



NMRSD Update September 8, 2021

Dear NM School Community,

I truly appreciate the effort of families and staff to make the opening of school go so well. It typically takes a few weeks to work out some of the operational logistics with such matters as drop-off/pick-up, bussing, etc. Now that schools have reopened, we all must adjust to traffic patterns in our towns as we drive to and from school and bus drivers get up-to-speed on their new routes. However, this is to be expected and I believe we're off to a great start. I would like to focus this week's communication on two specific topics, as it is very important families review and communicate with the NM nursing staff about:

1. The COVID-19 vaccination status of their child(ren); and
2. Whether you want your child to participate in the Test and Stay protocol, if not vaccinated, and identified as a close contact of a COVID positive individual this year. Please take a few minutes, review the information below, and respond to inform the NM nursing staff of your decision.

COVID-19 Vaccination Status

One of the significant changes this year, over last, is that asymptomatic vaccinated individuals are not considered close contacts to a confirmed COVID positive individual and do not need to test or quarantine to remain in school. Parents are asked to provide documentation of vaccine status for their child so we may appropriately identify "close contacts" exempt from COVID-19 testing and quarantine protocols in the event a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 this school year. Vaccination is a key mitigation strategy as we work to provide a healthy and safe learning environment in our school community. **If a parent elects not to share the vaccine status of their child, the child is assumed unvaccinated and must follow COVID-19 test and quarantine protocols for unvaccinated individuals.**

Test and Stay Protocol

NM will be offering a Test and Stay protocol for unvaccinated individuals who are identified as "close contacts" due to a COVID-19 positive school exposure.

This testing protocol will minimize the amount of time individuals (students and staff) are out of school due to an in-school COVID-19 positive exposure and is a safe alternative to quarantining at home during the school day. The Test and Stay protocol requires an individual to take a rapid antigen test, BinaxNOW, upon arrival at school each day and receive a negative test result.

The duration of the Test and Stay protocol is seven (7) days from the date of exposure, and close contacts may remain in school if they:

- Are asymptomatic;
- Wear masks in school at all times, other than when eating or drinking
- Take a rapid antigen test – BinaxNOW, each school day and receive a negative test result. When the 7 days from date of exposure includes weekends or holidays, individuals should quarantine on weekends/holidays and if they remain asymptomatic, upon return to school be tested immediately. If the individual remains negative, they may stay in school;
- Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14, and self-isolate at home if symptoms develop.

Individuals who elect to participate in the Test and Stay protocol **may** be eligible to participate in school sports and extracurricular activities. Your school nurse can provide instructions on how to do this. Test and Stay is only applicable to in-school COVID-19 exposure. Exposures outside of school require a traditional quarantine protocol response. Any student who participates in the Test and Stay protocol is required to quarantine at home when not at school.

Important Information – Consent to Participate Required

For your child to participate in the Test and Stay protocol if they are identified as a close contact to a COVID-19 positive individual, consent is required to test. Our nursing staff is thoroughly trained on how to administer the Abbott BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Test.

Symptomatic Testing

We are again offering symptomatic testing using the Abbott Binax COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test for students and staff who become symptomatic with COVID-19 symptoms during the school day. When you provide consent for the Test and Stay program, you will also provide consent for symptomatic testing in the event that it is needed. This program will operate the same way that it did last school year. No student will be tested, even with signed consent, without speaking to the parent/guardian first.

Pool Testing

At this time NMRSD is NOT participating in Pool Testing based on our analysis of the 2020-2021. NMRSD is asking parents to consent to Pool Testing below if

NMRSD chooses to bring this program to the district in the future. Pool testing is strongly encouraged and recommended for unvaccinated individuals. Participation in Pool testing is not recommended for vaccinated individuals.

A signed consent is required for both the Test and Stay and Pool Testing Programs.

PLEASE NOTE: The district is still working with DESE and DPH to set up the Test and Stay option. A district email will be sent out once testing is available.

