

NRHEG Safe Return to School Plan 2021-2022

Introduction

NRHEG Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our employees, students, parents, and visitors. To ensure we have a safe and healthy workplace, NRHEG Public Schools has developed the following plan for Safe Return to Learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. All employees are responsible for implementing this plan. The goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces and communities, and that requires full cooperation among all employees. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of all persons in our workplaces.

The Safe Return to Learning Plan is administered by NRHEG administration who maintains the overall authority and responsibility for the plan. However, all employees are equally responsible for supporting, implementing, complying with, and providing recommendations to further improve all aspects of this plan for Safe Return to Learning. NRHEG employees have the administration's full support in enforcing the provisions of this plan.

Our workers are our most important assets. NRHEG Public Schools is serious about safety and health and protecting its workers. Worker involvement is essential in developing and implementing a successful plan for Safe Return to Learning. Staff concerns and suggestions have been implemented into this plan when they follow the overarching guidelines set forth by MDE/MDH/CDC.

NRHEG Public School's plan for Safe Return to Learning follows the industry guidance developed by the state of Minnesota, which is based upon Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines for COVID-19, Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MNOSHA) statutes, rules and standards, and Minnesota's relevant and current executive orders. It addresses:

- ensuring sick employees and students stay home and prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- social distancing – employees, and students must be at least three feet apart whenever possible
- employees and students hygiene and source controls;
- workplace building and ventilation protocol;
- workplace cleaning and disinfection protocol;
- drop-off, pick-up, and delivery practices and protocol; and
- communications and training practices and protocol.

NRHEG Public Schools has reviewed and incorporated the industry guidance applicable to our business provided by the state of Minnesota for the development of this plan, including the following industry guidance for public schools from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Other conditions and circumstances included in the industry guidance and addressed in the plan that are specific to our schools include:

- additional protections and protocols for guests, visitors, and vendors;
- additional protections and protocols for personal protective equipment;
- additional protections and protocol for access and assignment;
- additional protections and protocol for sanitation and hygiene;
- additional protections and protocols for handwashing;
- additional protections and protocol for distancing and barriers;
- additional protections and protocols for managing occupancy;
- additional protocols to limit face-to-face interaction;
- additional protections for receiving or exchanging payment; and
- additional protections and protocols for certain types of services within the school district.

Social Distancing

Social distancing of at least three feet whenever possible

- Will be enforced for all visitors, guests, and vendors at all times.
- Will be enforced for staff and students dependent on the Learning Model including Hybrid and Distance Learning.
- Signage, markings, and instructions to address social distancing.

Signage will be placed throughout the school buildings to remind employees, students, guests, and visitors of social distancing requirements. There will also be signage placed on the floors to encourage social distancing. Locations of floor signage will include locations where a line is likely to form in places such as hallways, cafeteria/kitchen, workroom, check-in "scanning" stations, offices, classrooms, restrooms, buses, outside of buildings at entrances, drinking fountains, and gymnasiums/lobbies. Staff will remind each other and students if social distancing is not followed.

Sharing and cleaning of equipment

- Sharing of equipment will be discouraged and eliminated whenever possible. Equipment will be cleaned with EPA-approved cleaner between users.
- Questions and Concerns may be forwarded to the appropriate staff person listed below:
 - School Nurse
 - School Principal
 - District Superintendent

Masks / Face Coverings

- NRHEG Public Schools recommends that all students, staff, and visitors continue to wear a face-covering while present in any of our school buildings.
- All employees and students are required to wear a face-covering while in a school bus or school vehicle.
- Exempt individuals: The following individuals are exempt from face-covering requirements of Executive Order 20-81:
 - Individuals with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable for the individual to maintain a face covering. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals who have a medical condition that compromises their ability to breathe, and individuals who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance. These individuals should consider using alternatives to face coverings, including clear face shields, and staying at home as much as possible.
 - Children who are five years old and under. Those who are under two years of age should never wear a face-covering due to the risk of suffocation. Those who are at least two years old are encouraged to wear a face-covering if they can do so in compliance with [How to Safely Wear and Take Off a Cloth Face Covering](#) (i.e., without frequently touching or removing the covering).
 - Individuals at their workplace when wearing a face covering would create a job hazard for the individual or others, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety and health standards and guidelines.

Contract Tracing, Isolation, & Quarantine

Contact tracing will be conducted anytime we are aware of a positive case or exposure in our school buildings. Families will be notified if their child has been exposed to a positive COVID-19 case. In the event of an exposure, families will receive instruction from the district nurse on quarantining. For information, the CDC recommends a 14-day quarantine period, with two other options: (1) a 7-day quarantine period (test on day 5 or after) or (2) a 10-day quarantine period without a test. Any person who lives in the same household as the person that tested positive or a person who has tested positive is required to quarantine and will receive specific instructions from the district nurse. Quarantining will not apply to those that have been vaccinated and remain symptom-free.

