



NORTHSTAR SCHOOL  
*Nurturing the Mind, Body and Spirit*

# **NORTHSTAR SCHOOL COVID-19 REOPENING PLAN AND GUIDELINES**



Northstar School's COVID-19 Reopening Plan and Guidelines document provides guidance for school operations and procedures to mitigate the risks of COVID-19. This plan is designed to be flexible and adaptable to meet the needs and conditions that may fall beyond the control of our school given the fluidity of the virus and the ever changing information under the current pandemic. With this in mind, we have developed a comprehensive reopening plan in accordance with current directives, guidance and data from the [Alameda County Department of Public Health](#) (ACDPH), [California Department of Public Health](#) (CDPH), [Alameda County Office of Education](#) (ACOE), as well as available medical literature on COVID-19 related to children and school settings.

It is Northstar School's top priority to maintain a safe and healthy school environment. With adherence to a comprehensive set of critical health and safety requirements, we believe that we can bring our students and staff safely back to school to resume in-person instruction. We will continue to coordinate with ACDPH, CDPH, and the ACOE for updates, consult with relevant stakeholders, and will always adhere to the most recent and restrictive recommendations throughout this process. These guidelines, which include health, safety, and sanitizing procedures, as well as general practices will be in place for the duration of the pandemic. This is a live document that will be updated as new regulations go into effect.

We greatly appreciate the understanding, support and resilience of our school community as we continue to adapt and improve. Despite these challenging circumstances, we are wholeheartedly committed to providing the best education to each of our students, while following these best practices to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19.

## COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

All members of the Northstar School community have a shared responsibility to prevent the spread of illness when they are aware or suspect that they may have contracted a communicable disease. Each family will make the decision as to whether their children will attend in-person instruction or whether their children will continue with distance learning. Families play a critical role in supporting the new culture of health and safety that our school must establish. Most importantly, families can help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 in our school community by checking their children daily for any symptoms and keeping them home from school if they are sick or have had close contact with a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. It is imperative that all members, families and staff, remain committed to the safety policies and procedures listed in this document and updated communications to help keep staff, students, and our community safe.

Best Practices to Mitigate the Spread of Illness:

- [Maintain good social distance](#) (about 6 feet). This is very important in preventing the spread of COVID-19.
- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- [Routinely clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a [mask](#) when around others.

## CLEANING, DISINFECTION AND VENTILATION

### Disinfecting and Cleaning

Northstar School will follow the [CDC recommendations](#) for daily cleaning and disinfecting our campus.

Northstar School's disinfecting and cleaning protocols are as follows:

- A regular cleaning schedule is put in place with each student/staff transition with an emphasis on high touch surfaces. This includes but is not limited to door handles, light switches, desks/tables/countertops, toilets, faucets/sinks, shared equipment.
- Campus-wide attention will be given to reduce the need to touch objects, such as open-lid trash cans and doors propped open.
- Water fountains will not be in use. Touchless water bottle filling stations are available on campus. Students are asked to bring a full personal water bottle each day.
- Students will have their own personal class items. Heavy use items, such as pencils, pens, erasers, will remain with them at all times, and light use items, such as markers, crayons, glue, scissors, will be clearly marked and stored in the classroom.
- All educational equipment and manipulatives that are used are made of materials that can be cleaned and disinfected.
- Staff will regularly use disinfectant spray to wipe down surfaces with each transition.
- Staff and older students will have at their disposal disinfectant spray and materials so that surfaces can be wiped down regularly.
- Custodial staff will deep clean and disinfect classrooms, restrooms, offices, and hallways daily. The staff will monitor and replenish essential supplies (paper towels, soap, hand sanitizer, toilet paper, etc.) once a week and as needed. Additional stock of PPE and cleaning supplies are readily available on site at all times.

### Ventilation and Air Quality

Northstar School has taken measures necessary to assure classrooms are adequately ventilated and to improve air quality. Updates will be made to the HVAC systems including improved filters as well as the addition of air purifiers to the classroom spaces.

Northstar School's ventilation and air quality protocols are as follows:

- Teachers will keep doors and windows open throughout the day to increase natural air flow and ventilation in the classroom as well as utilize HVAC systems for air circulation.
- As weather and scheduling permits, classes will utilize outdoor classroom spaces.
- Lunch breaks will be outdoors as much as possible, maintaining social distancing, or within their classrooms.

## COHORTING

A cohort is a stable group with fixed membership that stays together for all courses and activities (i.e. instruction, lunch, recess, etc.) and avoids contact with other persons or cohorts. Cohorts will remain small and be divided by grade level and will not mix with other groups. Per ACPHD and CDPH guidance, groups will remain as small and consistent as possible while maintaining the physical distance recommendation of 6 feet, given the size of each classroom.

