



Newcomb Central School District Stay Open Plan 2021-2022

As we welcome students and staff members back this fall, Newcomb Central School District remains committed to the health and safety of everyone in our school community throughout the 2021-2022 school year. The Newcomb Central School District Board of Education and Newcomb Central School District Safety Committee have devised this plan based on guidance provided by the New York State Education Department, the Center for Disease Control’s Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools, the American Academy of Pediatrics COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools, and with input and support from the Essex County Department of Health and the district’s Medical Director.

As we plan for the 2021-2022 school year, Newcomb Central School will continue to utilize the health and safety guidelines in the District Reopening Plan. NCS D will utilize flexible planning to adjust to the changing circumstances in viral contagion, vaccination, county, state, and federal guidance. Data and guidance provided by the Center for Disease Control will continue to inform the decision-making for the Board of Education.

Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools

Updated Aug. 5, 2021

Key Takeaways

1. Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in the fall of 2021 is a priority.
2. Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports.

3. Due to the circulating and highly contagious Delta variant, CDC recommends universal indoor masking by all students (age 2 and older), staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.
4. In addition to universal indoor masking, CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to reduce transmission risk. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, such as when schools cannot fully re-open while maintaining these distances, it is especially important to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as screening testing.
5. Screening, testing, ventilation, handwashing, and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection are also important layers of prevention to keep schools safe.
6. Students, teachers, and staff should stay home when they have signs of any infectious illness and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.
7. Many schools serve children under the age of 12 who are not eligible for vaccination at this time. Therefore, this guidance emphasizes implementing layered prevention strategies (e.g., using multiple prevention strategies together consistently) to protect students, teachers, staff, visitors, and other members of their households, and support in-person learning.
8. Localities should monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies (e.g., physical distancing, screening testing).
9. NCS D will continue to limit the number of visitors, volunteers, and external groups on campus to the extent possible while striving for the best educational experience for our students.

Summary of Recent Changes

Updates as of August 27, 2021

- Pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.61, the Commissioner of the New York State Department of Health has issued a face covering/masking requirement for P-12 school settings. Universal masking of teachers, staff, students, and visitors to P-12 schools over age two and able to medically tolerate a face covering/mask and regardless of vaccination status, is required until this determination is modified or rescinded.
- Added recommendation for fully vaccinated people who have a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 to be tested 3-5 days after exposure, regardless of whether they have symptoms.

Key Changes for Newcomb Central School

(NCS's Stay Open Plan is subject to change based on circumstances with viral contagion, vaccination, and/or with the receipt of county, state and federal updated guidance.)

Masking:

- Universal masking of teachers, staff, students, and visitors to P-12 schools over age two and those able to medically tolerate a face covering/mask is required regardless of vaccination status.
- Masks must be worn by all staff, students, and visitors (regardless of vaccination status) inside the school and while on school transportation
 - Weather permitting, best practice supports mask breaks taking place outside throughout the day.
 - Masks shall be provided to anyone entering the building, or during the day, who is in need of one
 - Masks should cover both the nose and mouth, fit snugly, and be worn properly. Neck gaiters and bandanas are not recommended. There will be continued education regarding proper use of masks.

Classroom Instruction:

- 6 feet of social distancing will be observed to the extent possible. In situations where 6 feet of social distancing cannot be achieved, no less than 3 feet of social distancing will be required.

Transportation:

- NCS will return to normal bus runs for all interested families and students.
- Due to Federal Regulations, masks must be worn at all times.
- To the extent possible, the district will try to maximize the amount of available space on buses.
- 6 feet of social distancing will be maintained to the extent possible.
- A seating chart will be devised and students will be assigned seats.
- Students will be seated in family cohorts to the extent possible.
- Each family will be asked to inform the district of their transportation preferences as well as any changes.
- For the first month of school, the district will not share transportation with other True North schools. NCS will transport students to/from Boces Career and Technical Education. (The Safety Committee will continue to monitor and adjust this on a monthly basis based on area community transmission rates.)

Remote Learning:

- Unless a mandatory isolation or quarantine order is issued by Essex County Department of Health, a remote learning option will not be offered to students at NCS.
- If Essex County Department of Health places a student on isolation or under quarantine then:
 - The district will ensure that students are provided equal access to instruction and instructional materials via paper and/or Google Classroom.
 - Synchronous instruction will take place in real time with the student's classroom teacher(s).

Daily Screening:

- Newcomb will continue to use Pinpoint as the daily health screening for all students and staff.

- Paper screenings will be utilized for any person(s) entering the school building.

Athletics:

- Outdoor sports do not require masking
- For the first month of school, the district will not share transportation with other True North schools. NCS will transport athletes to/from sporting events. (The Safety Committee will continue to monitor and adjust this on a monthly basis based on area community transmission rates.)
- Inside sports require masking
- Spectators are required to mask at all indoor events

COVID-19 Testing at school, isolation, and quarantine

- Following the Commissioner's testing determination issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.62, all school students, teachers, and staff with new or worsening symptoms of COVID-19 must be excluded from school, regardless of vaccination status, and either (a) provide a negative COVID test result, or (b) remain excluded from school for a minimum of 10 calendar days from symptom onset, prior to returning to school. If student, teacher, or staff symptoms are improving AND they are fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicines, they may return to school with either a note from the healthcare provider indicating the test was negative OR a copy of the negative test result. Following the Commissioner's guidance, there are exceptions for testing. These exceptions include (1) pre-existing medical conditions, where there are no new or worsening symptoms; or (2) a note signed by a healthcare provider, giving an alternative medical diagnosis, in which the school permits the return of student, teacher, or staff member per the usual guidelines for that particular disease.

