

Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan (SRCSP)

2021-2022



North Nodaway R-VI School District

June 2021

Board Originally Adopted: June 30, 2021

Reapproved by Board on January 5, 2022

(This information is available in other languages upon request. Contact the North Nodaway Central Office at 660-778-3411)

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Introduction:

North Nodaway School District will be re-opened to educate and provide a safe environment for students and staff members in the upcoming 2021-22 school year. This plan is a requirement of accepting and utilizing ESSER III funding provided by the federal government through the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The experience that was gained from COVID-19 in the past two years will help guide us and our decision for the school year of 2021-22. This plan will focus on how our district intends to educate students and continue to provide services depending on the health risks and assessments that are taking place within our area and in the state of Missouri. Some options of learning possibly being remote at home, with limited interaction, and being in-person at school with additional safety guidelines. Therefore, this plan takes many aspects into account to make our district and students as safe as possible. This plan is not inclusive of everything possible as COVID-19 has been unpredictable. The purpose of this plan is to reopen our school in a way that is safe and responsive to the needs of our families and the community.

The path to reopening was based on the direction of public health and the current guidance of social distance measures being mandated or applied locally in Northwest Missouri and more specifically Pickering and Hopkins. Depending on the direction of public health, our district may experience times of stopping and starting, staggered openings, and periods of normal operation. The previous year showed that our district could put safety measures in place and keep students at school for most of the year.

The North Nodaway administration staff members have devised this plan from stakeholder input to best understand this pandemic and what is needed to contain and mitigate any concerns. A Safe Return to Schools Committee will meet again every six months to discuss any needed updates/revisions to the plan. As this plan is a working document, all committee members understand that this plan may need to be modified more frequently depending on outside factors. Our next meeting is scheduled for December 15, and May 18, 2022.

SRCSP Committee Members:

Chris Turpin- Superintendent/Transportation Director
Roger Johnson- High School Principal
Ashley Marriott- Elementary Principal
Tiffany Whipple- Executive Assistant/Parent
Lynette Berg- Kitchen Supervisor/Parent
Kit Meiners- School Counselor
Linda Russell- School Nurse
Troy Nally-Teacher
Cody Jenkins- Teacher
Sarah Emery- Special Education Teacher/Parent
Bo Hansen- Maintenance/Custodial Supervisor/ Parent
Sami Jackson- Teacher
Catherine Auffert- Special Education Teacher
Samantha Brown-Board Member- Parent
Vicky Riley- Board Member
Tim Blackford- Board Member/Parent
Jerime Bix- Board Member/ Parent
Kane Oberhauser- Board Member
Jennifer Clements- Board Member/Parent
Cari Cline- Board Member/Parent

Educational Strategies/Phases:

There are three educational strategies/phases that we are anticipating to educate the students of North Nodaway. This is all depending on the community spread of COVID-19 and guidance presented by local health authorities. Recommendations that were implemented in the 2020-21 school year that seemed to be impactful were: the mask mandates from the state that our local school board adopted, encouragement of social distancing, sanitation of hard surfaces, increased sanitizing by students, protective barriers, hands-free devices, daily procedures that were modified such as extra lunch shifts and modified bus procedures. During the school year 2020-21 our district only utilized the normal operation phase as we only had a few students/staff out at a time with our increased mitigation that was put into place.

- **Normal Operation/No or Minimal Spread-** Our initial plan is to open school as closely to normal as possible based on no or minimal community spread of COVID-19. All students will be allowed to attend as “normal”. As part of the normal operation: Parents will have one of four options on how they want their students to be educated in terms of being an identified school contact or household contact. Those options are listed later in this section.

