share with you current information regarding Health Office procedures for the opening of the 2020-21 school year. As with other areas of the school environment, multiple adjustments are necessary to best ensure the health and safety of students, staff and the entire school community. Please understand that ongoing reassessments may alter these plans as new information becomes available regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Rest assured that as school nurses, we are continuously reviewing information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), as well as consulting regularly with the local Westfield Regional Health Department.

Please review the following information and guidelines that will be followed in the Health Offices of all district schools:

Masks/ Face Coverings:

All students and staff will be required to wear masks or cloth face coverings during in-person school hours (unless doing so would inhibit the student’s health). **Appropriate face coverings must cover the mouth and nose, and fit snugly along the sides of the face and under the chin.** Face shields are not a replacement for masks. For more information on proper face coverings, please view the current [CDC guidance](#).

Appropriate Face Coverings:	Unacceptable Face Coverings:
Snug fitting cloth coverings or masks	Face shields - cannot replace a mask
Disposable medical-like masks	Masks with Vents
Other face coverings that adhere to all current CDC guidance (covering nose AND mouth, snug fit along sides of face, and secured under the chin)	Any cloth face covering that does not adhere to current CDC guidance (i.e. not covering mouth and/or nose, not snug on sides of face or secured under chin)

Screenings:

All students will undergo a brief health screening upon daily arrival to school. Temperatures will be checked by staff members using touch-free thermometers, and students and/or parents will be asked a series of questions regarding the presence of symptoms. Any students who display a temperature of 100.4° F or greater and/or report **any single symptom (see symptoms chart below)** of possible coronavirus infection will not be allowed into the school building.

In an effort to keep our school community safe and remain in the best position to continue to offer in-person instruction, the district is going above and beyond the minimum standards of DOH guidance as it pertains to

symptomatic students staying home from school. *Please note, any symptomatic student who stays home from school but is feeling well enough to learn will still have the opportunity to participate in the learning process each day via Zoom links.*

Parents are expected to check their children before leaving the home and avoid sending students who display fever or any single COVID-like symptom to school.

****STUDENTS WITH ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS SHOULD NOT BE SENT TO SCHOOL****

Fever ($\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$)	Muscle or Body Aches	Chills
Shivers	Sore throat	Nausea or Vomiting
Fatigue	Headache	Congestion or runny nose
Diarrhea	Difficulty Breathing	Cough
Shortness of breath	New loss of taste	New loss of smell

**For more information in regards to staying home, as well as when a student may return to school, please view the [NPSD “Symptomatic” Student Flow Chart](#).

Other reasons to keep students home from school:

Children should not be sent to school if a household member, or other close contact, has tested positive for coronavirus infection or displays COVID-like illness. A 14-day quarantine period is required, starting from the last day of known exposure to the ill or coronavirus-positive individual. If the student becomes ill or tests positive for coronavirus, a 10-day isolation period is required that begins from the first day of onset of symptoms.

Keep in mind when vacationing that a 14-day quarantine is recommended after travel to many [U.S. states and international destinations](#). Students and staff who travel to these locations must adhere to guidelines and remain home from school until this quarantine period is completed. For more information, please view the [NPSD “Asymptomatic” Student Flow Chart](#).

Contact tracing:

The Westfield Regional Health Department will be managing all contact tracing responsibilities. Positive cases and contacts will be notified by the Health Department. Guidance regarding quarantine and isolation periods will be provided by Health Department contact tracers. Parents are expected to follow these guidelines and must keep students home from school if quarantine or isolation is recommended. Any notification of known cases in the school community will be issued by school administrators after consultation with the Health Department. *We encourage families to cooperate fully with contact tracing efforts in order to protect the health and safety of our entire school community.*

If students become ill during the school day:

Students who appear ill or complain of having symptoms consistent with the COVID-19 exclusion criteria will be sent to the Health Office and immediately moved to isolation areas in each Health Office. School nurses will assess and notify parents if the student needs to be sent home (***any student presenting a sign/symptom listed in the above chart will automatically be sent home***).* Parents must have a plan for immediate pick up of ill students, preferably within a 30-minute time period. In an effort to protect the safety of others, ill

students should not spend extensive periods of time in the Health Office. Ill students will remain in the isolation area of the Health Office under the school nurse's supervision until they leave the school.

