

NORTHLAKE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

THINK CRITICALLY · LEAD COURAGEOUSLY · SERVE FAITHFULLY

July 24, 2020

Dear NCS Students, Parents, and Faculty,

As we move closer to an August 6th start of the 2020-2021 school year committed to in-person, on-campus education at Northlake Christian School, more details are becoming clear while some are still emerging. **The school's commitment is to opening the school year in a safe manner which will allow not just reopening, but staying open consistently.**

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

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

I want to update you on a number of **actions NCS has taken** to do all that can be done to ensure a safe and healthy reopening while also **answering a number of the most recent recurring questions** from parents and students. In addition, building principals will be sending more detailed information regarding each level over the weekend. Our goal is campus-wide consistency with age- and building-appropriate specifics.

WISE COUNSEL

NCS is blessed to engage in **meaningful conversations with experts** who are working diligently to help the school open as safely as possible, giving insight and understanding into best practices across the country and across the state. *From partners at LCMC Health to experts in facility security and facility management, NCS gleans information daily from national, state, and local levels.* I hope it is encouraging for you to know that the individual charged with St. Tammany Parish's "Live Safe. Work Safe. Shop Safe." action plan in our area is NCS parent Chief Ollie Brumfield of the St. Tammany Parish Fire Department. Chief Brumfield and I have spent a significant amount of time talking through NCS' plans for a safe and consistent opening in early August.

MEANINGFUL ACTION

Steps NCS has already taken toward opening in a safe and healthy manner involve personnel, equipment, supplies, and planning:

Personnel:

- NCS has hired a full time registered nurse who will be formally introduced next week.
- NCS is hiring additional teachers to ensure proper coverage and class size.
- NCS is hiring additional custodial staff for ongoing daily sanitizing of campus common areas.

Equipment:

- NCS is investing in outdoor seating & shade structures to move students outdoors when possible.
- NCS is investing in enhanced audio equipment for optimum presentation and recording of live classes to accommodate more liberal student attendance policies for those impacted by COVID-19.
- NCS is investing in additional mini-buses to accommodate student transportation.
- NCS is investing in touchless water bottle filling stations across campus.

Supplies:

- NCS has purchased hand sanitizer for each classroom and each building entrance.
- NCS has purchased spray sanitizer for cleaning desks and classrooms between each class.
- NCS has purchased a robust supply of touchless thermometers for each building across campus.
- NCS is purchasing extensive campus signage to remind students about the importance of social distancing practices.
- *Hand sanitizer, spray sanitizer, masks, and supplies are USA-sourced and have cleared all recall warnings.

Planning:

- NCS team members are preparing each classroom for maximum student distancing.

- NCS team members are adjusting campus patterns to minimize congestion, including staggered lunches, coordinated class changes, and minimizing chapels & assemblies.
- NCS team members are maximizing already-small class sizes (even with significant growth, NCS has approximately 40-70 students per grade level).
- NCS is preparing NCS Plus, a completely online option for families who need to remain away from campus.

KEY QUESTIONS:

Will NCS offer an online option?

- Yes, NCS is in the final stages of launching NCS Plus, a completely online option for students in 5th-12th grades who need to remain off campus to ensure the health of the student or family in unique situations. While details will be announced in the coming days, the program will necessitate a semester-long commitment but will allow students to:
 - participate in athletics when the LHSAA reinstates competition plans.
 - remain enrolled as a full-time NCS student.
 - pursue an NCS diploma.

Will students be required to wear masks all day?

- While NCS has successfully operated throughout the summer with optional masks for students, the governor's mandate for safely opening schools requires students to wear masks "to the greatest extent possible and practical within the local community context." For as long as the governor's mandate is in place, NCS will ask students in grades 5-12 to always have a mask on their person and to wear a mask at times when social distancing is less possible: arrival, departure, transition between classes/activities, and during food service. Students will not be required to wear masks in class unless in close proximity to others. When a mask is needed, students may wear their own mask with no controversial messages, slogans, or designs. NCS has masks on hand for any student or guest who needs one.

When a student or teacher tests positive, will everyone in the class need to stay home for 14 days?

- Current guidance indicates that each situation should be considered on its own merits, and NCS will evaluate each situation individually, yet consistently. NCS will only require those who have been in close proximity (defined by the CDC as “within 6’ without a mask for more than 15 minutes”) to a positive-testing individual to remain home for a prescribed time. A doctor’s note and complete cessation of symptoms will be required for return to campus.

When a student must remain home for a short period of time out of an abundance of caution, how will NCS maintain continuity of instruction?

- Students who need to remain home for a short time for medical reasons will be allowed to do so with a more liberal student attendance policy. Those students will log onto a Google Meet and utilize ItsLearning to join classes live with enhanced audio to ensure active participation in the classroom experience. The technology will be similar to NCS remote learning from March through May but with the student joining a live class to participate in the teacher’s instruction, which the student joins during the actual class time. When a student cannot join during the actual class time for medical reasons, they will be able to view a recording of the class in asynchronous fashion.

Northlake Christian School is committed to maintaining quality Christian education in this time of adversity. The NCS team is diligently focused on evaluating approaches which effectively and judiciously increase the value proposition of parents investing in independent Christian education. I believe times such as these highlight the value of what Northlake offers.

Thank you for your support as we work through daily changes in the emerging landscape. Regardless of what we face, I am convinced we must continue to “commit our work to the Lord” so that our plans might be established (Proverbs 16:3). Please continue to pray for wisdom, strength, and insight as we navigate a safe and successful new school year!

Yours for Christian education,

Glenn T. Martin

Head of School