

Knob Noster R-VIII School District



Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan 2021-2024

This Plan Represents an Update and Continuation of the Original
School Reopening Plan from July 2020

Revised Date: August 9, 2021

Foreword

On behalf of the Knob Noster Public Schools Board of Education, faculty, and staff I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our students, parents, and community for their ongoing cooperation, respect, and care for the general public health that has been extended since Covid-19 reached our community in March 2020.

Because of your good will, ongoing two-way communication and cooperation over the last 14 months, we were able to open our doors to in-person learning in August 2020 and complete the entire 20-21 school year without any elevated threat of a school shut down.

As we enter the 2021-2022 school year, we are again faced with new challenges, and we maintain our steadfast commitment to partnering with you to provide a learning environment that is as safe as possible for our students and as manageable as practical for our school district and families.

Broad input from our families through a variety of methods, including virtual town hall meetings, surveys, 1:1 communications, and other efforts has served to inform the district's response on the full scope of issues related to Covid 19. As a result of this partnership, feedback from our families indicates our approach last year was highly successful, as compared to many other districts in the region.

Our past approach was based on two primary metrics: (1) Adhering to public health orders and mandates from proper health authorities to enhance the overall safety of our school and community, and (2) Providing parental choice on educational decisions effecting their children, to the greatest extent possible and practical. This year's plan will continue to be founded on these two principles, as described in detail throughout this revised plan.

Once again, on behalf of our team, thank you for your ongoing partnership, and we look forward to another highly successful and safe year for our students in 2021-2022 in partnership with our parents and community. As always, please reach out to me directly or to any member of our team if we may assist you in any way.

Very Respectfully,

Jerrod H. Wheeler
Superintendent of Schools

Covid-19 Paradigm Protocol (Bottom Line Up Front Protocol for Success or Failure)

Commitment to Mutual Respect and Public Health

In March 2020, the Covid-19 Pandemic presented a challenge unlike any of us have ever faced. Through our partnership, respect, communication, and focus on our students and community, we handled the challenge in stride over the last 18 months.

As shared last year, Covid-19 can be dangerous, politicized, elusive, emotional, unpredictable, sensationalized and/or it can be a host of other things. It can also be none of the above. One significant consideration the district is working very carefully to embrace is that Covid-19 can be a variety of things based on both science/data AND based on individual viewpoints, opinions, or experiences.

As we move forward, we know that our success or failure continues to rest upon the extent to which all members of the Knob Noster Public Schools community commit to working together with the following in mind:

1. Respectful behavior for self and others
2. Commitment to the common health for self and others
3. Empathy for the situation rather than emotion
4. Open, honest and respectful two-way communication
5. That which is in the best educational and health interest of our students

Looking ahead, we do not know and we cannot control what the future will bring. However, we do know that we have both the ability and the choice to determine how we will embrace this situation and how we will treat one another. The Knob Noster Public Schools Community has come together, worked together, and demonstrated respect together as we embraced this situation. Our team is committed to continuing to operate with ongoing commitment to the items lists above. Working together, we can get through this situation in stride, with additional supports for those who need it most.

Communications Protocols

From the onset of the Covid-19 situation, the district has utilized a variety of methods to communicate with staff, students, parents, and stakeholders. The district has shifted its approach in a couple areas, but generally will use the same successful communication strategies that have been used over the last 18 months.

1. The district will communicate all significant communications through our parent notification system. This may include emails, texts, or phone calls depending on the urgency of the message.
2. The district will archive all significant communications on the district website under the Covid-19 webpage. These messages will remain available for references for all stakeholders.

3. The district may choose to utilize social media outlets to further distribute significant communications depending on the nature of the message. The district encourages individuals to direct follow up questions to the most appropriate person. Examples... A question about a sport should be sent directly to the coach. A classroom question should be sent directly to the teacher. A building level question should be sent to the principal. A district question should be sent to the Superintendent. The district will work very hard to keep all parties informed with the most up-to-date information. The district may not respond to all questions posted on social media.

Updates will be provided in the following outlets:

<http://www.knobnoster.k12.mo.us/>

<https://www.facebook.com/KnobNosterSchools/>

<https://twitter.com/KnobSchools>

PAIR Framework

Outside of orders from appropriate agencies or authorities, KNPS is committed to taking safety actions which are Practical, Attainable, Impactful, and Reasonable in scope (**PAIR**).