Mitigation Strategies

1. Masks will be worn in accordance to the option chosen by parents in coordination with school administration. Masks will also be worn on the school buses at all time.
2. Social distancing of 6 feet will continue to be incorporated in all settings where it is possible. The district will continue to use set seating charts for students in classes, at lunch, and on buses. Visitors will be allowed into the building during major school events.
3. Frequent hand washing and practices consistent with CDC guidelines will continued to be taught and administered by staff members with students.
4. During this time, custodial staff will continue to clean and disinfect of classrooms daily and shared spaces consistent with CDC guidelines. Cleaning will take place mornings and afternoons in high-touch surface areas that multiple groups of students use.
5. The district will be responsible for determining close contacts within the school setting. As a district we will receive information from the local health department on outside community positive cases and household contacts. The district will continue to educate parents of sick students and staff that they need to stay home when sick to keep spread from happening. Students and staff will be sent home when any symptoms occur.
6. The district will ensure thorough communication that parents and students know their options concerning COVID-19 protocols for North Nodaway students.
7. The district will educate students on respiratory etiquette of coughing and sneezing to mitigate the spread of germs.

8. The district will continue to coordinate with the local health department to get a higher percentage of teachers and staff vaccinated during the 2021-22 school term.

9. Those trained in using option 4 (Test to Stay) will be conducting diagnostic, screening, and/or testing, our staff and students who are ill or suspected of being ill. Students and staff maybe referred to their primary care physician or county health for suspected illness.

10. All students with disabilities will have their accommodations of their IEPs followed throughout their learning no matter which type of learning is taking place.

Background Information-In response to a recent judgment in the case Robinson v. Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (Cole County). The Cole County case reviewed discretionary rules/orders issued by unelected public health officials and determined certain regulations promulgated by DHSS and the authority flowing therefrom to be unconstitutional. The invalidated rules relate to the unelected health officials issuing public health orders and mandates without complying with the rule-making process required by the Missouri Administrative Procedures Act (Chapter 536 RSMo)

It is important to note that not one local school or policy was at issue or party to the suit in the case. Section 171.011 RSMo provides the authority for local public school boards to establish the framework for governance through rules and regulations. Section 167.191 RSMo sets forth a standard regarding communicable disease and school attendance saying: “It is unlawful for any child to attend any of the public schools of his state while afflicted with any contagious or infectious disease, or while liable to transmit such disease after having been exposed to it.”

While trying to understand the impacts of both the recent ruling and state statute, the North Nodaway administration put out a brief survey to patrons, staff, and parents to gain their thoughts and opinions in regards to COVID-19 and the learning experience at our school.

Based on our survey results, state laws, and guidance from the Department of Health and Senior Services we have recommended the following protocols for handling positive cases and close contacts within the school setting. Adjustments to the current school communicable disease policy (EBB) have been made by the North Nodaway R-VI School board to remove the following terminology; “be managed by the local health department.” By following the listed protocols and providing parents with options, the North Nodaway School District continues to follow CDC recommendations and safety procedures which help provide safe and practical educational experiences for students. Decisions continue to be made on what is safe, right, and just for all stakeholders involved.

The policies and procedures concerning the protocols and guidelines are subject to change based on any new laws, or guidance from the DHSS. Interpretation of these guidelines have been designated from the elected school board to the Superintendent and school administration.

North Nodaway COVID-19 Protocols:

When students are deemed a positive for COVID-19 or a close contact the school will work with the parents to see how best to educate the student(s) involved. Parent(s) will have the following choices for their student(s) based on whether they are a household contact or a non-household contact. **All positive cases must quarantine at home.** We ask that all parents be responsible for checking for symptoms at home and refrain from sending students to school who are sick. The school staff will identify all school contacts. We will receive outside contact information from health officials.

Household Contacts- (These contacts are deemed to be the most at risk of developing COVID-19)

If **fully vaccinated** per CDC guidelines- An asymptomatic student can quarantine at school 10 days while properly wearing a mask. Parents will need to provide proof of vaccination when requested.

If **not fully vaccinated** per CDC guidelines- Student must quarantine at home for 10 days after date of contact and can return by properly wearing a mask an additional 5 days while at school.

Non-Household Contacts-

Option 1- Student/Staff Quarantine at home for 5 days upon being deemed a non-household contact. If parents choose this option virtual learning or learning packets will be provided depending on grade level and teacher.

Option 2-Student/Staff Quarantine at school for 5 days upon being deemed a non-household contact. If parents choose this option students will be able to attend school by socially distancing, properly wearing a mask, and being symptom free.

