

NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

BACK TO SCHOOL PLAN 2020-21

Updated as of 7/23/2020



Northside Christian School

2655 W Schrock Rd, Westerville OH 43081

Introduction

As we have planned for the new school year, we have prayed for wisdom and discernment. We are truly faced with too much information and, of course, just as many opinions about how to proceed in this unique time.

Thankfully, scripture describes the source and fruit of true wisdom in many places. One is in James 3. We are told that “...the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

The wisdom we want applied to the operation of NCS is “from above.” According to James, it will be peaceable and open to reason and will lead to righteous fruit. **We pray that our decisions reflect a wisdom like this and that whatever we do, it leads to good fruit in the lives of the entire NCS family.**

As we present our plans for re-opening school for the fall below, we recognize that things may change and there are still details to be finalized. Therefore, we ask that you pray with us for divine wisdom and understanding. We know He will lead us to what is best for NCS.

As Governor DeWine acknowledged in his recent announcement about guidelines for opening schools and according to recent studies and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), **continuing to keep children physically out of school could have long-term detrimental effects on academic progress, mental and emotional well-being and behavior.** A recent AAP report says, “The AAP strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with the goal of having students physically present in school. No child should be excluded from school unless required to adhere to local public health mandates or because of unique medical needs.”

The AAP report also says, “Although many questions remain, the preponderance of evidence indicates that children and adolescents are less likely to be symptomatic and less likely to have severe disease resulting from SARS-CoV-2 infection. Also, children may be less likely to become infected and spread infection. Policies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 within schools must be balanced with the known harms to children, adolescents, families, and the community by keeping children at home.”

Given that our students are generally not a high-risk group along with the knowledge that some in our faculty and staff group are high risk, we seek to have a balanced approach to mitigating spread of the virus at NCS during the school day. We want to provide a safe workspace for our staff AND provide a safe and optimal space for our students to learn and grow.

Below are the main steps we will take as we seek to mitigate the risks of COVID-19. **Note that there are still a number of details that will be finalized over the last month of summer. Also, our plans may change as we review guidance from health and state authorities and consider feedback from the entire NCS family.**

Overall Goals

- Enable NCS students to LEARN and GROW this year.
- Provide a safe place for students and staff where risks are mitigated.
- As much as possible, return to normal classroom instruction and school activities.
- Appropriately consider the concerns, feedback, and suggestions from the NCS family.
- Adhere to government guidelines and the advice of health experts in order to mitigate risk.

Scriptural Insight

- **We are ultimately here to glorify our Lord and love one another.** 1 Peter 4:8–11 - Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins...As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace...by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- **Uncertainty is certain.** James 4:13–15 - Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit” - yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring...Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”
- **We will work together.** Proverbs 15:22 - Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.
- **We will submit to governing authorities.** Romans 13:1 - Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.
- **We will consider and care for one another and strive for Christian unity.** Ephesians 4:1–3 - I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- **We will trust God.** Proverbs 16:3 - Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.

Calendar

NCS will resume in-class instruction on campus on August 19, 2020 with no major changes to our calendar at this time.

Regular and Proactive Health Screening

In order to provide the safest learning environment for our students and staff, NCS will take a 3-tiered approach to health screening:

1. All students, staff, faculty, school volunteers, and visitors **MUST** self-screen for concerning health symptoms **BEFORE** leaving home each day to come to any NCS facilities. A person

shall not come to school under any circumstances if he/she displays symptoms listed below.

2. All students, staff, faculty, school volunteers, and visitors will be asked about concerning symptoms and will have their temperature taken before entering the school building.
 - a. As students arrive to school, their temperature will be taken before they can enter the school building.
 - b. Visitors and volunteers will have their temperatures taken outside of the building or in the Campbell Building lobby before entering the school office.
3. As symptoms are recognized in students or staff during the school day, the individual will be immediately sent home or placed in a designated isolation area at school until they are taken home. It is required that parents make immediate arrangements to have their child picked up from school if they demonstrate symptoms listed below.

A student, staff or faculty member, school volunteer, or visitor must not come to school under any circumstances if he/she displays any one of the following symptoms:

- A body temperature of 100°F or higher at any time within a 24 hour period
- Persistent cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Chills
- Loss of taste or smell

Or, any two of the following:

- Body ache
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Runny nose or congestion

Returning to School Following Symptoms and Sickness

- Generally, students, staff or faculty members, school volunteers, or visitors must be clear of symptoms for a full 24 hours before returning to school.
- Students kept home from school by their parents must present evidence of clearance from a doctor **OR** provide a written note from a parent listing the last time that the symptom was evident before returning to school.
- If a student is **sent home from school** due to any of the symptoms listed above, the family **may** be asked to present evidence of clearance from a doctor before being permitted back to school.

