



## BACK-TO-SCHOOL 2021 COVID-19 Layered Mitigation Protocols

The Niskayuna Central School District is planning for a full return to in-person education in September, providing all academic programs and a wide variety of extracurricular and athletic offerings. Consistent with the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Guidance issued by the New York State Education Department (NYSED), the district will use a “layered mitigation approach” that will address protocols such as mask wearing, cleaning and hygiene, contact tracing and quarantining, ventilation and disinfecting, food services and COVID testing and vaccination access.

**What does “layered mitigation” mean?** This refers to tiered and overlapping health and safety measures designed to reduce the spread of COVID-19, as well as the recognition that different measures may be needed as the rate of community transmission of the virus changes in one direction or another.

This approach is necessary to address the various stages and implications of COVID-19. A measured approach shall be taken in making adjustments to mitigate the spread of the virus based on the **transmission or rate of infections**, ranging from Low Community Transmission>>Moderate Community Transmission>>Substantial Community Transmission>>High Community Transmission. The intent of the tiered approach is to find and maintain a balance between **prioritizing** health and safety of students and staff, and **supporting** the social, emotional, mental health of students and staff.

It is important to recognize that while the Board of Education has the authority for school district plans and procedures, as it relates to health and safety, the district must follow the requirements of a variety of entities and that some take precedence over others. This progression begins with any federal, state and/or local laws, regulations, mandates and/or orders and follows with health and safety

recommendations issued by statewide agencies and organizations and then local entities. As we enter this year, it is also important for our community to understand that the protocols and practices in our schools are likely to be more stringent than what they see and experience in public. This is the result of our responsibility to follow certain laws and regulations as well as our best judgments about what will protect the health and safety of our students and employees. While these judgments are made based on the needs of our district and our school community, they are all informed by the health and safety recommendations made by the CDC, the Schenectady County Department of Health (DOH) and our district medical director..

It is important to note that while the community transition levels delineated below are based on CDC data, the district may need to take a more measured and nuanced approach to adjusting protocols as the level of community transmission changes. A change in the level of transmission for Schenectady County will prompt a review of what protocols can be changed in the district and the timing of potential changes. We will continue to work closely with the DOH and our district medical director to make any necessary adjustments as this continues to be a fluid situation and circumstances may change.

The intent of this plan is to maximize all of the benefits that Niskayuna students and community members get from education and activities within our school district while doing everything that is necessary to safeguard the health and safety of our students, staff and community.

	<b>Mitigation Protocol</b> <i>*Transmission rate based on CDC protocols and Schenectady County Public Health Services tracking</i>	<b>Low Community Transmission</b>	<b>Moderate Community Transmission</b>	<b>Substantial Community Transmission</b>	<b>High Community Transmission</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>COVID-19 Vaccines</b> <i>In the absence of any legal mandate for vaccination of staff or students, District will organize PODs or share information to facilitate access</i>	Strongly Recommended	Strongly Recommended	Strongly Recommended	Strongly Recommended
<b>2</b>	<b>Social Distancing (indoors)</b>	N/A	3 feet distancing <b>to the extent possible</b> <u>or</u> masked	3 feet distancing <b>to the extent possible</b> <u>and</u> masked	3 feet distancing <b>to the extent possible</b> <u>and</u> masked
<b>3</b>	<b>Social Distancing (outdoors)</b>	NA	3-feet	3-feet (Masked when students/staff will be within 3 feet of each other)	3-feet (Masked when students/staff will be within 3 feet of each other)

4	<b>Facemasks (indoors)</b> <i>*Anyone can wear a mask at any time. No one shall be bullied, harassed, or discouraged from wearing a mask. Limited exceptions to masking may be made in the case of disability.</i>	Encouraged for all	Encouraged for all Recommended for unvaccinated	Required for instances when 3 feet social distancing cannot be consistently met	Required by all at all times except when eating and distanced.
5	<b>Facemasks (outdoors)</b> <i>*Anyone can wear a mask at any time. No one shall be bullied, harassed, or discouraged from wearing a mask</i>	N/A	Encouraged when 3 feet social distancing cannot be consistently met	Required for all when individuals will be within 3 feet of each other	Required for all when individuals will be within 3 feet of each other
6	<b>Facemasks (Buses)</b> <i>*Students and drivers are required by order of the CDC to wear a mask on district buses.</i>	Required CDC Order	Required CDC Order	Required by CDC Order  Parents encouraged to drive students if possible but transportation provided to all who are eligible	Required by CDC Order  Parents encouraged to drive students if possible but transportation provided to all who are eligible
7	<b>Hygiene: Handwashing/Hand Sanitizer, and Respiratory Etiquette</b>	Expected and Encouraged	Expected and Encouraged	Strongly Encouraged and Expected	Strongly Encouraged and Expected
8	<b>Cleaning and Disinfection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily Routine Cleaning</li> </ul>	Daily Routine Cleaning  Enhanced Disinfection of High-Touch Surfaces (School Buildings and Buses)	Daily Routine Cleaning  Enhanced Disinfection of Moderate and High-touch Surfaces (School Buildings and Buses)	Daily Routine Cleaning  Enhanced Disinfection of Moderate and High-touch Surfaces (School Buildings and Buses)
9	<b>Ventilation and Air Quality</b>	Increased fresh air circulation (mechanical, open windows)	Increased fresh air circulation (mechanical, open windows)	Increased fresh air circulation (mechanical, open windows)	Increased fresh air circulation (mechanical, open windows)
10	<b>Contact Tracing and Quarantine</b> <i>*District shall engage in contact tracing with DOH staffs and follow applicable DOH protocols</i>	Pursuant to DOH Regulations - 10-day quarantine.	Pursuant to DOH Regulations - 10-day quarantine.	Pursuant to DOH Regulations - 10-day quarantine.	Pursuant to DOH Regulations - 10-day quarantine.