Consent Form

The District is requiring that each family complete ONE form for each child which provides the district with information regarding:

1. COVID-19 vaccination status
2. Test and Stay protocol intent
3. Pool Testing intent
4. CIC Health Platform to provide consent for your child to participate in weekly COVID-19 the Test and Stay Program and/or Pool Testing for each district. After you provide consent in the CIC Platform, you will need to return to the form and select "Submit" to complete the registration.

Student Consent and Vaccination Status Form

Please click the link above to access the form.

You are required to log-in to a Google account to upload your form. If you do not have a Google account, you may upload the form through your child's school issued Google account. Please complete a **separate form** for each child that attends an NM school.

IMPORTANT - From the NM Nursing Team

The NMRSD Nurses would like to welcome back all of our students and staff this school year. We are excited about having all of our students together again and have enjoyed the opportunity to see so many of them this past week.

We would also like to remind everyone that many of our COVID protocols are still in effect and that part of being able to return fully in-person this year means still being mindful of the pandemic mitigation strategies that we put in place last year. One of our most important strategies is to **stay home when sick**. There are many strategies that we can implement without your help, but this is one of the strategies that we rely on our families to follow so that all of

our students are safer. It is very important that families and staff follow this guidance:

1. Stay home if you are ill with any of the symptoms listed below . It is very important to keep everyone healthy that anyone who doesn't feel well stays home.
 - a. Fever of 100.0 degrees or greater, chills or shaking chills
 - b. New cough (not related to chronic condition)
 - c. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - d. Muscle or body aches
 - e. New loss of taste or smell
 - f. Headache in combination with other symptoms**
 - g. Sore throat in combination with other symptoms**
 - h. New nasal congestion or new runny nose (not related to seasonal allergies) when in combination with other symptoms**
 - i. Nausea or vomiting
 - j. Diarrhea
2. Families, please be specific on the absence call-in line with the reason your child is out of school. This is important in identifying illness trends.
3. If your child becomes sick during the school day, you will be called and advised of the need for dismissal. **It is expected that your child will be picked up within 30 minutes.** If your child presents with any of the above listed symptoms, they will need to wait in a designated isolation area until they are picked up.
4. We ask that you provide 4 contacts that the school nurse can call if you are unavailable and your child is ill. These contacts need to be able to pick up your child.
5. If your contact information or that of your emergency contacts changes, please notify the secretaries at each school your children attend.

So, each morning **before** coming to school or getting on the bus:

Families should assess their child's state of wellness before leaving home for school following the guidelines in the [Daily Student Attestation](#) .

If the student has any symptoms of COVID-19, they should not attend school. The family should notify their school nurse that the child will be absent and the reason for the absence. The school nurse will follow-up with the family

regarding the child's symptoms, whether the child was seen by a medical professional and any testing that was done.

If a student has any of these symptoms, they must get a test for active COVID-19 infection prior to returning to school.

The Supervisor of Health Services in collaboration with the NMRSD Nursing Staff will monitor the attendance rates and clinic visits as part of the illness surveillance rates. The NMRSD Nurses, Supervisor of Health Services, and the Superintendent will continue to work closely with the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health to mitigate the risk of coronavirus spread.

Thank you for doing your part to ensure that all NM students are healthy, safe and ready to learn!

Physical Distancing

We have been getting questions with regard to physical distancing, specifically during lunch when students are unmasked. Where DESE requires masks be worn indoors (with the exception of mask breaks/eating), there is no requirement of physical distancing during lunch. The primary reason for this is due to the fact that any physical distancing requirement could put NM in a situation where we would not be able to serve lunch in schools. The same holds true for most districts in the state.

Physical distance, whether 3 feet or 6 feet, renders cafeteria tables useless as they can not accommodate the number of students during a lunch at either distance. Last year, we borrowed and purchased desks to replace cafeteria tables, and although we had less students attending, we still did not have enough to accommodate our students within our cafeterias.