Legal Foundation and Compliance for this Safe Return to School Plan

In order to comply with federal regulations, school districts are required to post a “Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan.” This has been designed by Knob Noster Public Schools in conjunction with ongoing communication, input, and coordination with the Knob Noster Board of Education and community stakeholders through a wide host of engagements activities which have occurred regularly since March 2020.

This plan has been shared with the regional supervisor for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for compliance review, revision, and feedback. All feedback from DESE is included in this plan. (Pending)

Ongoing Periodic Review

This plan will be reviewed and revised monthly (or more frequently, as needed based on local metrics) by the Knob Noster Administration and Board of Education with input from community stakeholders. Community stakeholders are encouraged to actively participate in the variety of ongoing community engagement activities which will continue this year, as they have since March 2020. This may include but not be limited to: social media communication, newsletters, town hall meetings, public hearings, one on one meetings, and other two-way engagement activities.

Assistance and Translation Services

If you require assistance, or if you know of an individual who requires assistance, related to reading this plan or translating this plan into another language, please contact:

Mrs. Tina Brant
Director of Communications
Knob Noster Public Schools
401 East Wimer Street
Knob Noster, MO 65336
Phone: 660-563-3186
Email: tbrant@knr8.net

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities, Rehabilitation, Health, Other Unique Needs

As in all its operations, Knob Noster Public Schools is committed to meeting the educational needs of all students, including students with specific individual needs. Since March 2020, the KNPS Special Services team has worked closely with parents and students to ensure accommodations and protocols are developed and implemented as needed to meet the needs of all students. This partnership will continue throughout the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic. Parents are encouraged to continue to engage in coordination efforts with their child's teachers and case managers. If further assistance is needed, or to mitigate a concern, please contact:

Mrs. Deenia Hocker
Director of Student Services
Knob Noster Public Schools
401 East Wimer Street
Knob Noster, MO 65336
Phone 660-563-3186
Email: dhocker@knr8.net

Policy and State Statute Guidance Related to Local Health and Educational Authority

The Knob Noster Board of Education and Administration are bound to follow their written policies, which are aligned to state law and which have been developed by the Missouri School Board's Association and District Legal Counsel. All policies are approved by the Board of Education after thorough review.

Board Policy EBB states in part:

“Students or employees with communicable diseases that pose a risk of transmission in school or at school activities (such as, but not limited to, chicken pox, influenza and conjunctivitis) will be managed as required by law and **in accordance with guidelines provided by the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) and local county or city health departments**. Such management may include, but is not limited to, exclusion from school or reassignment as needed for the health and safety of students and staff.”

Board Policy EBB is aligned to various Revised Statutes of Missouri, as referenced in policy.

[Click Here to Access Policy EBB](#)

As clearly stated in approved Board Policy, the Knob Noster Board of Education is bound to align to the recommendations and/or mandates provided by the Department of Health and Senior Services and the federal, state, county or city health departments.

Endorsing Recommendations Versus Enforcing Public Health Orders / Mandates

Public Health Orders / Mandates are determined by proper health agencies of authority as described above. Knob Noster Public Schools assumes responsibility for **ENFORCING** these mandates.

Public Health Recommendations are determined by proper health agencies of authority, as described above. Knob Noster Public Schools assumes responsibility for **ENDORISING** these recommendations.

Knob Noster Public Schools will continue to ENFORCE Public Health Orders / Mandates and will continue to ENDORSE Public Health Recommendations as it has since March 2020 and will rely on the appropriate health agencies of authority to dictate health decisions. While this position by the Knob Noster Board of Education has remained consistent throughout the pandemic, the Board may periodically evaluate this position based on the extent to which federal, state, local, and city health agencies fulfill their duties based on evolving health conditions.

Current Health Mandates and Recommendations August 9, 2021

Centers for Disease Control Current Mandate for All District School Buses and Vans (Public Transportation)

As of the date of this plan (8-5-21), there is a CDC mandate impacting operations for all district transportation, which is the requirement for face coverings to be worn by all individuals while aboard school buses and vans. This mandate will be strictly enforced. No students will be allowed to enter a school bus without properly wearing a face covering. This mandate will remain in effect until such time that it is rescinded by the CDC.

[Click Here to Access the CDC Mandate](#)

Department of Defense / Whiteman AFB Current Mandate for Whiteman Elementary School and All On-Base Activities August 9, 2021

As of the date of this plan (8-5-21), in alignment with directives from Whiteman Public Health and the 509th Wing Commander, all students (2 years and above) and all adults must properly wear face coverings during all school activities. This mandate will remain in effect until such time that it is rescinded by Whiteman leadership.

