

Norton City Schools
Health and Safety Plan
Phase 3
July 13, 2020
Updated 8/25/20

Local Public Health Conditions

COVID-19 has not had as large of an impact on Norton and Southwest Virginia as it has had on other parts of the Commonwealth and the Nation. As of July 8, 2020 only four citizens of Norton had contracted the virus and there were no active cases as reported by VDH.

Therefore the following mitigation strategies variances will be considered as appropriate for students attending school:

Mitigation Compilation for NCS

[NCS Phase 3 Mitigation Strategies](#)

Planning to Reopen

COVID -19 Planning Team:

Norton City Schools (NCS) has created a COVID 19 Planning Team which is assisted by advisory committees. Members of the Team include: Dr. Gina Wohlford, Superintendent; Brad Hart, High School principal; Dr. Scott Addison, Elementary and Middle School Principal; Brandon Stidham, High School Assistant Principal; Melissa Kiser, Elementary and Middle School Principal; Sundy Adams, Special Education Coordinator; Lisa Bolling, Technology Coordinator; and Jennifer Hughes, school nurse.

The points of contact are:

Jennifer Hughes (school nurse) jhughes@nortoncityschools.org 276-679-0971 Norton Elementary and Middle School

Brandon Stidham (High School Assistant Principal) bstidham@nortoncityschools.org 276-679-2554 John I. Burton High School

NCS has established a partnership with Fred Ramey, Norton city manager, and Todd Lagow, Norton emergency management director. NCS is working with local leadership to coordinate a safe, well-coordinated, and responsive plan that encompasses the use of community resources and aligns with local strategic planning.

Contact Information for Local Health Department and procedure for reaching the local health department:

School nurses will report suspected cases of COVID- 19 to the Principal and Division Superintendent, who in turn will contact Michelle McPherson, at the local health department: LENWISCO Health Department, 134 Roberts Avenue, SW, Wise, VA 24293. (phone: 276-328-8000).

Norton City Schools will collect student data on absenteeism, clinic visits, exclusions due to illness, reporting of COVID-19 incidents, utilizing the student management system (PowerSchool). When a student visits or is sent to the school nurse, information is entered in PowerSchool to record reason/illness if necessary. Teachers will use School Clinic Guidelines provided by the school nurses for assistance in limiting non-emergencies that come to the nurse's office.

Communication Strategies include:

NCS health plan, mitigation strategies, and new health policies will be communicated with families, school personnel, and the community through the Division and School websites as well as by email and our School Messenger system. The Division will develop informational videos and training for parent viewing. Hard copies of the plan will be available upon request. In addition, information will be sent home to families at the beginning of the school year.

Faculty and staff will receive orientation and training specific to COVID-19 mitigation strategies utilizing SafeSchools Training Modules, webinars, and other means as deemed appropriate.

Stakeholders (leadership, teachers, parents, students, community members) have been involved in the decisions associated with reopening schools.

Decisions related to COVID-19 will be managed by the Superintendent in coordination with the administration and school nurses who work closely with the local health department to stay abreast of community spread and any issues that may require attention. If a student, faculty or staff is virtual learning/working or has *not* been in our schools 14 days prior to a reported case, it will not be reported as a school case, but considered a community exposure. In an effort for open communication and transparency, all information is shared through the superintendent's office via the District website and various social media outlets.

Positive cases detected while at school will be reported in a confidential manner to the appropriate officials.

On June 25, 2020, Governor Northam's Chief of Staff officially stated that the RECOVER, REDESIGN, RESTART 2020 document, and the Governor's recommendations were guidance only and that School Board's were best positioned to make reopening decisions based on their local health metrics during the Governor's daily press conference.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wN3XztSLo24> at the 26:00 mark).

A parent survey for the school year 20-21 was administered to families, about their preferred method of returning to school. Approximately 20% have indicated that they would prefer a fully remote/virtual option.

School administrators have held routine ZOOM meetings with teachers to keep them aware of the planning process and allowed them to ask questions and have input.

Division Student Health Services:

The NCS lead nurse serves on the executive task force for the reopening of schools, is fully

aware of all safety and health protocols related to COVID-19 and has helped order the appropriate medical grade PPE for use.

She has also participated in meetings with the NASN, VDH, and VDOE to develop a plan to assure and maintain typical, non-COVID-19, health services. In addition, face coverings have been ordered for all NCS staff members for use during the 2020-2021 school year. Furthermore, students will be encouraged to wear masks on a daily basis. Masks will be available for any student who does not possess their own mask.

