



NEC Healthy Together: COVID 19 Policies and Procedures July 2020

Student Handbook Version

Introduction and Basic Facts

This document was written following the most recent guidance from the MA Department of Education, which is based on state and federal data from the CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and a variety of other experts.

The COVID19 pandemic is not over. Some people get COVID19 and have no symptoms. Many have mild to moderate symptoms. Some individuals become severely ill and many have died. However, we know a lot more about this virus than we did six months ago, and can therefore safely reopen our schools as long as health and safety guidelines are vigilantly followed. It appears, from more recent data, that children are less likely to contract or transmit COVID19.

COVID19 is highly contagious, but it behaves differently than some other viruses. It is spread primarily from person to person, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). The virus can be spread by people who are infected but do not have any symptoms. This is one reason why it has been so difficult to control. The best ways to prevent spread are to maintain distance from other people, avoid large crowds, cover your mouth and nose, wash and sanitize your hands frequently, frequently clean high-touch surfaces, and stay home if you have symptoms or have been exposed.

NEC Response Team:

The Executive Director, All Principals and Program Directors, HR Director, Union President, and Nursing Supervisor have met regularly throughout this public health emergency and have worked together to draft all of the policies and procedures contained herein. Members of this team have been involved with a variety of statewide groups advising on these issues.

When Does My Child Need to Stay Home:

If your child is exhibiting any of the following symptoms they should stay home and consult with a health professional. Even if they have previously tested negative for COVID19, at this time they cannot come to school with any of these symptoms:

- Fever above 100

- Chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Muscle or body aches; Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

If your child has been exposed to COVID19:

Exposure is defined as close contact (less than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes). If your child has been exposed, you must keep them at home, and contact your medical provider for guidance. In most cases, you will be asked to isolate for 14 days, not come to school, and monitor for symptoms. You may be able to get tested. If a family member in your home is awaiting test results, you must keep your child home until you get a negative response.

If your child has traveled out of state, you should monitor closely for symptoms for at least 14 days.

If your child develops symptoms while at school:

If a student has symptoms during the school day, they will be moved to a medical waiting area and monitored while a parent is called for immediate pick-up. You are expected to come get your child immediately.

If a student or staff member who has been at school tests positive:

If we learn of a student or staff member who tests positive for COVID19 we will contact DPH for guidance on contact tracing and whether or not a room, a section of a school, or a whole school needs to be closed for deep cleaning.

Those deemed at risk will be informed that they have been exposed and will be asked to follow the procedures listed above under "If you have been exposed to COVID19."

Those affected by the closure of a room, section, or building will be informed that there has been a case and that although they are not considered to be in the "exposed" category, they should monitor for symptoms. The confidentiality of the positive individual will be maintained.

Policies about Social Distancing, Protective Equipment, and Hygiene

Masks and mask breaks: All students (with exceptions for medical or behavioral health diagnosis, or those under age 5) are expected to wear face coverings except for meal times, or when they are outdoors and able to maintain 6 feet of distance. Students may bring a mask from home or wear one provided by NEC.

Staff members will be required to wear face shields, gowns, or gloves if they are working with students who cannot wear masks or require physical care such as feeding, toileting, or hands-on support.

Hand washing and sanitizing: Students and staff must wash hands with soap and water frequently and/or use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not readily available. Students and staff should, at a minimum, wash hands upon arrival, before and after meals, after bathroom use, after coughing or sneezing, and before dismissal. Hand washing should be encouraged after any use of shared or “high touch” areas. Staff will help students with hand washing as needed. We will be using alcohol based hand sanitizers approved by our nurses and school physician. If you have any concerns please contact your Principal or School Nurse.

Social distancing: Six feet of separation between people should be maintained whenever feasible. In situations where a staff member needs to be closer to a student, they should try to avoid face-to-face contact. Whenever possible, students should have individual desks or work areas and should not be seated face-to-face.

Groupings and use of spaces: Groups will be self-contained as much as possible and “mixing” should be minimized. Group size will not exceed 12 individuals per room. Rooms must be large enough to accommodate 6 feet of distance between people. Use of sensory rooms or other shared areas will need to be well coordinated to minimize having too many people using the same spaces. Staff who must travel between classrooms should use additional precautions around hand-sanitizing and vigilant use of masks. Students who need to move between rooms, must not be able to mingle in the hallways. Hallway protocols will need to be developed to minimize crowding.

Sharing materials: Students should have their own materials and supplies whenever possible. Sharing of books/papers is low risk. Hard surfaces that are shared (tables, toys, computers) should be wiped down frequently.

Lunch and Snacks: Food should be eaten in classrooms or outdoors. There should be no sharing of utensils or family style meals. Breakfast and Lunch will be provided as usual.

Field trips, large group gym activities, and assemblies are prohibited at this time.

Special Protocols for Higher Risk Groups

Toileting: Staff who are toileting students will be provided with face shields, disposable gloves, and disposable gowns. Any soiled clothing should be removed and placed in a sealed bag or container. Toileting or diapering areas must be disinfected after each use and must be dry before being used by a student.

Feeding: Staff who are feeding students will be provided with face shields, disposable gloves, and disposable gowns.

Medical procedures: Nursing staff will be in communication with the parents of any students who require specialized medical procedures to determine if any additional precautions need to be in place.

Physical Intervention: When working with students who may need physical intervention, staff will be provided with disposable gloves, disposable gowns, or face shields to use if necessary.

NOTE: IF students are unable to comply with developmentally appropriate expectations, the team will need to consider whether the student is able to attend in-person instruction during this public health emergency.

