

2020-21 Back-to-School Guidance Document

Continuing Our Journey to Greatness!

COVID-19 can infect people of all ages, and school leaders are working to keep students, teachers, staff, and our community as healthy as possible. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has found that while children do get infected by COVID-19 and some severe outcomes have been reported, relatively few children are hospitalized or have severe symptoms. Additionally, the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) states that the COVID-19 risks must be balanced with the need for children to attend school in person, as the lack of school access leads to a number of negative physical, behavioral and mental health consequences.

Our students' well-being is a top priority. Together, schools and families can support your child during this challenging time. With the endless COVID coverage, it is natural for your child to experience some changes in behavior and mood. We will continue to work closely with families and students to ease the stress. Keeping routines predictable, sharing COVID facts that are age-appropriate, making time to listen and share feelings, and reaching out to us for support are all important.

While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of furthering the spread of COVID-19, the current science suggests there are many steps schools can take to reduce the risks to students, teachers, staff, and their families significantly. New Frontiers Public Schools (NFPS) has developed this guidance document to provide information for parents, families and the community in four key practices to minimize the likelihood of viral spread of COVID-19 on our campuses.

- **PROVIDE NOTICE:** Requirements for parental and public notices
- **PREVENT:** Required practices to prevent the virus from entering the school
- **RESPOND:** Required practices to respond to a lab-confirmed case in the school
- **MITIGATE:** Recommended and required practices to reduce likely spread inside the school

This plan to mitigate COVID-19 is available to all families and posted on the district and school websites. Information in this guidance is subject to change based on state and local decisions.

Provide Notice

NFPS is providing back-to-school plans and instruction to parents and the general public one week prior to the start of school. NFPS has created a **COVID-19 Task Force Team** to respond to concerns and communicate district decisions to all staff and families. Members of the team and email addresses are noted below:

Mario Mendiola	Director of Operations	mmendiola@newfrontierspublicschools.org
Norma Arshad	School Counselor	narshad@newfrontierspublicschools.org
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Alfredo Segura Jr.	CEO/Superintendent	superintendent@newfrontierspublicschools.org

The school nurse is available to answer COVID-19 related question that you may have. You may call the nurse at the office: 210-533-3655 ext. 3209 or on her cell: 210-418-0224.

Attendance

Per Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.092, students must attend 90% of the days in which a course is offered in order to be awarded credit and be promoted to the next grade. This requirement remains in force during the 2020-21 school year and applies to both face-to-face and remote instruction models.

Attendance will be taken each day in both instructional options to ensure students are actively engaged. Students opting for remote instruction are expected to participate and be fully engaged as directed by the teacher to receive attendance credit. *The NFPS Remote Learning Agreement, available on the district website, requires parent and student signatures to participate and further details expectations for attendance and academic credit.*

Instructional Model Options

Our goal is to *continue our journey to greatness!* While NFPS is taking multiple precautions to protect students and staff during this public health situation, we are offering parents the option to select either a face-to-face instruction or remote learning instruction for each student:

Instructional Options

School Year 2020-2021

Frank L. Madla Accelerated Collegiate Academy – 015805-041 (Grades Kindergarten – 8th)

Frank L. Madla Early College High School – 015805-001 (Grades 9th – 12th)

Option 1

Face-to-Face Instruction

100% In-School Attendance

Students will enjoy a normal school schedule under current health, safety and cleaning guidance outlined by TEA, CDC and New Frontiers standards as described in the 2020-21 Back to School Guidance Document. Daily instruction is provided for all students to include Special Education, English Language Learners, 504, Dyslexia, At-Risk and other identified learning groups.

Option 2

Remote Instruction

100% Remote Attendance

Remote instruction will be provided virtually through live interactive classes and/or pre-recorded instructional videos. All students are expected to attend classes and complete assignments as directed by the teachers as if they were participating face-to-face and in accordance to the requirements as described in the 2020-21 Back to School Guidance Document. All parents will be required to apply and sign an agreement to the mandatory student participation and engagement; educational progress must be made to stay in this option. These students cannot participate in extracurricular activities.

