Northwest Allen County Schools

2021-2022
COVID-Mitigation Procedures

Board approved July 26, 2021

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Summary of COVID-Mitigation Procedures

The following procedures serve as the procedures to start the 2021-2022 school year. The procedures are based on guidance from the Governor, CDC, IDOH, and ACDH and conversations with local public health experts. The procedures have been reviewed by the ACDH, NACS legal counsel, and NACS liability insurance carrier and discussed with NACEA representatives as required by Indiana statute. The procedures included on this summary page, and throughout the COVID Mitigation Procedures document, will continue being modified to reflect changes in guidance or orders from the Governor, governing bodies/agencies, CDC, AAP, IDOH, and ACDH. Mask requirements may be re-instated by the Board of School Trustees if community spread of COVID/SARS-COV2 reaches levels as determined by the ACDH or COVID cases are confirmed within a school or classroom.

Indoor Activities

- Masks are optional. If community spread of COVID reaches levels as determined by the ACDH or COVID cases are confirmed within a school or classroom, mask requirements may be re-instated.
- Masks will be optional during high exertion activities (i.e., PE classes, athletic practices, sports camps).
- If mask requirements are re-instated, then as practical, a mask break will be incorporated. Whenever weather conditions permit, outdoor breaks are encouraged.
- As practical, maximizing space between and among individuals will continue being implemented.
- Maintaining seating charts and cohorting of students will continue for contact tracing.
- Clean hands in/clean hands out procedures will continue being implemented.
- Shared equipment and supplies will continue being cleaned and sanitized between uses.

Health Screening and Self-Monitoring

Each day, parents of students will need to monitor whether their child has COVID-like symptoms, or any other illness related symptoms such as fever, vomiting, coughing, sneezing, etc. (i.e., flu, RSV, strep throat, etc.), and stay home if they are sick.

Transporting Students

Masks are required for students utilizing any NACS vehicle for transportation. Transportation procedures will continue to include implementing and maintaining seating charts for contact tracing.

Serving Meals

If mask requirements are re-instated, then masks will be required before and after eating/drinking, but masks may be removed while eating/drinking. Seating charts and cohorting of students will continue being implemented and maintained for contact tracing.

Outdoor Activities

- Masks are optional for all outdoor instructional activities and during high exertion activities.
- As practical, maximizing space between and among individuals will continue being implemented.
- Cohorting of students will continue for contact tracing.
- Clean hands in/clean hands out procedures will continue being implemented.
- Shared equipment and supplies will continue being cleaned and sanitized between uses.

Visitors, Volunteers, and Parents when school is in session

- Visitors, volunteers, and parents should not enter the school if they are sick.
- Visitors, volunteers, and parents will be expected to wear a mask upon entering any NACS facility. If a visitor, volunteer, or parent desires to be exempt from wearing a mask, then s/he may voluntarily present proof of vaccination.
- When visitors, volunteers, and parents reach their destination within the school and physical distances of 6 feet or more can be maintained, then masks may be temporarily removed.
- Visitors, volunteers, and parents will need to maximize and maintain physical distance between and among other individuals.

Contact Tracing and Quarantines

Contact tracing procedures and compliance with IDOH quarantine procedures shall continue being implemented. All close contacts will be quarantined for 14 days unless an asymptomatic individual voluntarily chooses one of the following options determined by the IDOH:

- As determined by the IDOH, an asymptomatic individual may be exempt from quarantine if s/he voluntarily chooses to present proof of vaccination.
- As determined by the IDOH, an asymptomatic individual who tests negative for COVID-19 may be able to return on day 8 if s/he wears a mask, except while eating/drinking, while at school and school activities throughout the remaining days of the quarantine period.
- As determined by the IDOH, an asymptomatic individual may be able to return on day 11 if s/he wears a mask, except while eating/drinking, while at school and school activities throughout the remaining days of the quarantine period.

