

North Haledon Public Schools

201 Squaw Brook Road • North Haledon, NJ 07508 • (973) 427-8993 (Phone) • (973) 423-1514 (Fax)

Nicholas Coffaro
Superintendent of Schools

Debra Andreniuk
Business Administrator
Board Secretary

January 5, 2022

Dear Parents/ Guardians:

After consultation with our town health department and administration/health team, we will return to in-person instruction on Monday, January 10, 2022. However, do prepare for any change as dictated by the NJ Department of Health or Governor Murphy.

As a school district, we prioritize the safety and well-being of all in our learning community and we value the importance of in-person learning. The North Haledon School District will continue to make every effort to remain open as we navigate the fluid nature of the pandemic.

Our efforts to ensure that we maintain adequate staffing to safely and effectively operate our schools, include but are not limited to adequate supervision, nursing services, food services, and custodial services.

While the shift from in-person instruction to virtual learning may be implemented due to a declared health emergency by Governor Murphy or the NJDOH (Department of Health), there are two other situations in which virtual instruction would be the course of action:

1. In the event school districts are unable to provide adequate supervision (decrease in staffing).
2. Substantial Covid-19 spread linked directly to the instructional environment.

In both of these cases, the LEA and Town Health Department would collaborate and agree to this shift from in-person instruction to virtual learning.

We recognize the concern from members of our community around the evolving nature of the increased transmission of COVID. We also understand that some members of our learning community may have questions about current guidelines and procedures as information continues to change regularly. We have provided updates (see below) that will be helpful in providing additional insight.

We continue to work with our health department as we explore all options, as well as assess and evaluate the current conditions of our schools and instructional plans necessary for safe and effective operation. Guidance from the State is fluid and ever-changing as we all need to prepare for any action or

mandate provided to us by state officials. We will continue to provide relevant updates to the community as new information becomes available.

Thank you for your support and cooperation as we continue to work collectively to meet the needs of our students and staff while providing the safest environment for our school community.

Thank you,

Nicholas S. Coffaro

Superintendent of Schools

UPDATES

I. Sneeze Guards/Dividers:

Optional only. There will be designated areas in the cafeteria/APR during lunch.

II. Quarantine time frame:

While additional information from the CDC will be forthcoming along with any changes from the NJDOH, please be advised that the CDC has not applied the recently revised isolation and quarantine time frames to K-12 schools. Therefore, until CDC/NJDOH updates school specific guidance, it is recommended that K-12 schools continue to follow conventional isolation and quarantine time frames:

- 10-day isolation/exclusion (no test) with return to school on day-11 (confirmed cases is 10 days from first symptom with return to school on the 11th day provided there is a majority of symptom resolution).
- 5-7-days with test with a return to school if negative result.

All vaccinated students will not enter quarantine protocol unless exhibiting signs/symptoms or have tested positive for Covid.

III. Virtual/Remote Learning:

The State guidelines provide for in-person learning unless there is a declared health emergency by Governor Murphy or the NJDOH. At this time, the State is not allowing a virtual option, which has been previously defined as a hybrid instructional experience where a classroom teacher shares time between the at-home students and the in-person students, as a choice during this school year. Remote instruction can only be used for students who have tested positive for COVID or for those who have been placed on quarantine due to being identified as close contact by the school and/or by the direction of a qualified physician.

Staffing shortages that impact the safe and effective operation of our schools or a COVID outbreak directly connected to our schools may be other reasons for allowing virtual learning.

IV. Testing

The district acknowledges that “at-home rapid tests” serve as a useful tool towards identifying positive coronavirus individuals, especially as we brace ourselves for a predicted surge in Omicron variant cases. Please be mindful that the Food and Drug Administration recently announced that some antigen tests may not be as sensitive to the Omicron variant - "Early data suggests that antigen tests to detect the Omicron variant but may have reduced sensitivity."

[At home Covid-19 tests](#) sacrifice some accuracy for speedy results, but they can be an aid for making decisions and knowing when to seek guidance from your healthcare provider on testing, treatment, isolation, quarantine, and school exclusion.

The most accurate tests available continue to be the polymerase chain reaction tests, or [PCR tests](#), which detect tiny snippets of the virus’s genetic material. Rapid tests, on the other hand, detect molecules that are found on the virus’s surface, called antigen and are most accurate when a person has symptoms. Most experts agree that people get positive antigen results when they’re most contagious. The PCR test will be the only test result accepted for readmittance to school.

V. Notification of a Covid positive student:

- Individuals who [test positive](#) must stay home until at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset and/or testing positive whichever comes first, and at least 24 hours have passed after resolution of fever without fever-reducing medications and improvement in symptoms.
- The school nurse should be contacted and provided with a copy of your child's positive test results (Vaccination status can be voluntarily submitted).
- Once confirmation of a positive test is received, the school will initiate a request for remote instruction.
- In order to return to school after the 10-day period ends, the school nurse will need written clearance from a qualified physician stating your child is free of a communicable disease.