Participation in School Sponsored Activities (Involving other Schools)-

If deemed a non-household contact, students fully vaccinated (according to current CDC guidelines) or participate in the Test to Stay Option listed below are able to participate in school sponsored extra-curricular activities provided they are not a positive COVID-19 case. Those who quarantine at home may resume participation after their quarantine period.

Test to Stay Option This allows students/staff who are identified as close contacts to attend school and participate in extra-curricular events as long as they received 3 negative rapid antigen tests provided at school, or with a local health care provider, during the first 7 days of the 10 day quarantine period. This does not apply to those students who are not fully vaccinated and are listed as a household contact Test must be on separate days and on the day of the sporting contest(s). Students will also be asked to wear a mask, and social distance while remaining at school during that time. It is our responsibility as a member school to protect student athletes from both schools involved in the event. Missouri State High School Activities Association, (MSHSAA) expects that those students testing positive for COVID-19 virus, complete the MSHSAA Return to Play protocol form prior to participation. The quarantine period for a student testing positive will include 10 days of no practice or competition. If the student is asymptomatic after the 10 days, they must be released by a physician before they begin the 5 stages of Return to Play.

- **Partial Remote Learning Strategy/Moderate Spread-** This method will be used when state or local authorities provide guidance that we limit the number of students and staff to confined spaces such as classrooms and buses. This method will be utilized if there is moderate community spread and a spike in cases in Pickering or Hopkins. This method will consist of students attending either Monday or Wednesday with an alternating Friday, or Tuesday and Thursday with an alternating Friday. We realize that this method creates some additional coordination amongst staff and for families, but the face to face interaction is valuable to assist and monitor student progress with learning. The administration staff will determine which families will be assigned Monday/Wednesday and those that will be Tuesday/Thursday based on the families' last name. For example, a family with the last name of Smith might be assigned a Tuesday/Thursday schedule. During this method of instruction students will receive educational instruction of the district curriculum and provided with additional resources and instruction to complete work independently, at home, on days not in school. It is our expectation that teachers provide a means that parents can request help or assistance concerning assignments being completed at home. During this strategy/phase the following will be done to help mitigate and reduce the further spread of COVID-19:

Mitigation Strategies:

1. Increase social distancing on buses.
2. Suspend all non-essential activities.
3. Limit visitors to the building.
4. Increase hygiene and disinfecting practices.
5. Encourage students and staff to wear protective equipment.
6. Close all playground facilities.
7. Pro-rate costs for preschool families.
8. Continue special services and accommodations as specified in the student IEPs.
9. Continue respiratory etiquette concerning coughing and sneezing.
10. Refer student(s) to primary care physicians and county health when someone is suspected of being ill.

- **Complete Remote Learning/Wide Spread-** Complete remote learning is the strategy that our district will utilize as a last resort if school closures are necessary. Closures may be a result of substantial community spread amongst teachers or students, a mandate from federal, state, or local authorities. This strategy will entail students being sent home with a Chromebook and teachers providing instruction remotely for all students. One Chromebook(s) will be assigned to each family for every two students and sent home with the oldest student enrolled. Should additional devices be needed, please contact the central office. The district will take measures to ensure that equitable access is available to all students. This may include opening up access points to families in school parking lots, and/or providing "hot spots" to families in need. Teachers will utilize Google platforms for learning such as: Google classroom, Google hangouts, and Google Docs. Teachers in the elementary may send instructional packets home that assist or compliment the on-line learning. Students will be expected to check their school Gmail accounts daily, as teachers will post assignments by 10:00 a.m. each morning. Middle school and high school students will log in Zoom, and their Google classroom during each instructional period each day to receive their remote learning. In the 2020-21 school year, this seemed to be the most effective manner to use for student learning and accountability. The district has purchased Edgenuity as an on-line resource for all grade levels.

Pandemic/Inclement Weather:

The state of Missouri has instructed all districts to submit a plan for an alternative method of instruction (AMI) for students should it be forced to close for inclement weather. The district's plan has already been approved for the 2021-22 school year. With an approved plan, the district may be exempt from making up missed instruction time up to 36 hours. North Nodaway will not utilize an AMI method for early out dismissals due to weather. Complete Remote Learning (described above) will be used after the 4th snow day of the school year. A school district text caster will be sent out stating that the school district will be closed due to weather but students will be utilizing remote learning.