Foreword

The following procedures serve as the procedures to start the 2021-2022 school year. The procedures are based on guidance from the Governor, CDC, IDOH, and ACDH and conversations with local public health experts. The procedures have been reviewed by the ACDH, NACS legal counsel, and NACS liability insurance carrier and discussed with NACEA representatives as required by Indiana statute. The procedures included on this summary page, and throughout the COVID Mitigation Procedures document, will continue being modified to reflect changes in guidance or orders from the Governor, governing bodies/agencies, CDC, AAP, IDOH, and ACDH. Mask requirements may be re-instated by the Board of School Trustees if community spread of COVID/SARS-COV2 reaches levels as determined by the ACDH or COVID cases are confirmed within a school or classroom.

Resources

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html

https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/

https://www.allencountyhealth.com/get-informed/covid-19/

https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx

Definitions

AAP: American Academy of Pediatrics

ACDH: Allen County Department of Health

Close Contact: A close contact is defined by the IDOH and occurs when an individual interacts with a person confirmed to have SARS-COV2/COVID-19.

Facial coverings: An acceptable facial covering covers the nose and mouth of the person wearing the facial covering, and it fits snugly around the face to significantly reduce the amount of air expelled away from the person and into the space of others. An acceptable facial covering is comprised of 2 or more plies of fabric that is breathable but prevents the person wearing the facial covering from being able to expel air into the space of others. For more information about facial coverings, please visit: CDC Information about Masks or American Academy of Pediatrics Information about Masks.

Fully Vaccinated: According to the CDC and the IDOH, an individual is considered fully vaccinated 14 days after receiving the second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or 14 days after receiving a dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Vaccination decisions are personal, please consult your family healthcare provider to determine the best course of action for individual family members. Additional information about COVID vaccines can be found at: CDC, FDA, Mayo Clinic, or AAP.

ISDH / IDOH: Indiana State Department of Health / Indiana Department of Health

Isolation: According to the CDC and the IDOH, isolation refers to separating sick people with a contagious disease from others who are healthy. Isolation usually means that the sick person stays away from others by resting in her/his own bedroom or in an area of the home away from others. **Isolation includes staying home from school/work.**

NACS: Northwest Allen County Schools

Physical distancing / Social distancing: According to the CDC and IDOH, the terms physical distancing and social distancing refer to the practice of maintaining personal space. Ideally, individuals will remain 6 or more feet away from others to decrease the likelihood of breathing in COVID-contaminated air exhaled by another person.

Quarantine: According to the CDC and the IDOH, quarantine refers to separating people who were exposed to someone who is sick with a contagious disease. People who are quarantined may have been exposed to a disease, may or may not know it, and may not know if they contracted the disease, or they may have the disease but do not show symptoms. Since people who were around other sick people are more likely to get sick themselves, quarantine prevents them from accidentally spreading the virus to other people even before they realize they are sick. People who are in quarantine should stay at home and avoid going out or being around other people. **Quarantine includes staying home from school/work.**

Self-Monitor: According to the CDC and the IDOH, self-monitor refers to people monitoring themselves for symptoms of a disease if there is suspicion that they may have been exposed to it.

Health Screening and Self-Monitoring

Each day, parents of students will need to monitor whether their child has COVID-like symptoms, or any other illness-related symptoms such as fever, vomiting, coughing, sneezing, etc. (i.e., flu, RSV, strep throat, etc.), and stay home if they are sick. Actions to take to increase the likelihood of good health can be found by visiting the CDC or the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Although the IDOH identified the following list of symptoms as those causing greater concern, the most current list of symptoms can be accessed at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html.

- Fever or chills (temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when taken by mouth)
- Sore throat
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (or change in cough from baseline for those with allergies or asthma)
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New onset of severe headache, especially if accompanied by a fever
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
- Loss of taste or smell

1. As required by the IDOH, students and employees will be excluded from school if they are diagnosed with COVID-19 or exhibit one or more COVID-related symptoms that cannot be otherwise explained.

2. As required by the IDOH, students and employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 without being otherwise explained, are prohibited from coming to school.
   a. If a student comes to school exhibiting COVID-like symptoms, a parent/guardian will be notified to pick their child up from school and transport them home.
   b. If an employee comes to school exhibiting COVID-like symptoms, s/he will be directed to return home and consult a physician to determine whether the symptoms are caused by COVID-19.

