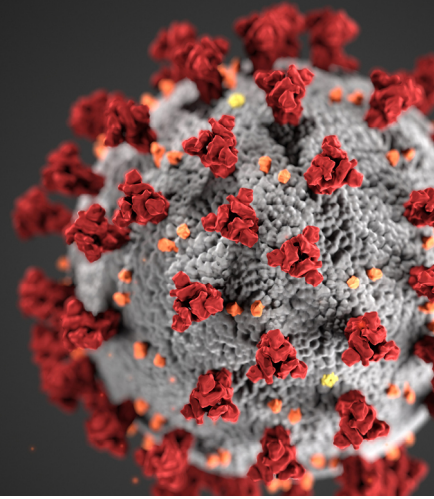




# CORONAVIRUS COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

News to keep our school community up to date during the Coronavirus crisis



## Message from Superintendent Dr. Sharon I. Byrdsong



Welcome to a special edition of the *Coronavirus Communications Update* newsletter that shares important details and informs families, students, staff, and community about the return of students to in-person instruction.

We know that families, staff, and students have many questions regarding this important decision, and we hope to provide you with the answers you need.

For starters, NPS is ready to launch a new dashboard on our local health metrics that is easy to find and understand (see page 2). We also have provided details on the NPS hybrid learning model (see page 2) as well as a look at our health mitigation strategies for ensuring staff and student health and facility cleaning (see page 3).

As we move forward together in these unprecedented times, I am confident that NPS can meet these challenges with your understanding, flexibility, and patience!

Thank you for ALL you do to support Norfolk Public Schools!

## STUDENTS TO RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION BASED ON HEALTH CONDITIONS AND IN PHASES

At their meeting on October 21, 2020, the City of Norfolk School Board voted to return students to in-person instruction only when the health indicators set forth by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) fall in the lower or lowest risk of transmission of COVID-19. These core and secondary indicators, which can be found on the [CDC's website](#), are labeled in dark green and light green. Norfolk's current health metrics are posted on the [Virginia Department of Health's website](#) and on NPS' new dashboard that will launch next week.

Once these indicators are in the lowest or lower risk zones for 14 consecutive days, the School Board approved a phased-in approach to returning students in the following sequence:

- **Phase One** – Equity and Opportunity students, specifically students with disabilities (K-12 students in self-contained classrooms) and English learners (K-12 students in levels 1, 2, and some 3). The students with disabilities in this phase will attend school four days per week. The possibility of English learners attending school four days per

week will be reviewed by the administration.

- **Phase Two** – Kindergarten through grade 3 (hybrid model)
- **Phase Three** – Grades 4 and 5 (hybrid model); the possibility of returning prekindergarten students will be reviewed
- **Phase Four** – Grades 6 through 8 (hybrid model)
- **Phase Five** – Grades 9 through 12 (hybrid model)

There will be a three-week transition between the phases pending positive health metrics. Students in Phases Two through Five will attend school using a hybrid model, in which they will attend school in-person two days a week and receive virtual instruction two days a week.

Wednesdays will remain an asynchronous learning day for all students (see more details on page 2).

Students will remain in their virtual learning format until they are phased in, pending positive health metrics. Parents/guardians who did not previously enroll their child(ren) in the Virtual Scholars Academy (VSA) and would like to do so still have the option to enroll their child(ren) in this 100 percent virtual program.



## NPS To Launch New Norfolk Health Metrics Dashboard

The School Board's decision to return students is dependent upon the City of Norfolk's positive health metrics for a consecutive 14 days.

To keep families and students up to date on these metrics, Norfolk Public Schools is creating and will launch a new dashboard for easy tracking next week.