- If a student, staff or faculty member or school volunteer tests positive for COVID-19, they must do the following before returning to school:
 - Remain away from school for at least 10 calendar days from the onset of symptoms, AND
 - Remain fever-free for 72 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication, AND
 - Demonstrate improved respiratory function, AND
 - Present evidence of clearance from a doctor.
- A student or staff member who has been exposed to an individual who was tested positive for COVID-19 must remain out of school for 14 days from the date of exposure. They must present evidence of clearance from a doctor or Health Department before returning to school.

“Exposure” has been defined as being within 6’ of an infected person for more than 15 minutes without both individuals wearing masks.

The school nurse and principal have the authority to determine whether a student or staff person has been exposed while at school.

- NCS will communicate with the Columbus Public Health Department anytime a student or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19. NCS will then cooperate fully with their guidance.

Special Assistance for Students Missing School

Our team will be developing processes to minimize the effects on student progress from missing an extended amount of school days due to sickness or preventative health measures.

Physical Distancing

To reduce the risk of spreading germs and sickness, all classrooms at NCS will adhere to the following guidelines:

- Student seating will be spaced up to 6’ apart, but not less than 3’ apart from one another.
- Whenever possible, the sharing of supplies among students will be avoided.
- Six feet of distancing between adults will be maintained when at all possible. Teachers will use common sense when determining appropriate distancing practices between themselves and their students.
- Hallways in the Deubner Center will be one-directional. Hallways in the Campbell building will have designated “lanes” for walking back and forth.
- Cubbies and lockers will be spaced apart as much as possible. Lockers will be grouped by grade level cohorts in order to mitigate spread of germs between grade levels.

- When applicable, and when necessary physical distancing is not achievable, students and/or teachers may be separated by Plexiglas dividers to reduce the spread of germs.

Consistent Hand Hygiene

Research shows that regular hand-washing and sanitizing is one of the most effective ways to control the spread of germs. NCS will ensure that students will have consistent access to soap and water, as well as alcohol-based hand sanitizers. To support students and staff in maintaining healthy hand hygiene, NCS will ensure:

- All classrooms and common spaces (including front office, cafetorium, gymnasium, computer lab, library, etc.) will be equipped with hand sanitizer stations. Staff and students will be expected to use hand sanitizer when entering and leaving those spaces.
- Soap dispensers (in the bathrooms and Elementary classrooms) will be regularly monitored for refilling.
- Students will be expected to wash their hands before and after lunch, before and after recess, and after using the restroom.
- NCS staff will regularly remind students to wash hands, as well as proper handwashing methods. Signs and other methods of communication will consistently remind students of the importance of healthy hand hygiene.

Face Coverings

The following policy was created in accordance with the [COVID-19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools](#), using trusted research from reliable sources, and with every intention to balance the most conducive learning environment with safe and reasonable expectations. As of today, Westerville City Schools, Olentangy Schools and Worthington Schools have varied plans for utilizing face coverings.

NCS students, staff, faculty, school volunteers, and visitors will adhere to the following face covering policy:

- Per the State of Ohio mandate, all NCS staff members **will be required to wear a face covering at all times** during the school day unless they are alone.
Teachers will be permitted to wear a mask, face shield, or teach behind a Plexiglas barrier (when necessary to best accommodate student learning).
- Per the State of Ohio guidelines, students are **not required to wear face coverings at all times**.
 - Students in grades 3-12 **will be required to wear fabric face coverings** while in the hallways during class rotations or in line moving to lunch, recess, restrooms, etc.

- Generally, NCS will **not require students to wear face coverings** while in the classroom. However, they will always be welcome to wear them at any time during the day as desired.
- Students **may be required to wear a face covering** when in a classroom with a teacher who is in a COVID-19 high risk category and are therefore in need of special protections.
- We will ask that students (grades 3-12) wear masks at times **when our ability to maintain physical distance is limited** or when they are closely interacting with students that they do not regularly interact with (e.g. indoor small group activities, morning drop-off, afternoon dismissal, etc.)
- Any K - 12 student visiting or sent to the office with concerning health symptoms will be required to wear a mask.
- Face coverings or masks must cover the mouth and nose.
- We are investigating options (lanyards, clips, baggies, etc.) for helping students manage their masks and keep them as clean as possible during the day.
- **Families must provide their students with their own face coverings.** We strongly recommend that students (Grades K - 12) have access to a clean, unused (or washed) cloth mask every day. This includes preschool through the 2nd grade as there may be rare situations where a face covering is appropriate.
- Plexiglas barriers may be used in places where physical distancing is impossible or impractical.
- Any adult entering the building must be wearing a face covering that covers the mouth and nose. The face covering must remain in place until they have left the building.

