

# NORTH ADAMS SCHOOLS CONTINUING EDUCATION PLAN FALL, 2021-2022

Beginning July 1, 2021, Governor Holcomb gave local school boards the responsibility of determining what safety measures will be put in place to address the impact and spread of COVID-19 for their districts. They have been strongly encouraged to follow guidance from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and the IDOH (Indiana Department of Health) as well as to work with their local health departments.

As most school trustees are not healthcare experts, this task requires much consideration, consultation with our local health department, and research. The North Adams Board of School Trustees wishes to return to the most flexible, optimum learning environment for our students and staff, but realizes safety and well-being must continue to be a consideration, as well.

The following pages outline those recommendations from the CDC, IDOH, and the Adams County Health Department as well as the protocols adopted by the North Adams Board of School Trustees. **Please note that this is a living document and will continually be reviewed and refined based upon the positivity rate in our county and community as well as any additional recommendations, mandates, or directives we may be given from our government and/or healthcare officials. Immediate changes to the plan may be made by the Superintendent based upon recommendations and/or mandates from State and/or local government agencies and health departments.**

Thank you for your support of our school district and students. Together we have met and will continue to meet the challenges of COVID-19 and provide a quality education in a safe environment for our children.

Topic	Guidance and Notes
<b>Best Practice for Teaching and Learning</b>	<p>North Adams continues to believe that onsite, in-person, collaborative learning environments provide the best learning outcomes and social/emotional development for students.</p> <p>Virtual learning opportunities will NOT be an option EXCEPT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For those students confirmed to be positive for the virus or close contacts of someone positive for the virus and during their required quarantine or isolation OR</li><li>• For those students with an IEP or 504 (or who with documentation have been identified as potentially eligible for one of these under Article 7 or IDEA) whose least restrictive environment is found by case conference committee decision to be separate from peers and/or outside the regular school.</li></ul> <p>In these situations, NACS is committed to providing continuity of learning to the best extent possible through a combination of options which may include virtual learning.</p> <p><b>Please note that virtual learning is NOT an option for students absent for short periods of time (i.e., sickness, appointments, etc.) or who are</b></p>

**going on vacation. Attendance policies will be in effect and followed at this time for the 2021-22 school year.**

For staff, the NACS Board of School Trustees passed a resolution providing for COVID leave until October 12, 2021 when it will be reviewed again. Please do note that certified staff will be expected to use up to five (5) sick days before the district will supply up to an additional five (5) sick leave days for COVID or COVID-related absences. Classified staff will be expected to use up to three (3) sick days before the district will supply up to an additional seven (7) sick leave days for COVID or COVID-related absences.

As for SHUTDOWNS, North Adams does NOT intend to shut down this school year. However, without knowing what situations may arise, a general rule of thumb would be when 15% or more of the student enrollment within one of the NACS schools are quarantined due to being positive for COVID-19 or a close contact for someone positive for the virus, eLearning may be implemented for a minimum of one week to mitigate the spread. This may happen in specific grade levels, buildings, or district wide. Another consideration will be if we have the availability of substitutes to staff needed positions due to staff absences.

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## Screening Measures

Health screening should continue to be completed before a student/employee leaves home each day. **Students/Staff are encouraged to stay home if they exhibit any of the following symptoms.** Please call your school to report the absence.

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or greater
- Persistent cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills/repeated shaking
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

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## Hygienic Practices

- We will continue with Clean Hands In, Clean Hands Out practices. Please apply hand sanitizer upon entering and leaving an area/room or wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, when possible. This practice alone helped reduce the number of absences due to typical illnesses, like the flu or colds.
- North Adams will continue with increased cleaning of high touch, high traffic areas.
- Classroom surfaces will be disinfected each evening, and buses will be disinfected daily.

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## Bus Transportation

**CDC Requirement:** The CDC's requirement that masks are required on all public transportation, including school buses, still is in effect.

**North Adams Guidelines:** The NACS Board acknowledges that there is incongruity between our Governor’s directive for local governing bodies to make decisions on COVID-related restrictions and the CDC’s standing requirement that masking is REQUIRED on all forms of public transportation. However, the failure of the Board to follow these requirements could expose the district to liability that would impact its ability to provide the programming and services our students need. Therefore:

- Anyone riding a bus is REQUIRED to follow whatever the most current CDC or government REQUIREMENTS are regarding school transportation. As of 7/13/2021, that is to mask on all forms of public transportation.
- Seats will be assigned for contact tracing and to continue to help with management of the bus.
- Daily changes to the bus a child rides are not permitted. The only exception to this rule will be for those students who attend the Boys and Girls Club after school. These students will most likely ride a different bus in the afternoon when traveling to the Boys and Girls Club than the one they rode to school in the morning.
- Guest riders for sleep overs, play dates, etc. will not be allowed.

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### **CDC and IDOH Recommendations:**

- The CDC and IDOH strongly recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status, and layered prevention to remain safe for in-person learning.
- For outdoor situations, the recommendations are to mask if one is:
  - At high-risk for illness,
  - In a crowded area and unable to socially distance, and/or
  - More comfortable wearing a mask.

## **Masking**

**North Adams Guidelines:** Beginning August 25, 2021, all staff and students will be expected to be masked except when:

- Six (6) feet or more apart and seated, facing the same direction,
- Eating,
- Given masks breaks,
- Physically exerting oneself (i.e., playing sports, running, dancing, etc.), and/or
- Outside and at least three (3) feet apart.

This requirement will continue until such time as Adams County is “blue” or “yellow” by the State COVID alert system or until the Adams County Health Officer lifts his recommendation.