Preventative Measures

1. Masks for students and employees are optional; however, if community spread of COVID/SARS-COV2 reaches levels as determined by the ACDH or COVID/SARS-COV2 cases are confirmed within a school or classroom, mask requirements may be re-instated by the Board of School Trustees. For more information regarding preventive measures families may take, please consult with your family healthcare provider or visit the AAP and CDC websites.

2. Physical distancing between and among individuals will be maximized, and whenever practical, it will be 6 feet or more.

3. To comply with contact tracing requirements, students will be seated with cohort groups.

4. Hand soap or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, paper towels, and no-touch trash cans will be available in all bathrooms. Refillable hand sanitizer containers or mobile hand sanitizing stations will be provided for each classroom and frequently visited areas.

5. Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected at least once each day.

6. Shared objects will be cleaned before and after each use.

7. Plastic or Plexiglass barriers may be utilized to provide additional protection for employees/students in some situations.

8. Whenever touchless water refilling stations are available, water fountains will be turned off, and students will be permitted to bring water bottles from home.

9. Ventilation systems will continue being periodically inspected to ensure proper operation. The maximum level of MERV filters

allowed within the specifications of each HVAC system will continue being used. The number of air exchanges with outdoor air will continue being maximized as allowed by the specifications of the HVAC system and at a level that ensures maintenance of good indoor air quality.

10. Whenever practical and weather permits, outdoor instructional activities are encouraged.

Visitors, Volunteers, and Parents

When school is in session:

1. Visitors, volunteers, and parents should not enter a NACS facility if they are sick by confirming that they are not experiencing fever, vomiting, coughing, sneezing, etc. **AND** do not have COVID-like symptoms as noted in section of this document titled "Health Screening and Self-Monitoring."

2. Visitors, volunteers, and parents will be expected to wear a mask upon entering any NACS facility. If a visitor, volunteer, or parent desires to be exempt from wearing a mask, then s/he may voluntarily present proof of vaccination.

3. When visitors, volunteers, and parents reach their destination within the school and physical distances of 6 feet or more can be maintained, then masks may be temporarily removed.

4. Visitors, volunteers, and parents will need to maintain physical distance between and among other individuals. As practical, physical distances of 6 feet or more should be maintained.

Transporting Students

Utilizing NACS transportation resources is optional. The following guidelines will be utilized to ensure a safe and efficient transportation program following all established safety protocols with additional considerations for the potential spread of communicable diseases.

1. To comply with federal orders regarding public transportation, facial coverings must be worn whenever utilizing any of the NACS transportation resources.

2. Given the setting of the school bus, we acknowledge that physical distancing of 6 feet or more is not practical in most situations; therefore, the following procedures will be implemented:
   a. Students will continue being expected to remain seated and face forward during travel.
   b. Drivers will evaluate loading and unloading procedures and, as practical, customize them to their route and ridership to minimize contact among students.
   c. To comply with contact tracing requirements, students will be seated with cohort groups.

3. Cleaning and disinfecting commonly used areas of the buses will continue being implemented.

4. When weather conditions permit, safe and proper use of open windows and hatches along with fans will be encouraged to allow for increased ventilation.

5. Transportation services for students will be limited to riding their assigned bus – adjustments to accommodate alternate transportation to a friend's house, etc. will not be available.

6. Special Education transportation will continue being offered to students who receive this related service. To comply with federal orders regarding public transportation, facial coverings must be worn whenever utilizing any of the NACS transportation resources. The case conference committee will work with parents of students who are unable to wear a mask on the school bus to determine what accommodations may be needed.

Serving Meals

The following guidelines will be utilized to safely and efficiently serve meals to our students and staff.

1. Masks for students are optional; however, if community spread of COVID/SARS-COV2 reaches levels as determined by the ACDH or COVID/SARS-COV2 cases are confirmed within a school or classroom, mask requirements may be re-instated by the Board of School Trustees. If mask requirements are re-instated, then masks will be required before and after eating/drinking, but masks may be removed while eating/drinking.