Both instructional delivery formats must cover the required curriculum under TEC §28.002. Parents must commit to one option for an entire grading period. All parents and students should familiarize themselves with the 2020-21 Back to School Guidance document to understand how this school year will operate differently during this public health situation.

- **Face-to-Face Instruction** – Students attend school daily, as with the regular school year, and must follow safety, sanitation, and social distancing expectations as outlined in this document and communicated by the faculty and staff. This option is subject to mandated school closures and the exceptions listed in this document.
- **Remote Learning** – Students participate in classroom instruction via remote learning and are expected to complete and submit assignments as communicated by the remote learning teacher(s). This model is an extension of the classroom and includes the same high-level expectations for participation and assignments as face-to-face, to include but not limited to attendance rules.

In both models, students will be expected to master the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the required grade level and subject/ course. Monitoring student learning and progress remains integral to the success of each student and requires attendance, grades, formative/ summative assessments, and other monitoring systems that help teachers determine student progress.

Unless otherwise noted by the campus administrator, once the parent/ student commit to an instructional model, a written request must be submitted to the school principal to switch to the other model.

- Transitions can only occur at the end of a grading period
- Written requests must be submitted two weeks prior to the start of the next grading period
- The school must approve and process this instructional change before the transition can happen
- Requests will only be approved if it is beneficial to the student's instructional quality

Grading

Texas state law requires each district to adopt its own grading policies. This policy must require a classroom teacher to assign a grade that reflects the student's relative mastery of an assignment. NFPS grading policies are published annually in the Student Handbook. Progress reports and report cards, along with parent conferences, will be used to communicate each student's progress and performance for both instructional model options.

State and Local Testing

All students are expected to follow state and local testing requirements.

Prevent

NFPS has implemented the following practices to prevent the virus from entering the school:

Daily Temperature Checks and Screening

Per CDC guidelines, initial monitoring of symptoms begins at home. Individuals who are feeling ill, including symptoms like fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, abdominal pain, fatigue, muscle aches, or headache, must stay at home and consult with a medical professional regarding school participation.

Temperatures will be taken before students, faculty and staff are allowed on a campus. All students, faculty and staff will be required to use the COVID Quick Screen mobile app to record daily symptoms and temperatures before reporting to campus. The district will monitor this input each morning. If a temperature is at or above 100.4°, the individual will not be allowed on campus and will be provided a medical/safety informational form which must be followed before he/she is allowed to return to school. In some instances, a release from a medical professional may be required.

TEA guidance for students: *"Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in this document) or is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and instead should opt to receive remote instruction until the below conditions for re-entry are met. Parents may also opt to have their students receive remote instruction if their child has had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 until the 14-day incubation period has passed. School systems may consider screening students for COVID-19 as well. Screening is accomplished by asking questions by phone or other electronic methods and/or in person. The screening questions should also be asked of a student's parent if that parent will be dropping off or picking up their child from inside the school."*

TEA guidance for teachers and staff: *"Teachers and staff are required to self-monitor. The self-screening should include teachers and staff taking their own temperature. Teachers and staff must report to the school system if they themselves*

have COVID-19 symptoms or are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and, if so, they must remain off campus until they meet the criteria for re-entry as noted below. Additionally, they must report to the school system if they have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, as defined at the end of this document, and, if so, must remain off campus until the 14-day incubation period has passed.”

COVID-19 symptoms:

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Shaking or exaggerated shivering
- Significant muscle pain or ache
- Diarrhea

Handwashing/Sanitizing

Students and staff are required to use hand sanitizer when entering a building, classroom, bus, and/or office.

Visitors, Drop-off, and Pick-Up

During this public health situation, NFPS is limiting campus visitors to only those which are necessary. We highly encourage parents to use alternative meeting options such as phone, video and email. All visitors must have an appointment and must be free of COVID-19 symptoms as listed in this document. Any visitor who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 or has had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed, must remain off campus until they meet the criteria for re-entry as noted below. Sanitation protocols will be followed after each meeting.

Each campus will have procedures in place for daily drop-off and pick-up. This information will be communicated prior to the first day of school.