Communication:

Communication between the home and school is paramount in a time of crisis. We will take every effort as a district to keep students, staff, and patrons informed of changes associated with the spread of COVID-19. Our district's main form of communication will be via the school text caster. We encourage families to sign up and utilize this service. The text caster will feature messages or messages with instructions to check email, the school website, or a letter attached. The secondary form of communication that will be employed during this time will be letters sent from the school administration. We ask that teaching staff send their correspondence through student emails or other platforms approved by building administrators. Decisions concerning COVID-19 will be made with the collaboration of administration, school board members, staff, health officials, community agencies, and the safe return committee. The contact person for North Nodaway is the superintendent followed by building administrators.

Student and Staff Expectations

As we try to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 we need to establish some expectations of students and staff. When determining expectations, we as committee had to keep the feasibility/practicality of our requests at the forefront of our decisions. Therefore there may be some expectations that could be considered "safer" but determined not to be feasible.

- Students and staff will need to follow the guidelines as outlined in the North Nodaway COVID Option Protocols. In 2020-2021 a mask mandate was in effect for all students during school hours and for spectators at in-side activities such as volleyball and basketball games.
- Students and staff will be requested to utilize social distancing practices in classrooms, public spaces, buses, and during extra-curricular activities.
- Students and staff will be encouraged to utilize proper hand washing and hygiene practices.
- Teachers will provide on-line learning instruction and training based on the strategy being employed.

- Teachers will post assignments by 8:00 am each day. Students will be expected to check in each hour while connecting on-line. Assignments may be turned in via on-line platforms, taking pictures, or other means requested by the teacher. Turning in assignments the next day in person or on-line will be used to justify attendance and monitoring progress of students.
- Teachers are expected to notify students and parents concerning how to receive assistance on independent work assignments.
- All teachers are expected to have at least one live video conference or on-line interaction per day as a minimum.
- Teachers will adhere to additional minimal expectations determined by their building principal or superintendent.

Protocols for Staff and Teachers

- North Nodaway School District has deemed that all staff are essential. As a district, we will continue to follow the CDC, and DESE guidelines put forth regarding COVID.
- Any staff member who tests positive for Covid will have to quarantine for five days at home, and refrain from being in the building. After the five days of isolation, if the staff member is symptom free, they may return to work wearing a mask and continuing to check for symptoms.
- Any staff member deemed a Non household contact of a person who tested positive, will be allowed to work in the building as long as they are symptom free and wear a mask for five days from contact.
- Any staff member deemed a Household contact of a person who tested positive, will be allowed to work in the building as long as they are symptom free and wear a mask for 15 days from contact.
- At any point when a staff member thinks they have symptoms of COVID, they should refrain from working and or being in the building. If a staff member is tested for COVID they are asked to stay at home in quarantine until their results from the test are in.
- There is no COVID relief pay for staff members. Meaning the district will not pay for any time off due to COVID. Staff members must use their own accrued time.

- While it is understood that having the COVID vaccine is a means of preventing transmission of the disease, it is the choice of the individual staff member to be vaccinated or not.

Cleaning/Disinfecting:

The district will make a concerted effort to increase the cleanliness of facilities during the pandemic. Custodial/teacher staff will clean desks, chairs, door knobs, and water fountains along with bathroom facilities throughout the day and again in the evening. Teachers will be asked to wipe down their desks with disinfectant wipes as necessary in the elementary and the middle/high school. Bus seating and rails will be sprayed and wiped down after bus routes. Special surfaces will be cleaned more often as needed such as bleachers and weight room materials. Because of the increased cleaning, more supplies and materials will be needed to provide a safe environment. During the 2020-2021 hands free equipment was installed such as: bottle filling stations, soap dispensers, paper towel dispensers, sink faucets, and toilet flushers.

