

NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

PARENTS' GUIDE TO REOPENING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

For
a Healthy
School
and
Healthy
Students



THINK.

LEARN.

LOVE.

LIVE.

Thank you for reading the Parents' Guide to Reopening. Many questions have been submitted and referred to staff members for consideration. We appreciate your patience as we respond. The list below does not include every question that was asked. Some questions were actually answered in the Plan; others are still being considered by staff; still others may fall into a category where our guidance is under review. Those cases may actually result in an amendment of the Plan.

It is important to note that our Plan is fluid and will be updated as we respond to local data and further guidance. Finally, we have tried to group the questions into categories for easy reference.

GENERAL HYGIENE AND MITIGATION

- Q. Will there be common supplies that everyone can use or will everything be kept separate?
- A. The sharing of supplies, including books and other materials, will be minimized. This requires that students come to school with the items on the supply list. Teachers will manage classroom resources such that they are wiped down between uses if they must be shared.
- Q. When cleaning and disinfecting rooms affected due to a positive COVID-19 case, will you use chemical agents per CDC guidelines (List N: Disinfectants for use against SARS-Cov-2), for how long will you cordone off the affected room (CDC recommends 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting), and where will non-quarantined cohorts receive instruction?
- A. The disinfectant we have used for years has been shown to be effective against SARS-COV-2. We will therefore be using that product for all cleaning needs. The CDC does make allowance for clinics, etc to be ventilated, cleaned and reopened in one hour. (Dr's offices follow this guideline.) We also have alternate spaces available for cohorts to receive instruction during the cleaning process.
- Q. Does the HVAC system in the school have the appropriate filters to mitigate the spread of any virus?
- A. Commerical AC units such as those used in our buildings cannot be fitted for filters with mitigation properties for COVID-19, influenza or other diseases. This is not a recommended mitigation strategy.

COHORTS

- Q. How big are the cohorts in the high school (especially 9th and 10th grade)?
- A. A cohort is roughly equivalent to a grade section, 18-20 students. The rising junior class is only one section and is, therefore, its own cohort. The rising senior class is treated as a cohort because these students mix the most due to variations in course selection.
- Q. Will cohorts mingle at all? It sounds like they will not have lunch or recess together. Is that correct?
- A. Cohorts will mingle on a limited basis, subject to review. We will begin the term in a more constrictive posture, and open gradually upon review. Lunch and recess will mingle cohorts at such a time as we believe it appropriate to do so.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Q. I noticed that the social distancing guidelines in your plan mention 3-6 feet. I thought that the recommendations were 6 feet?
- A. The CDC, the WHO, and AAP state that 3-6 ft when feasible is acceptable.
- Q. Will rooms be big enough to ensure social distancing?
- A. Yes; rooms have been measured and classes have been re-assigned based on size so that we maintain the recommended 3-6 feet distancing.

DROP-OFF

- Q. The Plan states that at drop-off students will report to their classrooms and will not be supervised in a common area. Does this mean that there will or will not be supervision in the classroom starting at 7:30?
- A. Students will report directly to classrooms where their teachers will be present. There is no drop-off before 7:30 a.m. Students who do not arrive by 8:00 a.m. are tardy.
- Q. Should parents take temperatures or do a symptom check at home before they even come to school?
- A. By all means. We would encourage this. New Covenant will be taking temperatures also.

AFTER-SCHOOL CARE

- Q. The Plan states that After School Care will expand to include grades 7-12, and also says that students in those grades will be placed in study hall if not in an activity. Will they be in an alternate location?
- A. New Covenant will continue to offer ASC for grades K-6, but only for demonstrated need, not for social purposes. New Covenant is expanding After-School Care to accommodate students in grades 7-12 who are not in an after-school activity. In previous years, older students were free to be in designated common areas indoors and outdoors. That is no longer the case. These students will be required to report to an After-School study hall that is supervised, and this will entail a fee. Note: All athletic practices will be synchronized to begin at 3:15 pm. Thus, no student will be required to wait until a late practice. All practices are immediately after school.

LUNCH

- Q. Can parents donate microwaves for kids to use in the classrooms to re-heat lunches?
- A. No; students will often eat out of doors for “picnics;” moreover, the logistics of sanitation and the lines created by one class for one microwave are not workable. (One child w/ 3min heat up of mac & cheese x 15 children = no lunch after the 9th child).
- Q. How will the classroom teachers get their lunch break if the kids will be in the classroom?
- A. The school has hired additional aides to help during certain times and will supervise children during lunch. This will provide breaks for faculty members during the day.

LUNCH

Q. What about ordering ice cream and getting chips?

A. There is no ice cream this year. There will be a few items for sale when lunch is delivered, and parents can pre-order side items as well. The Director of Food Services will send out a lunch newsletter that will address this more fully.

SOCIAL, EVENTS, FIELD TRIPS, MASTER CALENDAR

Q. Will the middle school retreat still happen?

A. The middle school retreat has been postponed until further notice.

Q. Are there any known updates to the master calendar or is an updated version forthcoming?

A. New Covenant will seek to maintain a predictable schedule and a culture that feels normal to parents and students. When a change occurs, we will seek to give adequate notice of change. Some events will be cancelled; others will change in the way they are carried out.