Cleaning and Sanitizing of NCS Facilities

In order to reduce the risk of spreading germs and to provide the safest possible learning environment for students and staff, NCS will ensure that:

- NCS facilities are cleaned and sanitized regularly. Disinfectants labeled for use against SARS-CoV-2 will be used on surfaces. High touch surfaces such as door handles, desks, and shared materials will be cleaned more frequently.
- All classrooms will be supplied with disinfectant cleaning supplies. Classrooms will be disinfected throughout the day as necessary.
- The health office and front office will be disinfected following every sick visit.

- Options for air purifiers, HVAC system modifications and providing additional fresh air in classrooms are being investigated.

Pick-Up and Drop-Off Procedures

In order to provide the safest learning environment for staff and students, the following pick-up and drop-off procedures will be implemented:

- NCS will open doors to students at 7:30 am for arrival.
- An NCS staff member or volunteer will check each student's temperature before they enter the building. **If a fever is detected, the student will not be permitted to attend classes that day.**
 - Because of this precaution, it is possible that drop-off may take extra time.
 - Multiple health screeners will keep traffic moving as quickly as possible.
- For Pre-K and Kindergarten students, parents will **NOT** come into the building to drop them off. There will be no sign-in sheet this year. Students will exit the vehicle and be directed to where they should go.
- Unless students are staying for our Latchkey Program (grades K4-5), we ask that all students depart from the building by **4:00 pm** to limit the number of people who are in the building. If this is not possible, please make special arrangements with the front office so that we know who is in the building after the school day has ended.
- All parents must remain in their vehicles as they wait for their child at the end of the day. Students will come to you.
- If physical distancing cannot be maintained during pick-up and drop-off, students will be asked to wear masks.

Chapel and Assemblies

- We believe that Chapel programming is an integral part of our mission and discipleship priority. Because of that, we will plan to hold regular Chapel services with appropriate distancing between students, teachers, and the chapel speaker.
- Other large group assemblies will be limited as much as possible, or special considerations made, to ensure that we are seeking to avoid large group gatherings.

Recess

NCS believes that purposeful play is an integral aspect of a child's healthy development. Because of this, and understanding much research that communicates that the risk of viral spread is significantly lower outdoors, we will seek to keep recess as normal as possible for students. However, to keep students healthy and active, NCS will ensure that:

- Recess will be outside whenever possible (weather permitting).
- Physical distancing requirements will not be enforced, however, teachers will be vigilant to enforce a no-hands policy – keeping students from putting their hands on one another.
- Students will be required to wash or sanitize their hands before and after each recess.
- Playground equipment and toys will be regularly sanitized.
- When possible, recess will be limited to no more than 2-3 classes at a time.

Lunch

- Student lunch tables will be spaced around the lunchroom, permitting no more than 8 students per table (2 students per 6' bench). Students will also be seated so that they will not be eating directly across the table from another person.
- Outside lunch seating will be made available for Middle and High School students (weather permitting).
- Lunch tables will be disinfected following every lunch rotation.
- Microwaves will likely not be available to students for heating food for lunch as we seek to minimize common touch surfaces.

Afternoon Latchkey Program

NCS will plan to continue Latchkey care for students in grades K4-5. In order to provide a safe environment for your child, NCS will ensure that:

- The number of toys that students may play with will be limited and thoroughly sanitized after play.
- All touched surfaces will be sanitized before and after latchkey.
- Students will be required to wash or sanitize their hands before and after snack and playing outside.

- Latchkey students will play outside as much as possible (weather permitting).
- Adults picking up students from latchkey must wear a face covering.
- Signing out latchkey students will be done either just inside the Cafetorium doors (facing the front circle) or on the playground. Adults may not enter the building during Latchkey except through the Cafetorium entrance.

Music and Choir

Music education is an essential distinctive of the NCS experience. We greatly desire to provide music and choral instruction and, eventually, performances.

- We are currently awaiting research scheduled to be released in July that should help us understand the risks and mitigation of viral spread from singing.
- The annual high school fine arts contest at Bob Jones University will be a virtual contest. More details about our participation will be released after school begins. There will be no trip to South Carolina in the fall.

Athletics

As a member of Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA), we will abide by the direction of the OHSAA. At this point, OHSAA has not finalized their plan for all inter-scholastic sports for the Fall season. If our Fall sports are permitted to happen, NCS will be ready to provide guidance on COVID related policies and procedures for Fall sports. More details to come.

Information for Consideration (click links below)

[Ohio Guidance for Schools](#)

[CDC Guidance for Schools](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics Considerations for Schools](#)

[University of Toronto Pediatric Hospital Recommendations for School Reopening](#)

[Performing Arts Aerosol Study](#)

[OHSAA Correspondence related to COVID-19](#)

[Risk to Teachers of COVID-19](#)

[CDC on "exposure"](#)