MISSION: To provide a learning environment that inspires and challenges students and employees to excel
VISION: To graduate all students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for a successful future
Contact Information

District Information

Name of District: Northwest Arctic Borough School District

District Point of Contact Name: Scott Lefebvre, Assistant Superintendent

Address (Street, City, State, Zip): 776 Third Avenue, Kotzebue, Alaska 99752

Phone: 907-442-1804 Email: slefebvre@nwarctic.org

Assurance Agreement for ARP Act Mitigation Plan

The district assures either:

a) It will, within 30 days of receiving ARP ESSER funds, develop and make publicly available on the district’s website a mitigation plan for the safe return and/or continuation of in-person instruction and continuity of services as required in section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP and in the U.S. Department of Education’s Interim Final Requirements, or

b) It developed and made publicly available on the district’s website such a mitigation plan that meets statutory requirements before the enactment of the ARP Act that meets federal requirements. (The ARP Act was enacted on March 11, 2021)

The district assures that:

a) It will periodically review and revise its mitigation plan, as appropriate, no less frequently than every six months for the duration of the ARP ESSER grant period (i.e., through September 30, 2023); and

b) It will seek public input, and take such input into account, on (1) whether revisions are necessary and, if so, (2) the proposed revisions to the mitigation plan.

Before making the mitigation plan publicly available, the district must seek public comment on the mitigation plan and take such comments into account in the development of the plan.

Name of Superintendent: Terri Walker

Signature: ____________________________

Date: 02/23/2022
Mitigation Plan

Plan Components

Districts must implement, to the greatest extent practicable, prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the reopening and operation of school facilities to effectively maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff. Describe the extent to which the district adopted policies and a description of such policies on each of the strategies listed below:

1. **Masks**

   Consistent and correct mask use is universally required (i.e., required regardless of vaccination status) in all NWABSD buildings and school buses. Reasons for this include:

   - Awareness of low vaccination uptake (i.e., less than 85% vaccination rate) within some student, family, or teacher/staff populations or within the communities.
   - The circulating and highly contagious COVID-19 variants.

   Unvaccinated people are always required to use well-fitting face masks consistently and correctly in all designated School District facilities and while outdoors in a group.

   Vaccinated people may forego wearing a mask in District facilities in situations when ALL the following criteria are met:

   a. No students are present,
   b. All others present are up-to-date on vaccination (having received all recommended vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people),
   c. All people in the room are stationary, and
   d. There is a physical distance of 6 feet or more from each person.

   During times of a high level of community transmission, consistent and correct use of well-fitting face masks will be required by all students and staff while outdoors in a group.

   The District will provide masks to those students who need them (including on buses), such as students who forgot to bring their mask or whose families are unable to afford them. No disciplinary action will be taken against a student who does not have a mask as described in the U.S. Department of Education COVID-19 Handbook, Volume 1.

   Exceptions for those with disabilities will be determined in accordance with Federal disability law.

   The district will continue to follow updated guidance provided by the CDC on the use of masks in school settings.

2. **Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/pods)**

   Physical distancing will be maintained. Desk shields will be required for individual student eating areas.
The mitigation layer of cohorting may be used within schools to reduce COVID-19 transmission in schools that have less than 6 feet of physical distance. Cohorting means keeping people together in a small group and having each group stay together throughout an entire day. Cohorting can be used to limit the number of students, teachers, and staff who come in contact with each other, especially when it is challenging to maintain physical distancing, such as among young children, and particularly in areas of moderate-to-high transmission levels. The use of cohorting can limit the spread of COVID-19 between cohorts but should not replace other prevention measures within each group. Cohorting people who are fully vaccinated and people who are not fully vaccinated into separate cohorts is not recommended. It is a school’s responsibility to ensure that cohorting is done in an equitable manner that does not perpetuate academic, racial, or other tracking, as described in the U.S. Department of Education COVID-19 Handbook, Volume 1.

Gatherings of students that include multiple grades and/or classes may occur provided students are physically distanced by no less than 3 feet and the gym (or multi-purpose room) capacity does not exceed 50%.

The District will continue to follow updated guidance provided by the CDC on physical distancing.

3. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Schools will monitor and reinforce handwashing and respiratory etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes) and provide adequate handwashing supplies. Schools will:

- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Remind everyone in the facility to wash hands frequently and assist young children with handwashing.
- Make hand sanitizer available.

The District will help students and staff understand that handwashing and respiratory etiquette should continue beyond the pandemic to prevent other infections.

The District will continue to follow updated guidance provided by the CDC on handwashing and respiratory etiquette.

4. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

High-touch surfaces will be cleaned routinely. Desks and tables will be cleaned in between each use of different students.

If a facility has had a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, the space will be closed until it is cleaned AND disinfected.

Air filters across the district are being replaced with air filters ranging between Merv 8-13. Fresh air intake has been increased from 10% intake into buildings to 50% intake.

Exhaust fans will be used in kitchens and restrooms.

During times of a high level of community transmission, all designated NWABSD facilities will be closed to the public unless an appointment has been made.
The District will continue to follow updated guidance provided by the CDC on cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation.

5. **Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments**

School principals and District staff will cooperate with regional health provider requests to support contact tracing efforts to the extent allowable by privacy laws. Confidentiality will be provided regarding persons diagnosed with or exposed to COVID – 19.

School staff will communicate with regional health providers regarding any positive cases and will proactively communicate with staff and families of any close contact exposure suspected to occur within the school setting.

- **CLOSE CONTACTS:** Parents will be notified if their child is suspected to have been exposed to COVID-19 while at school and is considered a close contact. Notifications will include information on testing, monitoring for symptoms, quarantining after exposure, and when to return to school
  
  a) Staff and students not up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations with COVID-19 exposure are instructed to stay home from school for 5 full days after exposure:
    
    (1) Must test on day 5 or later.
    
    (2) May return to school on the 6th day after a negative test result
    
    (3) If no test is available, students and staff may return to school on the 11th day after exposure
  
  b) Staff and students up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations must monitor for symptoms, test 5 days after suspected exposure, and may remain attending school fully masked throughout this time.

- **HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS:** Students and staff not up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations must quarantine at home if they have a household member that has been diagnosed COVID positive regardless of the ability of that household member to isolate
  
  i) Students and staff must test within the 5-day period after the household member has completed their mandatory isolation
  
  ii) May return to school on the 6th day after a negative test result
  
  iii) If no test is available, students and staff may return to school on the 11th day after their household member is cleared

- **90-DAY LETTER EXEMPTIONS:** Students and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to get tested again or quarantine for up to 3 months as long as they do not develop symptoms. Staff and students who are within 3 months of their bout of COVID-19 and develop symptoms must adhere to the above mitigation. A letter from a medical facility attesting to the student/staff qualifications for this exemption must be provided.

- Exposures in a school will be supported on a case-by-case basis and will not automatically cause a school to change operational zones
School risk operational zones are determined on an individual school basis in coordination with Maniilaq Health, local village leaders, and NWABSD Administration. The NWABSD has two operational zones: Green Low-Risk Operational Zone and Red High-Risk Operational Zone.

Factors for changing risk operational zones include:
1. The level of case impact to the community,
2. The level of community transmission,
3. The level of community compliance to current mandates,
4. Vaccination coverage,
5. Availability of staff, and
6. Other.

The District will continue to work closely with Maniilaq Health Center and Maniilaq Public Health officials to update protocols as necessary. The District will continue to follow updated guidance provided by the CDC on contact tracing.

6. Diagnostic screening testing

School staff will advise staff and students who exhibit symptoms to stay home. Students and staff who develop symptoms at school will be placed in an isolation area until transportation can be arranged, or medical attention can be provided. The District will refer staff and students who exhibit symptoms for diagnostic testing at the local clinic.

Screening through molecular testing is provided at all schools and is a diagnostic molecular test. The School District molecular screening testing is to identify and isolate non-symptomatic COVID-positive cases to reduce the risk to in-person education.

School principals will develop a screening testing schedule for staff and student populations. When a community is experiencing moderate to high transmission, screening testing will occur more frequently. The District has received a CLIA waiver and reports test results following State reporting requirements. Staff receive ongoing training on proper reporting.