2. Food service employees will wear facial coverings while preparing and serving meals.

3. Students will have the opportunity to wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after meal service.

4. Hand sanitizer stations will be available in each cafeteria.

5. As practical, physical distancing among students will be maximized. To comply with contact tracing requirements, students will be seated with cohort groups.

6. Cleaning and disinfecting protocols will be implemented between lunch periods.

Extra- and Co-Curricular Activities

Extra- and Co-Curricular Activities are optional activities. Activities that have not already created plans, or had their plans reviewed and approved, must create and submit plans for review; the plans must be approved by the building principal before the activity may begin. Plans submitted for approval must:

1. Adhere to the NACS COVID mitigation procedures;

2. Integrate recommendations from sanctioning organizations, such as FCCLA, FFA, IHSAA, ISSMA, etc.; and

3. Be reviewed by the Allen County Department of Health and considered their feedback before implementing such plans.

Large Group Gatherings

(Student Assemblies, Awards Ceremonies, Concerts, Fine Arts Celebrations, Athletic Events, and similar activities)

The following guidelines will be utilized to ensure group gatherings are conducted in a safer manner.

1. To teach state standards typically included in student assemblies, alternate methods for teaching the state standards will be implemented, which may include different types of activities involving fewer students at any one time.

2. NACS will abide by the maximum number of people allowed to congregate as defined by the Governor's or the activity's county of jurisdiction's order and the sanctioning body of the event (i.e., ISSMA for music events, IHSAA for athletic events, FCCLA for culinary events, FFA for agriculture events, etc.).

3. NACS will abide by COVID-mitigation procedures, such as wearing facial coverings or maintaining physical distances, as required by the Governor's or the activity's county of jurisdiction's order and the sanctioning body of the event (i.e., ISSMA for music events, IHSAA for athletic events, FCCLA for culinary events, FFA for agriculture events, etc.).

4. Hand sanitizer will be accessible and available for attendees to use during events that include large group gatherings.

When May an Individual Return to School or Work

The following protocols are determined by the IDOH and will be utilized to determine when an individual may return to school after a positive SARS-COV2/COVID-19 test, a quarantine, or an illness. The listed criteria are subject to change to reflect and comply with procedures determined by the IDOH.

1. To maintain privacy among those who may be isolated or quarantined when communicating about SARS-COV2/COVID-19 cases, NACS will adhere to privacy provisions in federal laws such as, but not limited to, the ADA, HIPAA, and FERPA.

2. If a student or employee tests **positive for SARS-COV2/COVID-19**, then the student or employee will need to adhere to the following guidance as required by the IDOH:
   a. Contact the school nurse to ensure that reporting to the ACDH occurs in compliance with 410 IAC 1-2.5.
   b. If healthy enough to do so, the student may use Canvas to access and complete learning activities.
   c. According to the IDOH, if an individual tests **positive for SARS-COV2/COVID-19 and is symptomatic**, then before returning to school, the diagnosed person must isolate at home for at least 10 days from the inception of when the first symptoms began **AND** be fever free without the use of fever reducing medications for at least 24 hours **AND** experience improvement in symptoms. Siblings, other household members, and close contacts to the individual testing positive will need to quarantine as required by the IDOH.
   d. According to the IDOH, if an individual tested **positive for SARS-COV2/COVID-19 and has no symptoms**, then before returning to school, the diagnosed person must isolate at home for at least 10 days from the day the testing sample was collected. If symptoms develop, then the individual must follow the guidance in the previous item (c). Siblings, other household members, and close contacts to the individual testing positive will need to quarantine as required by the IDOH.

3. If a student or employee **exhibits symptoms of COVID-19/SARS-COV2 without being otherwise explained**, then as determined by the IDOH:
   a. The individual must isolate at home for at least 10 days from the inception of when the first symptoms began **AND** be fever free without the use of fever reducing medications for at least 24 hours **AND** experience improvement in symptoms.
   b. If the individual exhibiting the COVID-19/SARS-COV2 symptoms tests **negative for SARS-COV2/COVID-19 or receives an alternate diagnosis from a physician,** then the individual may return to school after being fever free without the use of fever reducing medications for at least 24 hours **AND** experience improvement in symptoms.

