

March 31, 2021

Newport School District Families,

It has been a few months since my last update to you and during that time, we have been inching our way back to some normalcy in our district. While we have a way to go before we get back to pre-pandemic life, high school athletics have resumed, middle school students are participating in intramural after-school activities, and in classrooms, our students continue to make the most out of what has been a challenging year.

With that, I am pleased to announce that, beginning April 19th, we are going to take an even larger step toward our normal school life by bringing all of our students, K - 12, back 5 days a week. As a district, we have made this decision and feel comfortable doing so because of the following: community COVID numbers are low, the safety protocols implemented in our district continue to be highly effective in mitigating COVID - 19 transmissions, and the recent announcement by the governor allowing for 3-foot physical distancing in our schools provides for ample distancing within our classrooms. I want to be very clear that, although our schools can operate under the 3-foot physical distancing guideline, we will continue to follow 6-foot social distancing whenever possible and believe that 6 feet physical distancing will be maintained in a majority of our classrooms throughout our district.

Please click here, [K-12 Schools Guidance 2020-2021 \(wa.gov\)](https://www.wa.gov/K-12-Schools-Guidance-2020-2021), to read the March 25 updates from Governor Inslee. The physical distancing section begins on page 8 of the document. We urge you to read the entire section very closely. Here is an excerpt:

Practice physical distancing of at least three feet or more between students within groups and in classrooms as much as possible. In certain circumstances (described below), students must still maintain six feet of distance. **Staff should continue to maintain six feet of physical distance from other staff and students in classrooms and otherwise.**

Create space between students and reduce the amount of time they are close with each other. Your ability to do this will depend on students' ages and developmental and physical abilities. Select strategies to increase physical distancing that will work for your school and the space available. Maintaining at least three feet of distance is most important when students or staff will be engaged in something for more than a few minutes, like during class or reading or quiet time. There may be brief moments, such as passing by others in the hallway or during play at recess when students are not fully physically distanced from each other. Not all strategies will be feasible for all schools. Consider opportunities to increase physical space between students during all scheduled activities while limiting interactions in large group settings.

At least six feet of distance must be maintained for the following circumstances:

- **Between staff** in the school building and between adults and students.
- **For all staff and students**
 - o **In common areas**, such as auditoriums.
 - o **When masks can't be worn, such as when eating.**

o **During activities when increased exhalation occurs**, such as singing, shouting, band practice, or physical education, these activities should be moved outdoors or to large, well-ventilated spaces whenever possible

While we are increasing the number of students and the number of days that students are attending, I feel confident that if we all remain vigilant and follow the safety protocols we have in place, we will continue to greatly minimize the spread of COVID within our schools. However, we can never guarantee that we will not have virus transmission. Again, if we do in fact have a positive case or transmission of the virus we will need to quarantine those individuals, and any identified close contacts, immediately. Our goal districtwide is to keep our students on-site as well as to do our part in limiting community spread. Parents, please continue to help us by keeping students at home if they are ill. Keeping COVID out of our buildings is the number one mitigating factor.

Finally, I want to again remind our parents that if you feel that onsite instruction is not the best option we do have alternative options through our Grizzly Remote Program. Please feel free to contact the building principal of the school your son or daughter attends and they will assist you.

Please read the information below carefully, as it outlines how we will conduct the phasing-in of our K-8th grade students to five days a week.

K - 12 Updated Attendance Plan:

Kindergarten - 8th Grade Students:

Beginning the week of April 19th, all students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 will be scheduled to attend school on-site FIVE days per week, every Monday-FRIDAY. K-8th grade students will no longer be following the Monday-Thursday schedule. Students will attend on-site on all scheduled Fridays. The first on-site Friday will be April 23, 2021. Previously, our teachers managed distance learning on Fridays allowing more access to students via Canvas who were isolated or quarantined. Now, if students need to isolate or quarantine, students will need to utilize paper packets for missing school due to COVID through working with the school office.

Please note re: Chromebooks - Please send your K-8 student with their Chromebook and charger as these will be needed during the school day.

*Preschool will maintain the current schedule: Monday-Thursday:

- morning session = 7:45am-10:45am
- afternoon session = 11:45am-2:45pm

9th - 12th Grade Students:

*As you have heard, beginning the week of April 19th, all NHS students in grades 9-12 will be scheduled to attend school on-site five days per week. With the governor's new guidance that sets social distancing in classrooms to three feet, we are able to offer our students a full-time, on-site education. **This is an exciting, yet significant change for the high school, as our 9th-12th grade students will no longer be following the A and B hybrid schedule.** Here is what you can expect as NHS makes the transition to bringing all of our students back for the remainder of the year:*

- *Please continue to keep your student (s) home if they are experiencing symptoms. To date, we have had zero transmissions within our building. The return of more students on-site means that there will be more of a possibility of illnesses being transmitted from one to another. Your continued vigilance in keeping your children home when they are sick is the number one factor in keeping NHS students safe, healthy and in school.*
- *The universal wearing of masks will still be required by staff and students.*
- *Most NHS classes will continue to have lower numbers (20 or less). When smaller class sizes allow, NHS staff will have students keep larger distances between one another (i.e. greater than three feet).*
- *Six feet of distance will still be required in certain circumstances, including, but not limited to: when masks can't be worn, such as when eating; when students are in situations with the express purpose of increased exhalation, such as P.E.*
- *NHS will continue to provide breakfast in the classroom (advisory classes) and maintain the two lunch times that are built into our schedule to maximize space for our students*

If you have any questions, please contact our high school office at 447-2481.

GRIZZLY REMOTE STUDENTS:

- Students enrolled in the Grizzly Remote Connect program will continue to work remotely.

Safety Procedures and Protocols

Safety Procedures:

- We will continue to utilize the same procedures that were originally implemented: health screening at entries or attestation tickets signed by parents, physical distancing of six feet, and face coverings/masks required to be worn indoors.

Transportation:

- Please remember that all students are required to wear a mask on the bus and that all students will be assigned a seat in order to track close contacts in the instance we have a student test positive for COVID. Please contact Durham Transportation with any questions or clarifications you may have about route times and locations: (509) 447-0506.

Meals:

- **With K-12 students** being on-site five days per week, we will continue offering both breakfast and lunch for students while on-site in school. Reminder: meals are offered free of charge to all students for the 20/21 school year.
- **For our distance learners or ANY child**, ages 1-18, regardless of whether they are enrolled in the Newport School District, we will continue offering FREE weekly meal packs until the end of the school year. Meal pickups are every Tuesday from 11:15 am - 12 pm in front of Stratton Elementary. **NOTE: MEALS MUST BE PRE-ORDERED.** Go to: <https://www.newportgriz.com/Page/1505> ([newportgriz.com](https://www.newportgriz.com) - Departments - Nutrition - "Meal Sign Up Form") for additional information and ordering. You can also call Sheila Myrvang, Nutrition Services Director, at 509-447-3167 ext. 4521. *Remember, all children on-site and off, 1-18 years of age, receive free breakfast and lunch through June, 2021.*

Again, this phasing-in plan will begin the week of April 19, 2021. We are committed to keeping our students safely on-site and want to thank all of you for your continued support and flexibility as we will continue to have minor bumps in the road as we bring more students back to on-site instruction.

If you have any questions, as always, please do not hesitate to contact the Newport School District.

Respectfully,

Dave Smith, Newport School District Superintendent

Jenny Erickson, Stratton Elementary Principal

Tony Moser, Sadie Halstead Middle School Principal

Jamie Pancho, Newport High School Principal

Brett Mackey, Newport High School Assistant Principal