All positive results from the School District molecular screening testing are a positive COVID diagnosis. People with positive molecular screening results will be placed in isolation until they are able to leave the school District facilities. Positive molecular results will be reported to Maniilaq Health. All COVID-positive students and staff are encouraged to work with a healthcare facility upon receiving a positive COVID molecular screening test result.

Informed consent is obtained prior to testing from the individual (adult) or parent (student). Informed consent requires disclosure, understanding, and free choice, and is necessary for teachers, staff (who are employees of a school) and students’ families, to act independently and make choices according to their values, goals, and preferences.

**TRAVEL:** Students and staff will be required to present a negative molecular COVID test prior to District-sponsored travel and competitions. School principals or designee will work with local clinics to arrange times for testing of students within 24 hours of District-sponsored travel or competition.
Students and staff recently diagnosed with COVID-19 will be eligible for District sponsored travel after they are released from isolation by a medical facility and 5 full additional days have passed.

Staff traveling outside of the Northwest Arctic Borough region must complete the District Travel Form and follow all Federal, State, and Local mandates. In addition, staff must test either 24 hours prior to return or immediately upon return to the region and again on day 3 after returning to the region.

1. Staff may return to work after showing the day 1 negative COVID-19 test results to their supervisor.
2. Staff must remain fully masked until day 3 negative test results are received and shown to their supervisor. Staff may return to normal site mitigation after day 3 negative results.
3. All staff must show proof of negative COVID-19 diagnostic tests to their supervisor upon receiving the results and attempting to return to work.
4. Any staff member, regardless of vaccination status, returning to the region from travel and refusing to or unable to take any diagnostic COVID-19 test may return to work after 10 days.

**90-DAY EXEMPTION**: Testing to travel or return from travel is not required for students and staff that are within 90-days of recovering from COVID with proof of recovery by a medical facility.

The District will continue to follow updated guidance provided by the CDC on diagnostic testing and screening.

7. **Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible**

The District will work with Maniilaq Health Services to support vaccination efforts for staff and students when eligible. The District will use its communication tools and facilities, when appropriate, to help support and accommodate vaccination efforts.

The District will continue to follow updated guidance provided by the CDC on vaccination efforts.

8. **Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies**

Schools will make individualized determinations as required by Federal disability laws to determine if an exception to mask requirements is necessary and appropriate. Additional determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis in compliance with Federal disability laws.

**Continuity of Services**

*The District will ensure continuity of services including, but not limited to, services to address students’ academic needs, as well as the social, emotional, mental health, and other needs of students and staff (e.g., student health and food service).*

The District strives to provide full-time in-person learning and believes that the mitigation strategies above help provide this opportunity. The District will no longer offer a remote learning option when in-person learning is provided. For families who do not want in-person learning for their child, the District continues to offer a homeschool program.

If there is an outbreak in a community or school, or local and regional COVID task force or emergency operations officials advise that schools not operate in person, the District has the ability and resources to
offer off-line remote learning. Every student has a personal device (iPad or laptop) to receive assignments. Microsoft Teams (video and phone connections) along with downloaded instructional videos provides an environment for classroom instruction. Canvas content can be downloaded for use when the internet is not available. Microsoft One-Note provides a sync-able platform for assessments and submission of student work. Support for social, emotional, mental health will continue to be provided through Social Emotional Learning (SEL) instructional curriculum offered over the same platforms, with additional support provided by school counselors.

Meal services will continue with scheduled pick-up for families and students when a school operational zone changes to remote learning (Red/At-Risk) due to COVID-19 community transmission rates.

**Periodic Review**

*The District will periodically review and revise its mitigation plan, as appropriate, including a description of how the district will seek public input and take such input into account on (1) whether revisions are necessary and, if so, (2) the proposed revisions to the plan. Important Note: The district must review its mitigation plan no less frequently than every six months for the duration of the ARP ESSER grant period (i.e., through September 30, 2023).*

The District will provide stakeholder feedback opportunities prior to December and May of each semester through the following means:

- Parent Forums to answer questions and gain feedback
- Community Leadership Meetings to meet with tribal and municipal officials from each community
- Meetings with regional emergency operations officials
- Updated surveys for families and students