Wildcat Nation,

As we prepare for the start of the 2020-2021 school year, there are many challenges and unknowns in the world. To be successful, it will take a collaborative effort between educators, health officials, support staff, and families to ensure that our students can resume learning and develop relationships safely. The past several months have demonstrated the crucial role that school districts play in the lives of students and the community as a whole. Our schools are a critical vessel for support, friendships, and the social-emotional needs of young people in our community. There is no doubt that reopening at this time presents many unique challenges; as this fluid situation changes, we know it may be uncomfortable, inconvenient, and sometimes downright annoying, but it’s our hope that Wildcat Nation will be unified among the noise.

To prepare for the upcoming school year, we have created a COVID-19 Task Force made up of school administrators, health officials, safety coordinators, educators, and custodial supervisors. We have examined all aspects of our operations to identify ways to make our students and staff safer and mitigate risk. We strive to continuously monitor the situation with the help of health officials and professional organizations, and change our approach if needed.

We recognize that in order for us to be successful, we will need the support of our community and our families. Providing for the safety and well-being of our students is of the utmost importance, and it will take all of us doing our part.

We look forward to working in partnership with families and community as school begins for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Please recognize that this is a living document that could change at any time based off of new information, data, or official guidelines.

#NSDUnited

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COVID-19

COVID-19 is mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. It is thought that the virus may spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose or mouth, causing infection. Therefore, personal prevention practices (such as handwashing, staying home when sick) and environmental cleaning and disinfection are important principles that are covered in this document. Fortunately, there are a number of actions school staff can take to help lower the risk of exposure to and spread of COVID-19 during school sessions and activities (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2020).

One of the actions that can be taken to help lower the risk of exposure is the use of face coverings. Face coverings may be challenging for students (especially younger students) to wear in all-day settings such as school. Face coverings should be worn by staff and students (particularly older students) as feasible, and are most essential in times when physical distancing is difficult. Individuals should be repeatedly reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently. Information should be provided to staff, students, and students’ families on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings (CDC, 2020).

What measures can we take to mitigate risk?

**Hand Washing** | Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

**Physical Distancing** | Avoid close contact by putting an appropriate distance between yourself and others. Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus. Keeping an appropriate distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

**Masks** | Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they have to go out in public, for example to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected. Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker.

**Cover Coughs and Sneezes** | If you are in a private setting and do not have your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

**Clean and Disinfect** | Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces throughout the day. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks. If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. Then, use a household disinfectant. Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants work well.

(Information above referenced from CDC, 2020)
Academic Options for 2020-2021

Neosho School District will be offering two academic options for the 2020-2021 school year; Virtual Learning and Seated Learning. Both learning options will begin on August 24, 2020. Students will be committed to the learning option chosen for the entire semester. Guidelines for switching from one option to the other are outlined under the “Virtual Learning Option” section.

Virtual Learning is available for students in grades K-12 and is geared for families who feel their child will be best served through an all-online environment that allows them to learn from home. The last day to sign up for the Virtual Learning Option is Monday, August 3, 2020.

Seated Learning will be five days a week and will be similar to a regular school year, with some added precautions and safety measures. We will be utilizing guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Newton County Health Department (NCHD). In the event the health department requires a school or the district to reduce capacity, an alternative schedule will be implemented. That schedule would be constructed based on health official recommendations, input from our community, and input from our peers around the world.

Information on both learning options is outlined below.
Virtual Learning Option
Whether it be for medical reasons or personal choice, this option is for families who feel their child will be best served through an all-online environment that allows them to learn from home.

How do I sign up for NSD Virtual (online instruction)?
Please use the NSD Instructional Commitment Forms located here. All responses must be received no later than noon on Monday, August 3, 2020.

Is there a contract for parents/guardians and students to sign for a commitment to NSD Virtual?
Yes, there is a contract which states that you understand the format and the time commitment to online learning. Students should plan on spending up to six hours per day in order to be successful with online learning.

Will elective class be available with NSD Virtual?
Elective classes will be offered, but there are some hands-on classes which would be difficult to teach online effectively. Therefore, they may not be available through NSD Virtual.

