

# NORTHLAKE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

THINK CRITICALLY · LEAD COURAGEOUSLY · SERVE FAITHFULLY

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Dear Northlake Students and Parents,

Happy July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend! I hope you've had time to rest and reflect on all that we enjoy in this nation. I know this has been an unprecedented time for all of us, but we have much to be thankful for as a nation and a community of believers.

**I am constantly encouraged and impressed by the Northlake community as we've worked together** to begin activities on campus, and I am thankful for the diligence of students, campers, athletes, and parents in **safely integrating best practices**. I am also thankful for a team of coaches, counselors, teachers, and administrators who have communicated and modeled those practices well.

We remain convinced of the value provided by **Northlake's in-person, on-campus educational experience**. We are committed to working as a community to open the school year on August 6th as planned, with notable adjustments for the health and safety of everyone involved in light of COVID-19. We will be diligent but not deterred in our mission.

The Northlake leadership team has been closely monitoring a variety of sources as we develop a plan which will reflect Northlake's ability to operate effectively. **As an independent school, our unique community and campus provide significant flexibility** within national and state guidelines. We commit to a wise balance in the school's approach to welcoming students back to campus.

Northlake's **four-point plan for reopening** in a safe and normal manner will focus on these key areas:

1. ***Wise personal interactions and practices***
2. ***Diligent personal and campus cleansing***
3. ***Reasonable health screening***
4. ***Timely and effective response protocols***

Each of these areas is addressed in detail below. They are hopefully organized in such a way as to provide a quick and helpful reference for questions you may have. Obviously, you may have additional questions or require clarification on some of these points. Please feel free to contact us at your convenience.

The Northlake Christian team is eagerly anticipating the return of students and faculty to campus so that we may continue to prepare children to ***Think Critically, Lead Courageously, Serve Faithfully - all from a biblical perspective.*** We are excited that after enrollment growth of 8.5% in 2019-2020, the school is again **on track for growth in 2020-2021**. God is blessing Northlake, and we look to Him for continued wisdom and protection.

Yours for Christian education,

*Glenn T. Martin*

Head of School

### **NCS Reopening Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**

#### **1. Wise Personal Interactions**

***Principle: Northlake will minimize, but not eliminate student-student and student-teacher interactions. We are a community, and students need personal interaction with classmates and friends. Direct communication from teachers to students is vital for great learning.***

**What does this mean in practice?**

- Indoor spaces such as hallways, classrooms, gyms, and cafeteria space will be managed in ways that **minimize large groups and gatherings**, while allowing students to learn, play, and socialize as freely and safely as possible. **NCS' small class size allows flexibility** in this area!
- When in close contact with students (6' or less), NCS faculty and staff will likely wear masks to minimize the spread of germs. **Students will have the option of wearing masks** and will be encouraged to do so in certain situations but masks will not be required unless mandated by law.
- The NCS **Capturing Kids' Hearts practice** of shaking hands and giving high fives will now emphasize fist bumps, toe tapping, and other safe means of personal connection.
- Events such as chapels, assemblies, retreats, field trips, and even ball games, concerts, and plays will be approached in ways that provide effective, yet safe interaction. **Events which must be cancelled to maintain safety may be reimaged or rescheduled.**

***Note: With best practices and guidance regularly changing, students and parents should expect updates and adjustments as time passes. Flexibility and understanding in the context of Christian love will guide our behavior.***

## ***2. Diligent Personal and Campus Cleansing***

***Principle: We recognize the responsibility each one of us has to look out for the well-being of others. Northlake will ensure that students, faculty, and staff attend to personal cleanliness and campus cleansing by providing regular opportunities and necessary supplies.***

**What does this mean in practice?**

- Northlake has **invested in approved supplies** such as hand sanitizer, spray disinfectant, and wipes for use across campus.
- Northlake has **professionally disinfected** the entire campus and will do so periodically throughout the school year.
- Teachers will use **age-appropriate methods** to teach and reinforce the importance of proper hand washing, sneezing, and coughing procedures.
- NCS is considering investing in further methods, contracts, and equipment to promote a **safe and healthy campus environment**.

## ***3. Reasonable Health Screening***

***Principle: Northlake will continue to implement appropriate health screening and monitoring as the student body arrives on campus each day in order to maintain a healthy campus.***

**What does this mean in practice?**

- All students and employees will be **temperature-checked upon arrival** via touchless thermometers to the extent it is possible and until such time as it becomes unnecessary.
- Students and employees will answer simple questions about health upon arrival to campus to **screen for possible illness** until such time as it becomes unnecessary.
- All **campus guests will be temperature checked and health screened** upon arrival to campus as part of the visitor security screening process to the extent it is feasible and until such time as it becomes unnecessary.
- Students, employees, and parents will be asked to be **more than usually diligent** about taking care regarding possible sickness. **It is never acceptable to come to school (or send a child to school) with a fever or onset of sickness**, and the entire community will need to be especially careful in this regard.
- While still emphasizing the importance of consistent, regular attendance, NCS will exercise **more flexible attendance policies** for students and employees.

## ***4. Timely and Effective Response Protocols***

***Principle: Northlake will institute a series of protocols for how to respond in the event employees, students, or guests are exposed to, diagnosed with, and cleared of COVID-19.***

***While no case is the same and one size never fits all, the school will follow appropriate updated guidance and always do what is best for the entire school community.***

## What does this mean in practice?

- Attendance policies will be adjusted to allow students and employees to protect themselves and others by **staying home when necessary**.
- NCS will follow **current recommendations for responding** to possible exposure, diagnoses, and clearance as they relate to ensuring students and employees stay home for sufficient time periods to minimize spread of the virus.
- Northlake is currently in the process of interviewing and **hiring a full time school nurse** who will assist with decision-making and record keeping in all aspects of school health.
- **Individual scenarios** of possible exposure, confirmed exposure, presumptive diagnosis, confirmed diagnosis, and clearance will be **examined following current guidance**.
- Northlake is currently developing specific **guidelines for remote access for students** who need to remain at home and still attend class virtually.

## Addressing the Unknowns

There are still a number of areas of normal school life that are not in NCS' control. **LHSAA policies** will have to be followed by Wolverine athletes and coaches, and those policies are still being developed. Capacities for **school buses** will be at the direction of state transportation authorities, so NCS policies for bus service and travel to and from games and events are still being refined. There may be instances where we will need to call on parents within the Northlake community to help with transportation.

As always, **NCS appreciates your prayers and support** as we navigate safe, effective schooling in this time of pandemic. While some elements of reopening are still in development, we will continue to **communicate periodically** with the school community. If you have questions or observations, please contact the appropriate office directly and the NCS team will be responsive to your needs.

On behalf of the NCS leadership team, as well as our entire faculty and staff, I would ask for your support to **discourage speculation** and encourage **healthy communication** on these important topics. To date, we have met each successive challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic with a positive, caring, and Christlike attitude, and I know we will continue to address whatever the future holds in the same manner.