Staggered rotation schedules for each group cohort will be implemented and will not overlap (taking into account instruction, snack/lunch, and recess - weather/air quality permitting). All classrooms have assigned bathrooms and handwashing stations, and designated outdoor areas where children will have lunch with their group and experience periods of outdoor instruction. Our large outdoor play space will be divided into sections, and classes will be assigned time slots for outdoor play.

Homeroom teachers will limit their interaction to their grade cohort. The average class/cohort size is 12-14 students. Subject teachers will be able to teach different cohorts of children as long as they are practicing physical distancing protocols.

## PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Classrooms have been rearranged to allow desks to be spread out to maximize physical distancing and minimize face-to-face contact. Excess furniture and carpet areas have been removed to maximize the classroom space to support distancing. School staff will abide by face covering guidelines and maintain social distancing in common areas. Drop off and pick up will be facilitated with a drive through queue. Parents are not permitted to enter classroom or administrative spaces. All whole school assemblies and community activities are cancelled through the first trimester and possibly for the duration of the school year.

### Cohorting & Physical Distancing Protocols:

- Students have been cohorted to limit student contact with staggered arrival & dismissal areas and lunch schedules.
- Students will receive all their instruction in the same classroom throughout the school day with a minimum number of faculty members rotating into each classroom.
- Desks and chairs are configured to assure physical distancing between students.
- Furniture in classrooms have been set-up to promote physical distancing.
- Faculty for preschool through 1st grade will limit close interaction to the extent possible with the understanding that playing and socializing is central to child development.
- Class sizes have been limited to accommodate student spacing.
- Playground/outdoor times will be coordinated to maximize distancing, and supervision will be adequate to ensure physical distancing.
- Staff will prompt and remind students of physical distancing throughout the day.
- Students' personal belongings (e.g. backpacks, educational supplies, etc.) will remain with or near them, or in a designated and separated location.
- Extracurricular programs, P.E., and contact sports have been modified or cancelled to align with safety/health protocols.

- Field trips are cancelled through the first semester and possibly for the entire school year.
- Large gatherings/assemblies have been cancelled for the immediate future.

## **ENTRANCE, EGRESS, AND MOVEMENT WITHIN THE SCHOOL**

The campus layout, with two classrooms per building and ample outdoor space, lends itself to an ease in distancing on the campus. In addition to Physical Distancing and Cohorting, Northstar School has taken specific steps to assure that students and staff remain properly separated during arrival, dismissal, and throughout the school day.

- Small class size/overall student body size
- Spacious classrooms/indoor space
- Waiting markers and directional indicators have been established at high traffic pathways to promote physical distancing and maintain traffic flow patterns.
- Ample outdoor space with designated arrival and dismissal areas
- Multiple building layout to support classrooms functioning as distinct “social cohorts”

To help minimize contact and/or increased risk of transmission, parents, family, and visitors are not allowed on campus beyond the designated drop-off/pick-up areas.

## **FACE COVERINGS AND OTHER ESSENTIAL PROTECTIVE GEAR**

Cloth face coverings are required (except when eating or drinking) for students (K and up) and all school staff, with the exception of students unable to wear them due to special circumstances such as a particular developmental or health diagnosis that would limit their ability to wear a face covering.

In limited situations where a face coverings cannot be used for pedagogical or developmental reasons, (i.e. communicating or assisting young children or those with special needs) a face shield can be used instead of a cloth face covering while in the classroom as long as wearer maintains physical distance from others, to the extent practicable. A face shield for students in kg and first grade is an acceptable alternative for those who cannot wear face covering properly. For staff, face shields should be worn with cloth drape across the bottom and secured (i.e. tucked into a shirt, tied around the back of the neck).

PPE, including gloves, face masks, face shields/protective eyewear, non-contact, infrared thermometers, and 70% isopropyl alcohol, are available for staff members conducting health screenings. A supply of 1,500 reusable fabric masks and child & adult sized surgical masks are on hand for students or staff members as needed.

In summary:

- All staff will have face masks or protective face shields on at all times while on campus and in the presence of students and colleagues.
- All faculty will wear fully protective face shields when students rely on visual/facial cues.



- All students (kg and up) are required to wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth. We recognize it may be impractical for a child to wear a mask for the duration of the school day and face shields may be worn as an alternative for kg and first grade students.
- Students can take mask breaks throughout the day, as long as they are not moving or when outdoors, while remaining at least six feet apart. Students will be trained on proper mask use (how to remove and put on masks) to avoid potential risk of infection.

