

Safe School Hybrid Re-entry Policy During Covid-19 Pandemic

Purpose: The *Raíces Staff and Governance Board Members* take very seriously its responsibility to protect the health and safety of students, families, and staff. *Raíces* develops this policy in alignment with 6.12.2 NMAC, 6.12.6 NMAC, 6.29.1 NMAC, and the School Re-opening Guidance document and the COVID-19 Response Toolkit for NM Elementary Schools provided by the NM Departments of Education (PED) and Health (DOH) related to Covid-19 health pandemic.

Policy: This policy addresses all the steps that will be taken by school staff to protect the health of students, staff and families in five areas as they relate specifically to the Covid-19 Virus health emergency as follows: 1) Prevention, 2) Protection, 3) Mitigation, 4) Response, and 5) Recovery.

Prevention:

Once Doña Ana County is declared to be in the “Green Zone” for Covid-19 cases by NMDOH, *Raíces* will open the school using a hybrid model for classes approved by the NMPED. The school will implement special conditions as specified by the COVID-19 Response Toolkit Document from NMPED and NMDOH. Fifty percent of the students in each classroom will attend all day on Monday and Tuesday of each week (A Day Cohort) and the other 50% of students will attend all day on Wednesday and Thursday of each week (B Day Cohort). On Friday, no students will attend school to allow for a very thorough deep cleaning by the custodian.

Parents who feel a special concern about their child returning to the classroom will be able to have their child continue with online learning.

The school administration will form a Covid-19 Planning and Response Team. The Principal will sign and submit to NMPED the required form ensuring that the school will abide by the following School Safety Plan Checklist guidelines for COVID-19 Preparation and Response:

- The school will maintain an inventory of masks and PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) for students and staff as specified by the NMPED in the signed Safety Plan Checklist.
- The Principal will identify a PPE Point Person for the School.
- The Principal will identify a COVID-19 Point Person for the School who will do all required reporting to the NMPED and NMDOH.
- The school will ensure that no more than 50% of the registered students will be in any given classroom at one time.
- The school will ensure that student groups remain in their classroom cohorts.
- The school will maintain an inventory of CDC-approved cleaning supplies.
- The school will have sufficient custodial resources so that the areas of the school are cleaned in accordance with the CDC standards in between “A Day” and “B Day” cohorts.
- The school will have an established and written protocol on inspecting, repairing, and providing maintenance on ventilation systems within the buildings (main building and portable unit).

Protection:

Families who chose to bring their child to the school-site classroom for instruction must agree to the following processes:

1. All students must wear a mask while at school. Two multi-layer washable cloth masks will be supplied per student. Should a student forget their mask, disposable masks will also be available for the day. There may be some **rare** exceptions for a student with a particular respiratory issue. In such a case the COVID-19 Planning and Response Team will determine the best course of action in consultation with the parents/guardians.
2. If a student repeatedly removes the mandatory face mask and refuses to put it back on when directed by the staff to do so, they must be removed from the class and isolated until the parent/guardian picks them up. The Team will determine how many warnings to the student to put the mask on is reasonable before removing the student from the classroom.
3. All staff, parents, and students must consent to having their temperature taken in the morning before they enter the building.
4. Information will be prepared and distributed to parents to help understand what needs to be done at school and at home to protect their children and family from exposure to Covid-19 and why this is so important.
5. To help parents further understand the importance of protective measures, the school will supply a site map that shows how all rooms have doors to the outside so that students do not enter halls or classrooms when they go out for play and fresh air outside, one class at a time.
6. Based on the September 11, 2020, Memorandum of the NM State Secretary of Education, as well as additional Memos, the facilities committee will consult with NMPED experts on ventilation to make sure that all possible efforts are being pursued to recirculate clean air in the school building. As per the NMPED requirements, the HVAC units will be fitted with MERV-13 filters, just as soon as they are available on the market. In the meantime, the strongest filters available will be installed and additional fans or air cleaners will be purchased for additional air cleaning capabilities.

Mitigation:

For further reduction of risk to the students and staff the following steps will be taken:

1. Each child's temperature will be taken 3 times a day, once before entering the school, mid-day, and just before leaving to go home or at any time that a child appears to suddenly feel unwell.
2. All parents/guardians must report if anyone in the family or the student has been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 during the infectious period. If so the student will need to be in quarantine at home for 14 days.

3. It will be up to the discretion of the COVID-19 Planning and Response Team to determine if it is necessary to ask parents to sign off on a list of questions each morning regarding confirmation of no COVID-19 symptoms present for the student and families members, no travel out of state, and no family member has had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. (See pages 3, 11, and 12 in the NMPED COVID_19 Response ToolKit for definition of close contact and the required response for staff and students).
4. All students will be supplied with protective glasses and table shields to further protect them from possible exposure to the body fluids of someone who may be infected with the virus without being symptomatic.
5. All classroom furniture and playground equipment will be wiped down 3 times a day or after used by different groups with the proper disinfectants as prescribed by the NMPED and NMDOH.
6. All staff members will wear face masks and protective glasses or face shields.
7. Any staff member who has had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 during the infectious period must report this to the school administration and self-quarantine for 14 days.
8. Children will receive frequent instruction on hand washing procedures and will be reminded to wash hands before and after using the restrooms or eating the prepared meals and snacks.
9. Students will be met at the gate each morning, and parents will be asked to not enter the building unless there is an emergency.
10. At the end of the school day, students will be escorted by staff to their parent or guardian's car at pick up time.

