



# The New School's Guide to COVID-19 Operations

While there is no 100 percent guarantee that people in our community will be able to avoid contracting the novel coronavirus, the procedures and practices outlined in this guide will help mitigate risk factors.

This document is your quick guide to procedures related to COVID-19 at The New School for the 2021-2022 school year. Because the situation with the virus is constantly evolving, the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook will be reviewed and updated as needed to keep the school and our community as safe as we can.


If there is a confirmed COVID-19 case within the school (student/staff), The New School will contact the CDC and follow their guidance. Response measures may include switching to remote learning and asking people to self-isolate or get tested.


## Daily at Home Symptom Screening


Every day, before leaving the house to come to school, all families and staff will conduct an at-home symptom screening. Please refer to the following info-graphic to help you decide whether it is safe to attend school.

### Pre-Screening Tool for School Attendance

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Within the past 24 hours have you had a fever\* or taken fever reducing medicine? YES = 

Do you feel sick, had vomiting/diarrhea, fever\*, sore throat, or felt unwell? YES = 

Have you been told to stay home and isolate/quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure? YES = 



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**Stay home with any YES response to the questions above.**

**Attend school when all answers are NO and your child is feeling well with no other symptoms of illness. Call or see your school nurse or other designated person at school if you have questions.**

IF YOUR CHILD HAS ANY ILLNESS THEY SHOULD STAY AT HOME UNTIL NO FEVER FOR 24 HOURS WITHOUT TAKING FEVER REDUCING MEDICATION AND SYMPTOMS ARE IMPROVING OR GONE.

\*A fever is 100.4F/38C or greater.

   
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### Daily at home Symptom Screening (continued)

- If staff or students stay home because they are unwell, contact the school ASAP.
- People who stay home because they are unwell should not return to school until they have been symptom free for 24 hours.
- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and suspect you have come in contact with someone who was positive for COVID, you should consult with your doctor and get tested. **Do not come to school.**
- If you **are** vaccinated and have a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, you should be tested 3-5 days after exposure, regardless of whether you have symptoms. **Do not come to school during this time.** You may return to school following a negative test. No additional quarantine is required.
- If you **are not** vaccinated and have come in contact with a Covid-19 positive individual, **do not come to school. You must remain home for 10 full days.** Maine CDC continues to recommend a COVID-19 test between days 5 and 7 to identify new infections as soon as possible, though a negative test will not change the duration of the 10-day quarantine period. All individuals in quarantine should continue to monitor themselves for symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 for 14 days.

### Medical Isolation Space/access to health care at school

- If during the day a student begins to feel ill, they should inform a staff person in the building. A symptom screening (including temperature check) will be performed and the parent/guardian will be contacted to collectively determine whether the student needs to go home or rest in our designated medical isolation room.
- Per our normal wellness policy, if a student has a temperature over 100 degrees or has vomited or had diarrhea, they will be sent home and cannot return to school until they have been symptom free for 24 hours without medication.
- If there is a confirmed COVID-19 case within the school (student/staff) The New School will contact the CDC and follow their guidance.

### Distancing policy/guidelines

- Everyone in school will maintain a distance of at least 3 feet between each other whenever possible.
- We have several outdoor classroom spaces which we will utilize for as long as the weather permits. Staff and students are encouraged to dress for being outside.

### Hand hygiene

- Students and staff will thoroughly and frequently wash their hands throughout the day (minimum 20 seconds with soap).
- Direct teaching about hand washing will occur in the first weeks of school.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers are located throughout the building and people are encouraged to use hand sanitizer as they exit/enter rooms and periodically throughout the day.
- People are encouraged to bring their own personal supply of hand sanitizer.
- Hands should be cleaned after touching masks and before/after touching common surfaces.

### Cleaning stations, cleaning protocols

- At the end of every class block, the students & staff in each classroom will clean surfaces, sweep, and remove trash to maintain classroom cleanliness
  - Staff will work with students to create a plan to clean the rest of the school

### Outdoor Learning Spaces

- As weather permits we will utilize outdoor learning spaces as often as practical.

### Ventilation

- As weather permits, windows in the school will be open in the building for cross ventilation
- The school has two air exchange systems that recycle the air in the building every 15 minutes. These will be used in accordance with industry standards.

## Vans

- All occupants will wear masks when in the vans.
- Maximum air circulation will be maintained using the windows and fans in the vans.
- Interior of the vans will be sprayed with aerosol disinfectant after each use.
- All occupants will wash or sanitize hands before and after van trips.

## Shared supplies

- We encourage students to bring their own school supplies. A [supply list](#) was issued at the beginning of the school year.
- When it is necessary to use communal supplies, students will be given clean supplies and then asked to put their supplies in a clearly marked, designated spot in each classroom for later disinfection/cleaning.

## Personal supplies

- Students should have a sealable container labeled with their name to hold their personal supplies.
- Sharing supplies is discouraged this year to minimize the risk of transmission.

