



NEWPORT NEWS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

RETURN TO LEARN

PLAN FOR A SAFE RETURN, 2020-2021

Phase II

Updated February 8, 2021

Message from the Superintendent



Dear Colleagues and Families,

On January 14, 2021, Governor Ralph Northam and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. James Lane released updated [interim guidance](#) for the reopening of K-12 schools. This replaced the guidance previously provided in our initial Return to Learn Plan for Phase II.

As the Governor shared during his briefing, the emphasis has changed. **“Instead of (saying) ‘schools should be closed’ we’re going to approach it from the starting point of ‘schools need to be open’ and here are the ways to do that safely.”** Citing [recent research](#), Governor Northam referenced the low incidence of transmission in schools that are currently teaching students in person.

Since the beginning of the school year, our focus on safety has primarily been driven by health metrics and statistics related to COVID-19 community transmission and positivity rates. While we have seen these metrics increase over time, the health, safety and education communities have taken notice of school divisions and private schools that have provided in-person instruction since September 2020. Because of this, there is now credible evidence that supports the effectiveness of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) recommended safety mitigation strategies in lowering the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in school settings.

We now know that schools can be safer places when in-person instruction is offered. Consequently, one major change in the state’s new interim guidance is the inclusion and emphasis of a school or school division’s capacity to successfully implement safety mitigation strategies and the assessed level of school impact of those measures in ensuring the safety of staff and students.

The state’s new guidance does not advise that we ignore community health metrics. These metrics are still extremely important when we consider potential factors that may impact school operations. However, our local or regional COVID data can no longer be the sole determining factor in our decision-making process for in-person instruction.

Given this new guidance, our readiness to implement and follow the five key CDC mitigation strategies, and our progress in equipping our schools with the materials and supplies necessary for safe in-person learning, we are better positioned to take the next step to safely return our students to in-person learning.

This update is prepared to inform NNPS families and staff of our planning for the implementation of the hybrid schedule of the Return to Learn Plan.

I thank our School Board and wonderful school division team for the planning, and now, implementation of this plan. This school year has certainly presented its challenges, yet we continue to work together as partners to ensure that our students have the support and resources they need to excel.

Yours in Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Parker, III". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light-colored background.

George Parker, III, Ph.D.
Superintendent



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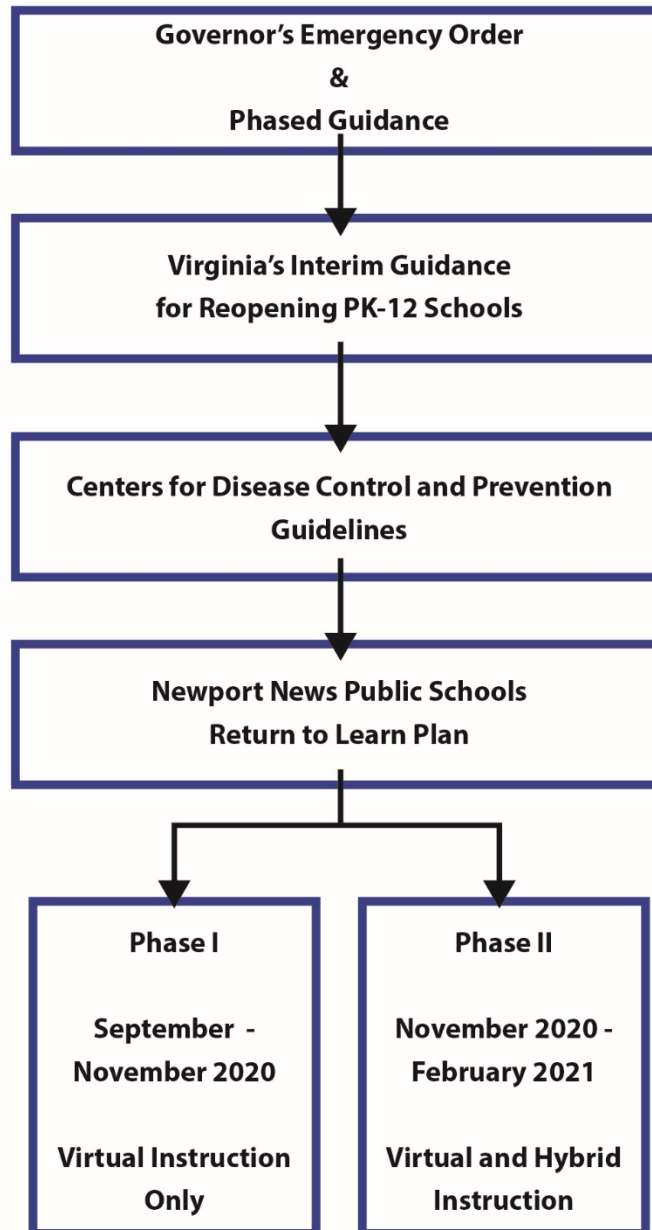
PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND FORECASTING

Safety Guidance and Philosophy

Newport News Public Schools Safety Guidelines will remain in alignment with the following:

1. [Virginia's Interim Guidance for Reopening PK-12 Schools](#)
2. Governor's Executive Orders
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidelines
4. Guidance from the Virginia Department of Health and Peninsula Health District

Safety Decision-Making Flowchart



Virginia's Interim Guidance for Reopening PK-12 Schools

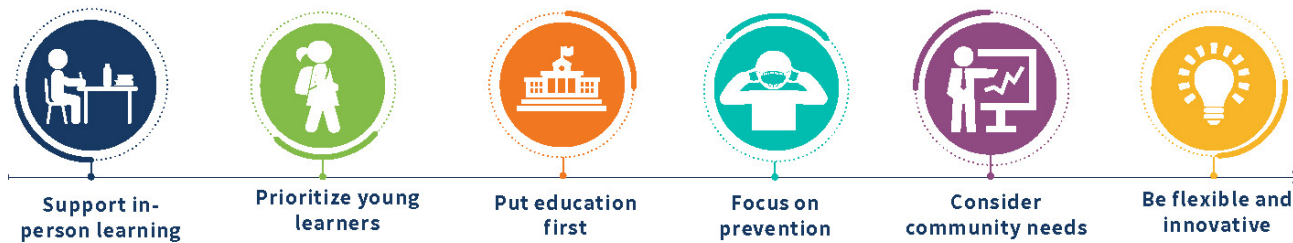
Introduction and Guiding Principles

VDH recommends that schools start by using the CDC Indicators for Dynamic School Decision-Making framework to assess the risk of introduction and transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in schools, to help inform decisions about school operations, and to implement necessary mitigation strategies. The CDC framework is best used together with the Interim Guidance for K-12 School Reopening. This document now incorporates and replaces the [Phase Guidance for Virginia Schools](#), previously issued by the Commonwealth to further inform local approaches.

A school division's capacity to successfully implement mitigation strategies and/or level of school impact AND local community

disease data should be carefully factored into school operations plans. Schools that have been open to in-person instruction should also consider the level of impact to a school itself. The three CDC core indicators serve as a starting point for decision making, but should not solely dictate the decisions that school divisions make to best serve their communities. [CDC guidance](#) states that “Each indicator or combination of indicators should neither be used in isolation nor should they be viewed as hard cut-offs by state and local officials and school district decision-makers. Rather, they serve as broad guideposts of inherent risk to inform decision-making.”

Guiding Principles

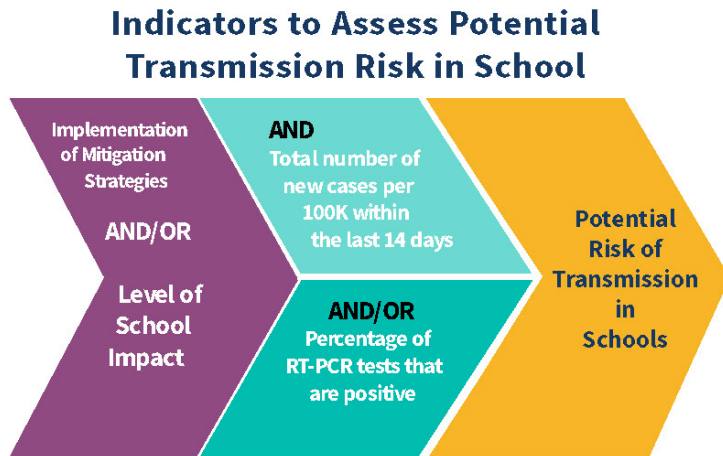


- **Support in-person learning** considering both students and staff. Account for the learning needs and the health needs of all students.
- **Prioritize younger learners, students with disabilities, and English Learners.**
- **Put education first.** Prioritize educational opportunities over extracurricular activities or other events in the school and surrounding community. Establish reasonably safe in-person educational environments and then think through including extracurriculars and athletics.
- **Focus on prevention.** Establish a school culture of adherence to mitigation strategies both in and out of school. Encourage people

- to physically distance, wash hands, and wear masks. Coordinate closely with your local health department. Educate students/staff to monitor health daily and stay at home if they have symptoms, and follow public health recommendations.
- **Consider community needs.** Consider disease data and understand the socioeconomic factors, literacy barriers, and other educational needs in your community when making plans.
- **Be flexible and innovative.** Scientific knowledge evolves rapidly, and local context is incredibly important. Decisions about instructional modality ideally should be made for shorter periods of time (e.g. 2-4 weeks) in response to changing disease dynamics rather than for longer periods or months ahead of time.