- **Instruction During Quarantine:** If a student is required to quarantine due to a personal or family positive case of COVID-19, classroom materials will be provided through Schoology (6-12) or SeeSaw, or other educational programs as provided (K-5). Students should log into the appropriate platform to access classroom materials. Specific questions about learning should be directed to the classroom teacher.
- **Diagnostic and Screening Testing:** If you're sick or your child is sick, we ask that you/they do not attend school or school activities. All people entering NRHEG facilities are expected to perform a self-health screening prior to entering the building (screening for elementary children must be completed by an adult).
- **Continuity of Services:** The school district will continue to provide services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs which will include student health and food services.
- **Distance Learning Options:** This school year the district is not providing a local Distance Learning option. However, if families are considering a change in learning format, they should contact their building administrator to discuss options.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) & Essential Cleaning Supplies

NRHEG schools have the necessary PPE and necessary cleaning supplies available. These supplies include but are not limited to: face shields, masks, gloves, cloth face coverings, cleaner, and hand sanitizer.

Source Controls

NRHEG Public Schools is following MDE/MDH guidance along with any executive orders at the state or federal level. Appropriate and necessary communications are being provided to employees, students, parents, visitors, and guests.

Workplace Building & Ventilation Protocol

Operation of the building in which the workplace is located, includes necessary sanitation, assessment, and maintenance of building systems, including water, plumbing, electrical, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. As of the 2020-2021 school year, both school buildings have updated HVAC systems. The maximum amount of fresh air is being brought into the workplace, air recirculation is being limited, and ventilation systems are being properly used and maintained. Steps are also being taken to minimize airflow blowing across people.

Workplace Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

Regular practices of cleaning and disinfecting have been implemented, including a schedule for routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, tools and machinery, vehicles, and areas in the work environment, including restrooms, break rooms, lunchrooms, meeting rooms, and other occupied spaces. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting are being conducted of high-touch areas, including phones, keyboards, touch screens, controls, door handles, railings, copy machines, carts, delivery equipment, etc.

Appropriate and effective cleaning and disinfecting supplies have been purchased and are available for use in accordance with product labels, safety data sheets, and manufacturer specifications, and are being used with required personal protective equipment for the product.

Persons Conducting Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Custodians
- Staff including but not limited to administration, teachers, paraprofessionals, clerical, and food service personnel

Cleaning/Disinfecting Schedule

- Custodians will be primary cleaners/trainers
- Cleaning schedules

Elementary School

- All areas including furniture, equipment, high touch surfaces, etc. used by staff and students will be cleaned prior to the start of each school day. (This will likely occur the prior day after staff and students have left the building.)
- Throughout the school day, staff will monitor the cleaning/disinfection needs of occupied spaces including classrooms, hallways, restrooms, cafeteria, offices, etc.
- Classrooms -- Desks, equipment, materials, high touch points disinfected throughout the day. Additional disinfecting, vacuuming, mopping as needed, etc. to be completed after the school day.
- Hallways -- High touch points during the day. After the school day, floors scrubbed, etc.

Secondary School

- All areas including furniture, equipment, high touch surfaces, etc. used by staff and students will be cleaned prior to the start of each school day. (This will likely occur the prior day after staff and students have left the building.)

- Throughout the school day, staff will monitor the cleaning/disinfection needs of occupied spaces including classrooms, hallways, restrooms, cafeteria, offices, etc.
- Classrooms -- Desks, equipment, materials, high touch points disinfected throughout the day. Additional disinfecting, vacuuming, mopping as needed, etc. to be completed after the school day.
- Hallways -- High touch points during the day. After the school day, floors scrubbed, etc

Communication, Training Practices & Protocol

This COVID-19 plan for a Safe Return to School was communicated via email to all employees on August 17, 2021, and necessary training was provided. Additional communication and training will be ongoing by planned in-services throughout the school year either virtually and/or in-person.

Instructions will be communicated to all employees, substitutes, independent contractors, students, guests, visitors, vendors, and outside technicians about protections and protocols, including 1) social distancing protocols and practices; 2) drop-off, pick-up, delivery; 3) practices for hygiene and respiratory etiquette; 4) recommendations or requirements regarding the use of masks, face-coverings and/or face-shields by employees, students, guests, visitors, and vendors. All employees, students, guests, visitors, and vendors will also be restricted from entering the school buildings, bus garages, and school vehicles if they are experiencing symptoms or have contracted COVID-19. Notification of the safety protocol will be shared through signage and other written communication.

Managers and supervisors are expected to monitor how effective the program has been implemented. The administration will work closely with employees and other persons to assess the effectiveness of the program. Metrics used may include but are not limited to: percentage of employees and students with symptoms and the number of employee and student absences related to COVID-19 symptoms. All employees are to take an active role and collaborate in carrying out the various aspects of this plan and update the protections, protocols, work practices, and training as necessary. This COVID-19 plan for a Safe Return to School has been approved by the NRHEG School Board and the plan was posted throughout the school buildings and bus garages and made readily available to employees on August 17, 2021. It will be updated as necessary by the administration.

Changes to this document are expected and will be addressed as needed. The NRHEG Superintendent and School Board Chair will act in accordance with mandates and directives from state and federal agencies. The COVID Planning Team will be involved in discussions and decisions of change to the fullest extent possible.