Traditional campus events such as Open House, Parent Nights, etc., have been temporarily suspended. We will reevaluate how to proceed with these activities when state and local guidance permits. Campuses will use other means to keep parents and families up-to-date and engaged in their child's learning.

Faculty and Staff Training

Teachers and staff will be trained specifically on the protocols outlined in this document and the practices adopted by NFPS. Additionally, a 2-hour online training, *Special Considerations for Infection Control During COVID-19*, will be made available to all employees.

Respond

NFPS has implemented the following practices to respond to a lab-confirmed case on our campuses:

TEA Guidance on Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19

Any individuals who themselves either:

- are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or
- experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed above) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:

In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met:

1. at least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
2. the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
3. at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the campus until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.

If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or (b) receive two separate confirmations at least 24 hours apart that they are free of COVID via acute infection tests at an approved COVID-19 testing location found at <https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>.

Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus

NFPS will immediately separate any student who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian. The student will be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19. If a temperature is at or above 100.4°, the individual will not be permitted to stay on campus and will be given a medical/ safety informational form which must be followed before he/she is allowed to return to school. In some instances, a release from a medical professional may be required.

NFPS will clean the areas used by the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school (student, teacher, or staff) as soon as is feasible.

COVID-19 Cases

If a student or staff member tests positive, the learning group (cohort) will shift to remote learning for 14 days (may include weekends). If a student or staff member has been in close and/or prolonged contact with someone who has tested positive, the cohort will move to remote instruction for a minimum of three days to allow for additional

sanitation/disinfecting and monitoring. Staff and students who test positive and/or were directly exposed will not be permitted to return to school until they are cleared by a medical professional. While this may cause an added burden on families, our goal is health and safety for all students.

Consistent with school notification requirements for other communicable diseases, and consistent with legal confidentiality requirements, NFPS will notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students in the school if a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participate in any on-campus activities.

Mitigate

NFPS has implemented the following health and hygiene practices to mitigate the likelihood of COVID-19 spread inside our schools:

Handwashing and Sanitizing

Frequent handwashing and sanitizing will be incorporated in the daily schedules. Each classroom will be provided with sanitation kits that will be used during transitions. On the first day students will be provided instruction on appropriate hygiene practices and other mitigation practices adopted by NFPS.

Classrooms, buses and other common areas within the school will be thoroughly disinfected daily and deep cleaning schedules will be regularly conducted. This include objects such as door handles, common tables/ desks, shared supplies such as art supplies, and high touch devices such as shared laptops or tablets.

Whenever possible, we will open windows to improve air flow by allowing outside air to circulate in the building and conduct classes outside.

Masks

Schools are expected to comply with the Governor's Executive Order for wearing masks or face shields, when developmentally appropriate. All adults are required to wear masks when in the building, classroom, and/or office with others. Exceptions to this requirement include lunch breaks with appropriate social distancing. Classroom teachers may use face shields and social distancing when providing direct instruction in the classroom. During classroom monitoring and circulations, masks are required.

Students are required to wear masks during the school day and when riding the bus. Exceptions to this requirement include during meals and other activities. For example, it may be impractical for students to wear masks or face shields while participating in some non-UIL athletic or other extracurricular activities. When it is impractical for students to wear masks or face shields during those activities, NFPS requires students, teachers, staff, and visitors to wear masks or face shields when entering and exiting facilities and practice areas and when not actively engaging in those activities.

Staff and students are expected to provide their own masks. If individuals need assistance with this matter, please contact the district. It is recommended that masks be rotated and washed daily. Sharing of masks with other family members, friends and other students is extremely risky and discouraged.

Social Distancing

To the extent possible, faculty, staff and students will maintain six feet of social distancing in indoor and outdoor settings. Transitions will be limited in the elementary campus (currently we are discussing staggered school start and dismissal times, passing periods and the use of cohorts to minimize interactions with others).

Campuses and Classrooms

Cohorts – In elementary schools, students and faculty will be assigned to cohorts or groups that will stay together to the best extend possible for defined periods of time. Each cohort will use common areas, such as cafeterias, gyms, playgrounds, etc., together as a group. This concept is intended to minimize the interactions of cohorts with other students and staff. Common areas will be disinfected between each cohort's use.

