



**Norfolk Public Schools**  
The cornerstone of a proudly diverse community

# Secondary Schools Return to In-Person Learning Guide





Dear Southside STEM Academy Families:

The City of Norfolk School Board along with Superintendent Dr. Sharon I. Byrdson, members of the Norfolk Public Schools (NPS) administration and our school's leadership team have collaborated over the last several months to intensively and carefully develop plans in preparation for the return to in-person instruction.

This guide is based upon our NPS COVID-19 Health Mitigation Plan and provides general information to students returning to our school building; however, you will find even more detailed information and video(s) on our school's website <https://www.npsk12.com/ssac> that details our school-specific arrival, dismissal, transition, meal, and restroom procedures, along with other pertinent information specific to our school. We also encourage you to check the school division's Return to In-Person Instruction and Operations webpage for the most up-to-date information as decisions continue to be made during this process: [npsk12.com/site/Default.aspx?PageID=17555](https://www.npsk12.com/site/Default.aspx?PageID=17555).

As always, the safety and well-being of our students is a top priority. Rest assured that we are here to support our students and families throughout this transition, so please do not hesitate to reach out to our school staff at the number below with any questions you may have. We're looking forward to a safe return to in-person learning and to welcoming each of our students back into our building!

Sincerely,

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## Norfolk Public Schools Secondary Schools Return to In-Person Learning

The return to in-person learning will be a phased-in approach, in accordance with the guidance of the Norfolk Public Schools (NPS) School Board and Superintendent. Please refer to the school division's website for up-to-date information here: [Updates on Return to In-Person Instruction and Operations](#).

### **SCHEDULES**

**All Virtual Model:** When health metrics dictate the need to do so, all students will attend classes virtually on Zoom. Students will follow the NPS Even/Odd Calendar (blocks 1, 3, 5, 7 on odd days; blocks 2, 4, 6, 8 on even days). The calendar can be viewed here: [NPS 2020-2021 Even/Odd Block Schedule](#).

**Hybrid Model Return to In-Person Learning:** Families will receive a letter in the mail from each school that shares the house to which each student has been assigned. Students will attend in-person learning and virtual learning according to the following schedule:

#### **House A**

Mondays and Tuesdays – in-person learning in the school building  
Wednesdays – asynchronous learning at home  
Thursdays and Fridays – virtual learning via Zoom at home

#### **House B**

Mondays and Tuesdays – virtual learning via Zoom at home  
Wednesdays – asynchronous learning at home  
Thursdays and Fridays – in-person learning in the school building

*NOTE: The students will continue to follow the NPS Even/Odd Calendar.*

Students must follow the schedule for their assigned house. The school will contact the parent/guardian if a student comes to the building on a day they should be learning virtually for immediate pick-up from school. Should the house assignment cause an undue hardship on the family, parents are asked to please contact the school's principal to discuss additional options. Considerations for changes in house will be made on a case-by-case basis for only the most extenuating circumstances and will be subject to space availability to ensure COVID-19 mitigation strategies (like physical distancing on buses, in classrooms, etc.) can be safely met if the change can be granted.

## THE IN-PERSON LEARNING SCHOOL DAY

**Health Screening:** Prior to leaving home each day, all Norfolk Public Schools employees and families must conduct a health screening by answering the following questions:

- Are you currently ill or caring for someone who is ill?
- Do you have any of the following?
  - Fever or feeling feverish
  - Chills
  - Sweating
  - Shortness of breath
  - Cough
  - Fatigue
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Diarrhea
  - Sore throat
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Muscle or body aches
  - Headache
  - Rash

If the answer is “yes” to **any** of these questions, the employee or student’s parent/guardian should immediately notify the school. The employee or student must **stay home**.

**Students Who Begin to Feel Sick While in the School Building:** Any student present in the building who begins to exhibit symptoms or has had significant exposure to someone that has tested positive for COVID-19 will be directed to the school’s isolation room for monitoring under the care of the school nurse. As part of the school division’s established protocol, the school nurse will notify the school’s administration and contact the student’s parent/guardian for the student’s **immediate pick-up from the school**. The nurse will inform the parent of the student’s symptoms and/or possible exposure.

**Parents/Guardians must ensure that their child’s(ren’s) current emergency contacts, phone numbers, and accurate address are on file at the school** as a necessary safety precaution.

**Face Coverings:** All students and staff will be required to wear face coverings over their nose and mouth throughout the school day. The school day includes at the bus stop, while on the school bus going to and from school, as students enter/exit the building, during all classes, during hallway transitions, in the bathrooms, and in the cafeteria. Students may only remove their face coverings briefly for eating/drinking and must immediately put their face coverings back on when finished eating/drinking. Face coverings or masks will be provided to students in the event that theirs is misplaced or broken/torn.