We do have assigned seats during lunch that will make contact tracing easier, should there be an issue. Please remember all mitigation and testing strategies available this year to help monitor and alleviate the need for quarantining, including the upcoming Test and Stay protocol, distancing when possible, assigned seating, and vaccinations (where eligible).

School Buses

After receiving some complaints about bus windows being closed, we have contacted Dee Bus. They are currently mandating that all bus windows be

open a minimum of 4 inches. Based on reports from administration, at this mark, it does appear that the windows are closed due to tinting. That said, students who wish to open their windows more than 4 inches are welcome to do so.

Important Dates

October 2021

- 6 Early Release - Professional Development
- 11 No School - Indigenous Peoples Day

November 2021

- 2 No School - Election Day - District-wide Professional Development
- 11 No School - Veterans Day
- 22 K-8 Early Release - Parent Conferences High School in Session
- 23 K-8 Early Release - Parent Conferences High School in Session
- 24-26 No School - Thanksgiving Recess

Tentative Virtual Coffees

All coffees will be held remotely. Please use the link below to join.

- Tuesday, September 21st - 9:30 am
- Tuesday, October 26th - 4:00 pm (Date Change)
- Tuesday, November 16th - 9:30 am
- Tuesday, December 21st - 4:00 pm
- Tuesday, January 18th - 9:30 am
- Tuesday, February 15th - 4:00 pm
- Tuesday, March 15th - 9:30 am
- Tuesday, April 12th - 4:00 pm
- Tuesday, May 31st - 9:30 am

The link for all coffees:

For Video: meet.google.com/vfc-wzau-yem

For Phone: (US) +1 484-416-2706 PIN: 194 998 043#

NMRSD Adopt a Spot Program

The NMRSD "Adopt a Spot" Program provides opportunities for companies, civic groups, and community members to adopt a "spot" (island/mulch

bed/entryway) to create attractive, welcoming "oases" throughout the District. Adopters agree to invest "sweat equity" to maintain a spot at one of our schools, in return for which an Adopt a Spot sign recognizing the spot's adopter will be installed by the District. Adopters agree to maintain the area for one fiscal year (July-June) during the summer, fall, and spring seasons. Spots are available at all of our schools.

To begin the process of becoming a Spot Adopter, please contact Andrea Royer at 978-597-8713 ext. 1900 to find a spot that suits your interest and discuss guidelines.

Fall Parent/Caregiver Information Series

This fall, NMRSD will be offering four (4) parent/caregiver information nights in the Performing Arts Center at NMRHS at 6:30 pm. Please mark your calendars:

Tuesday, October 12th

Navigating the Common Application & Naviance

NMRHS Guidance Team

This presentation will be geared towards current 9th, 10th, and 11th graders' parents/caregivers and their students planning to attend two or 4-year colleges.

Tuesday, October 26th

How to Manage Teen Mental Health

Dr. Dan Rosa

This presentation will be geared towards parents/caregivers of middle and high school students. Dr. Rosa is a veteran clinical psychologist in the Chelmsford Public Schools and was instrumental in bringing in a K-12 team of clinical psychologists to the district. He has a private practice and has done presentations throughout Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

Wednesday, November 3rd

Internet & Social Media Safety

Katie Greer (klgeer.com)

This presentation will be geared towards all parents/caregivers and students at both the middle and high school levels. As we all realize, technology is unavoidable, and this presentation will help both adults and students better understand the Internet and social media. Katie has done presentations all over the country and has been featured in several national media outlets.

Wednesday, November 10th

How Do We Create Safe & Welcoming Schools for All Students?

How Can We Support Our LGTBQ Students?

Jeff Perrotti

This presentation will be geared towards parents/caregivers of all grade levels. Jeff is a renowned expert in the field of Gender Education - creating a Safe School Climate and the founding director of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education's Safe Schools Program for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning Students.