CDC Indicators for Dynamic School Decision-Making

The CDC recommends the use of three core indicators (mitigation assessment, 14 day case incidence and/or RT-PCR test positivity) to assess the risk of transmission in schools and to inform decisions about school programming. For schools that have offered in-person instruction in some manner, VDH also recommends that schools consider the level of impact to a given school when assessing mitigation capacity, which is described below.



Core Indicators

Schools should assess their ability to implement and adhere to the following [five key mitigation strategies](#). These strategies are most effective when compliance is universal and when all the strategies are used together.

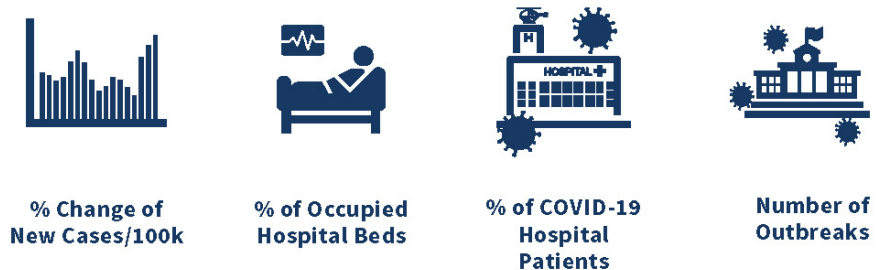
Five Key Mitigation Strategies



In addition to the mitigation strategies/level of impact indicator, schools should also consider the extent of COVID-19 community transmission using the disease indicator(s). The VDH [Pandemic Metrics Dashboard](#) includes a “CDC School Metrics” tab that includes the [CDC Indicators for Dynamic School Decision-Making](#). The dashboard provides indicator data by city or county and trends over time. CDC recommends assessing the core measures of incidence and/or RT-PCR test positivity for the community (e.g., county) as a whole, and not for the schools or school divisions themselves.

Secondary Indicators

The following secondary indicators can be used to support the decision-making process in local communities, but should not be used as the main criteria for determining the risk of disease transmission in schools. This data can also be found on the [VDH Pandemic Metrics Dashboard](#).



Consideration of School Impact

Schools open for in-person instruction should evaluate the level of impact that COVID-19 transmission has had within their specific school. Some considerations include:

- the number of outbreaks experienced and their proximity in time to each other;
- the size of any outbreak(s) (number of cases/close contacts identified);
- the level of spread within the school (e.g., whether cases are confined to a particular classroom or grade level);
- the level of student and/or staff absenteeism due to illness, and the staff/faculty capacity.

These criteria and impact levels may change during the school year as we better understand how COVID-19 impacts schools.

Regardless of what the indicators determine, the more students or staff who interact and the longer that interaction lasts, the higher the risk of SARS-CoV-2 spread. While risk of introduction and transmission in a school may be lower when community transmission is lower, this risk is dependent upon the implementation of school and community mitigation strategies. **Adherence to mitigation strategies in schools and the broader community will reduce the risk of introduction and subsequent spread of SARS-CoV-2 in schools.** Notably, even when a school carefully plans and prepares, cases of COVID-19 may still occur. Having detailed plans in place for the occurrence of cases in schools can help quickly mitigate the impact and may allow the school to remain open for in-person learning, if deemed appropriate in collaboration with the local health department.

Criteria to consider	Level of School Impact*		
	Low	Medium	High
Transmission within school	Zero or sporadic cases with no evidence of transmission in school	Two outbreaks within a short time period or sporadic outbreaks in school. Size of outbreaks remains small.	Several outbreaks in school within short time period; size of outbreaks is large or scope of outbreaks is significant (e.g. multiple classrooms or grade levels are impacted).
Student absenteeism	At baseline/Low	Slightly above baseline	High
Staff Capacity**	Normal	Strained	Critical

* Level of School Impact can only be assessed for those schools that have offered some level of in-person instruction. Schools should collaborate with local health departments on contact investigations. Depending on the level of COVID-19 transmission in the school and outbreak status, public health may recommend adjustment to mitigation strategies. In some circumstances, public health may recommend temporary closure of school/remote learning for a short period of time to control transmission before re-opening.

**This subjective assessment should factor in a school's ability to maintain adequate staff for facility operations, transportation, teaching, and administrative functions. It should include input from teachers/staff regarding their availability to return to in-person instruction.

Considerations For Schools for All Levels of School Transmission

COVID-19 spreads when people are in relatively close proximity, by respiratory droplets generated through coughing, sneezing, or talking to an infected person. The CDC describes levels of risk for transmitting COVID-19 in school settings. As such, different activities come with different levels of risk. The risk levels are defined as:

- **Lowest risk:** Students and teachers engage in virtual-only classes, activities, and events.
- **More risk:** Hybrid virtual and in-person class structures, or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes, occur. Small, in-person classes, activities, and events are held. Groups of students stay together and with the same teacher throughout/across school days and groups do not mix. Students remain at least six feet apart and do not share objects.
- **Highest risk:** Full sized, in-person classes, activities, and events occur. Students are not spaced apart, share classroom materials or supplies, and mix between classes and activities.

VDH recommends that all schools, regardless of the level of transmission risk in a school, should:

- Implement strategies for all individuals within a school to maintain six feet of physical distance from each other, to the greatest extent possible.
 - The [American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#) recommends “keeping desks at least 3 feet apart, and ideally 6 feet apart.” Maintaining less than six feet of distance should only be considered if all students are wearing masks correctly and do not have symptoms of illness.
- Implement strategies to reduce groups of individuals from mixing with each other. This includes:
 - Closing or staggering the use of communal spaces.
 - Limiting assemblies and other school gatherings.
 - Restricting classes from mixing (cohorting).
 - Limiting athletics and other extracurricular activities.

