



Return to Learn Plan FAQs

Please note that this document is a fluid document that will change as we receive updated guidance and information from the Iowa Dept. of Education and state and local health departments.

FACE COVERINGS

1. **Are all individuals in a school building required to wear a face covering at all times?**
 - a. Face masks (nose and mouth) are required for students, if social distancing can't be maintained, and required for staff and visitors. Waivers of these requirements may be granted for religious and medical reasons as required by law.
 - i. Guidance and recommendations on face coverings can be found on the [CDC Cloth Face Covers webpage](#).
 - ii. Warren County Health Services has informed this recommendation using guidance from the [American Academy of Pediatricians](#)
 - b. Students in grades Pk-12 will be responsible for providing their own mask
 - c. Students in grades Pk-12 will be responsible for daily cleaning of cloth masks
 - d. Staff members are required to wear a mask, unless the staff member has a note from the superintendent or designee waiving this requirement
 - e. Staff members will be responsible for daily cleaning of cloth masks and/or face shields

2. **Are face masks required when individuals are outside?**

Yes. Face masks are not required outside if social distance is maintained (if individuals remain 6 feet apart from each other).

3. **How will we verify a staff or student meets an exemption to the face covering requirement?**

The district has developed a [form](#) for families and staff members to request medical or religious exemptions for face coverings.

4. **Can individuals in a school building wear a face shield instead of a face mask?**

No. Building principals and/or the Superintendent may grant permission for alternative face coverings if appropriate. This would make sense particularly in situations where it is important for students to see words being formed (i.e. English Learners, early childhood, world language, etc.).

5. Can dividers be placed around student and staff desks in lieu of face coverings?

No. Schools and districts may opt to utilize dividers around desks, especially for those individuals who have a face covering exemption; however, the dividers will not be used in lieu of face coverings for students without an exemption.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

1. Are all individuals in a school building required to maintain social distance (remain 6 feet apart) at all times?

Social distance must be observed as much as possible. Desks do not need to be spaced 6 feet apart; however, it is recommended that excess furniture be removed from classrooms to allow for as much space as possible in between desks.

2. Is social distance required to be maintained on school busses?

No. All individuals on a bus must wear a face mask, unless they have a face mask waiver. Allow as much space as possible between each individual on a bus. It is recommended that students from the same household sit together on a bus and students sit in the same seat each day.

3. How should schools handle passing periods and allowing students to move from class-to-class?

Consider the following hallway procedures to adhere to social distancing requirements and IDPH limitations on gathering sizes, when possible:

- Limit the number of persons within hallways at any given time to the greatest extent possible.
- Limit required movement of students between classes. Consider having teachers and staff rotate through classes rather than requiring movement/mixing of student groups.
- Provide hallway supervision using hall and bathroom monitors to ensure a limited number of persons enter bathrooms at one time.
- Use marking to designate one-way paths in hallways and designate certain staircases one-way only, as possible.
- Place floor markings to delineate 6-foot distance between students in locations where they line up.
- Remove furniture or other items that may encourage congregating in certain areas.
- Limit number of riders in elevators to one or two students with an additional adult (when a student needs continuous support or supervision).
- Suspend the use of lockers, if possible. Sharing lockers should be prohibited. If lockers must be used, consider staggering locker assignments and creating schedules to stagger locker access to allow for 6-foot distancing between students. For example, students could be assigned to every other or every third locker depending on their width.

SYMPTOM SCREENINGS/TEMPERATURE CHECKS

1. How should symptom screenings be administered?

Norwalk Community Schools will require self certification and verification for all staff, students, and visitors entering school buildings. Symptoms include a temperature greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit and currently known symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, muscle and body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Individuals who have a temperature greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or one known symptom may not enter buildings. Individuals who exhibit symptoms should be sent home and referred to a medical provider for evaluation and treatment and be given information about when they can return to school.

2. Will the schools and district utilize self-certification to verify that individuals are symptom free?

Yes. Schools will require individuals to self-certify that they are fever and symptom free before entering a school building, in lieu of conducting symptom and temperature checks at the school building. Self-certification may consist of a simple electronic form that an individual must complete on each day that they will enter a school building. A self-certification may not be completed at the beginning of the year for the entire year.

3. Who can perform symptom screenings?

Any staff member may perform symptom screenings. It is not required that a certified school nurse perform these checks and screenings. We have established a self-certification process, parents, guardians, or other individuals can perform the temperature and symptom checks. More symptom screening information will be sent out prior to the start of the school year.

SELF-QUARANTINE

1. When must an individual self-quarantine?

The district will follow Warren County Health Services, Iowa Department of Public Health and CDC COVID-19 guidance. The nurse in each building will assist with specific quarantine questions based on those guidelines.

2. What is considered “close contact”?

Close contact means the individual was within 6 feet of the individual for more than 15 consecutive minutes who tested positive for COVID-19.

3. What is the procedure if a student were to show symptoms mid-day?

We will provide a supervised isolation room for students/staff who are experiencing COVID-19-like symptoms and may be awaiting evaluation and/or pickup. Judgment of nursing professionals or the administrator/designee (in the absence of a nurse) must determine who is placed in the isolation room. Parents/Guardian will be contacted to have the child sent home.

REMOTE LEARNING

1. Can parents opt-in to full remote instruction for students?

Part of the NCSD Return to Learn Plan is to allow students to opt-in to remote instruction (Required Remote Learning - RRL). The deadline to request voluntary RRL was August 1 - medically related RRL requests may still be submitted to Superintendent Magee at dmagee@norwalk.k12.ia.us. This will be addressed on an individual student basis to meet the learning needs of each student. Students receiving remote instruction will be required to attend the remote sessions and complete all work as required by the teacher. Attendance is required to be taken.

2. Is a school required to transition to remote instruction if an individual who was in the building tests positive for COVID-19?

No.

3. What are the hybrid options for learning?

A reduction in class size will require students to attend fewer days per week for in-person instruction. The district will employ an alternating day hybrid model where one group of students attends school on “Purple Cohort” days and one group of students attends school on “Gold Cohort” days. District staff members will make every effort to assign students in the same household to the same cohort. Students with special needs (IEPS, 504 plans, ELL, and at-risk students) may continue to attend daily.

4. May students in Required Remote Learning still participate in cocurricular and extracurricular activities?

Yes.



Resources

[Norwalk CSD Return to Learn Plan](#)

[IDOE Reopening Guidance](#)

[IDOE Reopening Guidance FAQ](#)

[Iowa Department of Education COVID-19 Guidance](#)