Cleaning Protocols

Overview:

- NEC will perform all cleaning tasks in keeping with state and CDC guidelines.
- Custodial and facilities staff will be trained on proper cleaning and disinfecting procedures, safe handling of chemicals, and the proper use of PPE.
- All cleaner/disinfectants and disinfectants that NEC uses are EPA approved and are listed on [EPA List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- Non-disinfectant cleaners or degreasers that are not approved by the EPA will be used prior to disinfecting if a surface is heavily soiled, or requires pre-cleaning due to the presence of gross soils.
- A complete list of cleaning and disinfecting products used by NEC facilities staff is available to view [HERE](#)

Daily routine:

- All trash receptacles will be emptied and trash removed from the buildings. Trash receptacles will be cleaned and disinfected if visibly soiled.
- All bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected as outlined in the bathroom section below
- High touch surfaces will be cleaned/disinfected to the greatest extent possible. High touch surfaces include: handrails, doorknobs, push plates, elevator buttons, light switches, countertops, handles, phones, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc. (*Help from staff in disinfecting other high touch surfaces such as desks, tables, keyboards, phones and copiers will be greatly appreciated. Disinfecting spray and/or wipes will be provided)
- Floors will be swept and spot mopped if necessary
- Spot cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces or rooms on request due to other high risk situations.

Bathrooms:

- High touch bathroom surfaces such as toilet seats and handles, sinks, faucets, switches and handles will be cleaned and disinfected daily.
- Floors will be swept, and wet mopped/disinfected daily.

- Bathroom surfaces and floors will be cleaned and disinfected more frequently if time allows and upon request.

Deep cleaning:

Some aspects of deep cleaning will be performed weekly as time allows. Full deep cleaning will be performed over vacations, and when other high risk situations arise.

Deep cleaning includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Using an electrostatic fogger to disinfect the entire building or areas that cannot be cleaned and disinfected by hand.
 - Disinfectant in fogger for routine use will be sprayed at the lowest level possible approved for killing the COVID-19 virus.
- Floor scrubbing, dusting, and vacuuming.
- Vacuuming and dusting of air vents and returns.
 - Vacuums are equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters.
- Cleaning and disinfecting walls, windows and other low touch surfaces.
- Cleaning and sanitizing of refrigerators.

Other high risk situations:

Spot cleaning and disinfecting following state and CDC guidelines will be available on request as common high risk situations arise.

- The use of electrostatic foggers or sprayers may be employed to help in these situations if fast turnaround time is needed.
 - Disinfectants in fogger for special situations will be sprayed at the lowest level possible to treat the given situation.

When there are cases of COVID-19 or other infectious illness the following procedures will be followed:

- Area(s) used by the person who is sick will be closed off
- Outside windows, if applicable, will be opened to increase air circulation in the area.
- Area(s) will be closed off for 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting if feasible, or as long as possible.
- Non affected areas will be cleaned/disinfected prior to cleaning/disinfecting the affected area.
 - The use of electrostatic foggers will be used to aid in whole building disinfecting. The disinfectant used will be sprayed at the highest level approved for killing the COVID-19 virus.
- All areas used by the person who is sick will then be cleaned and disinfected, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment, etc.
- The area will be vacuumed if needed.

- Once the area has been appropriately disinfected, it will be opened for use.
 - Workers without close contact with the person who is sick can return to work immediately after disinfection.
 - Routine cleaning and disinfection will continue.

HVAC and air filtration system:

HVAC systems in each building will be optimized to bring in as much fresh air as possible based on the individual systems and occupants.

HEPA air purifiers, [RabbitAir MinusA2 Ultra Quiet Air Purifiers - SPA-780](#), will be installed in the first floor classrooms of KOG. These classrooms house our most vulnerable students who may be unable to wear masks and who require close physical contact. The HEPA air purifiers have 5 stage filtration including a HEPA filter and germ defense filter and are capable of filtering all the air in each classroom 2x + an hour. (Addition of air purifiers to these rooms will require the removal of filters currently over HVAC vents to facilitate optimal ventilation and system performance. Air diverters will be provided if air flow direction is a concern)

Visitors, Field Trips, Transportation and Community Outings

NEC Vehicles:

- All NEC vehicles will be stocked with gloves, facemasks, and cleaning supplies.
- Vehicles will be cleaned before and after each use in keeping with CDC guidelines.
- Drivers must wear masks at all times.
- Students must be seated one per seat and must wear masks unless there is a clear medical exemption.
- Windows should be open if possible.

Deliveries: Staff should not be arranging for personal delivery of lunch or other items. Only essential work deliveries are allowed. Delivery people will need to wear masks and leave items in reception area.

Visitors: No visitors are allowed beyond reception areas. Any visitors, including parents who are waiting for a student, must be wearing masks while in the building.

Field Trips v. Pre-Vocational: No recreational field trips are allowed. Small outings for IEP related purposes may be allowed on a case by case basis if all protocols can be followed.

Home Visiting and Home Services

No staff member can go into homes until parent and staff member have reviewed attached guidelines and signed to indicate agreement with the following:

- Staff member and adults in the home will wear masks when in the same room.
- Proximity of other family members will be limited.

- Parent/Guardian must immediately report if anyone in the home has been exposed to someone with COVID19 and/or are exhibiting any symptoms.
- All participants should wash/sanitize hands before and after each visit.
- Family must provide a clean area and assurance that appropriate sanitizing has occurred.
- Meetings should take place outdoors if possible or in well ventilated areas.
- Food should not be shared.