Response:

The following responses will be implemented should anyone (students or staff) become symptomatic during the day in the school building:

1. If any staff member becomes symptomatic during the school day, they will be immediately isolated, sent home, and required to be tested for the virus.
2. If any student becomes symptomatic during the school day, they will be immediately isolated until they can be picked by a parent/guardian and it will be strongly encouraged that they be tested for the virus.

3. Should there prove to be a positive case in a given classroom, the teacher and all students will be quarantined immediately for 14 days and return to online virtual instruction. The NMPED and NMDOH will be notified within 4 hours of the time of a positive case notification by submitting the Initial Report COVID-19 Positive Case form.
4. Should it be discovered that a student, staff member, or a family member of a student or staff member has had close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case outside of the classroom, they must report it immediately to the school administration and quarantine at home for 14 days before returning to the classroom. The NMPED and NMDOH will be notified within 6 hours of the time that a close contact incident is reported by submitting the Close Contact Report form.
5. Should a student become symptomatic when he/she is away from the school building overnight or on the weekend, the parents/guardians must report this to the school administration and it is strongly encouraged that the student be tested.
6. If a student tests positive for the virus, they must quarantine at home for 10 days and be free of fever for 24 hours without medication before returning to school.
7. Should a teacher become symptomatic during the hours he/she is away from the school, they must report this immediately and be tested for the virus. If test results are positive, the staff member must quarantine for at least 10 days and must be without a fever for 24 without medication before coming back to school.
8. Should the teacher have a positive test result, first the NMPED and the NMDOH will be notified. The school maintains a list of approved substitutes who will receive special instructions they must abide by in order to be a substitute in the school during the Covid-19 emergency. They must read, agree in writing, and abide by all the prescribed measures for protection and mitigation of risk that must take place to protect all staff and students.
9. According to the Employee Rights Paid Sick Leave and Expanded family and Medical Leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act Employees, the following applies for employees:

QUALIFYING REASONS FOR LEAVE RELATED TO COVID-19

An employee is entitled to take leave related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work, including unable to telework, because the employee:

- a. is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
- b. has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;
- c. is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis;
- d. is caring for an individual subject to an order described in (1) or self-quarantine as described in (2);
- e. is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons; or
- f. is experiencing any other substantially-similar condition specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In the event that a teacher falls under any of the above categories and is unable to teach his/her class, a substitute teacher will be called to continue with classes, hybrid (if the class is in hybrid mode) and online. In the event that classes are strictly online, the substitute teacher will continue with online classes.

In the event that the school cannot find enough substitute teachers to cover classes then classes will be cancelled.

Teachers may teach from home if they are not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (asymptomatic).

Office staff must stay home and follow the sick-leave guidelines for COVID-19 if they are experiencing any symptoms. If office staff is asymptomatic, staff may work from home. In the event that all office staff must be quarantined at the same time, the whole school will revert again to online learning, as the staff cannot carry out instructional duties without the assistance of office staff.

These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

[Employee Rights: Paid Sick Leave and Expanded Family and Medical Leave Under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#)
[External link](#)

10. Information will be provided to all families and staff about where to go to be tested for the virus and updated in weekly information that will go out to parents as a reminder of their responsibilities as well as the school's to help reduce the risk of infection.

Recovery:

The following procedures will be followed to make sure that class instruction can begin again for students or staff who have been quarantined because of a positive test for Covid-19:

1. When there has been a quarantine for a particular class or the school in general, all students and staff must be able to attest to lack of symptoms within the past 14 days and anyone who has tested positive for the virus must have been in quarantine for at least 10 days and been free of fever for 24 hours without medication to be eligible to return to the classroom.
2. When all infected individuals have been shown to have been quarantined for at least 10 days after a positive test and free of fever for 24 hours without medication, they may come back to the classroom if they have no fever or symptoms upon arrival at the school.
3. Teachers will give special attention to make sure that students who have been quarantined or are ill with the COVID-19 virus have extra assistance if they have fallen behind academically during their time at home, especially if they were too ill to participate in online classes.
4. The school COVID-19 Preparation and Response Team acknowledges that it is possible that a student, staff member, or family members may suffer emotional distress due to COVID-19 resulting in the death of a family member or loved one, dealing with a serious case of COVID-19 within the family, or the loss of a job which is critical to family support. In such cases, the school will connect the family or student to the services of one or more of our three community school mental health partners. One of these partners will prepare a survey to assess specific needs and the certified mental health professional and her NMSU student intern will provide support through virtual community sessions to talk and answer questions and online educational programs.
5. The COVID-19 Planning and Response Team will meet as needed to review both 1) what is working and 2) what is not working well with regard to each of the 5 stages of this plan. Based on their review, they will plan and implement needed changes with prior notification to the Governance Board Members.