

# **North Putnam School Corporation**

**Back to School Plan  
in Response to COVID-19  
2021-2022 School Year**



Board Approved: July 15, 2021

# Document Overview

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Considerations outlined within this document are based on the Indiana Department of Health's *Back to School Guidance*. This document was developed in coordination with other schools in West Central Indiana and the Wabash Valley. It is intended to provide stakeholders with information on how North Putnam Community Schools plans to return to school in the Fall of 2021. The conditions, current medical landscape, and growing body of knowledge surrounding COVID-19 continue to evolve. This is a living document and may change based upon the situation at given moments in time.

In light of this new pandemic environment, please understand two key factors. One, this document was developed on the school's ability to maintain a safe and healthy school environment and the prevalence of COVID-19 in their community. Schools will need to constantly evaluate these two key factors as schools and communities will most likely fluctuate between the various phases of disease transmission over the coming months.

# Health Protocol for North Putnam Schools

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It is essential for our school community to work together to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the school environment and in the community while still providing a quality education program.

State statute gives public school districts the authority to exclude students who have a contagious disease such as COVID-19 or are liable to transmit it after exposure (IC 20-34-3-9). In addition, the local health department has the authority to exclude students from school and may order students and others to isolate or quarantine (IC 16-41-9-1.6). As such, districts/schools are encouraged to work closely with their local health departments.

## **Symptoms Impacting Consideration for Exclusion from School**

Students and employees will be trained to recognize the following COVID-19-related symptoms:

- A fever
- Cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea/Nausea
- Fatigue; muscle aches; headaches
- Sore throat, congestion, runny nose
- Loss of taste or smell

Students and employees who have symptoms of COVID-19 as described above and tests positive or does NOT get tested, then siblings and household members should be considered close contacts and advised to quarantine. If the symptomatic person is diagnosed with another condition that explains the symptoms, or tests negative, then no quarantine for close contacts is necessary, but a provider's note with an alternate diagnosis will be needed to return to school or work or the individual will need to remain home for 10 days from the first day symptoms appeared.

A symptomatic student or employee and anyone living in their household should quarantine while waiting for test results.

Please see [this link](#) for close contact and quarantine guidance. If you are fully vaccinated and identified as a close contact, you may continue to attend school and work. You will need to monitor for symptoms and isolate if they develop. If you are unvaccinated and identified as a close contact, you will need to isolate at home for a minimum of ten (10) calendar days.

Asymptomatic students and staff may return on Day 11 with a negative COVID test conducted by a health department, on-site clinic, or physician on Day 10 (Rapid or PCR) and resume normal educational activities without restrictions. Students returning on Day 11 will not be allowed to fully participate in extracurricular activities. If students and staff want to return on Day 11 and do not wish to obtain a negative COVID test, they will need to wear a face covering when not eating or drinking and remain six (6) feet away from individuals at all times, including

extracurricular activities. Parents can choose to have their child complete their 14 days at home versus returning to school with precautions.

### **Return to School After Exclusion**

Once a student or employee is excluded from the school environment, they may return if they satisfy the recommendations below. Currently those guidelines are:

#### ***Symptomatic and Tested Negative***

- Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication and show improvement in symptoms, unless advised otherwise by a healthcare provider.
- An alternate diagnosis is not needed.
- Close contacts do not need to quarantine.

#### ***Symptomatic and Untested and NOT a Close Contact of a COVID-19 Positive Person***

- Remain at home at least 10 calendar days since your symptoms first appeared.
- Be fever free without the use of fever reducing medication and show an improvement in symptoms.
- Siblings and household contacts should be considered close contacts and quarantine for 14 days.
- A note is not needed for return to school after isolation.
- Individuals with an alternate diagnosis do not need to isolate, but will need a note stating they may return to school or work, but the note does not need to list the alternate diagnosis.

#### ***Symptomatic and NOT Tested for COVID-19 and IS a Close Contact***

- Individuals must quarantine for 14 days after the last contact with the COVID-19 positive person. If the exposure is a household member and the case cannot properly isolate away from others at home, the last date of contact may be the last date of isolation for the case.
- Individuals must isolate at home for at least 10 days, be fever free 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.
- Show an improvement in symptoms.
- The above criteria must be met before returning to school or work.
- Siblings, household members, and other close contacts must quarantine.

#### ***Symptomatic and Tested negative and IS a Close Contact***

- *Individuals must quarantine for 14 days after the last contact with the COVID-19 positive person.* If the exposure is a household member and the case cannot properly isolate away from others at home, the last date of contact may be the last date of isolation for the case.
- Be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication; an alternate diagnosis is not needed.
- Both criteria need to be met before returning to school or work.