NCS maintains a strong relationship with Health Connect America and Family Preservation Services to provide mental health services to children in need. Professional development training for all NCS staff in the area of trauma informed instruction has occurred during the 2019-20 school year.

Promoting Behaviors That Reduce Spread of COVID-19

Educational videos and SafeSchools Training Modules will be provided for all staff, students and families prior to reopening schools. These trainings will promote hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, use of cloth face coverings, staying home when sick, encouraging physical distancing.

In addition, signage, flyers, and instructions will be a part of the information process for all students, employees, and visitors to school facilities.

Adequate supplies will be provided to promote healthy hygiene. Preventative measures signs will be posted in high traffic areas that will educate students and staff and serve as reminders of ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Social distancing guidelines will be followed in the classrooms, communal areas, and buses to the greatest extent possible. Meals will be provided in the classroom to optimize social distancing while gatherings of over 250 will not be allowed anywhere until Phase III restrictions have been lifted.

Virginia Phase Guidance for Schools and CDC guidance for recreational sports and school related sports will be followed.

Maintaining Healthy Environments and Operations

Norton City Schools has developed procedures and protocols for health screenings for all students, employees, and visitors within the school division. The following daily procedures will be followed:

Screening of Students (Bus):

- Daily health screenings will be conducted for staff and students prior to their start to the school day.

- Bus monitors and other staff will be assigned to morning bus routes. The assigned staff member will wear PPE (gloves and face covering) and will step off the bus to screen students' temperatures by scanning foreheads with a no-touch thermometer.
- Parents are asked to check their child's temperature prior to coming to the bus stop and to be readily available until their child is officially screened by our staff.
- Students registering a temperature of 100 degrees or higher will not be permitted on the school bus and will return to the care of their family. Their names and temperatures will be recorded by the bus monitor so that the school nurse will have the information necessary to enable her/him to conduct follow-up phone interviews with the student's family. They will be given written information regarding COVID-19 symptoms, self-monitoring/quarantine tips, and appropriate responses.
- Students not allowed bus transportation will be required, health allowing, to participate in remote learning for the next 72 hours (if school days) before attempting to return to school.
- Any student who is required to participate in remote learning will have the necessary school materials (electronic device, etc.) made available to them for pickup or delivery.

Screening of Students (Car Riders/Student Drivers):

- Students who are transported to school in personal vehicles will be screened upon entering the building.
- The school personnel assigned to the car rider line will wear PPE (gloves and face covering) and will scan students for temperatures as they enter the building at a designated location.
- Student drivers will be screened upon entering the school by an assigned staff member who will be wearing PPE (gloves and face covering).
- Students registering a temperature of 100 degrees or higher will not be allowed to attend classroom instruction. The names of such students, as well as their temperatures, will be recorded and the information will be given to the school nurse. They will be given written information regarding COVID-19 symptoms, self-monitoring/quarantine tips, and appropriate responses, as well as informing them that a school nurse will follow up with them later in the day.
- Students who cannot participate in in-person instruction will be required, health allowing, to participate in remote learning for the next 72 hours (if school days) before returning to school. At that time, a student returning to school must also have clearance from a clinician.
- Any student who is required to participate in remote learning will have the necessary school materials (electronic device, etc.) made available to them for pickup or delivery.

Screening of Employees:

Faculty and staff will be required to self monitor each day prior to beginning their workday utilizing an employee system checklist form. The screening will include the assessment of:

- Temperature of 100°
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat

- Loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea
 - Known close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19
- If a faculty or staff member registers a temperature of 100 degrees or more, they will notify the administrator of their respective school that a substitute has been utilized following the ReadySub protocol.
 - Additionally, once employees arrive at their assigned work location, a self-administered temperature check will be required.
 - In the event an employee registers a temperature of 100 degrees or more they will be required to leave the site immediately and notify their administrator.
 - The administrator will record the information and provide it to the school nurse. The school nurse will conduct a follow-up interview by telephone.

Screening of Visitors:

- Only essential visitors will be permitted to enter school premises. All visits to the school will require a scheduled appointment.
- All visitors will be screened using a symptom checklist form and require a temperature check.
- Visitors must sign a form attesting to being symptom-free for the past 10 days and not have been recently exposed to anyone known with COVID-19. The screeners will wear PPE (gloves and face coverings) while conducting the screenings.
- Any visitor registering a temperature of 100 degrees or higher will not be permitted entrance to the school facility.
- Visitors will be issued a visitor badge that must be worn at all times during their visit.
- Visitors will be required to follow current health and safety protocols during their visit, including routine hand washing between clients when working with children or supplies.

Families coming to the School:

- Families coming to the school to check in or check out a child will need to call before arriving and wait outside the school building.
- School personnel will escort students to the entrance/exit when necessary.
- Families should not leave their cars.

As a safety precaution, families should have personal identification to show school personnel that they are a person who is allowed to pick up the child.

Staff and children who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 will be offered virtual learning and may work from home as recommended by their physician.

If any gathering and field trips are planned, guidelines will be aligned to follow any Executive Orders in place.

Back up staff will be trained prior to reopening of schools and as needed throughout the school year to ensure continuity of operations.

Custodians are trained in cleaning and will provide increased cleaning to buses, transport

vehicles, and frequently touched surfaces. Adequate cleaning supplies will be ordered frequently and maintained in safe and appropriate environments.

Additional hand sanitizing stations will be made available to all students and staff.

Adequate student and staff supplies will be provided to minimize sharing.

Doors will be propped open and monitored during student arrival and dismissal times. Due to safety protocols, we are unable to prop doors open at all times, but ventilation systems will be monitored to ensure that they are operating properly.

Automatic watering stations are available, which provides a touchless availability to water. Where automatic watering stations are not available, those stations will be cleaned after use and water bottles will be encouraged to be brought from home.

Protecting vulnerable individuals

Higher risk individuals and those age 65+ will be provided support and may work virtually or be reassigned to other duties, as recommended by their physician, to limit exposure. Sick leave policies and practices are enabled so they may stay at home or self-isolate when they are sick or exposed. Sick leave and truancy policies can be waived due to COVID-19 so that students/staff may stay at home or self-isolate when sick or have been exposed. Communication with the local Health Department and the establishment of return to school policies will be implemented before an exposed school community member is allowed to return.

Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

Isolation areas have been set up for students/staff that present with symptoms. Parents/guardians will provide transportation to isolated students, unless symptoms are so severe that they require emergency services. Staff will transport themselves home if able and if symptoms are not severe. If symptoms are moderate to severe, staff will be transported via medical services to local health facilities.

Adequate cleaning and disinfection procedures will be followed for isolation areas and to any areas of exposure.