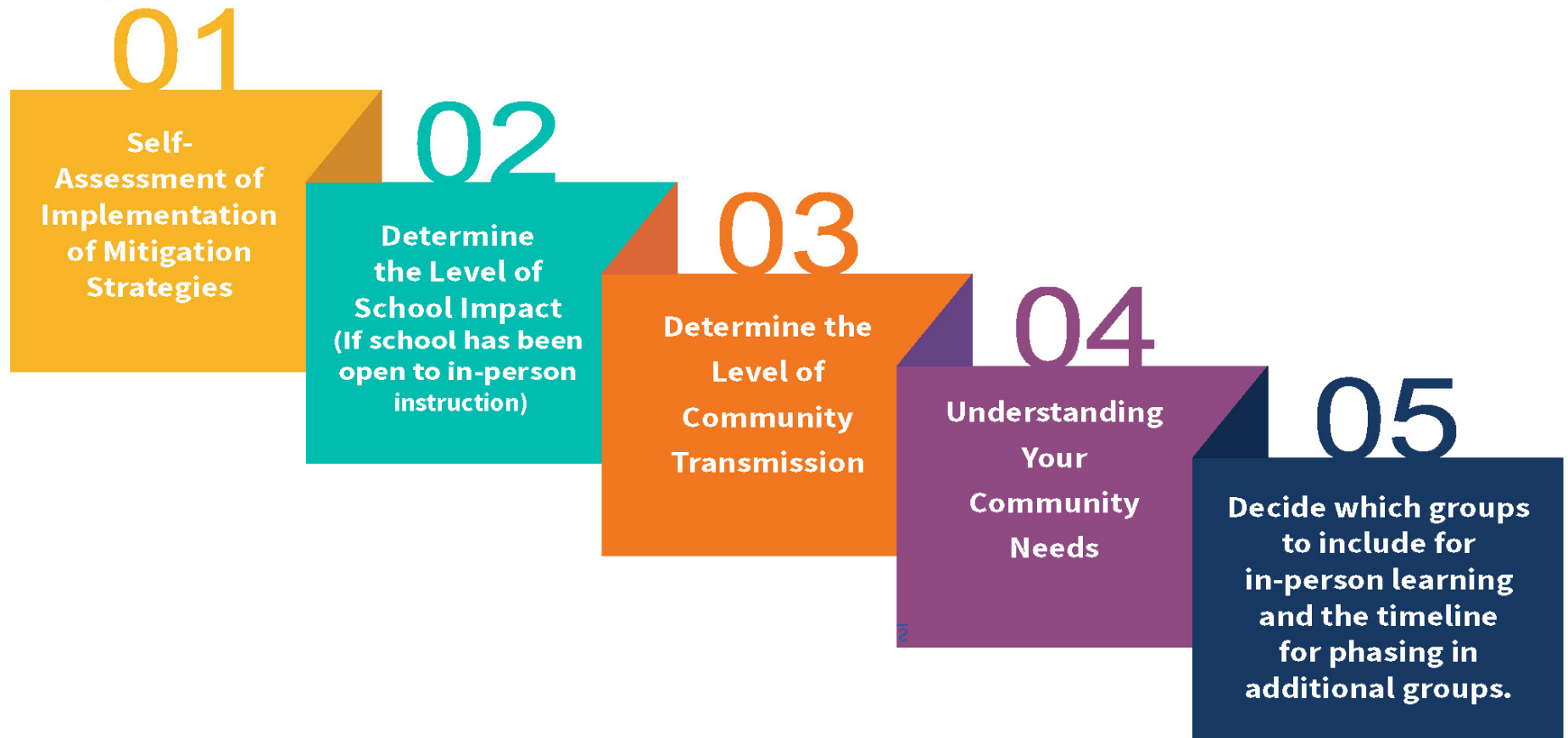
- Ask parents or caregivers to monitor children’s health daily. Students and staff should [stay home when sick](#) and follow all recommendations from public health officials.
- Provide remote learning exceptions and teleworking options for students and staff who are at [high risk of severe illness](#) (as defined by the CDC).
- Implement the relevant sections of the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) [16VAC25-220, Emergency Temporary Standard](#), which provides guidance for employers regarding COVID-19. More information can be found in the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) FAQs webpage](#).
 - This includes the requirement to [report all known COVID-19 cases to the VDH/DOLI using their online portal](#).
- Have clear and comprehensive plans in place to isolate and send home staff or students who display symptoms of COVID-19 onsite. Use the [Child-Schools COVID-19 Booklet - Algorithm](#) and [Staff Algorithm](#) as resources.
- Develop communication plans and be prepared to work with local health departments on contact tracing. The VDH has issued [specific guidance for schools on contact tracing](#). Additionally, there is a [Contract Tracing in Schools Infographic](#).
- Follow any relevant executive orders related to social gathering limitations, recreational sports, etc. as relevant to operations of the school unless specifically exempted. This includes, but is not limited to, wearing masks.

Steps to Guide School Reopening Decisions

The following recommendations serve as a guide for Virginia schools to use to inform school reopening and closing decisions. Nuanced local public health conditions and practical limitations will be important information to help inform decisions. Although possible, it may be challenging for a school to open for in-person instruction for the first time during times of substantial community transmission or surging case counts while also minimizing impact to the school community. Schools should consider the timing of implementation to increase their likelihood of success. A gradual approach to reopening is encouraged.

Divisions should make decisions on implementing such guidance, and assuming additional risk, in consultation with local health departments and school board attorneys.

VDH continues to recommend that local officials prioritize educational opportunities over extracurricular activities or other events in the surrounding community. During times of substantial COVID-19 activity, these choices are especially important. Mitigation strategies in school help keep kids and adults safe, but what happens outside of school is equally important.



Decision Matrix for Health Metrics and School Operations

Newport News Public Schools will implement its [Return to Learn Plan](#) based on the state's updated and consolidated [Interim Guidance for Reopening PreK-12 Schools](#) released on January 14, 2021 and the CDC's three core indicators (mitigation assessment, 14 day case incidence and/or test positivity) to assess the risk of transmission in schools and to inform decisions about school programming. When students return to-person instruction, the school division will also follow the Virginia Department of Health's recommendation to consider the level of impact of COVID-19 transmission on a specific school.

Steps to Guide School Reopening Decisions

The following state recommendations serve as a guide for Newport News Public Schools reopening and closing decisions.



01

STEP ONE: Self-assessment of Implementation of Mitigation Measures

NNPS will continue to assess how well COVID-19 prevention strategies are implemented to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. The CDC has determined that a consistent implementation of safety mitigation procedures is necessary to lower the risk of transmission of the Coronavirus in schools. Therefore, NNPS is committed to providing the necessary training for school personnel and students; personal protective equipment; cleaning supplies and cleaning staff necessary to ensure that school buildings remain safe for daily usage.

Key Mitigation Strategies Implemented at All Schools

NNPS will continue to implement the necessary CDC recommended safety mitigation strategies and additional strategies consistently in all of our schools to lower the risk of COVID-19 transmission:

- [Daily COVID-19 Symptom Self-Screening](#) (required for all staff and students)
- Consistent use of masks in all buildings and on school buses
- Social distancing of at least 6 feet
- Student cohorts wherever possible (to support reduced interactions)
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Consistent cleaning and disinfection
- [Air purification systems](#) (where HVAC systems do not meet current ASHRAE standards)
- In-classroom health stations (cleaning supplies, hand-sanitizer, hand soap, disinfectant wipes and masks)
- Desk shields for use with small group instruction
- PPE for staff where needed (face shields, gloves, gowns)
- COVID-19 isolation and parent/guardian pickup room
- Contact tracing



STEP TWO: Level of School Impact

Criteria to Consider	Level of School Impact*		
	Low	Medium	High
Transmission within school	Zero or sporadic cases with no evidence of transmission in school	Two outbreaks within a short time period or sporadic outbreaks in school. Size of outbreaks remains small.	Several outbreaks in school within short time period; size of outbreaks is large or scope of outbreaks is significant (e.g multiple classrooms or grade levels are impacted).
Student absenteeism	At baseline/Low	Slightly above baseline	High
Staff Capacity**	Normal	Strained	Critical

Following Virginia’s new interim guidance, NNPS will use this criteria to assess the level of impact that COVID-19 transmission may have on a particular school or location.

NNPS Level of School Impact			
	If the level of school impact is within this category	If the level of school impact is within this category	If the level of school impact is within this category
Transmission within school	<p>NNPS will ensure the following:</p> <p>VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION Virtual Instruction will remain available for all students.</p> <p>HYBRID IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION A phased approach to in-person instruction is permitted under these conditions.</p> <p>STUDENT ATHLETICS/ACTIVITIES Student athletics and activities are permitted. Schools are required to develop and communicate safety procedures prior to beginning any activities.</p> <p>Student groups are encouraged to meet virtually. Student in-person events will require building level approval and a safety plan.</p>	<p>NNPS will ensure the following:</p> <p>VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION Virtual Instruction will remain available for all students.</p> <p>HYBRID IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION NNPS will assess the ability to provide in-person instruction and other activities. Hybrid instruction can continue with increased emphasis on mitigation strategies.</p> <p>STUDENT ATHLETICS/ACTIVITIES NNPS will assess the ability to host athletics and activities.</p>	<p>NNPS will ensure the following:</p> <p>VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION Virtual Instruction will remain available for all students.</p> <p>HYBRID IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION NNPS will temporarily suspend hybrid instruction and all students will move to virtual instruction until further notice.</p> <p>STUDENT ATHLETICS/ACTIVITIES Student athletics and any student activities meeting in person will be suspended until further notice.</p>

03

STEP THREE: Evaluating the Level of Community Disease Transmission:

COVID-19 Dashboard

NNPS has launched an online [dashboard](#) to keep families, staff and the community informed about positive COVID-19 cases within Newport News Public Schools. The dashboard provides the number of positive COVID cases by location each week, in addition to eastern region, Peninsula and Newport News transmission data from the Virginia Department of Health, which evaluates statistics for two weeks to identify reliable trends.

The chart provided below is included on the NNPS COVID-19 Dashboard and will be updated weekly.

INDICATORS	Lowest 	Lower 	Moderate 	Higher 	Highest
Core Indicators					
Number of new cases per 100,000 persons within the last 14 days*	<5	5 to <20	20 to <50	50 to ≤200	>200
Eastern Region					
Peninsula					
Newport News					
Percentage of RT-PCR tests that are positive during the last 14 days**	<3%	3% to <5%	5% to <8%	8% to ≤10%	>10%
Eastern Region					
Peninsula					
Newport News					
Ability of NNPS to implement 5 key mitigation strategies.	Implemented all 5 strategies correctly and consistently	Implemented all 5 strategies correctly but inconsistently	Implemented 3-4 strategies correctly and consistently	Implemented 1-2 strategies correctly and consistently	Implemented no strategies
Newport News Public Schools					

Transmission Rate Key Code: = Decreasing = Fluctuating = Increasing

Following the state’s new interim guidance, NNPS will consider the school division’s capacity to successfully implement safety mitigation strategies and the assessed level of school impact in addition to community health metrics in the decision-making process for in-person instruction.