Can my student change from NSD Virtual to in-person instruction?
Once a student begins instruction through NSD Virtual, they will be committed to that format for the rest of the semester (December 2020). If a student chooses to return to in-person instruction, they need to contact their school counselor at least one week prior to the end of the semester. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis (i.e. change in employment).

Can my student change from in-person to NSD Virtual instruction?
Students may only choose instruction through NSD Virtual during the regular enrollment period (Five days prior to and five days after the beginning of each semester). Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.

What kind of device will be available for my student? Can students use their own devices with NSD Virtual?
NSD will provide a Chromebook for students in grades 3-12 and an iPad for students in grades K-2. While students are able to login to the NSD Virtual platforms with any device, we can only provide technical support for the district-issued device.

What type of internet access will I need to have to enroll in NSD Virtual?
Families will need to provide fast, reliable internet access to have a successful online experience.

Will my student receive training on how to access their learning platforms?
Yes, students will have access to training within the platforms used in the NSD Virtual experience.

Will I be able to monitor my student's online progress?
Yes, parents will have the opportunity to view student online progress and performance through PowerSchool and other online learning platforms.

**What if my online student becomes sick?**
If your online student becomes sick and unable to perform the assigned work for a period of time, the student will need to communicate with his/her online teacher to make arrangements for extended deadlines. Parents/guardians must also communicate with the school office.

**Will my student be on the computer the entire time?**
Depending on a student’s grade level, the time on a device will vary. Students may spend time on physical education, art projects, or other hands-on learning activities. Depending upon the courses a student is enrolled in, additional time could be expected on a device for secondary students.

**Will my NSD Virtual student be eligible for activities and athletics?**
Yes, provided the student is engaged in the NSD Virtual Learning Coursework and maintaining academic eligibility according to NJH/NHS expectations.

**Will I still receive notifications from the district?**
Yes. NSD Virtual students are still enrolled as Neosho School District students. You will receive email and text notifications from the district, as well as occasional phone calls. To ensure you receive these alerts, please make sure your contact information (phone, text, and email) is accurate in our student information system. Parents can check their contact information by reaching out to their school office. Another recommendation is to download the NSD app in Google Play or the App Store. Using the app, parents can receive push notifications and manage notifications for each student enrolled at NSD.
Seated Learning Option
On the first day of school and throughout the first week, safety procedures will be taught and practiced in all of our classrooms. Parental support and reinforcement of these new measures will be critical in providing the safest possible environment for students. We appreciate your understanding as our team works through the implementation of these new protocols.

MASKS & SOCIAL DISTANCING
Staff will be required to wear a cloth mask or plastic face shield during most of the school day, especially when physical distancing is difficult. Students will also be required to wear a cloth mask when social distancing guidelines cannot be maintained, or special circumstances exist. Special circumstances will be addressed on an individual basis. Age and circumstances will also govern when students may remove face coverings in the classroom. NSD will have cloth masks available for students on the first day of school, or students are welcome to bring their own.

Students will be spaced throughout the classroom to promote physical distancing.

We will limit the use of community supplies (pencils, calculators, machinery, P.E. equipment, etc.) that are difficult to disinfect in the classroom or at recess.

To the extent possible, schedules will be staggered to minimize large gatherings in the hallway.

Additional Considerations & Practices
- Weather permitting, students may go outside for all physical education and/or music classes.
- A larger space will be considered to accommodate for physical distancing if designated classrooms are too small to allow for appropriate student numbers and/or spacing.
- Upon the return of library books, each book will be disinfected prior to recirculation.

RECESS
Schools will develop recess schedules that limit the number of students on the playground or within a specific area of the playground. This may look differently at each school due to the amount of playground space at each site.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL
Arrival and dismissal can provide a challenge with large numbers of students congregating, making it difficult to physically distance. Therefore, schools will communicate a plan that allows for multiple entrances for students to use during arrival and dismissal. The use of multiple entrances will only apply to certain buildings where this option is feasible and safe. Signs will be placed outside as a reminder for students to physically distance themselves from their peers while entering the building or standing outside. Students will be asked to walk directly to their homeroom or first hour class to discourage congregating in the hallways.
Additional considerations for families include:

- Drop students off as close to the school start time as possible to avoid the gathering of students before doors open.
- If possible, drive your child to and from school each day to reduce the number of students riding the bus.
- Upon dropping your child off, please remind them that their first responsibility as they enter the building, is to either wash their hands or use the hand sanitizer located at the entrance.

