



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding COVID-19

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work together to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for all. The document below represents our current direction, but is still a work in progress, and

subject to change, as we work diligently through the public health situation. We are dedicated to providing as much specificity as possible when answering these important questions but we must remain flexible, as applicable, so we can effectively adapt to the evolving nature of this situation. We will continue to follow all local and state health orders.

1. Will we be able to start slow and ease into full regular school using some sort of a hybrid model? Would it be possible to do rotating days or times for kids?

Normal school schedules (days/times) will occur as planned.

Covid-19 has had a significant impact on our students, families, employees, and community. The impact has been far reaching and will be significant for months and years to come. We are incredibly sympathetic to the illnesses and loss of life caused by COVID-19. We are also very aware of the societal destruction and emotional impact of keeping schools closed and of the financial hardship that will be placed on our employees and families if schools remain closed. The American Academy of Pediatrics stated:

Schools are fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being and provide our children and adolescents with academic instruction, social and emotional skills... the AAP strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school (June 2020).

It is our primary goal to open schools and be able to keep them open safely for students and staff. That is why it is critically important to follow state and local health orders in place.

Based on the current information and in direct consultation with Casper-Natrona County Health Department (CNCHD), NCSD will open schools (in-person classes) beginning on September 2, 2020. NCSD will adhere to all statewide and local health orders in place throughout the pandemic.

Additionally, NCSD continues to offer the Natrona County Virtual Program to parents and students who would prefer that learning model.

NCSD will adjust and adapt in-person classes/schedules to any change in statewide or local public health orders to ensure the safety of students and staff. Changes could involve start/dismissal times, implement a rotating schedule, or instructional learning model.



2. Has NCSD looked at other districts that are implementing school return using hybrid models with some days in building and some days virtual?

We have considered all options for opening schools but, at this time based on Casper-Natrona County Health Department recommendations we will not be opening with a hybrid model. Additionally, the only School District that we have been made aware of not returning to in-person classes is the Wind River School District, which is under Wind River Inter-Tribal Order. NCSD will start the year offering in-person classes and Natrona

County Virtual Program. If circumstances change, based on statewide or local health orders, NCSD will adapt and provide a remote learning model or a classroom based virtual education learning model to students.

3. What is the protocol if a student/staff member at a school tests positive for COVID-19?

Isolate following CNCHD or healthcare provider order. A student/staff member who tests positive for COVID-19, by Casper-Natrona County Health Department or their healthcare provider, will be required to isolate at home for a minimum of 10 days AND have improvement of symptoms AND no fever for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medication) prior to returning to school. If they are still exhibiting symptoms after 10 days, they must remain isolated until symptoms improve and are fever free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications).

Students and/or staff members who were in close contact with a confirmed positive, as determined through investigative contract tracing by the Casper-Natrona County Health Department, will be contacted by the CNCHD and quarantined for 14 days. If symptoms develop during quarantine, evaluation and testing will occur and based on the results of testing further isolation may be warranted.

The student isolated or quarantined will receive instruction through a remote education model, classroom based virtual education model, or through homebound services for their time away from school.

4. What criteria determines if I need to keep my student at home from school? For example, what if they wake up with a headache or sore throat?

A great deal has changed during this pandemic. It is critically important that if a student becomes ill, or symptomatic, he or she should stay home. If someone in the household is symptomatic (fever of 99.5+, cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste, or loss of smell) stay home.

Students who develop symptoms at school will immediately report to the nurses office and parents/guardians will be contacted.



5. If my student is exposed to COVID-19 through the school environment and needs to be tested, who covers the cost?

Students and/or staff members who come into close contact with a confirmed positive, as determined by Casper-Natrona County Health Department, will be quarantined for 14 days. If symptoms develop during quarantine, testing may occur and based on the results of testing further isolation may be warranted. If individuals are required to be tested, Casper-Natrona County Health Department will test free of charge. If you contact your own healthcare provider you must use your insurance and cover associated costs.

6. If my student(s) is quarantined or isolated due to COVID-19, how does this affect their attendance?

Students who are required to quarantine or isolate by the Casper-Natrona County Health Department or their individual healthcare provider due to COVID-19 will receive instruction through the remote education model, classroom based virtual education model, or through homebound services for their time away from school. Attendance expectations will be the same as in-person and will be recorded by the teacher as “present off-site”.

7. Are face shields an option?

At this time, aligned with the Governor’s Statewide Public Health Order, face coverings are required in all K-12 schools if social distancing of at least 6’ cannot be maintained. A full face shield may be worn if it is accompanied with a healthcare provider’s order or IEP team decision.