*Please note, any student or staff member who exhibits signs and symptoms consistent with the COVID-19 exclusion criteria **during the school day** (2 or more symptoms from the "yellow" boxes above or 1 or more symptoms from the "orange" boxes above) will need to be isolated and treated as a potentially COVID positive case during the school day - in accordance with [NJDOH guidance](#). As per the [New Providence School District's Health and Safety Reopening plan](#), all areas used by the person who is sick must be immediately closed off, outside doors and windows will be opened to increase air circulation in the area and we must then **wait 24 hours before cleaning or disinfecting these areas**. 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. Again, it is for these reasons that the district has chosen to go above and beyond DOH guidance and is mandating that students with even a single symptom consistent with COVID-19 remain home. We ask that all parents remain vigilant in looking for these symptoms and follow these protocols by airing on the side of caution - keeping children home whenever necessary.

When can ill students return to school:

If students are absent or are sent home from school due to illness, a doctor's note stating that they are cleared for school attendance is needed to return to in-person instruction. *In the absence of a doctor's note* and the presence of **symptoms consistent with the COVID-19 exclusion criteria**, a 10-day isolation period AND 24 hour fever-free without medication AND significant improvement of symptoms will be required before students can return to school*. Remote learning can proceed during the isolation period if the student feels well enough to participate. Please contact the school nurse with any questions regarding the appropriate time to return to school. *Please note, particular guidance for returning to school may vary due to the ["risk factor" of our region](#) ("Central East"). Please refer to the [NPSD Symptomatic Student Flow Chart](#) for more information on student absences/returning to school scenarios.

Medications:

Only those medications *absolutely necessary during school hours* are to be administered in the Health Office. Parents should make every attempt to schedule medications for administration at home.

Nebulizers:

Due to the potential for aerosolization of viral particles, nebulizers can only be administered in emergency situations. Regularly scheduled nebulized medications must be planned for administration at home. Please consult your child's doctor regarding appropriate adjustments to asthma action plans and the use of inhalers as a possible alternative.

Vaccinations:

To avoid potential outbreaks of vaccine preventable illnesses, all students are required to receive immunizations according to regulatory guidelines. The NJDOH has announced that it is not waiving vaccine requirements for school attendance. This pertains to students who attend both in-person and remote learning settings.

Plan now for flu shot appointments. ***Pre-K students are required to receive annual flu vaccines and it is strongly encouraged for all other students.***

Mental Health:

The New Providence School District places a strong emphasis on addressing the mental health concerns of students and staff, as it is an essential component of reopening schools. We recognize as school nurses that now more than ever, students and parents may be anxious as we return to our school buildings for in-person learning. While we take pride in our ability to offer the nurse's office as a "safe space" for all students during a typical school year, we ask that students make appointments with a counselor for all non-emergency situations - this will limit traffic in the nurse's office and minimize risk of potential exposure for our students. For more resources and helpful guidance in navigating the return to our schools from a mental health perspective, please visit the [NP Parent and Student Site for Social and Emotional Learning](#).

Preparing for the school reopening:

We recommend that parents prepare their children in advance of the start of the school year for these new health procedures.

- Purchase or make masks for students and practice wearing these face coverings. Try different types to determine what is most comfortable for your child. Children will likely do best by slowly increasing the amount of time spent wearing a mask. Wearing the mask during enjoyable activities can lead to better acceptance of mask wearing. Allow children to participate in choosing masks that reflect their personal style.
- Obtain a thermometer for checking temperatures at home. "Feeling" a child's forehead is not a reliable measure of fever. Students with temperatures of 100.4°F or greater should not be brought to school.
- Discuss with students that screenings will be performed for all students. They are not being singled out. Prepare them to expect that staff members who are performing screenings will be wearing masks, face shields and gloves.
- Reinforce healthy habits that can prevent the spread of germs. Encourage frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizer, practice 6' spatial distancing, clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces, avoid touching eyes and face, and demonstrate covering coughs and sneezes.

Thank you for your cooperation in adhering to the new Health Office procedures. Please contact your child's school nurse or building principal if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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