04

STEP FOUR: Understanding Your Community Capacity and Needs

Newport News Public Schools remains steadfast in its commitment to provide equitable access to a quality education for each learner. NNPS recognizes the impact of extended school closures and learning loss due to COVID-19 affects all families, but the impact on historically marginalized communities will further increase opportunity gaps.

Using interim guidance provided by the state, NNPS has considered our most vulnerable learners and the impact that extend school closures has had on their learning. These groups include students with disabilities, English learners, and our youngest learners. The school division must recognize and respond to the effects of the current model of instruction. NNPS data suggests that approximately 67% of our most vulnerable learners have fallen significantly behind in their education. In addition, the school division has considered the percentage of high-risk staff and the mental health of our learners.

NNPS' commitment to a safe return to in-person instruction, the willingness to respond to the needs of the community, and our dedication to closing opportunity gaps, serve as our guide for a responsible return to in-person instruction. Moving to face-to-face instruction does not mean options for virtual instruction, support, and services provided to families and staff will cease. Newport News Public Schools will continue to provide resources to families who choose virtual learning, and families who want and need to return to in-person instruction.

05

STEP FIVE: Decision Matrix to help Determine Student Populations to Prioritize for In-person Learning

Community Transmission is assessed via case incidence, test positivity and secondary disease indicators. School Impact is assessed through outbreak data/information, student absenteeism and staff capacity AND/OR assessment of mitigation strategy implementation.		Level of Community Transmission		
		Low/Lowest/ Moderate	Higher	Highest
Level of School Impact and/or Ability to Implement Mitigation	Low Impact and/or Best Mitigation	Maximum in-person learning, then consider extracurricular activities and athletics.**	Maximum in-person learning, then consider extracurricular activities and athletics.**	Priority learners* in-person. Add groups as capacity allows.
	Medium Impact and/or Mitigation Needs Improvement	Maximum in-person learning, then consider extracurricular activities and athletics.**	Priority learners* should be in school. Add groups as capacity allows.	Priority learners* should be in school.
	High Impact and/or Mitigation Needs Significant Improvement	Priority learners* should be in school. Add groups as capacity allows.	Priority learners* should be in school.	Temporary, remote instruction may be prudent for all.

Newport News Public Schools strives to ensure that all students have access to a high-quality instructional program. The Return to Lean plan identifies and prioritizes student populations who should return to in-person instruction first: special education students served in self-contained learning environments, English language learners and preschool through third grade students.

Return to Learn Timeline

In October 2020, the Newport News School Board approved a phase-in plan for returning students back to in-person instruction while granting the Superintendent the authority to modify the schedule as needed to manage safety or logistical requirements. The approved plan will bring students back to school in smaller groups following the hybrid learning model, which combines in-person and virtual instruction. A virtual option remains available for all families.

On February 8, the Superintendent announced a revised timeline to return students to in-person instruction. The plan identifies target dates for bringing students back to school in phases, beginning with student populations who are most in need of in-person instruction and support.

Timeline for Return to In-person Instruction	
First Group February 22, 2021	Special Needs Students (Self Contained – K through 5 th grade) <i>In-person instruction four half-days a week (M, Tu, Th, F)</i> Special Needs Students (Self Contained – 6 th through 12 th grade) <i>In-person instruction four full days a week (M, Tu, Th, F)</i> English Language Learners (Newcomers – 1 st through 8 th grade) <i>In-person instruction four three-quarter days a week (M, Tu, Th, F)</i> Students in Pre-kindergarten through Grade 3 <i>In-person instruction four half-days a week (M, Tu, Th, F)</i>
Second Group March 8, 2021	Students in Grades 4-12 <i>Hybrid learning model (see schedules below)</i>

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Development Pathway for the NNPS Return to Learn Initiative

Administrator Expectations

Site-based leadership is essential to the learning that takes place at each school, as each school leader assumes responsibility for managing student and staff safety, staff morale, internal and external communication, curriculum and instruction, extra-curricular activities, etc. Because each school is different, site-based leaders are encouraged to be responsive to the unique needs of their school community.

Preparing School for In-Person Instruction

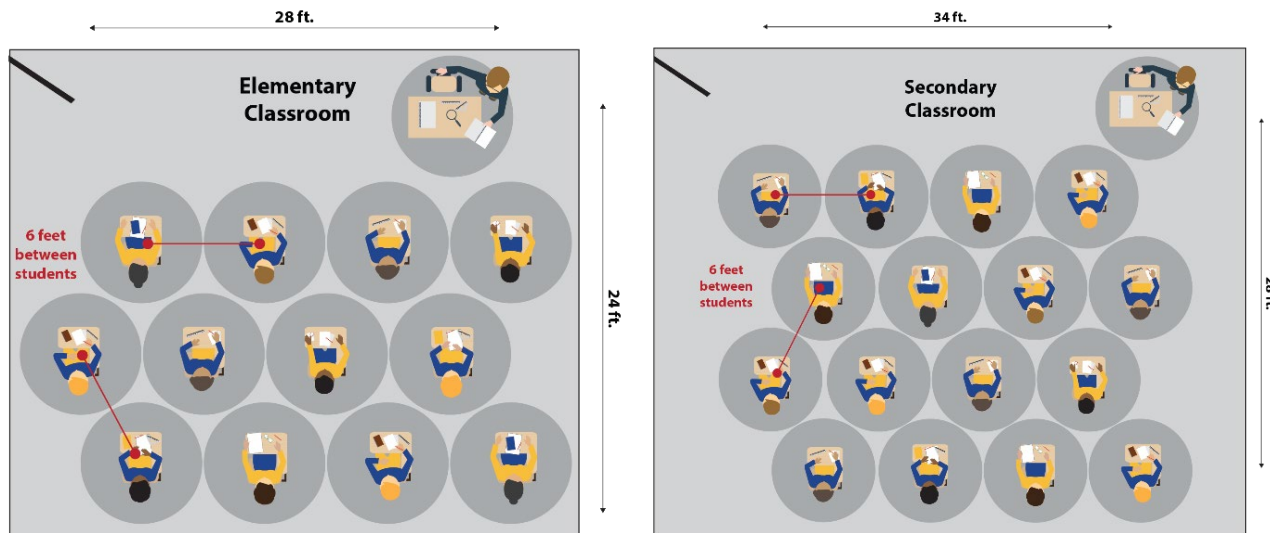
School administrators will ensure that all school-based staff prepares for in-person instruction. Teachers and other instructional staff will report to their schools on February 16 and work from inside their classroom. Returning on this date will ensure that teachers have adequate time to prepare classrooms and learning resources for students.

School administrators will coordinate building routines including developing traffic patterns for the flow of students and staff in the hallways, ensuring all students and staff are wearing face coverings and maintaining a distance of six feet from one another, encouraging good hand hygiene and ensuring all students and staff follow all mitigation strategies.

Classroom Preparation

To promote the safety, health, and welfare of students and staff, classrooms will be prepared with the following safety measures:

- Physical distancing – Schools will increase space between students during in-person instruction. To the extent possible, desks will be spaced six feet apart (but no fewer than three feet apart) and facing the same direction.



- Student groups - Elementary schools will aim to keep students in the same groups throughout the day and secondary schools are encouraged to minimize mixing student groups and stagger student movement throughout the building to the extent feasible.
- Each classroom will have supplies for a classroom wellness station:
 - 2 – 16 oz. bottles of hand sanitizer
 - 1 – 500 disinfectant wipes
 - 1 – 32 oz. anti-bacterial hand soap
 - 1 – 50 per box masks (RS700)
 - 1 – 50 per box masks (RS700Y)

Communication

School administrators will utilize email, phone calls, newsletters and social media to ensure timely and clear communication with families and staff.

Establishing Safe Classroom Practices and Routines for Students

All NNPS teachers are encouraged to follow CDC guidelines for safe classroom practices:

- Space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible
- Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart
- Modify learning stations and activities as applicable so there are fewer students per group, placed at least 6 feet apart if possible
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g. guides for creating “one-way routes” in hallways)

Parent Expectations

Daily Pre-Screening and Reporting

All parents/guardians will be asked to conduct a [health screening](#) of their child each day before the child reports to school or boards a school bus. Before leaving home, parents/guardians will ensure that their child does not have a fever or have any other symptoms of COVID-19 and has not been exposed to anyone who exhibits symptoms of the virus.

