



## **Important COVID Updates and Reminders from Nurse Bridget**

(from letter of August 29, 2021)

Dear NDB Families,

...As you know, NDB's decision to welcome all students back on campus this fall is informed by medical and educational experts, taking into consideration public health trends and guidance from federal, state, and local agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE). As we have done from the start, we will continue to monitor the situation closely and adapt to changing circumstances as needed.

### **The Numbers**

First, in speaking with my contact at San Mateo County, I have confirmed that NDB's case numbers are very low compared to other area schools. It is clear that all of the public and private schools in our community, as well as nationally, are facing the same challenges with the more contagious Delta Variant, as they focus on keeping our schools open and safe.

In addition, NDB's vaccination rates are high and increasing daily, with over 97% percent of our faculty, and over 89% of our students, vaccinated. Vaccinations, along with masks and the additional health and safety protocols outlined in the [NDB COVID-19 Safety Plan](#), remain the best defense of our community's health. We are grateful for your continued partnership on this journey, as we continue to work hard to bring our community back together for an in-person school experience, with these careful health and safety guidelines in place.

### **Testing**

As you know, NDB provided COVID testing for all unvaccinated faculty, staff and students just before the start of this school year, free of charge. We have also continued to require weekly testing for all unvaccinated faculty, staff and students, and given them the same ability to test onsite at no cost. NDB has also offered free COVID testing on campus to all "Close Contact" students, who are not able to get tested in the community.

### **Expanded COVID Testing Access**

We are currently working on enrolling in a testing program where we will be able to test all members of our community weekly, as well as twice a week for students on 10-day-modified quarantine or high risk sports, such as water polo.

However, even as NDB expands our community's access to free onsite COVID testing, please keep in mind that a COVID test only provides a picture of one moment in time. In other words, a negative test on one day does not guarantee a lack of future infection. Therefore, one should not have a false sense of security based on a negative test. Vaccination, masking, hand hygiene and physical distancing when eating and drinking, is our best line of defense.

### **Vaccinations**

NDB families are required to upload a picture of their student's COVID-19 vaccination card to the School Admin Portal, to maintain accurate records.

If your student is fully vaccinated, wears a properly fitted mask, practices good hand-washing and uses hand sanitizer between washes, then they are well armed against the Delta variant. However, if despite all of these best practices they do test positive, it is well documented that the symptoms are much less severe and last only a few days.

If your student is unvaccinated, then they must be extra cautious about avoiding close contact with others, especially during meal times, and take responsibility for following all guidelines. If desired, we can make arrangements for your student to eat in a separate space, away from the general student population.

Understanding the serious long term possible side effects of COVID-19, we encourage all members of our community to be vaccinated. As you are likely aware, the FDA has given final approval of the Pfizer vaccine:

*"The FDA's approval of this vaccine is a milestone as we continue to battle the COVID-19 pandemic. While this and other vaccines have met the FDA's rigorous, scientific standards for emergency use authorization, as the first FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccine, the public can be very confident that this vaccine meets the high standards for safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality the FDA requires of an approved product," said Acting FDA Commissioner Janet Woodcock, M.D. "While millions of people have already safely received COVID-19 vaccines, we recognize that for some, the FDA approval of a vaccine may now instill additional confidence to get vaccinated. Today's milestone puts us one step closer to altering the course of this pandemic in the U.S." ([Read the full article on the fda.gov website here.](#))*

If your student begins or completes the vaccination process, please inform me at [bwylie@ndhsb.org](mailto:bwylie@ndhsb.org) so we can have accurate records.

### **Expanded COVID Team Support**

Unlike many area schools, NDB also benefits from a full-time nurse and COVID Associate dedicated solely to the COVID safety and support of our community, including training in and implementation of all COVID guidelines, as well as testing and contact tracing, etc. NDB is also taking the extra step of hiring additional COVID Associates, to ensure the consistent implementation of COVID safety protocols and policies. The School is also hiring a COVID Director, to ensure that we remain fully informed of, and are complying with, all new policies.

I hope that this email provides you with a helpful overview of the [NDB COVID-19 Safety Plan](#), so that you can better understand the practices and policies that the School has put in place to keep our campus open and safe. The updated [NDB COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) continues to not only meet, but also exceed, the CDC, CDPH, San Mateo County Pandemic Recovery Framework, and CIF guidelines. The full [NDB COVID-19 Safety Plan can be found at this link](#). This information can also be accessed by clicking on the blue button at the top of the [NDB website](#). Please see also the Q & A attached at the end of this letter, with my responses to some frequently asked questions.

I encourage your family to have a conversation with your daughter about the importance of staying healthy by following these required COVID guidelines at all times, both on campus and in the general population. We are all responsible for our own well being, but as a member of a community, we have the additional burden to protect those around us as well.

Together, we can keep NDB safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Bridget Wylie, RN  
School Nurse  
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