[Click here to Access the Whiteman AFB Public Health Notice](#)

Current Mandate for Knob Noster Public School Campuses Located Off Base

As of the date of this plan, there are no mandates for students or adults in these locations. Johnson County Community Health Services has issued [Click Here to Access the Johnson County Community Health Services Health Advisory](#)

Knob Noster Public Schools Guidance In Addition to Current Mandates and Recommendations from Proper Health Agencies of Authority

In addition to the above mandates and recommendations, this plan contains a robust list of RECOMMENDATIONS from the CDC, DESE, DHSS, and JOCO Health Department that are being ENDORSED as RECOMMENDATIONS by Knob Noster Public Schools to our community.

Implications of the B.1.617.2 (Delta) Variant of Covid-19

Reported positive Covid-19 Cases in Johnson County Missouri in June 2021 were less than a dozen per JOCO Public Health Records. In July, that number increased drastically to nearly 200. Knob Noster Public Schools continues to monitor and prepare our response to this situation as we approach back to school activities.

Preliminary information and data suggests that the transmission and impacts of COVID-19 resulting from the Delta variant is impacting residents in novel and different ways than what was experienced with COVID-19 outcomes last school year. While research is still being conducted, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Local Public Health Agencies (LPHAs) should work together as this variant appears to be more quickly transmissible, more impactful on unvaccinated populations, and affecting more adolescents than what was experienced with COVID-19 last year.

The body of research work and science regarding COVID-19 variant transmission continues to grow each week. Transmission of the Delta variant and other possible current and future variants may be exceptionally different from what was experienced in previous COVID-19 outbreaks. Therefore, this guidance may continue to be modified as more data and information is learned.

Current Guidance Provided to the Public Schools of the Nation from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) provides a robust plan of recommendations for the safe operation of the public schools of our nation. Knob Noster Public Schools actively extends these recommendations to the individuals of the Knob Noster Public Schools Community through dissemination and implementation of this plan.

This information continues to change constantly as new information is received. The district continues to regularly review and revise its procedures and recommendations to the public to remain in alignment with the most current information.

[Click Here to Access the CDC Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)

Knob Noster Public Schools endorses and encourages all individuals to review all RECOMMENDATIONS from the CDC to inform your own personal decisions and your decisions for your own children.

The following are key takeaways and recommendations from CDC that are endorsed and extended to the KNPS community:

- Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in the fall 2021 is a priority.

Knob Noster Public Schools will provide options for in-person, and virtual learning, to be selected at the discretion of the individual parent. Please see details below.

- Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports.

Knob Noster Public Schools provides information to promote vaccination in the vaccination section below.

- Due to the circulating and highly contagious Delta variant, CDC recommends universal indoor masking by all students (age 2 and older), staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.

Knob Noster Public Schools will ENDORSE universal indoor masking by all students (age 2 and older), staff, teachers, and visitors to all our facilities, regardless of vaccination.

Knob Noster Public Schools will ENFORCE universal masking on all district buses by all individuals at all times, per the CDC mandate.

- In addition to universal indoor masking, CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to reduce transmission risk. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, such as when schools cannot fully re-open while maintaining these distances, it is especially important to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as screening testing.

Knob Noster Public Schools will ENDORSE all individuals maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance at all times. The district will exercise protocols to maximize physical distancing to the extent practical.

- Screening testing, ventilation, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection are also important layers of prevention to keep schools safe.

Knob Noster Public Schools will continue to implement multiple layers of prevention as described above in all facilities.

- Students, teachers, and staff should stay home when they have signs of any infectious illness and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.

Knob Noster Public Schools will continue to recommend individuals stay home when sick and will monitor and respond appropriately to individuals displaying illnesses within our schools.

- Many schools serve children under the age of 12 who are not eligible for vaccination at this time. Therefore, this guidance emphasizes implementing layered prevention strategies (e.g., using multiple prevention strategies together consistently) to protect students, teachers, staff, visitors, and other members of their households and support in-person learning.

Knob Noster Public Schools will continue to implement layered prevention strategies as described above to promote safe in-person learning.

- Localities should monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies (e.g., physical distancing, screening testing).

