



Overview

The following is an update of safety guidelines and operations relating to reopening school. A complete list of questions from July is available on the district website<<hyperlink>>.

Travel

1. Can students attend school if they traveled to a state listed on the Cook County travel quarantine list?

The district will follow the recommendation of the Cook County Department of Public Health and expect families to also follow these guidelines. A travel question will be part of the daily self-certification process. Self-quarantine is recommended for individuals who spend 24 hours or more in the states designated as hot spots. **The first day of school is August 24, so as long as a student is back in the state by August 10, school attendance can begin on August 24.** The list of states is updated weekly on Tuesdays. Updated information can be found at:

<https://cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/covid-19/covid-19-travel-guidance>

Safety

2. What kind of face coverings are acceptable? Are gaiters or bandanas OK?

Per the CDC: *“The purpose of masks is to keep respiratory droplets from reaching others to aid with source control. Masks with one-way valves or vents allow exhaled air to be expelled out through holes in the material. This can allow exhaled respiratory droplets to reach others and potentially spread the COVID-19 virus. Therefore, CDC does not recommend using masks if they have an exhalation valve or vent.”*

The mask should fit snugly around your child’s mouth and nose and be at least 2-ply. A metal wire sewn or built into the mask will help it conform to the bridge of their nose.

Since a mask is the most effective face covering for containing the spread of the virus, bandanas, masks with one-way valves or vents, and other face coverings that do not function like a mask are not allowed.

There has been some debate within the medical community regarding the use of gaiters. At this time, gaiters, or neck bands, may only be worn if they fit snugly around the mouth and nose, are at least 2-ply, and do not slip down. If formal guidance is received from CDC, IDPH, or Cook County that bans gaiters, the district will disallow their use.

3. How many masks should parents have for students?



Parents should send students wearing one face covering and a spare to put on after lunch. It is also advisable to have a couple spare coverings to keep at school in case they are needed. Face masks should fit properly, with a secure fit at the nose and no gaping on the sides. Students will be trained on how to properly remove and store a mask while they are eating. Face coverings should be cleaned daily. The [CDC provides guidelines to properly clean face coverings](#) and instructions if you wish to [make your own](#).

4. Is there any specialized equipment that will be available to teachers?

We have ordered a face shield for each staff member. We are also ordering lightweight plexiglass dividers with a handle to easily move, as needed. Special education classrooms and those with instructional aides will have two or more, depending on the need.

Lunch

5. Can students come home for lunch?

Elementary and junior high students can go home for lunch after parents complete a form and submit to the school office for specific dates. This form will be available on the school website and at the school office.

Building Mitigation/Facility Questions

6. Is the district working on the air filtration system to increase fresh airflow?

District administrators met with our HVAC mechanical engineer and Camplin Environmental, our indoor air quality consultant, in order to evaluate filters and increase the mixture of outdoor air to the maximum allowable, which is dependent on outside temperature and humidity levels. The fresh-air intake of the systems will be increased from the current standard settings of 0-10%

percent to a minimum of 30-35% or greater if allowable. All system filters will also be changed monthly instead of quarterly. The use of classroom fans is being evaluated.

7. How will the outdoor tents be used?

The district has secured three 30- x 60-foot tents for each school, plus one for Young Explorers. This will allow time for outdoor learning, p.e., lunch and instrumental music in all but the most inclement weather. The district has increased wi-fi access to reach all outdoor teaching spaces. At the elementary schools, there will also be assigned outdoor teaching spaces for classrooms and assigned zones for recesses.

8. Are there enough water dispensers?

The district is installing additional water bottle dispensers so that every school has enough to provide students and staff with water since access to the drinking bubblers will be turned off.

Social Distancing

9. How is NBJH preparing for students to move and rotate in and out of various groups of peers as they change classes?

The elementary model where students stay with one teacher all day is not possible at jr. highs and high schools because of the subject matter expertise required as students get older. Also, the number of leveled classes for various content areas makes it extremely difficult to create consistent cohorts throughout the day, and the cohort concept can create tracking of students (which is detrimental socially and academically), as well as issues with staffing. That said, cohorting strategies are still being used at NBJH. They are creating cohorts when possible and are reducing the number of transitions in a given day as well. Students will spend X-Block and lunch in the same cohort of students. Our exploratory classes will also follow cohorts. (For example, the term one 6th grade Art class will all move together to the same term two exploratory class.) Also, PE/Health and Exploratory/Electives will follow a block schedule to eliminate another transition each day. Finally, with 22% of students in the remote learning option, the number of students at NBJH is significantly reduced when compared to full occupancy, creating a de facto hybrid model, which is a cohorting strategy.