## HEALTH SCREENINGS FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF

### Health Screening

Per County guidance, strict exclusion policies for symptomatic students and staff will be implemented. Self-checking for symptoms each morning by staff and parents before leaving in the morning for school is critical and will serve as the primary screening mechanism for COVID-19 symptoms. Staff and parents should review the [CDC Checklist of Symptoms](#) and should stay home if they or anyone in their household has these symptoms in order to prevent the spread of infection. All individuals (students and staff) will be temperature checked and screened prior to being allowed onto the campus. Drive through drop off/ pick up queue and assigned arrival areas will minimize student-to-student interactions and allow for a quick arrival/dismissal procedure. Students will report directly to their classroom upon arrival. As an added measure, Northstar School will be limiting campus access to students and school staff only. Visitors, including parents, are not permitted to enter the classroom spaces.

Northstar School's screening protocols are as follows:

- Face mask must be worn
- Students/families and staff are required to self-screen at home or before entering the building. If self-screening is not completed, school staff should conduct on-site visual and temperature screenings.
- Visual wellness check and temperature check with no-touch thermometers (readings must be less than 100.4 F degrees)
- Must answer 'no' to the following question: *Have you, anyone in your household, or anyone you have been in close proximity with shown signs of illness including fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, congestion, runny nose, chills, body aches, shortness of breath, loss of smell, loss of taste?*
- Sanitize hands upon entry (hand washing stations and sanitizer stations will be provided)

If an individual does not meet any of these requirements, unfortunately, they will not be allowed on campus and possibly will be asked to self-quarantine for a period of time before returning to school. A distance learning plan has been put in place for children who are required to stay home because they are sick or in isolation due to infection or exposure. Since fevers and symptoms are not stagnant, all staff will observe students throughout the day for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 so that appropriate action can be taken to isolate a student until they can be picked up by a parent.

Please note, we will require a 14-day quarantine (or longer, if symptoms develop) for the student/employee (not household members) after international travel only. Domestic travel does

not require a quarantine but it is highly discouraged. Any individual travelling internationally must inform the school administration immediately.

## HEALTHY HYGIENE PRACTICES

COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses are almost exclusively spread by respiratory droplet transmission. Healthy hygiene practices are one of the most effective strategies to prevent the spread of most respiratory viruses including COVID-19, particularly during the pre-symptomatic phase of illness.

Northstar staff and students will be required to exercise hand washing or sanitizing upon arrival to school, in between transitions in and out of their classrooms, before and after eating, after using the restroom, and before dismissal. While handwashing with soap and water is the best option, hand sanitizers may be utilized when hand washing is not available. Additional hand washing stations have been added to the campus adjacent to buildings B, D, and E. Our administrative team is monitoring the supply of necessary supplies including soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer.

Northstar School's hand washing/sanitizing protocol is as follows:

- A regular schedule for routine hand hygiene, above and beyond what is usually recommended (before eating food, after using the restroom) will be implemented.
- Students will have regularly scheduled hand hygiene breaks with each transition. For practical reasons, some of these extra hand hygiene breaks will be with hand sanitizers unless sinks are readily available in/adjacent to the classroom space.
- Hand sanitizer will be placed at key locations and entry points throughout the campus (e.g., campus entrance, each classroom, and in hallways).
- Hand washing with soap and water will be performed prior to and after eating and after using the restroom.
- Students will be taught how to clean their hands properly (with age appropriate material)
  - When hand washing, individuals should use soap and water to wash all surfaces of their hands for at least 20 seconds, wait for visible lather, rinse thoroughly, and dry with an individual disposable towel.
  - If handwashing is not feasible, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent ethanol or at least 70 percent isopropyl content will be used. Hand sanitizer should be applied to all surfaces of the hands and in sufficient quantity that it takes 20 seconds of rubbing hands together for the sanitizer to dry.
- Students will be encouraged, in a positive manner, to avoid touching their face, eyes, nose and mouth as much as possible.
- Students will be taught respiratory etiquette (to sneeze or cough into their elbow or sleeve).
- Age-appropriate signage will be visible throughout the campuses to remind children to wash and sanitize their hands.

## IDENTIFICATION AND CONTACT TRACING

Contact tracing involves identifying people who have an infectious disease (cases) and people who they came in contact with (contacts) in order to interrupt disease spread. Contact tracing begins with identifying everyone that a person recently diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in contact with since they became contagious. The contacts are notified about their exposure. They will be told what symptoms to look out for, advised to isolate themselves for a period of time, and to seek medical attention as needed if they start to experience symptoms.

Northstar School will implement the necessary processes and protocols, in accordance with CDPH guidelines regarding tracing of contacts. Northstar School has designated Leena Parwana and Michelle Lee to support contact tracing for the school community. Salwa Abed is designated as the school liaison to the Alameda County Public Health Department.

