



NEC Healthy Together: COVID 19 Policies and Procedures September 2021

Student Handbook Version

Introduction and Basic Facts

This document was written following the most recent guidance from the MA Department of Education and Department of Public Health, 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. Massachusetts has a high vaccination rate, and evidence continues to reinforce that the vaccines are safe and highly effective, especially against severe disease. **If your child is over age 12, we urge you to get them vaccinated!**

We have learned that the virus can be spread by people who are infected but do not have any symptoms. Although rare, people who are vaccinated can still get or spread the virus. This is why masks continue to be an important mitigation strategy and we are going to continue to be very careful about asking people to stay home if they have any symptoms.

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 been vaccinated or have previously tested negative for COVID19, at this time they cannot come to school with any of these symptoms:

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

If your child has been exposed to COVID-19:

Close contacts are defined as individuals who have been within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive person, while indoors, for at least 15 minutes during a 24-hour period. At-risk exposure time begins 48 hours prior to symptom onset.

Vaccinated individuals who are close contacts do not need to test or quarantine as long as they are fully asymptomatic.

If your child is in a classroom with someone who tests positive, or were on a bus with open windows, as long as both individuals were wearing masks, your child does not need to test or quarantine unless they were very close to the individual who tested positive for more than 15 minutes.

If your child is a close contact, and is not exempt from testing and quarantine requirements there are three options:

- 1) Participate in our new Test and Stay program (see separate document)
- 2) Quarantine for 7 days, returning on day 8 provided they are asymptomatic and have obtained a negative COVID test.
- 3) Quarantine for 10 days, returning on day 11, provided they are asymptomatic.

If your child develops symptoms while at school:

If a student has symptoms during the school day, you will be expected to come get your child immediately and follow the instructions provided by the school nurse.

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 COVID-19 we will inform any close contacts and advise you of next steps based on the most recent guidance.

Masks:

All students, staff, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, are expected to wear face coverings except for meal times, or when they are outdoors. (The only exceptions are for those with medical or behavioral health exemptions)

Staff members who are working with students who cannot wear masks or require physical care such as feeding, toileting, or hands-on support will wear additional PPE when necessary.

Other Safety Measures:

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. 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.

Field Trips and Vocational Activities will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Special Protocols for Higher Risk Groups

Special protocols for medically fragile students and those who require assistance with feeding, toileting, or medical procedures will remain in place.

Cleaning Protocols

NEC will continue to perform all cleaning tasks in keeping with state DPH and CDC guidelines.

Home Visiting and Home Services

Existing protocols will remain in place.

SUMMARY OF EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS/STUDENTS:

- Before I send my child to school each day, I will make sure that they have no symptoms of COVID19 and have not been exposed to anyone with COVID19.
- If my child has any symptoms, and has not been vaccinated, I will keep them home.
- If my child has been in close contact with anyone who has COVID19, and has not been vaccinated, I will inform the school nurse or school principal, and will keep my child home as instructed.
- If my child tests positive for COVID19, I will inform the school nurse and school principal and keep them home as described above.
- If my child develops symptoms while at school, I will pick them up immediately and/or have made arrangements for a trusted adult to pick them up.
- I understand that my child will be expected to wear a face covering indoors, even if they have been vaccinated, unless there is a medical exemption that has been discussed with the school nurse.