The new dashboard, which will be updated daily, features all the Centers for Disease Control's core and secondary indicators that NPS will use in determining the date that students will begin to return to in-person learning:

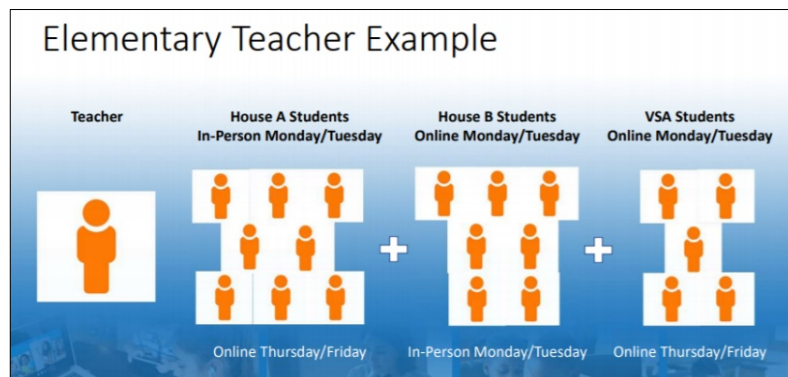
- Number of new cases per 100,000 persons within the last 14 days;
- Percentage of RT-PCR tests that are positive during the last 14 days;
- Ability of schools to implement 5 key mitigation strategies (see page 3 for more details);
- Percentage change in new cases per 100,000 population during the last 7 days compared with the previous 7 days;
- Percentage of hospital inpatient beds in Norfolk that are occupied;
- Percentage of intensive care unit beds in Norfolk that are occupied;
- Percentage of hospital inpatient beds in Norfolk that are occupied by patients with COVID-19; and
- Existence of localized community/public setting COVID-19 outbreak.

## What is the NPS Hybrid Learning Model?

Returning students to school and maintaining social distancing of six feet between students requires NPS to implement a hybrid class schedule with only half of the students in a classroom at a time.

The hybrid schedule breaks each grade level in half and students will attend classes in person two days a week, then learn virtually from home two days a week. Students will be organized by House A and House B. Virtual Scholars Academy students will remain virtual for all four days of the week.

Here's an example of an elementary classroom using this hybrid model:



This teacher has a total of 20 students: eight are House A students, seven are House B students, and five are Virtual Scholar Academy students. On Mondays and Tuesdays, this teacher will be teaching House A students in-person and House B and VSA students via Zoom. On Thursdays and Fridays, the teacher will deliver instruction to House B students in person and House A and VSA students through Zoom. Teachers will have cameras set up in their classrooms to enable them to simultaneously teach both in-person and online students.

Wednesdays remains an asynchronous learning day for all students, which allows students to complete assignments and independent work. Teachers use Wednesdays for planning, grading, participating in professional development, and communicating with students and parents.

## News for Families of Students with Disabilities

With the recent decision to return students in self-contained classrooms to school during Phase One, the Learning Support-Special Education Services team will be assisting teachers and staff with resources and tools to prepare students and families. These resources will include supports such as instructional videos and social stories for ongoing instruction and coaching to student and families around mask wearing, social distancing, and other health mitigation strategies students will face when they return.

Learning Support-Special Education Services and school staff understand that our students' abilities to consistently practice mask wearing or undertake other health mitigation strategies will vary based on their disability, developmental levels, and individual needs. Staff will continue to prepare for students' safe return, implement safety measures, and extend care and understanding to each child based on their needs.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to stay in regular communication with case managers, teachers, school administrators, and Learning Support staff. For more news and information, please visit the [Learning Support-Special Education Services webpage](#).

## What Will Be Expected of Students and Staff When They Return to In-Person Learning?

To keep students and staff healthy, every school will adhere to the following five key health mitigation strategies, as required by the Centers for Disease Control:

- **Consistent and correct use of masks** – Masks must be worn on school buses and at bus stops; throughout schools and within classrooms; and during lunch periods when not eating meals.
- **Social distancing of at least six feet** – Students and staff must remain apart on school buses and at bus stops; throughout schools and within classrooms; and during lunch periods. Seating will be arranged on school buses to alternate aisle and window seating every other seat. Bus windows and ceiling vents will be open, so students should dress accordingly. Hallways will be marked with floor decals or wall decals to demonstrate six feet of distancing. Cafeteria tables will be set up to ensure six feet of spacing using stickers on the seats and classrooms will be arranged to have six feet of distance between students' desks.
- **Hand hygiene** – Sanitizing stations have been installed at schools' main entrances, main offices, cafeteria serving lines, gymnasiums, and at elevator access areas. Hand sanitizer will also be accessible in classrooms. Soap, water, and paper towels will be well stocked in each student bathroom, and signage will be placed in each restroom to encourage hand washing.
- **Cleaning and disinfecting** – School buses will be sprayed with a germicide after each drop off and thoroughly cleaned at the end of each day. Classrooms desks will be sanitized with alcohol wipes after each class ends and before the next class begins. In the cafeteria, tables will be sanitized with a germicide after each meal shift. Bathrooms will be sanitized throughout the school day by custodial staff. Every day, after all students and staff leave the building, custodial staff will sanitize the entire building with approved disinfecting machines.
- **Contact tracing** – When a staff member or student reports that they have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, or report that they themselves have tested positive for COVID-19, a protocol is immediately activated. First, contact tracing is initiated to alert those with whom they might have come in contact. Contact tracing is conducted under the guidance of and in collaboration with the Norfolk Department of Health.

Next, areas within the building are sanitized where the individual was present. Building access is not permitted while sanitizing occurs within the affected area(s). Finally, building operations are restored once the sanitization process is completed. Staff and/or families are notified by the building principal about the report as well as about the subsequent closure and reopening of the building.

## Meal Program Updates

All children, age 18 and under, can receive free grab-n-go meals at 34 locations (see below) from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Breakfast, lunch, snack, and supper are distributed together.

Multiple days of meals may be picked up at one time. On Fridays, extra meals are provided for the weekend.

Please note these November meal date changes:

- **Election Day (Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>)** - Two days of meals will be offered on Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- **Veteran's Day (Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>)** - Two days of meals will be offered on Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>.
- **Thanksgiving (Nov. 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>)** - Three days of meals will be offered on Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>. Meal distribution time (for this day only) will change to 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Please join us for a special grab-n-go holiday meal served on Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>!

### Elementary School Pick-Up Sites:

Bay View, Richard Bowling, Camp Allen, Chesterfield, Coleman Place, Crossroads, Fairlawn, Ingleside, Jacox, Larchmont, Larrymore, Lindenwood, Little Creek, Monroe, Ocean View, Oceanair, P.B. Young Sr., Sewells Point, Sherwood Forest, Southside STEM Academy at Campostella, St. Helena, Suburban Park, Tanners Creek, Tarrallton, W.H. Taylor, Tidewater Park, Willard

### Middle School Pick-Up Sites:

Azalea Gardens  
Lake Taylor School (3-8)  
Northside

### High School Pick-Up Sites:

Booker T. Washington  
Granby  
Maury  
Norview

## Tips and Treats for a Safe and Happy Halloween

Traditional Halloween activities are fun, but some can increase the risk of getting or spreading COVID-19 or the flu. Want to make sure your child's Halloween is safe? Check out these tips gathered from the Centers for Disease Control that will ensure a happy Halloween this year.



### Make trick-or-treating safer

- Avoid direct contact with trick-or-treaters.
- Give out treats outdoors, if possible.
- Set up a station with individually bagged treats for trick-or-treaters to take.
- Wash hands before handling treats.
- Wear a mask.

### Wear a mask

- Make a cloth [mask](#) part of the costume.
- A costume mask is **not** a substitute for a cloth mask.
- Do **NOT** wear a costume mask over a cloth mask. It can make breathing more difficult.
- Masks should **NOT** be worn by children under the age of 2 or anyone who has trouble breathing.

### Stay at least 6 feet away from others who do not live with you

- Indoors and outdoors, you are more likely to get or spread COVID-19 when you are in close contact with others for a long time.

### Wash your hands

- Bring [hand sanitizer](#) along the trick-or-treating route and use it after touching objects or other people.
- Use hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Parents should supervise young children using hand sanitizer.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when you get home and before you eat any treats.

### Consider other activities in addition to trick-or-treating

- Decorate and carve pumpkins with members of your household or outside with neighbors or friends.
- Visit an orchard, forest, or corn maze, or set up a scavenger hunt outside.
- Hide Halloween treats in and around your house for your family to find.
- Hold an outdoor costume parade or contest.
- Have an indoor Halloween movie night with your family.