At the first signs of illness, please call the school office or email Leena Parwana at [leena@northstarschool.org](mailto:leena@northstarschool.org). The following steps will be taken once an individual on campus has a confirmed (positive test) or probable (exposed individual who develops symptoms) case of COVID-19:

- The individual will be sent home immediately (if not home already) and the date of when symptoms developed or positive lab test will be recorded.
- The infected individual will be interviewed by Leena Parwana or Michelle Lee to identify physical, close, and proximate contacts within the school campus.
- The Alameda County Health Department will be immediately notified at [safelearning@acgov.org](mailto:safelearning@acgov.org), (510) 268-2101, and they may reach out to the individual to determine other potential contacts and to provide further instructions.
- The infected individual must isolate for at least 10 days after onset of symptoms and may be released from isolation if their symptoms have improved AND they have had no fever, without use of medicines, for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- If the infected individual is a student or parent, then the entire household must quarantine for at least 14 days (or longer, if symptoms develop) after last contact with the infected individual.

## STAFF TRAINING AND FAMILY EDUCATION

Northstar staff will be trained on these guidelines and plans for re-opening. Communication regarding a phased reopening plan, Alameda County guidelines and waiver process, updated Standards of Practice, and COVID-19 transmission, symptoms, prevention and risk have been discussed at regular staff meetings beginning in July, 2020 in preparation for the school year. A link to this live document has been made available to staff. Ongoing education is provided during regular staff meetings to answer questions regarding application and enforcement of the guidelines.

All COVID related communication/education materials/updates are emailed directly to our families and will be posted to our website. Parents have received the guidelines and updates on the reopening plans through virtual meetings, emails, and the document is also on our website at



[www.northstarschool.org](http://www.northstarschool.org). Virtual parent meetings via Zoom will be held to review the plans in detail and address any questions prior to the reopening date. As new information becomes available, school administration will be sending out updates and will continue to facilitate virtual meetings to go over any changes or additional guidelines.

## TESTING OF STAFF

Upon reopening to in-person instruction, it is recommended by state and county health officials that surveillance testing be implemented based on the local disease trends. Northstar School shall test staff periodically, as testing capacity permits and as practicable, to include testing all staff over 2 months, with approximately 50% testing every month on a rotational basis. If epidemiological data indicates concern for increasing community transmission, it is recommended that schools increase testing of staff to detect potential cases as lab testing capacity allows.

We are seeking a memorandum of understanding with the [Hayward Covid Testing Site](#) located at Skywest Golf Course in Hayward.

Any staff member that may have potentially been exposed to COVID-19 must notify the school administration and COVID Liaison via email or phone and stay home. Return to work is not permissible until written documentation of a negative COVID test is presented or other requirements are met.

## TRIGGER FOR SWITCHING TO DISTANCE LEARNING

This year we started the new school year in a distance learning modality for kindergarten-8th grade. As soon as the pause on reopening is lifted, school will be open to in-person learning for those who choose to come back to our classrooms. We will also be offering a modified distance learning program for those who prefer to remain at home, and have made preparations to pivot to a distance learning program if the in-person program is mandated to close.

The majority of families have shown interest in an on-site learning option. As long as it is allowed, and within the safety parameters specified by health authorities, we are planning to be open for in-person learning pending approval of the waiver.

A return to a distance learning program for all students may be determined by the school administration in collaboration with the local public health officer if 5% of the school community (both students and staff) tests positive for COVID-19 within a 14-day period. The school community would include both students and staff, which will be tracked separately.

- Contact Alameda County Public Health Department immediately
- Northstar School will close the campus for 14 days and require home quarantine of all students and staff during that time period.
- Deep cleaning of the campus will be completed prior to reopening.

## SCHOOL COMMUNICATION PLAN

Northstar School's administrative team is working hard to be proactive and vigilant pertaining to COVID-19, and our goal is to keep our school community informed, maintain transparency, and keep all channels of communication open. Northstar School believes strongly in the importance of vigilance among our staff and families to use all the prevention practices to assure everyone's health and safety; namely, wearing masks, frequent handwashing, maintaining physical distance, and disinfecting/sanitizing surfaces.

While maintaining confidentiality as required by FERPA and HIPAA, the following communication chain will take place when there is a probable case (symptoms with known exposure) or confirmed case (COVID-19 positive test) on campus:

- The administration will interview the infected individual to do thorough contact tracing to identify who had close and/or proximate contact with this individual within the school community.
- The Alameda County Public Health Department will be immediately notified and provided all pertinent information.
- All close contacts will be notified, individually, by the school administration and provided guidelines.
- All proximate contacts will be notified by email and provided quarantine guidelines.
- For transparency, a notification email will be sent to constituents (parents and staff members on campus) letting them know that there was a COVID-19 case, that the individual has been isolated, contacts have been quarantined, and the Alameda County Public Health Department has been notified.