THE CAFETERIA & MEALS
Cafeteria capacity during meals will be reduced to allow for physical distancing, ultimately requiring students to eat in their classrooms or additional identified spaces. Our Food Service team will continue to be intentional with their meal selection and communication with teachers to ensure students with food allergies are not exposed. If you would like to send lunch with your child, please ensure that you are following any guidelines set forth by the classroom teacher as they relate to student allergies.

- Eating surfaces will be disinfected between student usage.
- Students will wash or sanitize their hands prior to eating. Self-service is not allowed during this time.
- Our Food Service Team will wear PPE at all times, including a face mask/covering and gloves as deemed necessary.
- Meals will be individually packed and passed out to students in a sanitary environment.
- There will be two options for breakfast and three lunch options at all grade levels.
- Each Student will have the opportunity to have access to a hot meal option at each meal service time.
- Meal substitutions and seating accommodations will be made for students with food allergies/intolerances based on medical forms on file.
- Meals may be sent from home. However, some ingredients may be restricted to minimize the risk for students with severe food allergies. Your student’s teacher will notify you if this is the case.

TRANSPORTATION
Significant changes to transportation provided by Neosho School District are being implemented to ensure the safety of all students and employees who are on the bus. Safety measures may continue to change as new transportation guidelines are made available.

- Students should use appropriate social distancing at bus stops.
- Hand sanitizer will be made available on the bus for students upon entering the bus.
- Students will have assigned seats.
- Siblings will be required to sit together to maximize the number of students per seat and to reduce contact with other students.
- Students will be required to wear masks while riding the bus.
- When possible, windows will remain open for ventilation.
- Buses will be sanitized daily after each route and bus routes will be evaluated frequently to balance the number of riders per bus.
BUILDING VISITORS & PUBLIC USE OF FACILITIES

In order to minimize risk to students and staff, building visitors will be kept to a minimum. This means we will temporarily be limiting classroom observers, parent volunteers, school party attendance, and school meal attendance. We hope this is only temporary and we can return to our normal procedures soon.

All building visitors will be asked to wear a mask at all times and adhere to social distancing guidelines while they are in the building. Parents or guardians should contact the school prior to visiting if they do not have a scheduled appointment.

During School Hours

In an effort to limit unnecessary risk and keep our buildings clean, only employees and approved volunteers required for student instruction or services will be allowed in the school building during school hours. Meetings and visits from non-essential entities such as vendors, local businesses, etc. will take place outside of the school day when possible. When it is not possible, these individuals will have access by appointment only and will follow the visitor guidelines.

There will not be any public use of school facilities where students are present during school hours.

After School Hours

To support the work of our custodial team and their efforts to disinfect the building to minimize risk for students and staff, facility rentals will be permitted on a case-by-case basis. All non-school groups will need to request facility usage through the Facility Use Agreement; all Facility Use requests will be reviewed and approved by school administration prior to the requested event.

Additional fees may be necessary for non-school related facility usage in order to provide the necessary staff for cleaning and disinfecting the facility after the event.

All non-school related groups will adhere to the gathering recommendations (masks, social distancing, etc.) at the time of the event.
SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED COVID-19 ILLNESS
Parents are asked to notify the school if a student has symptoms associated with COVID-19 or has been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with, or is showing symptoms of, COVID-19. Close contact is defined as being 6 feet or less for more than 15 minutes without wearing a mask.

If a student is sick, or has an infected person in their household, please stay home. If a student becomes sick while at school, NSD Health Services will determine if the symptoms could be COVID-related. If the symptoms are determined to be of concern, the student will be isolated and parents will be contacted to pick up the student as quickly as possible. Parents may also be asked to pick up siblings or others who live in the same household.