8. What are you doing to disinfect and keep the buildings safe and healthy?

NCSD custodians have been trained and will disinfect the building accordingly. All staff will help to support in keeping buildings clean. Frequent hand washing/sanitizing is essential.

9. Will District Guidelines be consistent from building to building?

Yes. All district facilities and school plans will follow the Natrona County School District’s (NCSD) Smart Start Reopening Plan.

Work will continue with building leaders around identifying the reopening plans for each individual school. The guidance is consistent, however, operationalizing may look different based on your school, school size, programming, etc. There are areas where the protocols and systems will be developed to meet the needs of the specific school.



10. What happens if a student is not wearing a face covering or refuses to wear it?

If a student comes to school without a face covering, one will be provided to them upon entry of the building or district transportation. If a student refuses to follow the Governor's Public Health Orders that are in place at the time, then the building principal will address the issue and resolve the situation to align to the health orders.

11. What Personal Protective Gear will be provided to students?

Students may wear their own face covering to school. Cloth face masks will be provided to all staff and students, if needed. Face shields will be considered based on a healthcare provider order or an IEP team decision. All facilities will have sufficient hand sanitizer available for frequent use by staff and students. However, staff and students are encouraged to wash their hands frequently with soap and water for 20-30 seconds.

12. There may be some severe feelings of anxiety/trauma as we return back to school. Is the district prepared to help support students' social and emotional needs?

Yes, school counselors and support services are available to assist students each day, but especially during this transition back to school.

In these uncertain and highly stressful times, we recognize the significant impact COVID-19 has had on our employees, students, and community. The emotional, physical, and economic trauma is real. As we proceed in reopening our schools, it is important we take care of each other, now, more than ever. The decision to reopen schools in a safe and thoughtful manner has been in the forefront of all of our minds.

13. How will recess times be handled?

Following the Governor's Statewide Public Health Orders, groups are limited to 250. Specific processes and protocols will be developed at the school level to comply with the Governor's Orders and the NCS Smart Start Reopening Plan. Individuals engaged in athletic activities (physical activity, recess, etc.) do not have to wear face coverings. Students and staff will maintain social distancing and follow good hand washing/sanitizing practices (before/after).

14. How will passing periods/arrivals/dismissals be handled?

Following the Governor's Statewide Public Health Orders and NCS's Smart Start Reopening Plan, specific processes and protocols will be developed at the school site to socially distance students during passing periods, arrival, and dismissal. If social distancing of 6' cannot be maintained, face coverings are required.



15. If a parent knowingly sends their child to school ill are there consequences?

Parents are to self-check and monitor students at home. They are not to send students to school if they have a fever over 99.5. If a student is symptomatic, he or she should stay home and should not ride NCSD Transportation.

If someone in the household is symptomatic, (fever, cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste, or loss of smell) then stay home. If anyone in the household tests positive, the student should stay home.

If a student becomes symptomatic during the day, the student is to report to the nurse's office. The student will be isolated, required to wear a mask, and the parent/guardian will be contacted to come and get their child from school.

We are asking for the continued partnership of all school families as we navigate this difficult time together. As a community, we must do what is best for our students, our families, and each other. Please, stay home if you are sick and keep your child at home if they are sick. We want to keep all students and staff safe and we need your help to do so.

16. At the high school/middle school level could students take some classes on-campus and others online?

No. The Natrona County Virtual Program is available to parents as a choice. Information has been to all parents and guardians via parent news email. Natrona County Virtual Program does not have the same quantity or level of course offerings as brick and mortar schools. However, Natrona County Virtual does offer regular classes and limited elective offerings that will allow a student to make progress or attain a diploma. Limited courses are NCAA eligible. If a parent or student selects this option they may lose their brick and mortar school of choice because of the need to move staff.

17. What about sporting events, concerts, activities, and other NCSD events? Will parents/guardians and community members still be able to attend?

We are working together with local and state officials to identify further information and details regarding spectator attendance at NCSD concerts, activities, and athletic events. As soon as we have more information, in partnership with the Wyoming High School Athletics Association, we will share it with families.



18. What about class parties and other celebrations at schools which often had many outside visitors, will those still occur?

During the COVID-19 Pandemic it is strongly recommended to limit non-essential individuals and activities within the school (ie - visitors at lunch, school parties, etc.). Access is determined by the school principal on a case by case basis and must be a necessity. These need to align to social distancing standards, sanitization practices, and group size limitations as determined by health orders. Align to food services guidelines.

19. What about classes like Band, Choir, and Fine Arts?

These courses will continue to be offered. Following NCSD's Smart Start Guidelines, schools will implement common sense strategies to ensure safe and healthy environments.

20. Can students bring lunch from home?

Yes. However, they will not be allowed to share food.