#### ***No Symptoms and NOT tested***

- May attend school and work.

***No Symptoms and tested NEGATIVE and is NOT a Close Contact***

- May attend school and work.

***No Symptoms and NOT tested for COVID-19 and IS a Close Contact***

- Must quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the positive person. If the exposure is a household member and the case cannot properly isolate away from others at home, the last date of contact may be the last date of isolation for the case.

***No Symptoms and tested NEGATIVE for COVID-19 and IS a Close Contact***

- Must quarantine for 10 or 14 days after the last exposure to the positive person. If the exposure is a household member and the case cannot properly isolate away from others at home, the last date of contact may be the last date of isolation for the case.

***Tested Positive-Symptomatic***

- Individuals must isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms.
- Be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication and show an improvement in symptoms.
- Close contacts need to quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the positive person.
- Siblings and other household members who are not able to isolate from everyone else will need to quarantine for 14 days. This may be after the ill person completes their 10 days of isolation, which will result in 24 days in quarantine.

***Tested Positive-Asymptomatic***

- Must isolate at home for 10 days after the date the sample was collected.
- Siblings and other household members who are not able to isolate from everyone else will need to quarantine for 14 days. This may be after the ill person completes their 10 days of isolation, which will result in 24 days in quarantine.

The state website has a list of over 200 testing facilities, their location, and hours of operation. This list is updated frequently.

**Screening**

The current CDC guidelines recommend screening all students and employees for COVID-19 if symptoms and history of exposure. Screening can consist of self-screening, school-based screening, and/or medical inquiries. The type and extent of screening is at the discretion of the district/school.

- ***Self-Screening***

Students and employees will be asked to self-screen for signs of COVID-19 illness (see p. 3) each day prior to coming to school/attending school events prior to

arriving at the school. Students and employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 without being otherwise explained, are prohibited from coming to school, and if they do come to school, they will be sent home immediately.

- ***School-Based Screening***

- *Temperature Screening*

- The district/school may take the temperature of students, employees and visitors on school property on a random basis or in situations where there is reason to believe that the person may be ill.

- *Observational/Self-Reported Screening*

- Districts/schools are encouraged to provide professional development regarding the recognition of COVID-19 symptoms and screening. Students and employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 without being otherwise explained, are prohibited from coming to school, and if they do come to school, they will be sent home immediately.

### **Medical Inquiries**

Federal law typically limits the type of medical inquiries that can be made, but given the nature of the pandemic more leeway has been given to districts/schools in this circumstance to make additional medical inquiries of staff and students than would otherwise be allowed.

- If a parent tells the district/school that a student is ill, the district/school may ask the parent whether the student is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19.
- If an employee calls in sick or appears ill, the district/school can inquire as to whether the employee is experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.
- If a person is obviously ill, the district/school may make additional inquiries and may exclude the person from school property.

Even without symptoms, if a student or employee has recently had contact with a person with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, has someone in their home been tested for COVID-19, or has recently traveled from somewhere considered to be a “hot spot” by the CDC, the district/school may exclude the student or employee from the school building and recommend that they self-quarantine.

### **Wearing Masks**

Schoolbus: Per CDC guidance face coverings are required on school buses at the time of adoption. If the restrictions are lessened by the CDC after adoption, the school will respond accordingly with the guidance. [This link](#) explains more about masking.

Classroom, Hallways, and Other Common Areas: If students and staff are not vaccinated, wearing a face covering is recommended, but not required. If students and staff are vaccinated, masks are not required. Please see [this link](#) for more information.

If a student or staff member prefers to wear a mask, regardless of their vaccination status, they will be allowed to do so.

### **Clinical Space COVID -19 Symptomatic**

There will be a room or space separate from the nurse’s clinic where students or employees who are feeling ill are evaluated or wait for pick up. All waiting staff and students should wear a

cloth face covering. Only essential staff assigned to the room may enter. Prior to sending a student to the clinic, teachers will call the clinic to determine if it is appropriate to send the student for what might be considered a minor injury.

A record will be kept of all persons who entered the room and the room will be disinfected several times throughout the day. Strict social distancing is required and staff must wear appropriate PPE. Students who are ill will be walked out of the building to their parents.

Additionally, all staff and students with fevers or symptoms associated with COVID-19 should be encouraged to seek medical attention for further evaluation and instructions. Students and staff may return before the 72 hour window has elapsed if they are approved to do so in writing by their healthcare provider.

#### **Clinic Space Non-COVID-19 Related**

Students who do not display symptoms of COVID-19 can be seen and treated in the nurse's clinic. Teachers will call the clinic to determine if it is safe to send the child to the clinic prior to releasing them from the classroom. This would include students who are injured during the school day or students with special health care needs such as those with chronic health conditions (i.e. - diabetes or seizures), those requiring medical treatments (i.e. - suctioning, tube feeding, or nebulizers), and those with individual health plans.