**Arrival/Dismissal/Class Transition Procedures:** Each school has established clear, written procedures for students’ arrival, transition between classes, and dismissal. These procedures may differ significantly from the procedures students followed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, procedures may vary from school to school given the differences in building layouts. As a result, each school will have

these written procedures, along with informational videos, available on their websites prior to the return to in-person learning to familiarize students and families with these procedures.

Additionally, teachers and staff at each school will take time during the instructional day to further explain these procedures to students. All schools have installed clear social distancing and directional markings, where appropriate, with an established staff duty roster to ensure appropriate adult assistance and supervision is available for student and staff safety.

**Social Distancing:** Students and staff will remain six (6) feet apart throughout the school day. As stated above, each school has developed protocols to ensure social distancing in all areas of the school. These protocols may involve the designation of one-way stairwells and/or hallways. Please refer to the school's website for specific details.

**Riding the School Bus:** In order to ensure the ability to transport all students to and from school, ridership on school buses will be increased up to 40 students where necessary. Children who live in the same household must share a seat. Additional mitigation strategies include:

- Masks will be worn by drivers and students at all times. Drivers will provide masks to students that may need one.
- Drivers will sanitize all seating areas between routes.
- Windows will be opened as weather permits.

**Access to Drinking Water:** Water fountains will be off-limits to all students and staff in order to prevent the spread of germs. Students are encouraged to bring a non-breakable water bottle to school each day filled with fresh water for their personal consumption. Water bottles may contain water only, no other substances.

**Classroom Desks and Materials:** Students will bring their school-issued devices (if applicable) to the school building with them on the days they attend school in person. Students should also bring their own pens, pencils, paper, etc., as students will not be allowed to share materials with other students in order to limit the spread of germs. In some courses, students will use school provided materials during their class time. The school will implement strict sanitization protocols to ensure that materials are clean and sanitized for the next student who uses them. Student desks will also be sanitized between each class block to ensure student safety.

**Breakfast and Lunch:** Each school has developed a plan for students to eat breakfast, whether following a grab-and-go model where students will eat in their first classrooms or following one in which students will eat in the cafeteria in a socially distanced way prior to reporting to their first class. Specifics will be available on each school's website. Each school has also developed procedures to transition students to the cafeteria for lunch and back to class, and those procedures will also be available on each school's website. Regardless of the meal transition procedures, students will remain at least six (6) feet apart at all times while in the cafeteria. In addition, students may remove their face coverings only when they are actively eating and/or drinking and must replace their face coverings as soon as they are finished. Each school has developed a schedule that allows for sanitizing the cafeteria between each breakfast and lunch period.

**Hand Washing and Sanitizing:** Students and staff are encouraged to wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer often. Hand sanitizer stations have been installed in key high-traffic areas in our schools including entrances, offices, outside of bathrooms, and in the cafeterias.

**Use of Restrooms:** Students will use the restrooms one at a time, and schools have developed adult supervision schedules to enable this process. Students may have to wait in a socially distanced line, at the direction of an adult, outside of the restroom for their turn to use the restroom. Students should wash their hands after using the restroom and use the hand sanitizer *outside* of the restroom *prior to returning to class*.

**Athletics:** Student participation in athletics will continue under the clear guidance of the NPS Athletics Return-to-Athletics Plan, based upon current health metrics. Families may visit the NPS website or contact their school's athletic director for more information.

**Field Trips, Assemblies, and Meetings:** Schools will continue to follow state guidance on larger gatherings. Therefore, field trips, assemblies, PTA meetings, etc. will continue to be virtual until health metrics or updated guidance is issued.

**School Sanitization Protocols:** NPS will follow the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention guidelines regarding the cleaning, sanitization, and disinfection of schools. The school division will provide enough hand soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant to accommodate frequent cleaning of high-touch areas, such as restrooms, main offices, etc. Air ventilation systems in schools will be inspected regularly, with any needed repairs made immediately to ensure proper functioning. Filters will be routinely replaced using the highest-grade filter allowable for each system. Additionally, outdoor air circulation will be increased as much as possible by opening windows and doors, where necessary and when weather permits. Finally, each school has been equipped with the New Clorox® Total 360® System that will be used to disinfect all areas of the school at the end of each instructional day.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Q: Do your plans for gatherings, field trips, and volunteer restrictions align with the Executive Order in effect?

A: Yes. Gatherings and field trips, including athletics events and travel, will be restricted and/or limited and conducted only when appropriate physical distancing and other COVID-19 mitigation strategies can be readily enforced. NPS practices are consistent with the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) and CDC's best practices and the Executive Order currently in effect.

Volunteers will be required to undergo the same screening protocol and assessment strategies that all staff and students participate in. Volunteers that have tested positive for COVID-19, exhibit signs/symptoms of COVID-19 infection, or have had significant contact with an individual that has tested positive, should not be interacting with NPS students or staff. To the degree possible, building volunteers should limit their interactions to only those that are NPS students or staff members. Volunteers should be limited to working only with the groups that they are assigned.

### Q: How will the instruction during the 2020-2021 school year be different than the Spring of 2020?

A: Throughout this pandemic, Norfolk Public Schools has remained committed to providing equitable and quality learning experiences for all students. Since the mandate of school closures last spring, all students were transitioned to a virtual learning model. Upon the board's approval for the updated Return to In-Person Instruction Plan, concurrent and hybrid learning models will be followed in a three-phase approach beginning March 15, 2021. All classrooms are equipped with web cameras, along with power cords for recharging student devices. Each teacher will have Bluetooth headsets to allow for communication with students in the classroom and those learning virtually at home online. The [Virtual Scholar's Academy](#) (VSA) remains in place for students whose parents/guardians wish for them to continue learning from home.

The hybrid model applies to students who are not a part of Virtual Scholars Academy and is divided into two houses: A and B. House A will attend face-to-face school on Mondays and Tuesdays and will learn virtually on Wednesdays (asynchronous), Thursdays, and Fridays. House B will attend face-to-face school on Thursdays and Fridays and will learn virtually on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

### Q: If my child is already enrolled in VSA and I do not wish for them to return in-person, do I need to do anything?

A: No, this decision covers the remainder of the school year and no further action is required to remain in VSA. The student will not be required to report to school in-person at any time.

### Q: If the Governor closes schools again, what will the plan be for our students?

A: If the Governor mandates school closures, we will continue to utilize the virtual option for all students.

### Q: What is the cleaning protocol going to be for classrooms?

A: The protocol for cleaning and disinfecting school includes identifying and cleaning frequently touched surfaces, procedures for the required cleaning of transport vehicles before picking up

students and in between runs if the bus or vehicle will be used to make multiple runs, circumstances that would require emergency cleaning (positive cases), weekly inventories to ensure that adequate quantities of cleaning supplies are available, and the correct use and storage of cleaning materials. The building supervisor at each facility will monitor the inventory of cleaning supplies. The building supervisor at each facility will also coordinate the ordering of needed supplies. The following supplies will be provided for COVID-19 mitigation: soap, water, paper towels, hand sanitizer, trashcans, gloves, and masks.

The school division has purchased a sizable amount of hand sanitizer stations so that each building will have 7 to 10 additional units in the building. The units will be placed in high traffic areas such as the front office, cafeterias, and building entrances. Sharing of all supplies will be discouraged. Students will be required to utilize designated supplies and equipment and not share supplies or equipment with other individuals.

**Q: Will students and staff be wearing masks/face coverings?**

**A:** Yes, we will be following Governor Northam's executive order. Additional disposable face coverings will be available in every building, should they be needed. Our expectation is full compliance from all students and staff. Other than medical exceptions, students are required to wear face coverings in school.

**Q: What do I do when my child is sick?**

**A:** All parents/guardians should complete symptom screening at home each morning before the school day. Students with symptoms and/or a fever of 100.4 or higher should not come to school. Parents/guardians should notify the school of your child's absence by calling the school and follow up with a written excuse for the absence. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to communicate their students' COVID-19 symptoms and direct exposure to someone with COVID-19 when reporting an absence. Families and caregivers are encouraged to practice and reinforce good prevention habits at home and within their families.

**Q: What is the communication plan if someone in a school tests positive for COVID 19?**

**A:** Upon the report of a positive COVID-19 case or exposure in a building, existing protocols for contact tracing and sanitization will be immediately implemented. In the instance that a classroom, section(s) of a school and/or an entire school needs to be closed temporarily to control any type of an outbreak, parents will be notified and students will return to the virtual learning setting until the sanitization process is complete.

**Q: How will students be socially distanced in classrooms?**

**A:** Student desks will be spaced minimally six (6) feet.

**Q: Can students stay in the same classrooms and teachers move?**

**A:** Students will be divided into two houses: A and B. House A will attend face-to-face school on Mondays and Tuesdays and will learn virtually on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. House B will attend face-to-face school on Thursdays and Fridays and will learn virtually on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Wednesdays are currently designated as asynchronous learning days, meaning students do not follow their Zoom class schedule on these days and instead complete the posted assignments for their classes. ***It is imperative that students remain in their assigned house.*** Schools will create one-way hallways, where possible, to reduce close contact



and will place physical guides, such as tape, on floors or sidewalks to create one-way routes.

**Q: How will the traffic flow in the hallways be managed?**

**A:** Schools will create one-way hallways, where possible, to reduce close contact and will place physical guides, such as tape, on floors or sidewalks to create one-way routes. When one-way flow is not possible, schools will have tape and directional arrows in the hallways, as well as social distancing reminders, to encourage orderly traffic flow.

**Q: What will lunch look like for students who attend school?**

**A:** Each school has developed a plan for students to eat breakfast, whether following a grab-and-go model where students will eat in first classrooms or following one in which students will eat in the cafeteria in a socially distanced way prior to reporting to their first class. Specifics will be available on each school's website. Each school has also developed procedures to transition students to the cafeteria for lunch and back to class, and those procedures will also be available on each school's website. Regardless of the meal transition procedures, students will remain at least six (6) feet apart at all times while in the cafeteria. In addition, students may remove their face coverings only when they are actively eating and/or drinking and must replace their face coverings as soon as they are finished. Each school has developed a schedule that allows for sanitizing the cafeteria between each breakfast and lunch period.

**Q: Will students' temperatures be taken at school?**

**A:** No, students' temperatures **will not** be taken as they enter the buildings. We are asking families to pre-screen for symptoms every morning to ensure no one is coming to school with any COVID-19 symptoms. Guidance from our nurses will be provided to assist in this area.

**Q: Will students have access to water fountains?**

**A:** All water fountains will be closed to students and staff. Students are encouraged to bring non-breakable water bottles to school filled with water only.

**Q: Will the district restrict visitors from entering the school?**

**A:** Only essential visitors will be allowed to enter the school building. Essential visitors include those with prior scheduled appointments with school staff, along with parents/guardians picking up students for early dismissal and/or from the clinic. All essential visitors will be required to follow the same safety guidelines as all other school personnel. All essential visitors must wear a mask. The district will offer virtual meetings whenever possible.

**Q: What is the procedure for picking up my child early for an appointment?**

**A:** Parents are asked to send an early dismissal note to the school with their child in the morning. Students will be dismissed from class to the office once the parent arrives. Parents will be required to wear a face covering prior to being allowed to enter the building. Parents must come to the main office entrance and check-in, following early dismissal procedures for the school.

**Q: Will students be able to participate in chorus?**

**A:** As chorus is a curricular course, the students will be allowed to safely participate and will be required to wear a mask at all times.

**Q: How will special education services be implemented in the blended and remote models?**

**A:** The IEP team will continue to hold meetings and provide services based on the child's IEP in a blended and virtual setting. To clarify, students receiving specially designed instruction in House A will receive face-to-face instruction on Mondays and Tuesdays and virtual support Wednesdays-Fridays. Students receiving specially designed instruction in House B will receive face-to-face instruction on Thursdays and Fridays and will receive virtual instruction Mondays -Wednesdays.

**Q. If my child's evaluation report stated that further testing was needed once school reopened, when and how will the testing be conducted?**

**A:** The psychologist will contact you with dates and times for you to bring your child in once testing officially resumes. In accordance with CDC guidelines during testing, your child will need to wear a face covering and parents/guardians will not be allowed in the building to wait for the student. The testing room will be disinfected, there will be table shields between the evaluator and student, and the evaluator will wear a face covering/shield during testing.

**Q. What will remote learning days look like for my student?**

**A:** Teachers will post all daily lessons and activities in CANVAS. Lessons may include recorded instruction. Students are expected to log in daily to complete the lessons and activities. Login and completion of activities will count as attendance in the class for that day. Remote learning days will also include scheduled office hours/zoom lessons with their teachers.

Students who have opted for the **blending learning model** must log on to CANVAS and complete the lessons provided by their teachers. Attendance matters. Please help us by encouraging your child to log in and attend classes daily. Completion of the daily assignments is required. If students do not log on to CANVAS on remote learning days and do not complete the assignments, they are considered absent and will not receive credit for the work assigned.

Students who have opted for the **fully remote learning plan** will follow along with blended learners using CANVAS. Students are expected to log on daily and complete all assignments and activities. Login and completion of activities will count as attendance in the class for that day. These live sessions are mandatory for remote learners, and count as attendance for the day. Your child's teacher will provide a schedule for these live sessions.