Knob Noster Public Schools will continue to monitor local conditions in alignment with guidance from official health agencies of authority to guide decisions on prevention strategies.

Missouri School Reopening & Operating Guidance
Created by
Department of Health & Senior Services (DHSS) and
Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE)

DHSS and DESE have disseminated a robust plan of recommendations for the safe operation of the public schools of our state. Knob Noster Public Schools actively extends these recommendations to the Knob Noster Public Schools Community through dissemination and implementation of this plan.

This information continues to change constantly as new information is received. The district continues to regularly review and revise its procedures and recommendations to the public to remain in alignment with the most current information.

[Click Here to Access the DHSS / DESE Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)

Knob Noster Public Schools encourages all individuals to review all RECOMMENDATIONS from DHSS / DESE to inform your own personal decisions and your decisions for your own children.

Vaccinations

The decision to get vaccinated is important. It is the expectation of Missouri education and health officials that school leaders and local public health leaders will work together to develop and implement policies that impact the public health of teachers, students, and other school staff. While the individual choice to be vaccinated is an important one, public health policy decisions should be made on the basis of legitimate and appropriate information obtained from trusted health sources.

Johnson County Community Health Services is the local health agency that is responsible for coordinating and disseminating information regarding vaccinations. Knob Noster Public Schools is disseminating information related to vaccinations to our community through this plan. The district may also share additional information regarding vaccination through our website and social media. The district may also continue to engage in the coordination of vaccination efforts as it has over the last nine months. [Information from JCHS may be accessed by clicking here.](#)

Knob Noster Public Schools has extended the use of its facilities and transportation fleet/staff to Johnson County Community Health Services to assist with the dissemination of vaccinations to our community stakeholders.

100% Parental Choice in Selecting Method of Instructional Delivery

As was offered throughout the 20-21 school year, Knob Noster Public Schools will provide parents the option of having their children attend in-person instruction OR attending virtual instruction.

In-person instruction will be delivered in our local schools by our local educators.

Virtual Instruction will be delivered by enrolling through the Missouri Course Access and Virtual School Program (MOCAP). Enrollment in MOCAP Programs must occur no later than Sept 3, 2021 or no later than Jan 7 for Spring 2022. This enrollment period could be revised in the instance of a full or partial school shutdown situation. To enroll in MOCAP, please contact your school counselor to schedule an appointment for enrollment.

[Click Here to Visit the Missouri MOCAP Program](#)

The district reserves the right to deny enrollment in these programs for any student who has previously struggled in virtual classes or students who are otherwise likely to struggle in a virtual setting, based on existing observations. Principals and Counselors will engage with parents to approve enrollments during the enrollment process.

Continuity of Services

Knob Noster Public Schools Alternative Methods of Instruction (AMI) Plan (Instruction during a Student Quarantine or Shutdown)

If students are required to quarantine or isolate, instruction will be provided to students via electronic methods, paper-pencil packets, or a combination of both. Teachers will provide students with information on office hours for student instruction and feedback opportunities via phone, email, text message, Google classroom, and other methods of communication in order to ensure learning is not interrupted. Teachers have received training, and will continue to receive training regarding how we can meet the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students and staff during any interruptions of in-person instruction, as well as during the regular school year.

Knob Noster has modified its Alternative Methods of Instruction (AMI) Plan from last year to meet the needs of our students for the 2021-2022 school year. That plan has been approved by DESE and the KNPS Board of Education.

[Click here to Access the KNPS AMI Plan](#)

Operational Protocols

With 18 months of successful response behind us, the district will continue to move forward with the implementation of a variety of ongoing operational protocols including but not limited to the following:

Public Health Orders - Authority Directives
According to the Centers for Disease Control
Definitions
Symptoms of COVID-19
Universal Precautions
Screening Protocols
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Protocols
Social, Emotional and Health Safety Protocols
Response / Shutdown Protocols
Authority to Shutdown
Confirmed Positive Protocols
Close Contact Tracing Protocols
Partial, Intermittent, Full Shutdown
Partial Shutdown
Intermittent Shutdown
Full Shutdown
Dynamic Environment Protocols

For full details on these operational protocols, please review the 2020-2021 Safe Reopening Plan which was executed for the 20-21 school year. *Not all protocols included in the 20-21 Plan remain in effect. However, the protocols listed above remain the same.

[Click Here to Review the 20-21 Safe Reopening Plan](#)

Knob Noster Public Schools #OurMissionIsStudentSuccess