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## **Food Service**

- Students will continue to be spread out as much as possible during lunch to allow for reasonable distancing. K-4 will eat in the Activity Center; 5-8 in the BES/BMS cafeteria dining room; and 9-12 in H-Hall and the BHS cafeteria dining room.
  - Students will be expected to sit in the same seats daily for contact tracing purposes.
  - Food service staff will be masked when preparing, serving, and sanitizing food prep areas.
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- The USDA has approved its Universal Feeding program again this year, so basic lunches will be free for everyone for another year.

## Isolation

Isolation means individuals should stay home and away from household members (as is possible) for ten (10) days following the onset of symptoms or a positive test. If symptoms are improving and they are fever-free for at least 24 hours, they may return to school and activities after the 10 days.

## Contact Tracing

- If all students are masked and facing forward in a classroom, a close contact is any individual within three (3) feet of someone confirmed positive for COVID-19.
- If all students are NOT masked correctly and facing forward in the classroom, a close contact is any individual within six (6) feet of someone confirmed positive for COVID-19.

## Quarantining

- Vaccinated Close Contacts:**
- **Asymptomatic close contacts** do NOT have to quarantine.
    - However, they should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure and
    - Wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.
  - **Symptomatic vaccinated** close contacts must quarantine for 10 days from the onset of symptoms and fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications.
- Unvaccinated** close contacts MUST quarantine UNLESS they tested positive for COVID-19 in the last three (3) months. Verification of a positive test may be required to be exempted from quarantine.
- Unvaccinated Close Contact and Quarantine:**
- **Asymptomatic** individuals may return after:
    - Day 8 with a negative PCR test on Days 5, 6, or 7 OR negative BinaxNOW test on Day 8. Must observe Enhanced Precautions for Days 8-14 (see below)
    - Day 10 with Enhanced Precautions for Days 11-14 (see below)
    - Day 15 with no precautions or testing.
  - **Enhanced Precautions:**
    - Masked at all times
    - At least 3 feet from others in classrooms, facing forward
    - Lunch eaten separately and/or at least 6 feet from others
    - Hand hygiene practiced
    - Symptom monitoring daily at home and school. If symptoms present, student should stay home/be sent home and encouraged to receive a PCR test
      - Positive PCR: **Isolate** 10 days from onset of symptoms
      - Negative PCR: Complete remainder of 14-day quarantine
  - **Symptomatic** individuals may return after:

- 10 days from the onset of symptoms and
- Fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication

## Reporting

Schools are required to report all positive cases to the IDOH.

## Field Trips

Field trips will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, considering the positivity rate in the location of the trip and transportation requirements. All protocols for transportation and the receiving location must be adhered to by all participants, including any volunteers who may attend.

## Visitors and Community Use of Space

- Visitors providing or assisting with academic programming (i.e., military recruiters, guest speakers, convocations, college reps, case managers/counselors, approved chaperones, etc.) will be permitted beyond the main offices if positivity rates in our county and their counties of origin are blue or yellow (as based on the IDOH's dashboard).  
*\*As of 8/24/2021, visitors providing or assisting with academic programming will still be allowed provided they adhere to masking, social distancing, and other hygienic expectations.*
- Community organizations with insurance will be considered for rental of the facility based upon community positivity rates as well as all pre-existing considerations for eligibility.

## Nurse's Clinic

- The nurses will be masked at all times when directly caring for students and staff.
- One sick bay will be reserved to isolate potentially infectious individuals separately from others receiving routine healthcare.
- When potentially infectious individuals are or have recently been in the Nurse's Clinic, the nurse may require anyone entering the clinic to mask as a precaution.

## Extra-Curriculars and Events

- Performing arts, clubs, organizations, and athletic teams will continue to follow guidance from their professional organizations (IMEA and IHSSA) as well as the local health department to make determinations of protocols instituted.
- Indoor event capacity will be continually monitored and adjusted based on positivity rates in our community and area. If Adams County is blue, spectators may be at or near maximum capacity. If the county is yellow or orange, spectators at events may be restricted to 75% or 50% capacity, respectively. If Adams County is red, spectators at sporting events may be restricted to 25% or lower capacity.  
*\*8/24/2021 Note: At this time, we will NOT restrict capacity. However, all spectators are expected to be masked at events indoors. When at outdoor events, masks should be worn when not more than 3 feet socially distanced. If it is observed that spectators are not masking consistently, capacity limits may have to be considered to ensure the safety of our student athletes.*
- Please note that athletes/organization participants will be subject to contact tracing, too. Therefore, being vaccinated, if eligible, is the best way to ensure continuous participation and to avoid quarantine. If an athlete/participant is

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not vaccinated and deemed a “close contact”, he/she will be subject to all timelines regarding quarantining.

- Typical school events like Back-to-School nights, P/T Conferences, Prom, etc. are planned to happen, although modifications at times may need to be made.
- Visitors to school are encouraged to follow CDC recommendations regarding social distancing, masking, and hygienic practices, please.

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## **Water**

All students will be given a water bottle at the start of the year or may carry their own. Contactless bottle filler stations are available in all buildings.

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## **Students Attending Other Area Schools/ Businesses**

Students attending other schools/businesses (i.e., CTE, special education, clinical placements, work internships, etc.) will be expected to abide by the receiving organization’s protocols.

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## **Special Education**

- Case conferences may be convened virtually, in-person, or a combination of the two.
- Accommodations and/or modifications which may be needed to mitigate concerns associated with COVID-19 may be addressed in a case conference. Please contact the school to schedule a meeting as quickly as possible to make sure appropriate interventions may be put in place before school starts.

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## **Vaccinations**

- Please go to <https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/2524.htm> to find the most up-to-date information about vaccination availability, how to get copies of your test results/verification, or to register for a vaccine or COVID test.
  - Presently, AMH is offering the Pfizer vaccine, which has been approved for children 12 and up.
  - The Adams County Health Department is offering the Moderna vaccine.
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