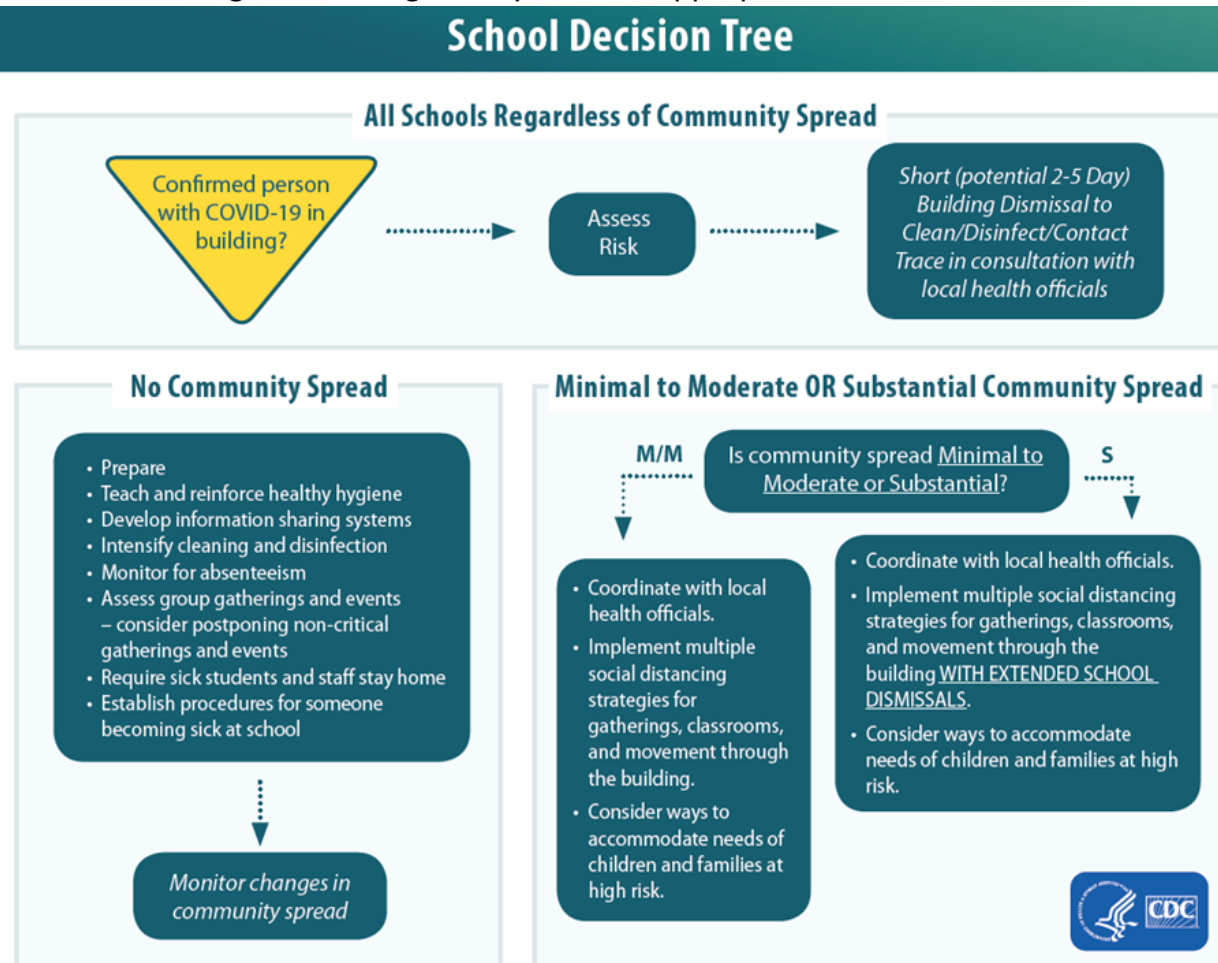
Local Virginia Health Department will be contacted to initiate public health investigation, contact tracing, and consultation on next steps. Notification to the point person at the school will also be implemented.

Planning to close down if necessary, due to severe conditions

Health Services and the point person at each school will work closely with the local Virginia Department of Health to determine which conditions will trigger a reduction of in-person classes and complete school closure.

Protocol For Closing Schools:

Schools should be prepared for COVID-19 outbreaks in their local communities and for individual exposure events to occur in their facilities, regardless of the level of community transmission, for example, a case associated with recent travel to an area with sustained COVID-19 transmission. The following decision tree can be used to help schools determine which set of mitigation strategies may be most appropriate for their situation.



Norton City Schools will coordinate with local health officials. Once learning of a COVID-19 case in someone who has been in the school, we will immediately notify local health officials. These officials will help administrators, Superintendents, and School Boards determine a course of action for the school system.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html#confirmed-case>

Athletics, Extracurricular Activities and Camps

NCS will follow the CDC Guidance for Schools, including enhanced social and physical distancing, health and hygiene procedures, cleaning and disinfecting measures, and other mitigation strategies. These precautions should include, but are not limited to:

- Daily health screenings of students and staff

- Providing remote learning exceptions and teleworking for students and staff who are at a higher risk of severe illness.
- The use of cloth face coverings by staff when at least 6 feet physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- The encouraging of the use of face coverings for students, as developmentally appropriate, in settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Health screenings are mandatory. Head coaches will ask each assistant coach/player if they have been sick in the last 24 hours, fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, close contact, or care of someone with COVID -19. If yes, they must leave immediately. Temperature checks will be mandatory for all assistant coaches, staff, and players. If anyone has a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, they will be sent home immediately.

The weight room will follow all social distancing protocols at all times. Coaches will ensure that students wipe down equipment before and after each use with appropriate disinfectant. Only equipment that can be used under social distancing guidelines will be made available. The weight room will be sanitized after each use.

Athletes and coaches will bring their own water or use touchless fountains. Locker rooms will not be made available unless the area is large enough for proper social distancing.

Gymnasiums may be used, but social distancing guidelines must be followed. Gymnasiums will also be sanitized daily.

All coaches, student athletes, and extracurricular supervisors will receive training regarding CDC, VDOE and VHSL guidelines regarding practices and activities during Phase III of the return to school.