COVID-19 Symptoms Include:
Cough | Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing | Fever or Chills | Muscle pain or Body Aches | Sore throat, Congestion, or Runny Nose | New loss of taste or smell

This list is not all inclusive. Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
(Symptoms referenced from the CDC)

Additional Safety Measures
- NSD will determine if other close contacts (longer than 15 minutes within a 6 foot radius) need to be screened, quarantined, and what deep cleaning will be necessary for school locations. Contacts may include staff members, family members, or peers.
- Information about testing locations will be provided to the family.
- Individuals who have tested positive will not be allowed to return to any NSD campus until 72 hours have passed without fever, and 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, or until cleared by a doctor. Family members of an individual who tests positive may be asked to follow the same guidelines.
- NSD Team Members who test positive for COVID-19 will be asked to not return until 72 hours have passed without fever and 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared or until cleared by a doctor and NCHD nursing staff.
- NSD will follow CDC and NCHD guidance for those deemed close contacts to the individual identified.
ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES

Extracurricular Activities (including athletics, cheer, dance and marching band):
NSD plans to provide students the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities. While offering these opportunities, the district will prioritize the health and safety of students and staff by adhering to the CDC and NCHD recommendations. We understand that as we abide by those recommendations, some if not all, of those opportunities may be limited in the extent in which they can be provided. MSHSAA Reccomendations

Additionally, the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) may further outline guidelines as to how athletics and activities will be offered at district high schools and middle schools. As a district, we understand the importance of offering these opportunities to our students and will continue to make every effort to do so. However, we know there may be decisions made by local, state, or national organizations that may prohibit some, if not all, extracurricular activities from taking place.

*The most recent information suggests that contact sports will be allowed to begin practice with contact after June 22, 2020. This would include all sports where individuals could come in contact with other individuals (basketball, football, wrestling, cheer, dance, soccer, softball, baseball, tennis, volleyball). It also suggests live games will be allowed to begin July 24, 2020.

Certain opportunities may be limited to the extent in which they can be offered due to physical distancing and gathering size recommendations. Some of the co-curricular opportunities may only be offered virtually, as they were this past spring. Offering of and participation in co-curriculurs will require flexibility by students, families, and sponsors which may include, but are not limited to:

● Before or after school practice in larger spaces to account for physical distancing.
● Multiple “practice times” in order to promote smaller group sizes and physical distancing.
● Students and staff wearing masks due to inability to consistently maintain physical distance.
● Adjusting performances and competitions to adhere to gathering size and physical distancing recommendations.
● Local and state organizations may provide further guidance to schools on how to provide these opportunities while prioritizing student and staff safety. School officials will communicate that information upon availability.

What precautions will be made to minimize the risk to students and staff?

● Students will complete a short health questionnaire prior to daily participation in all after-school activities. Staff will communicate with students when necessary to determine whether the student should be participating.
● Pending further guidance from state and local health officials, to the extent possible, NSD Schools will adhere to the most current recommendations concerning physical distancing, gathering size and personal protective equipment (PPE) for students and staff at the time of the extracurricular opportunity.
● Commonly touched surfaces will be avoided when possible. Those surfaces and/or objects will be disinfected before and after use when avoidance is not possible.
• Locker rooms will be disinfected, and commonly touched surfaces in locker rooms will be cleaned throughout the day.

What actions will be taken if a student or coach/sponsor tests positive for COVID-19?
• We will follow the Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 plan listed above.
• If the suspected or confirmed case can be traced to limited individuals or no contact was made, a team can continue to practice.
• If a student who tested positive has been in contact with multiple members of the team, it may require shutting down that team or group for a specified amount of time.

Additional measures may be required if a student or staff member is infected that may include, but are not limited to:
• Requiring that groups participate in only physically distant, non-sport specific activity.
• Restricting the group from practicing on campus or for an extended period of time.

Will spectators be permitted to attend games, competitions, and/or performances?
• NSD will review recommendations from national, state, and local health organizations while prioritizing the safety of students, staff and families. It is likely that limited numbers of spectators will be allowed to attend games, competitions, and performances. It is also possible that some sports and activities will be able to compete and perform while others will not. Restrictions concerning these events will be determined by state and national organizations. School officials will communicate that information as it becomes available.
• Additional requirements may be in place during competitions or performances.
• Essential personnel only will be allowed near students during games and competitions. Those individuals will maintain social distance when possible.
• Players on the sidelines may be required to physically distance when not in the game.
• Multiple events may be necessary in order to ensure proper physical distancing while performing (band, choir, orchestra, theater).
• Live-streaming services for events will be offered when possible.