		Vaccinated and asymptomatic <b>do not</b> need to be quarantined, but per CDC guidance will get tested 3-5 days after exposure and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until negative test result.	Vaccinated and asymptomatic <b>do not</b> need to be quarantined, but per CDC guidance will get tested 3-5 days after exposure and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until negative test result.	Vaccinated and asymptomatic <b>do not</b> need to be quarantined, but per CDC guidance will get tested 3-5 days after exposure and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until negative test result.	Vaccinated and asymptomatic <b>do not</b> need to be quarantined, but per CDC guidance will get tested 3-5 days after exposure and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until negative test result.
11	<b>Random COVID-19 Surveillance/Screen Testing (Staff and Students)-Rapid Testing (24 hour results) or Pool Testing</b>	No Testing	No Testing	Working with BOCES to plan for screening testing per CDC's recommendation that 10% per week of unvaccinated students and staff be tested  Parental consent for screening testing required	Working with BOCES to plan for screening testing per CDC's recommendation that 20% per week of unvaccinated students and staff be tested  Parental consent for screening testing required
12	<b>Staying Home When Sick</b>	Yes for all students and staff  Pursuant to Collective Bargaining Agreement for Use of Sick Days or Paid COVID Sick Leave if applicable.	Yes for all students and staff  Pursuant to Collective Bargaining Agreement for Use of Sick Days or Paid COVID Sick Leave if applicable.	Yes for all students and staff  Pursuant to Collective Bargaining Agreement for Use of Sick Days or Paid COVID Sick Leave if applicable.	Yes for all students and staff  Pursuant to Collective Bargaining Agreement for Use of Sick Days or Paid COVID Sick Leave if applicable.
13	<b>Return to School/Work Protocols After COVID-Symptoms</b> <i>Students &amp; Employees</i>	Yes  Resolution of symptoms & proof of negative COVID test	Yes  Resolution of symptoms & proof of negative COVID test	Yes  Resolution of symptoms & proof of negative COVID test	Yes  Resolution of symptoms & proof of negative COVID test

14	<b>Return to School/Work Protocols After COVID Positive</b> <i>Students &amp; Employees</i>	Yes  10 days after the initial onset of symptoms <b>and</b> fever free for 24 hours <b>and</b> symptoms have improved.	Yes  10 days after the initial onset of symptoms <b>and</b> fever free for 24 hours <b>and</b> symptoms have improved.	Yes  10 days after the initial onset of symptoms <b>and</b> fever free for 24 hours <b>and</b> symptoms have improved.	Yes  10 days after the initial onset of symptoms <b>and</b> fever free for 24 hours <b>and</b> symptoms have improved.
15	<b>Lunch/School Meals</b>	Limited restrictions, compliance with applicable school protocols	3 feet distancing <b>to the extent possible</b>	6 feet social distancing <b>to the extent possible</b>	6 feet distancing <b>to the extent possible</b>
16	<b>Recess, Playground, and Physical Education</b>	Limited restrictions, compliance with applicable school protocols	3 feet distancing <u>or</u> masked	3 feet distancing <u>or</u> masked  3 feet distancing expected when not engaged in the core activity (e.g.)	3 feet distancing <b>and</b> masked  3 feet distancing required when not engaged in the core activity (e.g. P.E.)
17	<b>Music and Performing Arts</b>	Limited restrictions, compliance with applicable school protocols	Singing/instrument playing require 3 feet distancing	Singing/instrument playing require 3 feet distancing and masked, bell covers	Singing/instrument playing require 3 feet distancing and masked, bell covers
18	<b>Sports</b>	Limited restrictions, compliance with applicable school protocols  Compliance with New York State Public High School Athletic Association and Suburban Council protocols	3 feet distancing or masked when not actively participating  Compliance with New York State Public High School Athletic Association and Suburban Council protocols	Awaiting further guidance related to screening testing recommendation  Masked at all times; 3-feet distancing except when engaged in the core activity  Limited spectators at	Vaccination required for high-risk sports; Awaiting further guidance related to screening testing recommendation for unvaccinated participants  Masked at all times; 3-feet distancing except when engaged in the

				events Compliance with New York State Public High School Athletic Association and Suburban Council protocols	core activity No spectators at indoor events; two spectators per athlete at outdoor events  Compliance with New York State Public High School Athletic Association and Suburban Council protocols
19	<b>School Events &amp; Activities</b>	Limited restrictions, compliance with applicable school protocols	Continue existing protocols requiring health & safety plan submission to safety officer, school medical directors and Board of Education for each event/activity	Continue existing protocols requiring health & safety plan submission to safety officer, school medical directors and Board of Education for each event/activity	No large-scale (e.g., whole school events)  Continue existing protocols requiring health & safety plan submission to safety officer, school medical directors and Board of Education for each event/activity
20	<b>Community/Outside Group Use of Facilities</b>	Compliance with applicable protocols	Compliance with applicable protocols	No Outside Use of Facilities Allowed	No Outside Use of Facilities Allowed
21	<b>School Visitors</b>	Official Business Only	Official Business Only	Official Business Only	Official Business Only
22	<b>Monitoring Community and School-Based Transmission</b>	Ongoing	Ongoing; weekly benchmark	Ongoing; weekly benchmark	Ongoing; weekly benchmark