Proper Personal Protection at School

All NNPS students are **required** to wear a face mask while on the bus and inside the building. Families are encouraged to provide masks for their students to wear. Disposable masks will be provided to students who are unable to provide their own or if they do not have a face mask upon entering the building or boarding the school bus.

Guidance from Children’s Hospital of The King’s Daughters addresses the medical reasons for which children may be considered for an [exemption from wearing a mask](#) while at school. If parents/guardians feel their child’s medical condition would warrant an exemption from wearing a mask, they must obtain a note from the child’s physician supporting the exemption. This note should be provided to the school nurse who will follow up with the physician if necessary.

Parent Availability During the School Day and Emergency Contacts

Parents and guardians are asked to make arrangements in the event that their child exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 or becomes sick while at school and must be picked up as soon as possible. If the child exhibits COVID-19 symptoms, he/she will be assessed by the School Nurse and asked to wait in an isolation room under the supervision of a NNPS employee until a parent or guardian can pick the child up from school. Parents and guardians are encouraged to ensure that their emergency contact information is up to date in case of an emergency.




Talking with Children About COVID-19

As public conversations around COVID-19 continue, children may worry about themselves, their family and friends getting ill with COVID-19. Parents and guardians play an important role in helping children make sense of what they hear in a way that is honest accurate and minimizes anxiety or fear. The CDC has created [guidance to help adults have conversations with children about COVID-19](#) and ways they can avoid getting and spreading the disease.



Instruction

To support students, families and teaching staff, NNPS has designed a flexible instructional model to support student learning and success for all students in grades PreK-12. The model incorporates traditional (face-to-face), hybrid (blended) and virtual learning. The instructional model is designed to provide rigorous and engaging instruction while also protecting the safety and well-being of our students and staff. The flexibility of the model allows the school division to quickly move between phases of instruction in the event of an increase of positive COVID-19 cases within the community and/or individual schools.

 <p>Traditional Learning</p>	 <p>Hybrid Learning (Blended)</p>	 <p>Virtual Learning</p>
<p>All students attend school in the building five days a week.</p>	<p>A blend of traditional and remote learning - students attend school part of the week and work remotely the other part of the week.</p>	<p>All students learn from home five days a week.</p>

Hybrid Learning and Virtual Learning

Hybrid Learning, also known as blended learning, is a mix of face-to-face learning and virtual learning. The student has some control over time, place, path and/or pace of learning.

Virtual learning is fully remote and teaching activities are carried out online whereby the teacher and learners are physically separated. Instruction is both synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous learning models direct instruction in the classroom and students experience learning activities at the same time. Asynchronous learning affords students time to work on their learning on their own schedule. The teacher designs a sequence of activities for students to work independently, and therefore, this work may not be completed in tandem with other students.

Daily Schedule

The division's flexible instructional model utilizes both hybrid and virtual learning practices and experiences. Secondary teachers will work with both in-person and at-home students concurrently throughout the day. Elementary teachers will work with in-person students in the morning and virtual students in the afternoon. There will be some concurrent instruction at the elementary level taking place in the morning. Based upon the Fall 2020 Parent Intent Form data and teacher input, Newport News Public Schools will employ both an elementary and secondary instructional schedule for students. Schedules were developed based on the needs of students at various grade levels and their ability to work independently without teacher interaction.

Expectations for Hybrid and Virtual Learning




Daily Expectations for Teachers

- Teachers will use a combination of digital and print resources from the NNPS curriculum to cover priority standards and objectives.
- Teachers will use Zoom in the Canvas Learning Management System to provide teacher-led instruction each day. Teacher-created class lessons should be recorded as appropriate. Previously recorded lesson videos should be made available to students who are absent from the class session.
- Teachers will upload independent work for students in Canvas.
- Teachers will provide feedback and post grades weekly.
- Teachers will create balanced assessment practices to include student feedback.

- Teachers will provide grade-level instruction, use pre-assessment data from division-created assessments to implement appropriate accommodations and/or modifications provided to students with diverse learning needs as necessary.
- Teachers will monitor student work and attendance and contact parents/guardians if students are not engaged in learning.

Daily Expectations for Students

Zoom Etiquette PreK - 2nd








Be Respectful		Be Responsible	
 Be Kind	 Participate in conversations	 Find a quiet place to work	 Have learning materials available
 Raise your hand to speak	 Type your questions into the chat box	 Use headphones if you have them	 Be on time for your meeting
 Stay muted when your teacher or another student is speaking		 Stay in view of the camera	

Zoom Etiquette 3rd - 5th

Be Prepared <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charge your computer. • Use headphones if you have them. 	Be On Time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Log on a few minutes before class. 	Be Respectful <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be kind.
Communicate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak clearly. • Stay on topic. • Stay in view of the camera. • Use a virtual background if you choose. 	Participate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be focused. • Be attentive. • Be an active participant. 	
Setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine a preferred learning space. • Have learning materials readily available. 	Mute Yourself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay muted when your teacher or another student is talking. 	Chat Responsibly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise your hand to speak. • Type your questions in the chat box.

Behavioral Expectations

Newport News Public Schools' Virtual Learning Behavior Matrix was developed to clearly communicate expectations while students are in a virtual setting. Establishing behavioral guidelines that are easy to understand, consistent, and equitable is the first step in creating a safe, supportive learning environment where each student can achieve and grow.

NEWPORT NEWS PUBLIC SCHOOLS VIRTUAL LEARNING BEHAVIOR MATRIX				
	ENTERING THE DIGITAL CLASSROOM	TEACHER-LED INSTRUCTION (WHOLE CLASS)	GROUP WORK (BREAKOUT ROOMS)	INDEPENDENT LEARNING
SAFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a distraction-free space Use equipment as intended Show only First.Last Initial (ex. First.L) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a distraction-free space Use equipment as intended Show only First.Last Initial (ex. First.L) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact your teacher or school counselor if you have any concerns Apply the principles of Digital Citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use equipment as intended Take breaks as needed Contact your teacher or school counselor if you have any concerns
RESPECTFUL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep video on <i>Start Video</i>  Keep microphone muted  Use chat with classmates for first 5 minutes Use kind words and faces Wear school appropriate attire (see Code of Conduct) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep video on <i>Start Video</i>  Keep microphone muted  Use tools and signals to communicate with your teacher Answer polls promptly Use kind words and faces Be mindful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep video on <i>Start Video</i>  Keep microphone muted  Wait or use chat tool; one speaker at a time Use kind words and faces Respect others' culture and opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen attentively
RESPONSIBLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be on time and ready to learn Start class with device charged or plugged in Have materials ready Use approved virtual backgrounds only Use Tips Sheet if experiencing technical difficulties or if you have questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Own your learning; ask questions when you have them and share your thoughts Be engaged and avoid multitasking Engage in all learning with academic integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the work together Use the "Raise Hand" tool if you have questions Be engaged and avoid multitasking Engage in all learning with academic integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask follow-up questions when you have them Try your best Be engaged and avoid multitasking Turn in work in a timely manner Engage in all learning with academic integrity

Delivery of Instruction

Teachers will continue to utilize the Canvas Learning Management System to ensure independent learning to all students during in-person and at-home learning days.

To maximize in-person instruction, student learning will focus on daily learning targets with success criteria that allow students to engage and transfer learning. The NNPS Curriculum units reflect opportunities for teachers to have some autonomy in instructional practices, which also models voice and choice for student learning.

Students will have a balance of direct instruction, guided practice and application to include interactive discussions, hands-on learning and labs, and one-to-one or small group instruction.

To maximize virtual instruction, student learning will focus on direct instruction in a pre-recorded video format, independent work to reinforce or extend learning, videos, texts, or project-based assignments and independent work using computer-based platforms such as Smarty Ants, Discovery Education, Dreambox, IXL and No Red Ink.

Elementary School Schedule for Instruction







NNPS has developed an elementary academic plan that will support teaching and learning for all students. The academic plan has been revised to include learning modules that will address content what was not taught during the 2019-2020 school year.

All instruction and assignments will follow the Virginia Standards of Learning and align to the written, taught and assessed curriculum to promote continuous learning.

The elementary school schedule is designed to support both in-person and virtual students four days a week. Students will attend school for a half day of instruction in reading and math and then they will go home to work virtually for science, social studies and resource classes (PE, music and art).

Students who are participating in virtual learning will work on science, social studies and resource during the morning and will meet with their classroom teacher synchronously to work on reading and mathematics in the afternoon. In this model, all students (hybrid and virtual) receive the same amount of instructional time with their teacher.

