



NORTHSHORE
EDUCATION
CONSORTIUM

**NEC Healthy Together:
COVID 19 Policies and Procedures
Student and Parent Handbook
Addendum
August 31, 2020**

Introduction and Basic Facts

The opening of Schools while still in the midst of a global pandemic requires us to operate in some new and different ways. We will need the cooperation of parents/guardians and students to keep everyone safe and healthy!

The guidelines in this document were 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 medical 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.

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.

It is not any one strategy, but a COMBINATION of many strategies that substantially reduces risk.

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.

SAFETY STRATEGIES AND EXPECTATIONS

STRATEGY 1: Staying Home When You're Sick, Monitoring for Symptoms, and Quarantining When Exposed

When to Stay Home:

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

- Fever above 100
- Chills
- Cough (not due to other known cause)
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Muscle or body aches; Headache (in combination with other symptoms)
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose (not due to other known cause and in combination with other symptoms)
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea (not due to known cause)
- Severe fatigue (in combination with other symptoms)

If a student has been exposed to COVID19:

Exposure is defined as close contact (less than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) or living in the same household. If your child has been exposed, they should stay home, and you should contact your medical provider for guidance. Your child may not return to school until they test negative or remain in self-quarantine for 14 days. If a family member in the same household is awaiting test results, your child must remain in quarantine until you get a negative response.

If you have traveled out of state, you must follow MA state guidelines around testing or self-quarantine before returning to school.

If a student develops symptoms while at school:

If a student has symptoms, they will be moved to the medical waiting area and monitored while a parent or guardian is called for immediate pick-up. The school nurse will advise you about next steps.

A person with symptoms can return to school when they are fever-free and have received a negative COVID test, OR a doctor's note stating that their symptoms are not related to COVID. If you choose not to have your child tested, and they have symptoms and no doctor's note, they will need to stay home for 14 days.

Please understand that we will need to "err on the side of caution" whenever a student shows symptoms. We will expect your cooperation.

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

If someone in your child's school tests positive you will be notified. Your child will not need to get tested or quarantine UNLESS they are in the same class or have been a close contact. If they have been a close contact, we will call you with further guidance. They will need to quarantine for 14 days.

We will provide remote schoolwork for students who must quarantine but are not ill.

The individual who has tested positive, may return to school after 14 days, assuming that they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours and their symptoms have improved.

STRATEGY 2: Social Distancing and Reducing Contact

We will be putting many procedures in place to maintain social distancing of six feet between students at all times, and between students and staff when possible. This means that classrooms will look much emptier and we will be keeping students in self-contained groups as much as possible. This may have an impact on classroom and therapy assignments.

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

Meals and snacks will be eaten in classrooms or outdoors. There will be no sharing of utensils or family style meals. Students will be at least 6 feet apart from one another while eating or drinking.

Field trips, large group gym activities, and assemblies are prohibited at this time. There may be rare exceptions for older students with pre-vocational internships or job placements. These will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Staff who work with students who need assistance with feeding or toileting, and those who are unable to wear masks or maintain physical distance have received additional training and PPE.

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

STRATEGY 3: Hand Hygiene

Students will be expected to wash their hands with soap and water frequently and/or use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not readily available. Students will, 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.

If you have any concern about the use of alcohol based hand-sanitizer please contact your principal or school nurse.

STRATEGY 4: Face Covering and PPE

Face Coverings

All students (with exceptions for medical or behavioral health diagnosis, or those under age 5) and staff are expected to wear face coverings except for meal times, and brief mask breaks.

Meals and mask breaks should take place outdoors whenever possible. If indoors, there must be at least 6 feet of distance between unmasked individuals.

Employees and students are encouraged to bring their own face coverings, but NEC will have an ample supply for those who may need them. Paper surgical masks or 3-ply cloth masks are strongly preferred. For students who are having difficulty with mask wearing, bandanas, scarves, gaiters, or face shields may be acceptable alternatives and are better than no protection. We will also be experimenting with clear masks for teachers and speech pathologists, so that students can see their mouths.

Students and staff without a medical exemption are expected to comply with this policy. Violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action in the same manner as any other violation of school policy.

Other PPE for higher risk situations: NEC will provide face shields, goggles, gowns, and gloves for staff who are working with higher risk students including those who can't wear masks, those who require feeding, toileting, or hands-on support, those who spit or may require physical restraint.

Staff who are working with students who are unable to wear a mask, and those who are feeding or toileting students are required to wear goggles or face shields in addition to a mask. NEC has purchased several options, and school nurses will work with individuals to determine the most comfortable/safe/appropriate option.

STRATEGY 5: Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Air Quality

Cleaning Protocols

Facilities staff will have primary responsibility for cleaning and disinfecting, and will follow all procedures listed below.

During the pandemic, all staff will be expected to assist with the wiping of surfaces and disinfecting areas used throughout the day.

All staff will be expected to follow building-specific procedures for cleaning shared supplies and spaces.

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. 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 upon request.

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 expected. 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 frequently throughout the day.
- Floors will be swept, and wet mopped/disinfected daily.

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.

Ventilation and Air Quality

- HVAC systems in each building have been optimized to bring in as much fresh air as possible based on the individual systems and occupants (15%).
- HVAC systems have all been serviced within the past six months and all filters have been replaced.

- HEPA air purifiers, [RabbitAir MinusA2 Ultra Quiet Air Purifiers - SPA-780](#), have been 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.

NEC Vehicles:

- All NEC vehicles will be stocked with gloves, facemasks, and cleaning supplies according to guidelines.
- 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.

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.

Although we usually encourage parents to visit, we will not be able to do at this time.

Home Visiting and Home Services

Prior to any home services, parent and staff member must review the guidelines and sign 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.

IEP Meetings and Parent Conferences:

Most meetings will be done remotely at this time.

Remote Learning

By participating in/ allowing your child to participate in online/remote learning or clinical activities you are agreeing to abide by these expectations. Furthermore, you are

acknowledging that you understand that your child's image and voice may be transmitted over the internet into the homes of other students and staff, and that NEC cannot guarantee complete confidentiality of your child's voice or image while participating in online learning.

NEC strictly prohibits screenshots, pictures, audio/video recording and distribution of any virtual educational experience in order to protect student privacy, proactively prevent potential cyberbullying, prevent the distribution of copyrighted materials and comply with Massachusetts law. Please note that in Massachusetts, it is illegal to record another person through any medium without his or her knowledge.

Students, and where appropriate parents/guardians, agree to engage in virtual educational experiences in a quiet, private area to the extent practicable given the circumstances, in order to minimize background noise and distractions and to protect the integrity of student engagement as well as student confidentiality.

Parents/guardians and other household members who normally are not privy to day-to-day classroom and group service discussions agree to respect and keep confidential any personal or private information (e.g. disability status) inadvertently discovered about other students due to proximity of virtual education.

As a reminder, NEC's Acceptable Use Policy and rules regarding Bullying/Cyberbullying apply to virtual learning, including school issued devices and networks.

Also, if you are the parent or guardian of a teen or young adult student, please be aware that clinical staff may request additional information or an emergency contact number to better manage risk while using technology to support your children.

Discipline

If students are unable to comply with developmentally appropriate expectations, we will work with the team to develop a plan and make accommodations where we can. In rare instances, if the student's behavior jeopardizes the health and safety of others, we may need to convene the team and consider whether the student is able to attend in-person instruction during this public health emergency.