#### **Confirmed Case of COVID-19 on School Property**

When there is confirmation that a person infected with COVID-19 was on school property, North Putnam Schools will contact the local health department immediately. It is important to also notify the Indiana Department of Health of the confirmed case and any close contacts. Unless extenuating circumstances exist, the district/school will work with the local health department to assess factors such as the likelihood of exposure to employees and students in the building, the number of cases in the community, and other factors that will determine building closure.

It is the responsibility of the local health department to contact the person confirmed with COVID-19, inform direct contacts of their possible exposure, and give instructions to those involved with the confirmed case, including siblings and other household members regarding self-quarantine and exclusions. The individual who tested positive will not be identified in communications to the school community at large but may need to be selectively identified for contact tracing by the local health department.

If a closure is determined necessary, North Putnam School Corporation will consult with their local health department to determine the status of school activities including extracurricular activities, co-curricular activities, and before and after-school programs.

As soon as the North Putnam School Corporation becomes aware of a student or employee who has been exposed to or has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the custodial staff will be informed, so that impacted building or bus areas, furnishings, and equipment are thoroughly disinfected.

#### **Regular Immunizations**

Immunization requirements will remain in place. Assistance through local health departments and health systems will be provided. Please ensure your child receives all required vaccinations for school attendance and are administered on time. We will continue to monitor immunizations as we normally do and will provide reminders to parents.

Staff and students are encouraged to consider obtaining the vaccination for COVID-19, but will not be excluded from school or work unless guidance changes for schools and this becomes a vaccination required for school attendance or work. Fully vaccinated students and staff members will experience greater latitude if they are identified as a close contact.

### **Preventative Measures**

The priority for preventing the spread of disease in the school setting is to insist that sick employees and students stay home. Additionally, students and employees should remain home if someone in the household has COVID-19 symptoms or is being tested for COVID-19.

Some people can be infected with COVID-19, but show no signs of illness even though they are contagious and can spread the disease to others. It is also unknown how contagious people are the day or two before they begin to exhibit illness symptoms. Thus, these employees or students may be present at school, will show no signs of illness, but be capable of transmitting the disease to others. In these situations, the three most important mitigation strategies are social distancing, frequent handwashing, and appropriate PPE.

Handwashing and avoiding touching your face, eyes, nose, or mouth are also important steps a person can take to avoid becoming sick or spreading germs to others. School administrators will insist that employees and students wash their hands often and if soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. School administrators will incorporate key times into the school day when all persons should wash their hands.

Students may bring water, ONLY, from home. If water is brought to school in a recyclable water bottle, it should be taken home and cleaned each evening before returning to school. Water bottles will be available for purchase or as a milk substitute at breakfast and lunch, if meal requirements are met.

### **Shared Resources at School**

Thorough and frequent cleaning for shared resources will occur when individual resources are not able to be provided.



# Social Distancing at North Putnam

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The following are measures that North Putnam School Corporation will take to increase social distancing while still maintaining a level of face-to-face instruction.

## **Educational Programming:**

- Students will attend school each day, as normally as possible.
- We know that students perform better, academically and socially-emotionally when they attend school in person. Therefore, North Putnam School Corporation will offer in-person instruction.

## **Classroom and Learning Space:**

- Seating charts will be utilized.
- Three feet of social distancing is recommended and will be in place to the extent possible.

## **Breakfast and Lunch:**

Breakfast will be served as 'grab-n-go' for all students. They will pick up their lunch and eat either in the classroom or large areas such as the cafeteria, gym, or library at the middle and high school. Elementary students may eat in their classrooms.

Prior to any meal service, hand washing and sanitizing will be available to ensure safe eating practices.

The Food Service Provider (FSP) will develop and follow internal guidance from their corporate office.

## **Recess:**

When lining up, social distancing will be encouraged. Students will wash hands upon returning from recess prior to entering the classroom.

## **Arrival and Dismissal:**

Entry doors to the building will be held or propped open during arrival and dismissal.

## **Visitors in the Building:**

Visitors will enter through the main door of the school, sign in, be issued a badge, and may be subject to additional screening questions. It is possible, depending on the time of year, visitors may be reduced or not allowed in the building.

# Extra-Curricular & Co-Curricular Activities

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## North Putnam's Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Re-entry Considerations

### Athletics

North Putnam Middle & High Schools Athletics are following the most recent guidelines distributed by the IHSAA and Indiana Department of Health, linked [here](#). We ask that you cooperate with school officials so our student athletes can enjoy a full season of events.