Busing:

The district will evaluate busing needs depending on the Instructional phase the school is in. When possible the bus will be filled starting in the back and alternating every other seat back and forth across the aisle. Siblings and family members will be encouraged to sit together to maximize space. Bus drivers will wear masks. Busing protocols of social distancing will be stressed with students in extracurricular activities and travel to practices. Because of the federal mandate in place, all students and staff must wear masks on the bus.

Daily School Procedures:

- **Water Fountains-** Only bottle filling stations will be in use. Students/staff will need to bring a bottle for water. (All phases)
- **Social Distancing Markers-** Students and staff will need to adhere to social distancing/directional markers that will be placed within the building. More specifically at lunch, specials, hallways, bathrooms, and lining up locations for playgrounds, and busing purposes. These practices will definitely be used during the partially remote phase.
- **Morning Procedures-** In the elementary school, after students arrive, they will put their things away and sit where staff direct them unless eating breakfast. In the high school, students will arrive through the commons door and proceed to the small gym to be dismissed for breakfast. The staff members on duty will make sure that social distancing is being maintained in the gym and cafeteria.
- **Breakfast/Lunch Procedures-** In order to minimize the spread of surface contamination, students will receive their trays from the cafeteria staff for both breakfast and during lunch. There will be 3 lunch shifts in the elementary (preK and K, 1st-2nd, and 3rd-5th). In the high school, there will be 3 shifts. Trading food, utilizing a share table, or serving yourself will be prohibited. A limited salad bar will be offered but placed in individual sealed containers. If seating becomes an issue, the administration may need to look at placing additional tables in areas such as the gym or have students eat in their classrooms. This may require the cafeteria staff to utilize disposable trays and utensils.
- **Passing Periods/ Attending Specials-** The elementary teachers will have to utilize safe judgment to get students from their classrooms to special classes throughout the day. In the high school/middle school, students will pass between classes accordingly: high school will dismiss on the first bell and the junior high will be dismissed on the second bell for each class.

- **Sick Student-** Sick students or those showing symptoms of having COVID-19 will be sent home immediately by the nurse/ school administration while waiting in a transition room. Temperatures should not be 100.4 degree or higher to be at school. The nurse/ administrator will notify the superintendent and then proceed with contacting the Nodaway County Health Department. The superintendent or his designee will start the proper communication to others. If students are complaining about being sick before coming to school, please don't send them to school or use fever reducing medicine prior to sending them to school. The school is committed to keeping abreast and working to keep kids in school.

Northwest Technical Center Students:

All North Nodaway students attending Northwest Technical Center are expected to attend days that they are in session even if the district is in a limited or remote phase of learning. The only time they would not attend is if we called for inclement weather or if they were not in session. The North Nodaway School District will provide transportation. Students are expected to ride the bus wearing masks unless they are given special permission by the administration. North Nodaway students are expected to follow the guidelines for re-opening that are in place for Maryville R-II School District while in attendance.

Extracurricular Activities/ Events:

Participating in extracurricular comes with extra risk often because of the nature of the activity. The North Nodaway School District will follow guidelines and recommendations put forth by the state athletic association. Athletic coaches will try to do as much practice outside as possible. Coaches will try to incorporate procedures that allow for social distancing when possible. Alternative schedules or minimizing the number of participants at a given time will be considered. Spectators at events may be limited or asked to wear masks based on available space or for mitigating purposes. Extra hygiene will be provided during events such as hand

washing stations. Concessions will be available at these events with extra precautions taking place. Gate workers will be encouraged to wear protective equipment because of the personal contact of others. Should North Nodaway go to complete remote-learning activities will be cancelled as stated by MSHSAA. Students who want to play extracurricular sports activities are recommended to choose Option 3 or Option 4 to ensure we have the safest of kids participating or traveling to other schools.

Social & Emotional Support:

The North Nodaway R-VI School District understands that COVID-19 has caused stress and disruption into the lives of our students. The school guidance counselor will continue to provide services to students, staff, and families that are experiencing difficult times. This can be done in person or virtual. We promote employees and students to eat healthy, exercise, get plenty of rest, and find time to relax. Students and staff should talk with people they trust about their concerns and how they are feeling. The national distress hotline will be a piece of communication that we share with all families at the beginning of this year. That number is 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUs to 66746.