Class Transitions – When at all possible, we will mark areas for students to practice social distance. This may include hallways and specific doorways to enter and exit.

Classroom Configurations – NFPS will arrange student learning spaces six feet apart, as feasible. In some instances, common areas may be used for instruction with similar distancing.

Additional Instructors in Classrooms – In certain instances, additional staff members may be assigned to classrooms to instruct specific students. These individuals will sanitize prior to entering and exiting the classroom; social distancing and masks will be required as they interact with students.

Restrooms and Water Fountains – Students' physical needs are extremely important. Social distancing and hand washing will remain the priorities during restroom breaks. Because water dispensers have shared surfaces, these will be disabled/turned off. Individual campuses will provide students with other hydration options prior to the start of school.

Materials and Supplies – Students are expected to use their own materials and supplies which will be kept in individually-assigned storage containers. Sharing of materials will not be allowed. In instances where technology, books, calculators, etc., are used by multiple students, proper sanitation protocols will be enforced. Due to the current safety and health concerns, students in kindergarten-8th grade will have packets of teaching materials and supplies made available to them.

High school students are expected to use their own materials and supplies.

Backpacks and Other Personal Items – kindergarten-8th grade students are not permitted to bring personal items other than a small backpack/bag from home. All school supplies will be kept in the classroom to minimize contact. Additional guidance will be provided throughout the school year.

High school students are required to keep their backpacks on them at all times (next to them while in class).

Field Trips/Assemblies – field trips and other academic/ social events will not be scheduled until further notice.

Meals and Transportation

Meals – NFPS complies with child nutrition guidelines. All breakfast and lunch meals will be served either in the classrooms and/or in the cafeteria depending on available space and the number of students. Students will eat in designated areas adhering to social distancing.

Transportation – The bus shuttle between the ACA and ECHS campuses will be suspended for the fall semester. The district will re-evaluate providing shuttle service for the spring semester later this year. If the current public health situation is still active, NFPS will follow these protocols for riding the bus: temperatures will be taken for each student before boarding the bus. If a student's temperature is at or above 100.4°, the student will not be allowed on the bus and will be given a medical/ safety informational form with guidelines that must be followed before he/she is allowed to return school. Seating arrangements will be established to comply with TEA's social distancing requirements for school transportation. Buses will be disinfected daily.

Electives

Music/Mariachi/Dance – Participating students must have their own costumes and instruments. U.I.L. protocols will be followed when possible. These electives may be temporarily suspended if there are not enough students in the programs.

Computer/Art/P.E. – Details are being developed to align with the TEKS course expectations. Each course will be reviewed individually to ensure that social distancing and sanitation requirements are established and communicated prior to the beginning of school.

CTE Courses – CTE courses include hands-on experiences. Social distancing and sanitation requirements will be further defined and communicated prior to the beginning of school. Students enrolled in advanced, hands-on CTE courses must enroll in a face-to-face instructional model. Remote/ virtual learning is only available for “principles” courses in CTE.

Special Programs

Program Participation and Services – Students currently participating in special program services, e.g., special education, 504, Bilingual/ESL, etc., will continue to receive services whether through face-to-face or remote learning. Parent meetings may be held using virtual meeting platforms.

Evaluations and Testing – District protocols have been established to evaluate students who have been referred for special programs. Social distancing and/or personal protective equipment (PPE) will be used, as appropriate.

Extracurricular and After-School Programs

Extracurricular Programs – Each program will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine implementation guidelines. Program sponsors will provide information to students and parents/ families as information is available. Extracurricular programs may be temporarily suspended if there are not enough students signed up.

After-School Program – The after-school program will be available on the first day of instruction for face-to-face students only. Pre-registration will be required through the outside vendor directly. This program will follow their own sanitation and social distancing requirements established by them. NFPS is working with two vendors to accommodate your childcare needs. For more information on the vendors and/or registration, please see below:

- South Presa Community Center at 210-548-0482; <http://presa.org/>; presayouth@gmail.com
- Campus Adventures at 832-294-4918; <https://campusadventures.org/>; lora.mullings@gmail.com