Food Service:

- Food service staff will wear masks at all times during food preparation and service.
- Physical distance will be maintained between students while moving through the food line and while eating.
- There is no need to limit food service approaches to single use items and/or packaged meals.
- Increased ventilation in food preparation, service & seating areas is recommended.

Breakfast:

- Secondary students (7-12) will eat breakfast from 7:45 am- 7:58 am
- Elementary students (Pre-K-6) will eat breakfast from 8:03 am- 8:20 am
- Tables will be disinfected between breakfast groups.
- Family cohorting will be observed to the extent possible.
- Assigned seats and a seating chart will be created.
- Physical distancing will be maintained between students while moving through the food line.
- Students will be seated no less than 6 feet apart when seated in the cafeteria.
- Increased ventilation will be observed in food preparation, service and dining areas.
- When students are not physically eating, masks must be worn.

Lunch:

- Elementary students (Pre-K-6) will eat lunch from 10:50 am- 11:20 am.
- Secondary students (7-12) will eat breakfast from 11:27 am- 11:53 am.
- Tables will be disinfected between lunch groups.

- Family cohorting will be observed to the extent possible.
- Assigned seats and a seating chart will be created.
- Physical distancing will be maintained between students while moving through the food line.
- Students will be seated no less than 6 feet apart when seated in the cafeteria.
- Increased ventilation will be observed in food preparation, service and dining areas.
- When students are not physically eating, masks must be worn.

Lockers:

- Students at the secondary level will have access to a locker.
- Lockers in use will be a minimum of 3 feet apart.
- In an effort to limit student congregation at lockers, the district will devise a plan to stagger locker visits for students.

Physical Education/Music/Band:

- 6 feet of social distancing will be observed to the extent possible. In situations where 6 feet of social distancing cannot be achieved, no less than 3 feet of social distancing will be required.
- Masks will not be required if physical education or music/band classes are conducted outside.
- Physical Education lockers will be assigned to each student.
- In an effort to maximize social distancing, students will be staggered when using the P.E. locker rooms.

Isolation room :

- The back entrance to the auditorium (foyer) will be used as an isolation room.

Vaccination:

- CDC recommends that all eligible teachers, faculty, staff, and students be vaccinated as soon as possible. Schools have a mixed population of both people who are fully vaccinated and people who are not fully vaccinated. Elementary schools primarily serve children under 12 years of age who are not eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine at this time. Other schools (e.g., middle schools, K-8 schools) may also have students who are not yet eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. Some schools (e.g., high schools) may have a low percentage of students and staff fully vaccinated despite vaccine eligibility. These variations require K-12 schools and stakeholders to make decisions about the use of COVID-19 prevention strategies in their schools and are reasons why the CDC recommends universal indoor masking regardless of vaccination status at all levels of community transmission.

Cleaning and sanitizing procedures:

- NCS will continue to follow our cleaning and sanitizing protocols from 2020-2021.
- All facilities will be cleaned daily.
- High touch surfaces will be cleaned several times a day.
- Areas where symptomatic / positive cases are presumed will be disinfected immediately following occupancy.
- Classrooms will be provided with additional cleaning, disinfecting supplies for staff during the day.

Ventilation

- Keeping windows open in individual classrooms and office spaces is recommended to the extent possible as long as it is safe to do so.

- If fans are used they should blow air out rather than into a room
- Holding of outdoor classes and activities is to be encouraged if safe to do so.
- Maximizing ventilation via the existing HVAC system

Safety Drills:

- Will be held as per the 2020-2021 Reopening Plan

Attendance:

- Per New York State Education Department Health and Safety Guide for 2021-2022, “so long as allowed by public health officials, schools should be open for in-person teaching and learning, and students should be in school.”
- Student attendance counts towards the minimum instructional hours and days required by the New York State Education Department therefore all NCS students are expected to attend school in-class every day.
- If Essex County Department of Health places a student on isolation or under quarantine then:
 - The district will ensure that students are provided equal access to instruction and instructional materials via paper and/or Google Classroom.
 - Synchronous instruction will take place in real time with the student’s classroom teacher(s).
 - Daily attendance as well as period by period attendance will be taken.

Use of school facilities:

- Indoor use of school facilities by outside groups will be prohibited.
- Outdoor use of facilities by outside groups will be permitted.
- Parents will be allowed into the school building by appointment.
- Parents/Guardians must wear masks indoors regardless of vaccination status.

While the District will not be involved in establishing county or area transmission rates, the thresholds below will be used as a tool to determine action by viral contagion rate.

CDC Transmission Thresholds:

Indicator (if different the higher level is selected)	Low Transmission Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
Total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days	0 - 9.99	10 - 49.99	50 - 99.99	≥100
Percentage of NAATs ¹ that are positive during the past 7 days	0 - 4.99%	5 - 7.99%	8 - 9.99%	≥10.0%

Newcomb Central School District’s Stay Open Plan is a living document. The Safety Committee, in partnership with Essex County Department of Health, intends to continue to exercise flexibility with monitoring and

adjusting our plan as needed based on the changing circumstances with viral contagion, vaccination, and/or with the receipt of county, state and federal updated guidance.