10. Will students have access to the lockers?

We will be using lockers at the elementary level only. No students will share lockers. Students will only access lockers one at a time or in pairs if lockers are at least 6-feet apart.

School Closing

11. With so many districts opting for remote learning, could a reversal be on the horizon for District 28? Has the district determined at what point it will move to remote learning? In other words, what are the thresholds, trends, the number of cases, etc. that will trigger a return to remote learning?

Currently, there are no changes to the district's plan to offer both in-person and remote learning for students. However, the district continues to monitor guidance from the governor, ISBE, and IDPH. If the status of our state region changes to phase 3, 2, or 1, per the *Restore Illinois* plan, the district will be required to transition to remote for all students. Additionally, if it becomes apparent that holding in-person instruction cannot be implemented safely, the district will be prepared to take whatever steps are necessary, including a switch to full remote learning for some or all of the District's students and staff.

12. What is the number (benchmark) of students in a school with COVID that ultimately closes a school or classroom?

Neither ISBE nor IDPH have established a specific number of students. If one or more schools have to close, it will be under the guidance of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

13. What are the circumstances that would result in closing school and moving to fully remote learning?

- a. moving from Phase 4 to Phase 3 or lower, as outlined in the state's Restore Illinois plan, due to regional health conditions;
- b. a declaration by the governor based on other rationales;
- c. District 28 schools are not able to secure enough substitute teachers to cover teacher absences;
- d. a recommendation or requirement to close schools by the Cook County Department of Public Health or the Illinois Department of Public Health (for example, due to a localized outbreak);
- e. unforeseen issues or obstacles.

Teachers and students are preparing at the beginning of the year with professional development for teachers and student lessons on tech tools that will be used if schools must close.

Remote Learning Academy

14. How will my student stay connected to the school?

Families will receive regular communication from their home schools so they can stay connected. Other opportunities will be explored once the school year is underway.

15. Will they be able to connect with other students in RLA?

Students in RLA will have many opportunities to connect with RLA classmates during the school day. There may also be virtual school assemblies or other activities for students to connect.

16. How will I get the school supplies that I pre-ordered? When will my student receive a device and additional learning materials?

You will receive more information about device pickup and school supply distribution once class lists have been shared. Additional learning materials will also be available.

17. Who is teaching the Remote Learning Academy?

The district used an application process to identify staff members who were interested in teaching remotely.

18. How many students are enrolled in the Remote Learning Academy?

At this point, we have 258 students who have chosen to participate in the RLA including a mixture of students from each building and grade level.

Elementary Specials Classes

19. Will all students, remote and in-person have Art, Music, and Spanish Classes?

In collaboration with our specials teachers, the elementary principals have made the decision to move all art, music, and Spanish instruction to remote delivery. This means that classrooms of students will receive instruction via Zoom during their scheduled times and that classroom assistants will be asked to supervise the in-person students during these specials classes.

There were multiple reasons for this move, including the following:

- Without this change, students would have lost instructional time in Art, Music, and Spanish. This move allows us to increase the total number of specials classes back to the normal amount:
 - a. Spanish 5 days per week (30 min each) for 1st-5th
 - b. Music 2 days per week (30 min each) for K-5
 - c. Art 2 days per week (30 min each) for K-2 and 1 day per week (60 min) for 3-5
 - d. P.E. 5 days per week (30 min each) for K-5
- With the addition of 15 sections of classes within the Remote Learning Academy, our in-person specials teachers would have been required to share buildings. This caused major problems with designing master schedules because of the limited time these teachers would be available in each building. Specials teachers will share instruction of remote learners in the RLA by each covering a specific grade level/range.

- Moving to remote instruction within the classroom allows all in-person students to stay with their familiar school-level specials teachers this year.
- Specials teachers would have been interacting with 200+ students across multiple buildings each week. That level of interaction at this point is not ideal for students or teachers.
- Moving to remote instruction allows for the ability to schedule recess times for every class every morning and afternoon and allows for consistent common planning time so teachers can continually improve their instruction.
- P.E. teachers will continue to teach in their home schools using the outdoor spaces and tents as much as possible.