It is important to note that during independent instruction students may be scheduled synchronous time (group learning) for extra instructional support in reading and mathematics.

	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday		Wednesday
	Hybrid Students	Virtual Students	All Students
Morning	Work at school on reading and mathematics 	Work at home independently 	Student support and independent work at home. 
Afternoon	Work at home independently 	Work synchronously with teacher on reading and mathematics. 	










Middle and High School Schedule for Instruction

NNPS has developed a middle school and high school academic plan that will support teaching and learning for all students.

All instruction and assignments will follow the Virginia Standards of Learning and align to the written, taught and assessed curriculum to promote continuous learning.

Students in grades 6-12 will be divided into two cohorts as demonstrated in the table below. Cohort 1 (students whose last names begin with A-K) will attend in person on Monday and Tuesday and participate in remote learning on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Cohort 2 (students whose last names begin with last names L-Z) will attend school in person on Thursday and Friday and participate in remote learning on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Teachers will work concurrently with both their hybrid and virtual students throughout the day to ensure all students have teacher facilitated instruction.

The middle and high school schedule will also incorporate A and B day rotations between traditional and remote learning.

Cohort 1 (last names A-K)/Cohort 2 (last names L-Z)				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A-Day	B-Day	Rotation of A/B	A-Day	B-Day
Cohort 1 In-person  Cohort 2 Remote 	Cohort 1 In-person  Cohort 2 Remote 	All students work remotely on assigned independent work. Identified students receive specialized supports. 	Cohort 1 Remote  Cohort 2 In-person 	Cohort 1 Remote  Cohort 2 In-person 

Regardless of the assigned cohort, Wednesdays will be independent learning days with identified student supports. Students will be learning asynchronously while teachers hold office hours, and provide individual or small group remediation. Teachers will also participate in professional learning, professional collaboration and lesson planning.

Resource Classes and Electives

While safety is a concern for the entire school, resource courses and CTE courses include special considerations.

Physical Education

In the hybrid learning model, physical education (PE) will be conducted while physical distancing is practiced. Teachers and students must wear face coverings. Classes, which will be limited in size, will be held outdoors whenever possible.

Prior to beginning PE, proper hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and physical distancing will be taught. Signs and floor/field markings will be used to ensure physical distancing. Activities that require limited or no equipment will be considered as well as activities that can be performed within physical distancing guidelines. Students will sanitize hands prior to PE class and afterwards. If any equipment is utilized, the teacher will disinfect the equipment before the next class arrives.

Students will move or run in the same direction. Students must wear masks outside when physical distance cannot be maintained. Specific entrances and exits to and from the building/gym will be utilized for physical education classes.

Middle and high school students will not redress for PE or use locker rooms.

Recess

Recess will be held outdoors whenever possible for students participating in hybrid learning. The CDC guidelines recommend separating classes for recess. During in-person hybrid instruction, all indoor and outdoor spaces will be considered to provide a range of activity options and minimize crowding. Physical distancing of 10 feet will be required during physical activity. If separate bins/bags of equipment are used for each class during recess, the equipment will be disinfected between recess periods.

A variety of outside spaces will be offered where free choice of different activities can take place including quiet, creative and solo activity spaces. Various "zones" will be marked to reduce the number of students who are in contact with each other. Students will sanitize hands before and prior to the end of recess. Playground pods will not be utilized.

During virtual learning, playgrounds are not in use.

Library Media

Students have access to eBooks and print books through Destiny Library Manager, the Sora app in their Clever dashboard and through the Newport News Public Library.

During virtual learning, students may place holds on books using the Destiny Library Manager. Library staff will have books ready for curbside pick-up once a week as scheduled by each school. To support virtual learning, school librarians will assist students with inquiry projects, self-directed reading and coursework.

During in-person hybrid instruction, students may check out books online which will be delivered to classrooms for distribution. When books are returned, they will be held for seven days before being returned to circulation.

Magnet Schools

Students currently enrolled in a magnet school program have the opportunity to remain in their magnet program during hybrid and virtual instruction. In the event that a family has had to withdraw their student

from NNPS for child care reasons, reenrollment into the magnet or specialty program once NNPS returns to the traditional learning model will be afforded where space allows.

Students who remain in virtual learning during phase II will be permitted to remain in their magnet program. While school administrators will make every effort to continue enrollment in all current classes, some specialty classes may not be available within the virtual option. Students will not be penalized should they be unable to complete specific coursework required in their magnet program.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Courses

Students currently enrolled in a CTE course will remain in the course during hybrid and virtual instruction. During in-person hybrid instruction, students will participate in project-based learning. Virtual learning students will participate in virtual simulations.

Visual and Performing Arts

Students learning art in the in-person hybrid model will be provided individual sketch pads and paper at school. Parents/guardians will be asked to provide individual art supplies (markers, pencils, paint brushes, scissors, rulers, etc.) that will remain with the student.

Students enrolled in the virtual model will receive instruction online. Parents/guardians will be asked to provide individual art supplies (markers, pencils, paint brushes, scissors, rulers, etc.) for use at home.

Group singing and sharing of instruments is not advised while social distancing guidelines are in place. Music teachers will alter the in-class curriculum and will focus on creative processes, critical thinking and communication, historical and cultural influences, and innovations in the arts.

Choral and instrumental students participating in hybrid learning will be encouraged to practice singing and playing at home, maintain practice logs or journals, and create recordings at home for feedback from the teacher.

Choral and instrumental students enrolled in virtual learning may record themselves singing and/or playing musical selections as advised by the teacher.

Social and Emotional Learning

The cumulative effects of COVID-19 have had an impact on every student, every family, and every staff member in NNPS. These universal impacts have heightened the need for learning environments that are welcoming to and supportive of all students. Newport News Public Schools is committed to helping all students weather this crisis through recognizing and responding to their emotions and promoting positive and prosocial relationships. Social emotional learning (SEL) is critical to re-engage students, support adults, rebuild relationships and school communities, and create equitable learning environments for all students.



While SEL promotes resiliency and managing emotions, some students may require mental health support beyond what is provided through a multi-tiered approach for social emotional learning. NNPS has

developed a plan focused on providing mental health supports and services to provide equitable learning opportunities for our students. Universal supports and practices are provided for all students during the school day during virtual learning and in-person hybrid learning. Some students may require additional intervention and mental health treatment that will be guided by mental health clinicians, student support specialists, school psychologists and social workers.

School Counseling

School Counselors will schedule face-to-face and virtual sessions with students. Sessions will consist of both individual and small groups. School counselors are also offering virtual workshops and college and career planning events. Visit <http://www.nnschools.org/counseling> for more information.

Student Attendance

Student Attendance During Virtual Learning

Teachers will take attendance during virtual learning sessions and will give attendance credit for completing assignments in Canvas; engaging in emails with teachers or other school staff; and/or participating in small group activities.

If a student cannot participate in any educational activity on a specific day, parents/guardians should call or email the teacher or attendance support staff regarding the reason for the absence. Each school will provide parents and guardians with information about reporting absences.

If a student does not log in to Canvas, does not make contact with the teacher or complete assignments in Canvas, and no information is received from the parent regarding the absence from participation, the absence will be considered unexcused. Parents/guardians have up to five days to provide a reason to the teacher for the student’s lack of participation on a specific day.

Attendance During Hybrid Learning

During hybrid learning, teachers will continue to record attendance using the same process they used during virtual-only learning. On the days a student is designated to participate in in-person learning, the teacher will take attendance during class. If the student does not report to class on their assigned in-person learning day, the student will be marked absent.

Assessment for and of Learning

The NNPS assessment (testing) plan helps guide instructional practices for students. Diagnostic assessments were administered virtually to measure student knowledge at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. During the 2020-2021 school year, instructional staff will use formative assessment data to offer just-in-time instructional support to address learning gaps. Data from diagnostic and formative assessments will help teachers plan student instruction, remediation and intervention activities.

Standards of Learning (SOL) Tests

Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments for the 2020-2021 school year have not been waived by the Virginia Department of Education. SOL tests will be administered as scheduled.



The Virginia Department of Education requires SOL assessments to be taken in person. Plans related to administration of these assessments will be communicated to students and families by school principals and teachers. Health plans will be developed to ensure the safest environment for students and staff.

School Division Assessments

Benchmark Assessments

NNPS developed benchmark assessments will be administered at the end of the first semester and at the end of marking period three using Synergy assessments. These assessments are cumulative and provide data about student mastery of priority standards.

Diagnostic Assessments

Diagnostic assessments gather data that helps the school division develop student growth measures that will be used to monitor progress.

