

LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services



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Section 1: Introduction

The purpose of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Fund is to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impacts of COVID-19 on the nation's students by addressing students' **academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs**. This plan describes how New Kent County Public Schools will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and division staff during and following the return to full in-person instruction. Questions about this plan should be directed to Jonathan Hochman (jhochman@nkcps.k12.va.us)

Section 2: Maintaining Health and Safety

New Kent County Public Schools has taken and will continue to take actions to ensure the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and division staff during and following the return to full in-person instruction. A description of actions already taken and additional actions planned is below.

In addition, New Kent County Public Schools has implemented practices on each of the following safety recommendations established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Mask Wearing

The CDC recommends masks as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the mask coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice.

NKCPS provides the option for staff and students to wear cloth face coverings/masks in the school building.

Modifying Facilities to Allow for Physical Distancing

Students and staff will maintain at least three feet of separation in the school building and on school buses, as is practicable.

Frequent Hand Washing and Use of Hand Sanitizer

Hands should be washed often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when visibly soiled, before eating, and after using the restroom. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer is also appropriate in the absence of readily available soap and water. However, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has warned consumers to avoid certain hand sanitizer products due to the potential presence of methanol, a substance that can be toxic when absorbed through the skin or ingested.

Frequent Cleaning of Surfaces

Reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by cleaning and disinfection is an important part of reopening schools. SSC Service Solutions provides custodial services for NKCPs. SSC submitted a COVID-19 Cleaning Strategies Plan that includes a frequency schedule for cleaning and disinfection.

In addition to the cleaning services provided by SSC, school staff will be reminded of the importance of routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be required based on the level of use. High-touch surfaces include, but are not limited to: tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.

Health Screening

Updated guidance from the CDC does not currently recommend universal symptom screenings (screening all students grades K-12) be conducted by schools. Parents or caregivers will be required to monitor their children for signs of infectious illness and exposure daily. Students who are sick should not attend school in person. School staff will follow similar procedures as students.

Exposure and Plans for how to communicate an outbreak or positive cases detected at the school

Exposure refers to whether an individual has had close contact with a COVID-19 case (or a person with COVID-19-like symptoms). Notifications will be done to protect the ill individual's confidentiality and clearly explain what the school is doing in response to the diagnosis and what the recommendations are for teachers, staff, and parents.

Teachers, staff, and parents will be kept apprised of developing situations in which more cases are found, and more stringent measures are planned in the school to prevent disease. The frequency of notifications may depend on how a situation is evolving.

Coordination with state and local health officials

An open line of communication has already been established between NKCPS and the Chickahominy Health District. Communication with the local health district will be made by the Division Superintendent or designee.

Accommodations for Children with Disabilities with Respect to Health and Safety Policies

Upon request, a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA may be provided with the plan in an alternative format accessible by contacting Mr. Richard Dirmeyer at rdirmeyer@nkcps.k12.va.us or (804) 966-8525.

Section 3: Continuity of Services

New Kent County Public Schools has taken and will continue to take actions to ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs.

Academic

NKCPS has returned to five days per week of in-person instruction for all students in grades K-12. Students will be assessed at the start of the school year to determine current instructional progress and provide guidance to staff to provide appropriate instruction to meet identified needs. Throughout the year, students will be assessed to determine their growth and interventions provided for students not making adequate progress. Teachers will be given professional development on incorporating intervention strategies into the classroom. School intervention teams will review assessment data regularly to determine the effectiveness of the strategies being used and adjust instruction accordingly to meet the needs of the students.

Absenteeism Monitoring/Approaches

Student attendance will be monitored through PowerSchool, the student information system used in NKCPS. The attendance clerk at each school will monitor attendance based on current regulations and practices. Current NKCPS regulations require that the school administrator, social worker, or attendance committee may require any student (grades K-12) who receives a total of five (5) absences per semester at the high school level or 10 absences per year at the elementary or middle school level to either provide documentation other than parental notes for additional absences to be excused and/or meet with the attendance committee. The school division will more closely monitor students' absences reported by the parent/guardian because of reported COVID-19 symptoms, exposure, or a positive test. Students will be referred to the school attendance committee (administration, counselor, school nurse, school social worker, student support facilitator, and other appropriate staff members) to work with the family in determining interventions and additional support that would be needed. Follow-up with the local health district is included in these situations. Staff attendance will be monitored through communication between the building administrators and the Office of Human Resources. Follow-up for staff absences will be coordinated through the Office of Human Resources.

Social/Emotional/Mental Health

The school division will support students with immediate needs in the social/emotional areas. Teachers and other school division staff will refer students with needs for immediate intervention and support to the school counselor. The building administrator will convene a school-based team meeting to determine the types of support that the student and/or family may need. Staff members from the Student Services department will participate in the school-based team meetings.

School Nutrition Services

The plan for the use of the school cafeteria will be developed at each school. Lunch schedules differ at each school. If a food and dining service plan can be created in a way that allows for optimal physical distancing, the cafeteria will be used. The cafeteria breakfast and lunch lines will need to be adjusted at each school depending on the number of students in the cafeteria at any given time.

Section 4: Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, New Kent County Public Schools sought public input and took such information into account, as described below.

Public input was sought through:

- Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Committee Meeting
- Superintendent's Parent Advisory Committee Meeting
- Indian Parent Advisory Committee
- Gifted Advisory Committee
- Division Website & Facebook Posting

Public Comments were received at the June 7, 2021, School Board meeting. Citizens were given another opportunity for public comment at the December 6, 2021, May 9, 2022, December 5, 2022, and June 5, 2023 School Board meetings. Another opportunity is currently scheduled for the November 13, 2023 School Board meeting.

Public Comments are always accepted by emailing NKCPSfeedback@nkcps.k12.va.us.

Section 5: Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

During the ARP ESSER award, New Kent County Public Schools will periodically review and, as needed, revise its plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services. The plan will be reviewed at least every six months, and New Kent County Public Schools will seek and consider public input during the review process. Plan revisions will address updated CDC guidance on safely reopening schools if any are issued.

Section 6: Making the Plan Available to the Public

New Kent County Public Schools has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at newkentschools.org;
- The plan is also available in Spanish;
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact Ross Miller at rmiller@nkcps.k12.va.us or (804) 966-9650 to request translation;
- Upon request, a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA may be provided with the plan in an alternative format accessible by contacting Mr. Richard Dirmeyer at rdirmeyer@nkcps.k12.va.us or (804) 966-8525.