



NEC Healthy Together: COVID 19 Policies and Procedures for Employees

August 30, 2021

Review of Basic Facts:

The guidelines in this document were written following the most recent combined 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 medical experts.

The COVID-19 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. **We urge you to get vaccinated. It is our most powerful tool for combatting this virus.**

COVID-19 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 strict about asking people to stay home if they have any symptoms.

Although we must remain vigilant about protecting the health of our community members, we must also model that it is time to move forward with effective, in-person, clinical and instructional practices...cautiously, but without fear.

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

SAFETY STRATEGIES AND EXPECTATIONS

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

When to Stay Home:

If you are unvaccinated and are exhibiting any of the following symptoms you should stay home and consult with a health professional. If you are vaccinated, you should still stay home if you have any of the symptoms in bold.

- **Fever above 100, chills, or shaking**
- **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing**

- **Muscle or body aches**
- **New loss of taste or smell**
- Cough (not due to other known cause)
- Headache (in combination with other symptoms)
- Sore throat (in combination with other symptoms)
- 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 or in combination with other symptoms)
- Severe fatigue (in combination with other symptoms)

If you have been exposed to COVID19:

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 you are in a classroom with someone who tests positive, or were on a bus with open windows, as long as both you and the person who tested positive were wearing masks, you do not need to test or quarantine unless you were very close to that individual for more than 15 minutes.

If you are a close contact, and are 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 you are asymptomatic and have obtained a negative COVID test.
- 3) Quarantine for 10 days, returning on day 11, provided you are asymptomatic.

If you or a student develop symptoms while at school:

Report this immediately to your school nurse and/or school principal who will advise on next steps.

If a staff member has symptoms, they will be asked to leave immediately and report anyone with whom they have been in contact and all rooms that they have been in.

If a student has symptoms, they will be moved to the medical waiting area and monitored while a parent is called for immediate pick-up. Nursing staff will consult with Nursing Supervisor and/or Principal about the nature of the symptoms and whether any further immediate action is necessary.

In some cases, with mild symptoms, you may be able to get a rapid test on-site with immediate results, enabling you to stay at work. More information will be available soon.

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

They must report to their school administrator.

All employees who work in that building will be notified. Classmates, teachers, and any other “close contacts” as defined above will be notified and advised accordingly. The confidentiality of the positive individual will be maintained.

STRATEGY 2: Face Covering and Other PPE

Face Coverings

All students (with exceptions for medical or behavioral health diagnosis, or those under age 5), staff, and visitors (including parents) 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 3 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.

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.

STRATEGY 3: Distancing

Meals should be eaten in classrooms, outdoors, or in spaces large enough to allow for distancing of at least three feet. There should be no sharing of utensils or family style meals.

Students should be at least 3 feet apart from one another while eating or drinking. “Snacking” during classes should be minimized or eliminated to reduce time that individuals are unmasked.

Employees who are unvaccinated must take meals and mask breaks in isolation or outdoors.

Maximizing distance and air flow are recommended whenever possible.

Field trips, large group gym activities, large staff meetings and assemblies should be evaluated on a case by case basis in consultation with nursing staff.

Student Meetings (i.e. IEPs) may be held remotely if all parties agree. If a parent requests an in person meeting, NEC should accommodate that request with the expectation that all participants will wear masks.

While using NEC vehicles, masks must be worn by staff and students. Windows should be open whenever possible. If transporting students who are unable to wear masks, maximum distance should be maintained.

Special protocols for toileting, feeding, and medical procedures will remain in place.

STRATEGY 4: Hand Hygiene

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.

STRATEGY 5: Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Ventilation

Cleaning Protocols

- NEC will continue to 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.
- If shared materials are used in classrooms, they should be cleaned/disinfected daily in accordance with CDC guidance.
- 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.

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.

OTHER

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 members 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.