Advanced Placement Exams (Grades 9-12)

The College Board administers the Advanced Placement Exam schedule. The scheduled dates for the 2020-2021 school year are May 3-14, 2021. A detailed exam schedule is posted on the College Board website: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/exam-dates-and-fees>. Under the direction of the College Board, NNPS anticipates administering in-person exams in May. Students are encouraged to visit <https://myap.collegeboard.org/login> for the latest information, AP resources, guides, exam prep questions, and videos.

Grading

Teachers will post grades weekly in ParentVUE and StudentVUE and provide timely feedback to students in Canvas. Teachers will also communicate with parents and guardians by phone and email to ensure they are informed about their child's progress and performance.

Students are graded on homework, class work, and formative and summative assessments. Assessments include demonstrating an understanding of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing through the completion of guided and independent practices, quick writes, computation and problem-solving, graphic organizers, projects, creation of videos, presentations, labs, simulations, hands-on activities, quizzes, and tests.

Technology

Newport News Public Schools has expanded its one-to-one technology initiative to provide a Chromebook for every student in kindergarten through 12th grade to support learning in-person and online. Preschool students will receive an iPad to support in-person and online instruction.

NNPS is also committed to ensuring that every student has internet access. The NNPS [Connected @home program](#) will provide mobile Wi-Fi hotspots or low/no cost Internet service to eligible families.

Virtual Learning Help Desk

The Virtual Learning Help Desk is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call (757) 928-6979 or visit <http://sbo.nn.k12.va.us/connectedathome/students.html> for assistance.

In-Person Technical Support

In-person technical support is available at several locations throughout the city on school days. Visit the website for details: <http://sbo.nn.k12.va.us/connectedathome/>



STUDENT SERVICES

Bus Transportation

Newport News Public Schools will provide bus transportation for students to and from school in each reopening phase in compliance with [CDC guidelines](#).

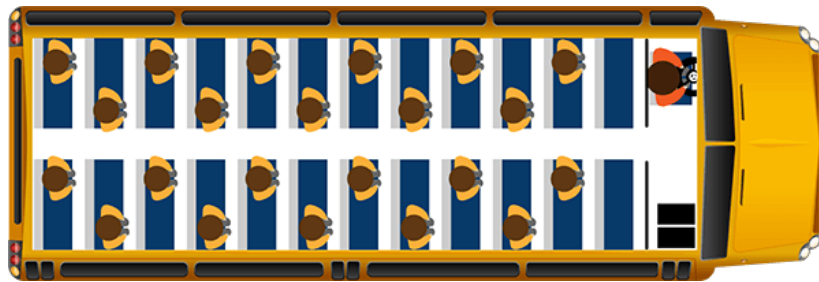


Safety Protocols

Physical Distancing

To ensure physical distancing, buses will only be able to transport approximately 20-30 students at a time (one student per seat as indicated in the diagram below). Students will alternate between the window and aisle seating position. Positions will be marked with tape identifying where students should sit. Siblings residing in the same household may be seated together on the same seat.

Students will be loaded from rear to front and unload from front to rear to limit interactions between students. Kindergarten students will be seated towards the front of the bus if possible.



Face Masks

Students, bus drivers and bus assistants are required to wear masks on the bus at all times. Drivers will have a limited supply of disposable masks for students who attempt to board a bus without a mask. Students who continue to board the school bus without a mask will be referred to school administration.

Cleaning

All buses will be cleaned and sanitized following each route. Drivers and bus assistants are required to wipe down all high-touch surfaces and seats after students get off the school bus. A team of trained transportation employees will conduct a thorough disinfecting process on all buses on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Routes and Bus Stops

As students return to in-person instruction, bus routes will be developed to ensure students have transportation to and from school. NNPS uses Zone Finder, a user-friendly bus stop web query system that allows parents and students to input a home address and grade level to determine the bus stop closest to their home address.

Bus stop locations and times will be available in [Zone Finder](#) before students are scheduled to return to school. Families will be notified when this information is available.

Bus drivers may need to make several trips back and forth to school to transport all students who need bus transportation to and from school on their designated days of attendance.

Student Meal Service

Meal service will continue for all students. Menus are available [online](#).



Elementary School Hybrid In-Person Learning

- Breakfast and snack will be delivered to the classroom in the morning.
- Due to the half-day schedule, students will take a lunch and a supper meal home.

Middle School Hybrid In-Person Learning

- Breakfast will be delivered to the classroom in the morning.
- For lunch, students will be offered a hot and cold option daily. Lunches will be delivered to the classroom in grab-and-go containers.
- Students will take a snack and a supper home at the end of the day.

High School Hybrid In-Person Learning

- For breakfast, kiosks will be set up in hallways outside of classrooms. Students will come out by classroom to pick up their meal. Social distancing will be practiced.
- For lunch, students will be offered a hot and cold option daily. Depending on how many students are in attendance, a combination of kiosk service and cafeteria service will be used. Grab-and-go containers will be used for both. Students will pick up their meal and eat in their classroom.
- Students will take a snack and a supper home at the end of the day.

Parents/families can pick up meals on Wednesdays when their student is learning from home. Parents can also pick up meals on Fridays for the weekend.

Virtual Learners

For students that are attending school virtually, parents can pick up meals daily. Locations can be found by visiting www.nnschools.org/cns.

Youth Development

Extracurricular Activities

Youth Development provides multiple opportunities for students to develop and grow through extracurricular activities. Student empowerment and contribution are essential to promoting student success.

During Phase 2 of the Return to Learn Plan, athletics, clubs and activities are permitted. Schools staff will be required to develop and communicate safety procedures prior to beginning any activities.

Student groups are encouraged to meet virtually; student in-person events will require building level approval and a safety plan.

Club Meetings	Virtual meetings are encouraged. In-person meetings and events will require administrator approval and a safety plan.
Community Service	School sponsored/coordinated community service which requires in-person contact is not permitted. For example, students offered as volunteers for community partner event.
Community Volunteers	Community volunteers will not be allowed in the building during Phase 2.
Field Trips	Virtual field trips may be offered as part of instruction or as an extra-curricular experience.

Virtual Programming will include diverse extracurricular activities including clubs, mentoring, leadership and other enrichment activities. Students may participate in extracurricular activities through their assigned school and through activities sponsored by NNPS departments (for example: Youth Development, the Student Advisory Group on Education, STEM, etc.) and community partners.

Athletics

Varsity student-athletes in Newport News Public Schools will be able to compete in this year’s fall sports season; however, JV sports are suspended for the fall season. These decisions were made in cooperation with the school divisions in the Peninsula District.

Fall Sports Season Schedule

- **Fall Season 1: February 15 – May 1** (First Contest Date – March 5)
Competition Cheerleading, Football and Sideline Cheerleading
- **Fall Season 2: February 22 – May 1** (First Contest Date – March 5)
Cross Country, Field Hockey, Golf and Volleyball

Planning for the spring season (baseball, soccer, softball, tennis and track and field) is underway.

Conditioning

NNPS athletic teams may start conditioning for the upcoming sports season with a school administrator approved practice plan and the following mitigation protocols:

- Outside conditioning only
- A maximum of 50 individuals may gather outdoors for workouts
- Workouts should be conducted in pods of the same 5 – 10 athletes and a coach
- A social distance minimum of 10 feet between individuals at all times
- Conditioning is limited to two days per week, Monday – Thursday, for a maximum of 90 minutes
- No locker rooms will be utilized
- No additional athletic equipment may be used (bats, ball, etc.)
- No shared water bottles, athletic towels, clothing or shoes are permitted
- Coaches are required to wear face coverings at all times, and athletes must wear a face covering before and after workouts

Athletic directors and coaches will provide specific details and schedules to student-athletes and families.

COMMUNICATIONS

Newport News Public Schools is dedicated to ensuring that families, students, staff and the community remain engaged and informed. NNPS will ensure consistent and transparent, two-way communication with stakeholders. As preparations for the 2020-2021 school year continue, the Community Relations Department will lead and coordinate all division wide communication strategies and will provide guidance and support for school and worksite-based communications.

Families and staff will continue to receive timely division-wide information from the NNPS Return to Learn website, social media, NNPS-TV, the local media, school board meetings, and as needed, through Blackboard Connect, an email and phone mass notification system. Division-wide news and information is disseminated in English and Spanish. Teachers of English Learners (EL) will assist with ensuring that EL families receive important news and updates in their native language using Voiance, a language interpretation service.

Focus groups and surveys will also be utilized to gather feedback and input.

School administrators are responsible for disseminating timely school specific updates and information to their families and staff. Voiance interpretation services will be utilized with families who speak languages others than English and Spanish.