4. If a student or employee is **exposed to SARS-COV2/COVID-19** by encountering a close contact with a person confirmed to have SARS-COV2/COVID-19, then the student or employee will need to adhere to the following guidance as required by the IDOH:
   a. Contact the school nurse to ensure that reporting to the ACDH occurs in compliance with 410 IAC 1-2.5.
   b. If healthy enough to do so, the student may use Canvas to access and complete learning activities.
   c. As required by the IDOH, if a person is **exposed to** someone confirmed to have SARS-COV2/COVID-19, then the exposed individual will need to quarantine for 14 days after the last contact with the person confirmed to have SARS-COV2/COVID-19 (positive SARS-COV2/COVID-19 test results).
      i. As determined by the IDOH, an **asymptomatic individual may be exempt** from quarantine if s/he **voluntarily chooses to present proof of vaccination**.
      ii. As determined by the IDOH, if the exposed individual **does NOT experience symptoms** and tests negative for SARS-COV2/COVID-19 using a PCR-type test on days 5, 6, or 7 or a BinaxNow-type test on day 8, then the exposed individual **may return on the eighth (8th) day if NO SYMPTOMS** were experienced during the quarantine period. If the individual chooses to return to school on day 8 after testing negative with no symptoms, then as determined by the IDOH, the individual must adhere to the following protocols:
         1) The individual must wear a mask at all times, except while eating or drinking, while at school and school activities throughout the remaining days of the quarantine period; and
         2) The individual must maintain a physical distance of 6 feet or more from others whenever practical while at school and school activities throughout the remaining days of the quarantine period.
         3) If the individual participates in extra- or co-curricular activities, then the individual may return to activities by adhering to the following procedures:
            a) For athletes, s/he may partially return to practice by wearing a mask and maintaining 6 feet or more

of physical distance from others during practice throughout the remaining days of the quarantine period. To comply with the additional requirements, practice activities and locker room protocols will be adjusted. S/he may not participate in contests with other schools or fully participate in practice throughout the remaining days of the quarantine period.

b) For students involved in other extra-curricular activities, s/he may partially return to the activity by wearing a mask and maintaining 6 feet or more of physical distance from others during the activity throughout the remaining days of the quarantine period. To comply with the additional requirements, procedures will be adjusted based on the type of activities s/he may be involved, and s/he may not fully participate throughout the remaining days of the quarantine period.

iii. As determined by the IDOH, if the exposed individual **does NOT experience symptoms** during the first ten (10) days of the quarantine period, then the exposed individual **may return on the eleventh (11th) day if NO SYMPTOMS** were experienced during the quarantine period. If the individual chooses to return to school on day 11 after experiencing no symptoms, then as determined by the IDOH, the individual must adhere to the following protocols:

1) The individual must wear a mask at all times, except while eating or drinking, while at school and school activities throughout the remaining days of the quarantine period; and

2) The individual must maintain a physical distance of 6 feet or more from others whenever practical while at school and school activities throughout the remaining days of the quarantine period.

3) If the individual is a student who participates in extra-curricular activities, then the individual may return to activities by adhering to the following procedures:

a) For athletes, s/he may partially return to practice by wearing a mask and maintaining 6 feet or more of physical distance from others during practice throughout the remaining days of the quarantine period. To comply with the additional requirements, practice activities and locker room protocols will be adjusted. S/he may not participate in contests with other schools or fully participate in practice throughout the remaining days of the quarantine period.

b) For students involved in other extra-curricular activities, s/he may partially return to the activity by wearing a mask and maintaining 6 feet or more of physical distance from others during the activity throughout the remaining days of the quarantine period. To comply with the additional requirements, procedures will be adjusted based on the type of activities s/he may be involved, and s/he may not fully participate throughout the remaining days of the quarantine period.