## Mask Policy

- The New School will have a universal indoor masking policy for all students, staff, teachers, and visitors regardless of vaccination status. Everyone is required to have an approved face covering and to wear it at all times except as outlined below.
  - The exception to this will be if eating (see below). When eating, people should sit facing away from others, and maintain a minimum distance of 6 feet from one another. Hands should be cleaned before and after eating. Care should be taken with used masks. Surfaces must be disinfected after eating.
- Students do not need to wear face coverings when outside as long as 6 ft distance is maintained.
- Mask breaks will be given during class. People will go outside, keep a 6 foot distance from one another, and wash/sanitize hands after touching masks.
- Face coverings:
  - **Acceptable** face coverings include: disposable non-surgical mask, homemade and store bought cloth masks that tie or have elastic ear loops.
  - **Unacceptable** face coverings: Additional research has recently come out that suggests the listed face coverings below are ineffective in preventing particle spread.
    - Scarf, bandana, neck gators, valve masks, plastic face shields (unless it is used together with an acceptable face covering listed above). To use a plastic face shield alone requires a doctor's order.
  - The school has a limited supply of masks if people need a replacement during the day.
  - Everyone should bring at least one spare mask.
- Masks should be changed if they become damp.
  - Used reusable masks should be placed in a sealed container and taken home to be laundered.
  - Disposable masks should be thrown out in one of the 4 trash cans with lids in the school (located in bathrooms, science room, and Discovery room).
  - Clean hands after changing masks.
- Masks must cover the nose and mouth. A well fitting mask should cover your face from the bridge of your nose to under your chin. It should be loose fitting but still secure enough to stay in place. People should make sure they can talk with their mask on and that it doesn't irritate them, so they are not tempted to touch it or pull it out of place, which could limit its effectiveness.
  - <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/coronavirus-face-masks-what-you-need-to-know>

## Lunch Procedures

- People are encouraged to eat outside and maintain a safe distance from one another
- In order to eat indoors, people must spread out in the school and be at least 6 feet away from each other.
- People should not directly face each other while eating.
- Maximum room capacities for **eating** are posted for each room.
  - (Art Room--2) (Science--4) (Common Room--6) (½ Room--6) (Discovery Room--8)
- In order to allow people safe access to the kitchen during lunch, there will be no eating in the kitchen.
- Before and after eating, people should wash hands and spray and wipe down table surface with disinfectant

## Kitchen Policy

- The kitchen is open this year. Community dishes are available. Students and staff are required to rinse their dishes and put them in the dishwasher to be sanitized.
- Everyone should have a water bottle and/or travel mug (hot beverages) that stays with them throughout the day.
- Food may be stored in the refrigerators in labeled containers.
- All appliances are available for use.
  - Before and after using shared resources (like the microwaves) people must wash hands.

## Visitors

- We are working to reduce the number of people in the school at all times.
- Visitors are strongly encouraged to call ahead before making a trip into the school.
- Visitors should enter only through the front door and check in at the front desk.
- Visitors must wear a mask when in the building.
- Visitors will be expected to follow all safety protocols while in the building.
- Parents and Guardians are welcome to come to the school provided they follow the above guidelines and adhere to the other protocols in the building (masks, hand hygiene, health checks, etc)

## Learning Plans for sick or quarantined students

- If a student is ill or has to self-isolate, teachers will work with each student individually to best meet their needs depending on their situation.
- We have seen that hybrid and remote learning models are no substitute for in-person learning and will not be offering hybrid learning for extended periods of time this year.
- Teachers will create alternative assignments when appropriate.

## Sick or Quarantined Teachers

- If a teacher is unable to teach in person at school while in-person learning is happening, we will work with them and their classes to establish whether we will hire a substitute teacher or they will teach from home via Zoom, or some combination of these options.

## Online platforms

- All teachers will use Google Classroom for posting class materials and assignments
  - All assignments should be submitted via Google Classroom
- Students all have gmail accounts with a tnsk.org address which enables them to access the Google suite of applications
- Direct instruction for use of Google Classroom will be given during Advisory in the first weeks of classes
- We will be using Zoom for video conferencing.
  - Each teacher has their own Zoom Account through the school. Paid Zoom accounts have increased security measures and unlimited time.

## Psycho-social supports

There is a great deal of research available indicating that relationships and personal connection are crucial to student well-being in general and specifically during the uncertainty of this pandemic. The nature of how we educate students at TNS has multiple support systems embedded within it.

These include:

- Advisory
- Direct communication with families about student well-being
- Flexible, individualized approach to education where we modify expectations according to student needs.
  - Using the COVID Practices outlined in this document, we will strive to ensure safe, in-person learning whenever possible.
- If we have to switch to Remote Learning again, we have built-in supports including daily check-ins.
  - Our holistic approach to working with adolescents includes implementing mindfulness moments throughout the day, encouraging physical activity, and discussing health, nutrition, and mental/physical wellness in advisory and as a whole school.

We do not have a counselor or a social worker on staff, but encourage families to access services if they need them. We have found NAMI Maine to be a valuable resource: <https://www.namimaine.org/>

## Thank you!

Thank you for doing your part to keep our school community safe during this pandemic. Please reach out to a member of the staff or faculty if you have any questions or concerns about this policy. And please remember to mask up, wash your hands, and practice social distancing! We will get through this together.