COVID Communication

The NNPS [COVID-19 dashboard](#) provides pandemic metrics, mitigation strategies and a transparent summary of positive COVID-19 cases within Newport News Public Schools by school and worksite. If a positive case of COVID-19 is reported within NNPS, Health Services staff will conduct contact tracing, and all close contacts as defined by current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, will be notified personally and advised of next steps. All families and staff within a building will be notified of a positive COVID case via email, phone call and/or letter. The name of the individual who tested positive will not be released in compliance with federal privacy laws.

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL GUIDANCE

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers the following guidance for planning and responding to COVID-19.

Preventing the Spread of COVID-19

Students and staff are encouraged to take [everyday preventive actions](#) to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses. These actions include staying home when sick; appropriately covering coughs and sneezes; cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces; and washing hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if they are visibly dirty. Remember to supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol.

What will schools include in their COVID-19 operations planning for safety?

School administrators will review and update their emergency operations plan which focus on the components of the plan that address infectious disease outbreaks.

- Administrators will ensure the plan includes strategies to reduce the spread of a wide variety of infectious diseases. This includes strategies for social distancing and school dismissal that may be used to stop or slow the spread of infectious disease.

- Administrators will ensure the plan emphasizes everyday preventive actions for students and staff. For example, it will emphasize actions such as staying home when sick; appropriately covering coughs and sneezes; cleaning frequently touched surfaces; and washing hands often.

What will school administrators do to maintain a healthy environment?

School administrators have made many of the CDC’s recommended changes to physical spaces to ensure a healthy environment.

- Modified classroom layouts – Student desks are spaced at least 6 feet apart when feasible and all desks will face the same direction.
- Physical barriers – Desk shields are installed in all school offices in the reception area and desk shields will be used in classrooms for teacher-led, small group instruction
- Communal spaces – Communal shared spaces such as the cafeteria will not be utilized for dining to avoid close contact
- Shared objects – Sharing of items is discouraged. Students will not be permitted to share school supplies. Each student’s belongings will be separated from others’ and in individually labeled containers or areas.

More information about NNPS’ mitigation strategies can be found in the Primary Safety Mitigation Strategies section of the plan.

What can teachers do to protect themselves and their students?

Teachers and students are in close contact for much of the day, and schools can become a place where respiratory diseases like COVID-19 can quickly spread. Teachers should protect themselves and their students by practicing and promoting healthy habits during the school year. They should also plan to stay home if they have symptoms of COVID-19 like fever, cough, or shortness of breath. They will also encourage parents to keep students at home if they’re sick. The school division will also implement social distancing strategies, such as modifying classes where students are likely to be in very close contact; increasing space between desks; and allowing students to eat meals in the classroom.



Are children more at risk?

Information about [COVID-19 in children](#) is somewhat limited, but the information that is available suggests that children with confirmed COVID-19 generally had mild symptoms. Person-to-person spread from or to children, as among adults, is thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. Recent studies indicate that people who are infected but do not have symptoms likely also play a role in the spread of COVID-19.

However, a small percentage of children have been reported to have more severe illness. Despite lower risk of serious illness, children with COVID-19-like symptoms should avoid contact with older adults and people of any age who may be at [higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#).

NNPS Safety Guidelines

The health, wellbeing and safety of Newport News Public Schools' students and staff is paramount and served as the guiding principle for the Return to Learn Plan. Newport News Public Schools has aligned its operations in accordance with the reopening guidelines outlined by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), the [Virginia Department of Health \(VDH\)](#), and [Virginia's Interim Guidance for Reopening PK-12 Schools](#).



The CDC has determined that consistent implementation of its safety measures will lower the risk of exposure to the SARS Coronavirus. NNPS has implemented the following mitigation measures to ensure the safety of staff and students:

- [Daily COVID-19 Symptom Self-Screening](#) (required for all staff and students)
- Consistent use of masks in all buildings and on school buses
- Social distancing of at least 6 feet
- Student cohorts wherever possible (to support reduced interactions)
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Consistent cleaning and disinfection
- [Air purification systems](#) (where HVAC systems do not meet current ASHRAE standards)
- In-classroom health stations (cleaning supplies, hand-sanitizer, hand soap, disinfectant wipes and masks)
- Desk shields for use with small group instruction
- PPE for staff where needed (face shields, gloves, gowns)
- COVID-19 isolation and parent/guardian pickup room
- Contact tracing
- Encouraging students and staff to receive the [flu vaccine](#) and the COVID-19 vaccine, if available

Daily Self-Health Screenings

Each NNPS staff member is required to conduct a [self-assessment/health screening](#) each day before reporting to work. When students are scheduled to return to school, all parents/guardians will be required to conduct a health screening of their child each before the child reports to school or boards a school bus.

Students and staff with a temperature above 100.4 degrees, and/or who are exhibiting any possible signs of illness including a cough or body aches, should not report to school or work until they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications, show improvement in respiratory symptoms, and can ensure that 10 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared.

To ensure the health and safety of all, students, parents/guardians and staff should:

- Answer the daily health questionnaire before leaving
- for school or work
- Stay home when sick
- Wear a face mask when inside the building
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Practice proper hand hygiene
- Maintain physical distancing



Throughout the school year, Health Services staff will educate staff, students and families about COVID-19 and mitigating its spread.

COVID Response Team

Newport News Public Schools has created a COVID Response Team to address potential and confirmed positive cases within the school division. When a case or potential case is reported, the COVID Response Team (comprised of the supervisors of health services, the executive director of plant services, the supervisor of custodial services, the supervisor of environmental safety, the coordinator of employee relations, the director of human resources and the assistant superintendent of business and support services) will begin its protocols including isolating the student or staff member, identifying close contacts, notifying the Peninsula Health District and implementing its procedures, cleaning and sanitizing all areas the ill individual has occupied, and informing the school community or worksite staff where the individual is assigned.

PRIMARY SAFETY MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Newport News Public Schools has implemented numerous mitigation strategies to ensure the health and safety of all students and staff.

Face Coverings

All NNPS students and staff will be required to wear a face covering while on the bus and inside the building. Disposable masks will be provided to students and staff who are unable to provide their own or if they do not have a face covering upon entering the building or boarding the school bus.



Physical Distancing

All students and staff are expected to maintain a six-foot physical distance. Classrooms will be reconfigured to ensure that students engaged with in-person learning will be seated at least six feet apart at desks or tables to the maximum extent possible in classrooms. School bus routes and schedules will be adjusted to allow for one student on each seat and masks will be required.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Staff members who need gloves or other protective equipment will be provided these items. Examples of other protective equipment include face shields and gowns for health services staff and other staff where their work requires it to be safe.

Air Circulation/Purification

A building's heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system provides clean air by bringing outside air into the building and filtering the air. The organization that provides regulatory guidance for HVAC systems, the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) recommends five air changes per hour; this is a standard supported by Harvard Healthy Buildings, a program of the Harvard University School of Public Health. In buildings where there are relatively new HVAC systems, NNPS is meeting this standard. In other NNPS buildings where HVAC systems are not able to meet this standard, the Plant Services team is implementing two options to improve ventilation in classrooms.

For classrooms and offices that have windows, staff are encouraged to open them just a small amount to increase the air exchanges when weather permits. To address the need for increased ventilation in classrooms, NNPS has purchased portable air purifiers for each classroom in all buildings where the HVAC system does not meet the ASHRAE standard. These air purifiers have HEPA filters which remove small particles to include viruses and bacteria from the air. The following schools met the ASHRAE standard and do not require portable air purifiers:

- Carver Elementary
- Deer Park Elementary
- Discovery STEM Academy
- Hidenwood Elementary
- Hilton Elementary
- Jenkins Elementary
- Lee Hall Elementary
- Nelson Elementary
- Riverside Elementary
- Sedgefield Elementary
- Heritage High

Cleaning and Sanitizing

Newport News Public Schools' cleaning schedules and practices comply with current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Virginia Department of Health guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting public facilities.

Cleaning and sanitizing will occur daily. All frequently touched areas including doors, countertops, knobs, hand railings and windows will be cleaned throughout the day while buildings are occupied. A deep cleaning and disinfecting will occur twice weekly in all schools and offices.



As a preventative measure, all water fountains have been wrapped to prevent public use. Bottle fill stations have been installed in every school. Students and staff are encouraged to bring a refillable bottle or their own bottled water.

Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes will be available at the main entrance of each facility and at other locations throughout schools and offices.

In addition, bus drivers will clean and sanitize buses following each route.

Secondary Safety Mitigation Strategies

NNPS will maintain student cohorts wherever possible to reduce interactions between students and staff.