SCREENING BY PARENTS

Q. What type of screening instrument will parents be asked to complete? Does this refer to travel restrictions or any other restrictions I need to know ahead of time that would keep my kids from starting school or returning after a break?

A. The school nurse will provide the screening instrument to parents the week of August 9.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Q. What specific situations will constitute a cohort closure or school-wide closure?

A. This would be determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the health department.

Q. For an intermediate school-wide closures the Plan states that Grammar school will follow “on-line instruction by pre-established schedule.” What is the pre-established schedule?

A. The school will publish those schedules as needed. Instruction will include Loom and Zoom.

FACE COVERINGS

Q. Is there any discussion about mandating face coverings in the classroom especially for middle and high school children?

A. **Yes. We have reviewed the published plan, and we are now asking GS children (pk-4) to wear face coverings to school. Upon reaching the classroom they may remove the face covering and wear it when instructed by the teacher. In grades 5-12, students are will wear face coverings at all times inside the building, except when eating lunch, or otherwise instructed.**

Q. What teachers have to wear face coverings?

A. Faculty members are provided KN/95 masks by the school. Teachers, like all students, will wear face coverings in the hallways and common spaces; they are not required to teach with face coverings when giving instruction when social distance can be maintained.

- Q. Will kids be allowed to wear the face/neck gaiters or just the face coverings that loop around your ears?
- A. Students may wear face/neck gaiters or face coverings that loop around the ears. Parents should plan to supply a face covering, but New Covenant will sell face coverings with NCS logos from the school store for sale at a time TBD.
- Q. May students wear gaiters around their neck all day and pull them up when needed?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Will students be instructed on how to wear a face covering?
- A. The school will give student instruction on a broad number of hygienic questions. If a student wears a mask incorrectly, instruction will be given to assist the child. Parents should teach this at home.
- Q. If a face covering is required for a student in Middle School and School of Rhetoric, what is the school's policy if a student arrives to school with no face covering?
- A. The student will be issued a face covering from the school store and the parent will be charged.

QUARANTINES

- Q. The Plan requires a student who has been exposed to COVID but has no symptoms to be out of school for 14 days; however one who is exposed and does have symptoms to only be out of school for 10 days and possibly 3 more if fever is present. Why would a child that has NO symptoms need to be out potentially 4 days longer than one with symptoms?
- A. If a student has been exposed and has symptoms, he/she has already started the viral cycle. Thus, the guidance from the CDC and the VDH shortens the time out of school. A student who has been exposed but shows no symptoms is presumed to be earlier in the viral cycle and therefore the guidance increases the time out of school.
- Q. What are the guidelines for when a student tests positive but is asymptomatic?
- A. The student must remain at home for symptom onset and ten days after that. Anyone who has a positive should tell the nurses who will then work with the local Health department for what the school must do. The health department will also contact the school whenever any one in our population has a positive. The positive person and their immediate family will be under the health department protocols for what they as individuals must do.
- Q. The flow charts for "what to do if" mention "symptoms"? Symptoms can be a broad term that seems to be expanding over time. Of course fever seems to be a major symptom, but does NCS intend on providing a specific symptom list which requires action?
- A. The list of COVID symptoms to watch for will be on the self-screening policy forthcoming from the clinic.

- Q. If my son has a cough with no fever, does that mean that we have to have a doctor note before he can be in class? My son suffers from what we believe are allergies. Last year he had a cough that lingered for many weeks. The flowchart doesn't address this other than to say "exclude from school until resolved". Is a doctor note needed for something as simple as a cough with no other symptoms (e.g. fever)? Also, does a doctor note, even without a negative test, exempt one from having to miss school?
- A. The nursing staff recognizes there are many reasons besides COVID for a child not to feel well. They will communicate closely with the parents and the child's medical provider while considering the current guidelines to find the best and most appropriate level of care for the student. The goal is to have students at school and keep the campus healthy. It may be the case that parents will be asked to contact their child's medical provider more often than in the past, and there will be occasions in which we will ask for medical clearance so that students may return to school quickly.
- Q. What happens if a child has a family member with COVID-19, and the child tests negative; will you allow them to come to school?
- A. If the child resides with that positive family member, then the health department will require that all persons living there remain in quarantine for 14 days since the last exposure from the positive person. If a student is exposed to a positive extended family member (ex. a grandparent) that they don't live with, the health department may require them to quarantine for 14 days since they last saw the relative. A negative test is only good for that day and does not mean the child won't develop COVID over the course of the incubation period. There is no role for a negative test to clear a child to return to school.
- Q. The CDC now recommends "24 hours after fever resolution" (instead of the 3 days or 72 hours) and improved "symptoms" instead of "respiratory symptoms" (since the symptom list continues to increase beyond that of respiratory) should it also include "without fever-reducing medication?"
- A. The guidance is shifting and at the time of publication we were in compliance. These flow charts are under review and we will amend as necessary.
- Q. Can you provide any further planning details in the case where a teacher(s) must quarantine and is(are) unable to teach online due to symptom severity?
- A. In such a case the school would provide a substitute teacher just as it would for any other faculty absence.