What additional measures will be taken to reduce risk for students in athletics and activities each day?
• Disinfect the venue and all equipment (weights, balls, jump ropes, etc.—anything that can be touched) prior to activity each day.
• Verify that coaches and participants are symptom-free before activity each day.
• Take attendance at each day’s activities, including the coaches.
• Prepare and schedule frequent hand washing/sanitization opportunities during activities.
• Require participants to bring their own water bottles and avoid use of water fountains.
• Modify drills and activities to limit or reduce potential violations of physical distancing guidelines including high fives, huddles, team meetings, etc.
• Regularly sanitize items that are most often touched during activities.
• Avoid using whistles when possible to reduce droplet spread.
• At the end of activities that day, sanitize and disinfect the venue and all equipment used.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING
Building & Classroom Practices

- Staff will require use of hand sanitizer when students are entering each classroom, before and after lunch, and at the restroom. Elementary school teachers will build in time to have students periodically wash hands throughout the day, including, but not limited to, the start of the day, before and after lunch and following recess.
- Teachers will disinfect desks and chairs between groups of students with a 4-minute wait time on disinfectant.
- Teachers will be responsible for refilling sanitizer. Custodial staff will make sure that staff has access to the stored sanitizer within their buildings.

Additional Measures

- All employees should work to keep their office and workspace as clean as possible by disinfecting their workstations, surfaces they commonly use, and other touchpoints. Employees should also avoid using others’ workstations, supplies, tools and equipment. Additionally, whenever an employee uses standard office equipment (e.g., printer or fax machine), it should be wiped down prior to and following use. Employees will be supplied with disinfectant and towels.
- Implement a limit on the use of community supplies.
- Use technology devices for work submission instead of paper when possible.
- Use virtual manipulatives/tools as much as possible.
- Limit multiple students touching/interacting with the same materials.
- Keep students physically distant within the classroom as much as possible.
- Support physical distancing between classes.
- Ensure students are facing the same direction as much as possible.
- Staff should regularly wash hands for at least 20 seconds throughout the day with warm water and soap.
- Coughs and sneezes should be directed into a sleeve.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid using common areas.
- Employees will be responsible for obtaining their own food and beverage. If brought from home, it is preferred to stay in an insulated bag. It is recommended that all personal dishware be taken home nightly for appropriate cleaning and disinfection.
- Conduct any meetings or gatherings in accordance with recommended restrictions for public gatherings regarding the number of participants. Virtual meetings are encouraged when possible.
- Employees who are feeling sick are asked to stay home.
- Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness should immediately seek medical attention and follow the guidance of a health care provider.
- Employees who have been diagnosed with or are aware they have been directly exposed to COVID-19 should notify their immediate supervisor.

How will workspaces and classrooms be maintained after school?

- We ask staff who do not have any contractual responsibilities (coach, sponsor, tutoring, etc.) after school to leave their classrooms at a reasonable time each day. Before staff leaves,
they should clean their desk area of papers, clean whiteboards, stack chairs and clear floor areas. This will allow custodial staff the time to properly disinfect the area.

- Custodial staff will disinfect all commonly touched surfaces and areas that are used for after school events and meetings.

**What are the general precautions for cleaning after a student/teacher becomes ill?**
The area will be closed off and will not be available until cleaned and disinfected. Custodial staff will use Electrostatic machines to conduct a deep clean and disinfect the space from COVID-19 or flu-like germs.

**What will the cleaning protocol be for playgrounds?**

- Outdoor areas, like playgrounds at schools and parks, generally require normal routine cleaning, but do not require disinfection. Disinfectant on outdoor playgrounds is not proven to reduce risk of COVID-19 to the public.
- High touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars and railings should be cleaned routinely. Suprox will be supplied to each building/facility manager.