



# Knob Noster R-VIII School District

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## Our Mission Is Student Success

Date: 8-14-2020  
To: KNPS Parents and Students  
From: Jerrod Wheeler  
Re: Updates from John County Health Dept. Meeting

KNPS Parents:

We hope this email finds you well and we look forward to our start to school on August 24. Our counselors, teachers, and administration continue to reach out to communicate and align plans for our return to school. We will continue to reach out with final details next week.

I am writing with some significant updates, protocols, and recommendations following a countywide meeting yesterday between school districts and the Johnson County Health Department. Please find below modified which will be included in our Covid Return to School and Response Plan.

### Significant Updates – New Information

1. The physical distancing guidance has been modified to a minimum of THREE (3) FEET of distance between individuals. Our previous metric of SIX (6) feet is now considered as desirable. Six feet or more will remain the target within the district, but three feet or more will be acceptable when the situation does not allow for 6 feet. We believe we will be able to maintain the desirable 6 feet in most areas.
2. The definition of Close Contact was modified in multiple ways. Close Contact was defined multiple times by JOCO Health Department officials as 3 feet or less for 15 to 30 minutes or more without a mask. Further it was explained that the type of activity that occurs during the 15-30 minutes would have to be evaluated to determine if a Close Contact was created when these parameters are not maintained. This significantly deviates from prior guidance and almost eliminates the opportunity for Close Contacts to occur, based on our planned protocols and our ability to eliminate Close Contacts. That said, we will identify close contacts as 3 feet or more for 15 minutes or longer, with OR without masks.
3. When a Close Contact does occur and both parties are masked, the chance of transmission is reduced by 80%. This is not a modification but is new information to consider as we abide by the mask order.
4. The Johnson County Health Board is scheduled to meet on Monday. We expect that the mask order will remain in place. There is also A CHANCE that the order may be amended to allow masks to be removed indoors when physical distancing of 6 feet or more can be maintained. The final decision will be relayed, once the decision is made by the health board.
5. The department does not anticipate making recommendations on limiting sports or other activities.
6. The express care line is being used as the Covid and testing information hotline. That number is 660-262-7580 Ext. 1.

### The following apply to Confirmed Positive Cases, Close Contacts and Quarantine:

1. For Symptomatic Positive Cases: Quarantine time is 10 days from initial symptoms and 24 hours fever free (changed from 72 hours fever free).
2. For Asymptomatic Positive Cases: Quarantine time is 10 days from the date in which the positive test was taken (not the date of notification of results).
3. Quarantine for a Close Contact remains 14 days from most recent Close Contact exposure as defined above (three feet or less, 15 minutes or more, unmasked).
4. Close Contacts will be reported and notified immediately. However, testing will be delayed for 5 to 7 days by the health department to avoid false negative results. This provides a targeted incubation period for the virus, if exposed.

5. A single positive or negative test will be the standard for quarantine or return to work. Double testing is not required.
6. A critical workforce staff member who is identified as a Close Contact may return to work during the quarantine period if a surgical mask is utilized. The district is evaluating this caveat as a stop gap for exercising a shutdown, should the district be faced with workforce shortage. We do not anticipate exercising this option, but it was presented as an option for consideration.

### **Required Employee Protocols While at Work:**

Along with this new information, I am providing the following guidance which is expected to be followed at all times as our team returns to school.

1. The county health order shall be followed by all employees at all times. At this time, masks are required of all employees while indoors. The only exceptions are those which are specifically written in the public health order. Currently, achieving physical distance indoors does not negate the requirement to wear a mask.
2. All employees are directed to absolutely refrain from creating a cohort group of close contacts among employees. In other words, they are directed to not be within 3 feet of another employee for 15 minutes or more. This is easily achieved with intentional effort. The bottom line is this is the number 1 threat to a forced school closure, outside of the unlikely chance of a catastrophic spike in cases among students. If this is achieved, our district will be able to bend, but not break. All employees will be held accountable for following this work requirement.

### **Additional considerations:**

There has been some conversation regarding desk dividers, plexiglass dividers, shower curtains, etc. Based on conversation and research about the impact of these concepts, the district is NOT recommending these be used and will not be making these purchases or reimbursing employees for these purchases. A variety of concerns, including requirements for additional sanitation, have led to this recommendation. In place of this, teachers are expected to arrange class settings to ensure physical distancing is achieved to eliminate Close Contacts (3 feet or more, 15 minutes or less). This change significantly changes the ability for our district to attain acceptable physical distancing.

### **Moving Forward**

As we have seen all along, the Covid situation continues to evolve and change. Our plan continues to be designed to flex and respond to these changes. We appreciate the ongoing partnership, support, and intentional efforts to comply with the most current guidance and protocols that are in place to help navigate the district through this situation. Please reach out to your teachers, building principals, counselors, or our district team if we may be of assistance. Enjoy your last few days of summer, and we will see you soon!

Very Respectfully,

Jerrold Wheeler, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools