



## 2021-2022 Back to School Plan

### Overview 1.6.22

On March 13, 2020, the employees, students, and families of the Neighbors' Educational Opportunities (NEO) team rallied to face the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the 2020-2021 school year, by diligently adhering to the guidelines provided by the Center of Disease Control (CDC), and the Indiana State Department of Health, NEO maintained a consistent Hybrid model of educational programs for our New Vistas High School and NEO Adult Education students with zero cases of internal spread of COVID 19!

As of July 1, 2021, the Governor has authorized local school boards of K-12 educational institutions to implement measures and restrictions deemed necessary and prudent to address the impact and spread of COVID 19. As per the Governors' recommendation, NEO's Board of Directors will follow CDC guidelines and any other Federal, state, or local guidance and requirements.

NEO's 2021-2022 Back-to-School Plan is in draft form and is based on current levels of COVID 19 in Porter and Lake Counties, current recommendation for operating under different levels of the spread of COVID-19 and incorporates the lessons learned from 2020-2021 and input from staff, students, and families.

This plan will be shared with NEO staff, students, and families and with the Porter County Health Department for final input and revisions prior to final approval by the NEO Board of Directors. Unless there is a significant change in the regional or local rate of COVID-19, **NEO will open to full in-person instruction for the 2021-2022 school year.**

This pertains to all NEO students and employees located at:

NEO's New Vistas High School	5201 US Highway 6, Portage, IN 46368
NEO's Adult Education	5201 US Highway 6, Portage, IN 46368
NEO's Adult Education	Thomas Edison High School, 3304 Parkside Ave. Lake Station, IN
NEO's Adult Education	Neighbors' Place, 454 S. College Ave. Valparaiso, IN
NEO's Adult Education	Robert A. Pastrick Library, 1008 West Chicago Ave. East Chicago,
NEO's Adult Education	Gary Lighthouse of Hope Ministries, 1520 Grant St., Gary

NEO administrators will continuously monitor the evolving nature of the pandemic at the state, local and internal levels and amend the plan as needed to keep all members of our school community safe. We will maintain an open line of communication with our staff, students, and families through emails, phone messages, on NEO's website and at [www.neoadulted.org](http://www.neoadulted.org) and on our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/NeighborsEdOpportunities/>

Likewise, we ask staff, students, and families to communicate all questions, concerns, and COVID-19 related information including confirmed COVID-19 exposure, symptoms, or diagnosis to **NEO's COVID-19 Leads:**

**Mr. Clifton Rhodes Jr.**  
*Director of Safety & Facility*  
**219-841-7047**  
[crhodes@neoadulted.org](mailto:crhodes@neoadulted.org)

**Ms. Rebecca Reiner**  
*NEO Executive Director*  
**219-841-7046**  
[rreiner@neoadulted.org](mailto:rreiner@neoadulted.org)

Thank you for your efforts to stay connected and to work with us to stay safe so we can continue to provide essential educational programs during these unusual times.

*Rebecca Reiner*

NEO Executive Director

## 2021-2022 Back to School Plan for NEO's New Vistas High School and NEO Adult Education

*updated 1.6.2022*

### Review and Updates

NEO's 2021-2021 Back-to-School Plan will be updated as often as needed to reflect CDC, federal, state, and local guidelines, but it will be reviewed at least every six months and will include opportunities for public input.

### Color-Coded Advisory Levels

The state has implemented a color-coded advisory matrix that utilizes data pertaining to weekly cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 and a seven-day positivity rate of all tests. We will carefully monitor this data on a weekly basis and use this information along with CDC, Federal, State, and local guidelines and orders along with our internal capacity to deliver safe and effective instruction and operations. See Appendix A for Indiana Department of Health's Pre-K-12 Recommendations Based on Level of Community Spread

Primary Metrics	Geography	Definition	Blue (0 Points)	Yellow (1 Point)	Orange (2 Points)	Red (3 Points)
7-Day Positivity Rate (All Tests)	County	7-day moving average of the all tests positivity rate, calculated by taking the total number of positive tests and dividing by total tests administered	Less than 5%	5.0-9.9%	10-14.9%	15% or greater
Weekly Cases Per 100,000 Residents	County	Total weekly cases in a county divided by the county population and multiplied by 100,000	Less than 10 new cases per 100,000	10 to 99 new cases	100 to 199 new cases	200 or more new cases

When a level change is warranted, NEO administration will provide timely information to all staff, students, and families via phone and email messages and post new level and relevant information on NEO's website, ideally a week in advance of change. This may not always be possible, however, and students, families, and employees should prepare for this. The following is a summary of operational guidelines by color- advisory level. Please note that there WILL be exceptions to these dependent on the actual situation.

### SUMMARY OF LEVELS OF COMMUNITY SPREAD ON OPERATIONS

<b>Level 1 Blue</b>	<b>Regional and Internal Status</b>	Minimal community spread of COVID-19 virus No known active exposure cases at NEO
	<b>Educational Model</b>	In-person learning (except in case of internal spread or lack of staffing capacity) Students attend school in person and follow assigned schedule
	<b>Protective Measures and Operations</b>	All staff and students should self-monitor for health issues before coming to school No social distancing or mask requirements unless advised by CDC, state, or local health officials Stay home when sick; test for COVID according to guidelines and medical advice Normal cafeteria operations; Normal school cleaning measures Continued emphasis on good hygiene and respiratory etiquette
	<b>Quarantine &amp; Isolation</b>	Follow current guidelines for quarantining and isolating (see Appendix A)
	<b>Extracurricular</b>	All extracurricular activities and fieldtrips will be permitted
	<b>Visitors</b>	Visitors will be allowed, masks and social distancing not required

<b>Level 2 Yellow</b>	<b>Regional &amp; Internal Status</b>	Moderate community spread of COVID-19 virus Minimal or moderate active exposure cases at NEO
	<b>Educational Model</b>	In-person learning (except in cases of internal spread or lack of staffing capacity) Students attend school in person and follow assigned schedule
	<b>Protective Measures and Operations</b>	All staff and students required to complete self-health screening before arriving to school; Social distancing of 3 feet is enforced at all times and per school Face coverings required until further notice, especially when social distancing (three feet) cannot be maintained High-touch surface cleaned daily and in-between classes; deep school cleaning and sanitization nightly Stay home when sick; test for COVID according to guidelines and medical advice Hygiene and respiratory etiquette remain a priority
	<b>Quarantine &amp; Isolation</b>	Follow current guidelines for quarantining and isolating (see Appendix A)
	<b>Extracurricular</b>	All extracurricular activities and fieldtrips may be permitted but with increased precautions
	<b>Visitors</b>	Visitors will be allowed; Masks will be required until further notice, especially when social distancing of 3' cannot be maintained Visitors will undergo a health screening upon entry to building
<b>Level 3 Orange</b>	<b>Regional &amp; Internal Status</b>	Moderate to high community spread; Moderate active exposure cases or absences at NEO that impact NEO's New Vistas High School or Adult Education and state and/or local government health officials are recommending increased mitigation.
	<b>Educational Model</b>	In Person or Hybrid depending on internal assessment of spread and capacity
	<b>Protective Measures and Operations</b>	All staff and students self-screen prior to coming to school and undergo health screening at school; Stay home if sick; test for COVID according to guidelines and medical advice Masks and social distancing of 3 feet is enforced at all times High-touch surface cleaned daily and in-between classes; deep school cleaning and sanitization nightly; Hygiene and respiratory etiquette remains a priority
	<b>Quarantine &amp; Isolation</b>	Follow current guidelines for quarantining and isolating (see Appendix A)
	<b>Extracurricular</b>	Extracurricular activities and fieldtrips will be suspended or limited
	<b>Visitors</b>	Visitors will be limited When allowed, masks and social distancing of 3' will be required along with health screening upon entry to building
<b>Level 4 Red</b>	<b>Regional and Internal Status</b>	High community spread; Substantial active exposure cases or absences at NEO which impact high school and adult education programs Regional, state and/or local government health officials order schools to close due to increasing cases of COVID-19.
	<b>Educational Model</b>	Will assess all factors (regional and internal spread, internal capacity, enrollment numbers, etc.) to determine
	<b>Protective Measures and Operations</b>	All staff and students complete health screening before arriving to school Stay home if sick; test for COVID according to guidelines and medical advice Social distancing of 3 feet is enforced; Face coverings required at all times Deep cleaning and sanitization before school reopens to students and staff; Hygiene and respiratory etiquette remain a priority Food distribution information or Grab and Go meals will be provided to parents while school is operating on remote (at-home) learning
	<b>Quarantines and Contact Tracing</b>	Follow current guidelines for quarantining and isolating (see Appendix A)
	<b>Extracurricular</b>	Extracurricular activities and fieldtrips suspended until further notice
	<b>Visitors</b>	Non-essential visitors will not be allowed in building; When allowed, masks and social distancing of 3' will be required along with health screening upon entry to building

## **DAILY SELF-SCREENING**

All students and staff should self-screen daily for COVID-19 and other health issues before arriving at school/work.

Fever of 100.4 (or higher)	Diarrhea, Nausea or Vomiting/Abdominal Pain
Chills	Headache (particularly new onset of severe headache)
Sore Throat	New Loss of Taste or Smell
Cough or Shortness of Breath	

The [COVID-19 Screening for parents](#) is an online tool that we ask students and employees to complete to help us limit internal spread of COVID-19 at NEO

Upon entry to school, NEO staff will also take students' temperatures and ask students to verify that they have self-screened for symptoms and that they have not been in close contact with infected individual.

## **WHAT TO DO IF SICK OR SYMPTOMATIC**

Students and employees who are sick are asked to stay home unless the symptoms are explained by an established medical condition or activity.

If symptoms develop at school, a NEO COVID-19 Lead will be notified immediately and escort the student or employee to the designated holding room for screening and to wait if waiting for a ride.

It is essential that NEO has accurate contact information (home, cell, work) for parents and emergency contacts. Student under 18 and those who do not drive, must have someone who can pick them up if they get sick at school.

When a student or student's parent/guardian calls the school to report student's absence, designated NEO personnel may request specific COVID-19 related information about symptoms, exposure, and diagnoses. NEO will follow state reporting guidelines when warranted.

## **REPORTING ABSENCE AND NOTIFYING SCHOOL**

New Vistas students/parents must call the school at 219-850-4448 if the student will be absent due to illness. Employees must notify their supervisor immediately. If the absence is COVID-19 related, (symptomatic, close contact exposure to COVID-19 infected person, or a COVID-19 positive test), NEO's COVID-19 LEAD or t, must notify NEO's COVID-19 Leads or to trained designated school employees assigned to receiving absentee calls.

Federal law typically limits the type of medical inquiries that can be made, but schools have been given more leeway to make inquiries of staff and students due to the nature of the pandemic. This information will be kept confidential but may be reported according to health department requirements to determine if contact tracing is necessary.

## **REPORTING AND CONTACT TRACING**

NEO will follow local reporting and tracing requirements of positive COVID-19 cases set forth by Porter County Health Department. NEO will track daily attendance trends to identify any patterns of absences due to COVID. Health officials may require students and staff to be contact traced and required to quarantine in the event of a positive case in a school. If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, school officials will continue to contact trace to determine who is identified as a "close contact." Those close contacts who have been vaccinated will not be required to quarantine if they are asymptomatic. Close contacts who have not been vaccinated will need to quarantine according to current guidelines that are updated regularly to reflect CDC recommendations.

## COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOL

### EXCLUSION (ISOLATION AND/OR QUARANTINE) FROM SCHOOL/WORK

NEO will follow the most current and frequently changing guidelines from the Indiana State Department of Health and CDC for when to isolate and quarantine. Students and employees will be excluded from school/work if they test positive for COVID-19. Current guidelines are summarized here:

<b>UPDATED COVID-19 GUIDELINES 1.5.22 DRAFT</b>	
<b>TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19</b>	<b>FULLY VACCINATED OR UNVACCINATED/ SYMPTOMATIC OR ASSYMPTOMATIC</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolate at home for 5 days from day of confirmed infection (test date)</li> <li>• Return to school on Day 6, after 5 days isolation <b>IF</b> fever-free for 24 hours without medication</li> <li>- <b>And</b> symptoms are resolved so you can physically participate in activities;</li> <li>• Wear a mask around others for 5 additional days. Follow NEO’s mask and social-distancing guidelines while at school/work and other guidelines outside of work</li> </ul> <p><i>NOTE: The change is motivated by science demonstrating that most of the SARS-CoV-2 transmission occurs early in the course of illness, generally in the 1-2 days prior to onset of symptoms and the 2-3 days after. Therefore, people who test positive should isolate for 5 days and, if asymptomatic at that time, they may leave isolation if they can continue to mask for 5 days to minimize the risk of infecting others.</i></p> <p><i>Also, a Negative test result is not required to return to activity since individuals may test positive for days beyond when they can transmit the virus to others</i></p>
<b>CLOSE CONTACT WITH COVID-19 INFECTED INDIVIDUAL</b>	<b>SYMPTOMATIC: FULLY VACCINATED, NOT FULLY VACCINATED, or UNVACCINATED or ASYMPTOMATIC: NOT FULLY VACCINATED or UNVACCINATED</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarantine at home for 5 days.</li> <li>• Test for SARS-CoV-2 on day 5 after exposure to infected individual or 5 days after onset of symptoms</li> <li>- If positive, follow guidelines above.</li> <li>• Return to school on Day 6, after 5 days isolation <b>IF</b> fever free for 224 hours without medication <b>and</b> symptoms are resolved so you can physically participate in activities;</li> <li>• Wear a mask around others for 5 additional days. Follow NEO’s mask and social-distancing guidelines while at school/work and other guidelines outside of work</li> </ul>
	<b>ASYMPTOMATIC - FULLY VACCINATED* OR RECOVERED FROM COVID-19 WITHIN PAST 90 DAYS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No quarantine or isolation is required while asymptomatic and self-monitoring daily for symptoms.</li> <li>• Test for SARS-CoV-2 on day 5 after exposure</li> <li>• Follow NEO’s mask and social-distancing guidelines while at school/work and other guidelines outside of work</li> </ul> <p><i>If symptoms develop or test is positive, follow appropriate guidelines</i></p>
<b>NO CLOSE CONTACT WITH COVID-19 INFECTED INDIVIDUAL</b>	<b>SYMPTOMATIC: FULLY VACCINATED, NOT FULLY VACCINATED, or UNVACCINATED</b>
	<p>Even if an individual believes they have NOT been exposed to an infected individual, they should closely monitor the onset of COVID-19 type symptoms and seek medical care for serious symptoms. If onset of symptoms is sudden and/or NOT readily explained by known non-COVID-19 medical condition or other known causes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay home</li> <li>• Test for COVID-19 immediately.</li> <li>• If test is negative, stay home until symptoms are resolved; recommended PCR test on Day 5 from onset of symptoms</li> <li>• If test is positive, follow guidelines above.</li> </ul>

## **E-LEARNING**

If student is required to isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19, has manageable or no symptoms and is able, they should make every attempt to continue to attend school virtually at home through Google-classroom.

## **TELECOMMUTING**

When appropriate and authorized by supervisor, employee who is required to isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19, has manageable or no symptoms and is able, may be offered the option of working from home.

## **RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER EXCLUSION**

A student or employee who has been excluded from the school environment due to COVID-19, may return to work/school on the day designated according to established IDOH guidelines:

- Required number of days in isolation or quarantine
- Fever-free for 24 hours without medication
- All symptoms resolving
- No additional close contact with new infected individual
- If hospitalized and/or severe or prolonged symptoms, a medical release by physician (medical documentation required)

## **COVID-19 TESTING**

Indiana's State Corona Virus Dashboard has information about resources including testing locations.

[COVID-19 Testing Locations](#)

## **MASKS**

Until further notice, all students, employees, and visitors, no matter their vaccination status, will be required to wear a properly fitted face mask at all times while on school property. Masks may be KN95, N95, cloth, or disposable. Students and employees may supply their own masks, but NEO will also, until further notice, provide masks free of charge as needed for use at school (KN95, cloth, and disposable).

Face masks must not contain any messaging or graphics that is unprofessional or inappropriate for the school environment.

All employees, students, and visitors MUST comply with NEO's mask requirement. Individuals who refuse or need to be reminded frequently are placing others at risk and face disciplinary action (i.e. parents notified, being sent home, possible suspension). Situations involving individuals with an underlying condition or disability, verified by a medical or other professional, who require alternative face coverings, will be dealt with on an individual basis by school administrators.

To maximize face mask efficacy:

- Do not touch eyes, nose, and mouth while wearing face coverings to prevent potential contamination
- Wash hands thoroughly before putting on face covering
- Make sure face covering is worn securely and covers the nose and mouth
- Remove the face covering carefully and wash hands thoroughly after removing
- Replace disposable face coverings daily and wash cloth face covering each day

Wearing face covering does not replace the need to continue frequent hand washing, avoiding touching the face, and practicing social distancing, which are the best tools to help prevent the spread of illness.

## **OTHER COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOL**

**Social Distancing:** While operating in Levels 2, 3, and 4, all individuals in the school will practice social distancing of 3 feet when required. Classrooms will be configured to provide appropriate social distancing according to the level on which we are operating. Students will be required to maintain appropriate social distancing during passing periods, before and after school, and in the bathrooms.

**Handwashing and Hand Sanitizing:** NEO will promote and support rigorous hygiene practices including frequent and proper handwashing and sanitizing. Hand sanitizer and sanitizing stations will be available and utilized during Levels 2,3, and 4. All hand sanitizers will contain at least 60% or higher alcohol content.

**Water Fountains:** Water fountains will be operational during Level 1 but closed during Levels 2,3, and 4 except to fill water bottles.

**Cleaning and Sanitization:** Normal custodial practices will be followed during Level 1. During Levels 2, 3, and 4, all high-touch surfaces will be cleaned daily and in-between classes; deep school cleaning and sanitization will occur nightly using cleaning supplies designated for killing the COVID-19.

**Ventilation:** NEO has ensured that our ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible and does not pose a safety or health risk to students or staff. Air filters will be replaced more frequently.

## **DAILY OPERATIONS**

### **ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL**

NEO will direct traffic flow and student drop off and pick-up procedures to support appropriate social distancing for students and staff. Parents should always stay in vehicles during level 3 and 4.

### **STUDENT NUTRITION (BREAKFAST & LUNCH)**

New Vistas students will have access to a free breakfast and lunch program during all levels and will be socially-distanced during meals according to colored advisory level. Until further notice, masks will be required at all times except when eating. The method of serving will be dependent on the level. NEO uses disposable plates and utensils. Food sharing will be prohibited. There will be sanitation stations available in the cafeteria. Food distribution options such as Grab and Go meals, will be offered when required or necessary.

### **SAFETY DRILLS**

Safety drills are required by Indiana law (IC 20-34-3-20) and NEO will continue to prepare and drill for all potential emergencies.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION CASE CONFERENCES AND 504 COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Case Conference Committee (CCC) & Section 504 meetings are deemed essential and require a parent/guardian to meet with the team on an as-needed basis. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, parents may request to participate in a CCC or 504 meeting telephonically or via a virtual meeting option if that option is needed due to health and or exposure reasons. The decision to participate via an alternative format rests with the parent/guardian.

### **FIELD TRIPS, SPEAKERS, AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

NEO's administrators will evaluate all field trips, speakers, and other special events on an individual basis in accordance with the Level at which the school is operating. There will be no field trips during Level 3 or 4 due to the challenge of controlling effective social distancing in an uncontrolled environment.

### **VISITORS**

NEO will follow recommendations from public health officials and restrict non-essential visitors according to advisory level. During Level 4, NEO will limit the congregation of groups in the building.

## **ENSURING CONTINUITY OF SERVICES FOR ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL NEEDS**

### **INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS**

NEO is committed to the continuation of student learning throughout this pandemic. Based on levels of community spread, internal spread, staffing capacity, facility capacity, student and parent need, and other factors, we will offer learning using one of these models:

**In-Person Learning Model:** The in-person model consists of students attending school each day in person according to their schedule. NEO will implement mitigation strategies in accordance with the designated tiered color level. Until further notice, New Vistas High School students will attend school in person on Monday through Thursday and participate in e-learning on Fridays. Fridays are also designated as days for assigned remediation, make-up, special projects, events, and meetings with teachers.

NEO Adult Education students and students coming to NEO for testing will attend classes or testing in person according to their assigned schedule. Depending on the color-coded advisory level, enrollment limits may be implemented.

**Hybrid Learning Model:** Under the Hybrid model, New Vistas students will attend class in person on two days and attend class live remotely on the other two days. NEO's adult education students would be assigned to specific classes to keep class-size small to allow for social distancing.

**Remote (at-home) Model:** NEO will move to the Remote-Learning Model if the school is at Level 4 (red). The remote model will consist of students participating in both live instruction using Google Classroom and various forms of live streaming, video recordings of lessons, hands-on activities, paper, and pencil assignments, virtual and in-person discussion, multiple feedback methods, etc.

**School Calendar, Days and Hours:** New Vistas High School, NEO Adult Education (Portage and satellite sites), and NEO Testing will follow the schedule posted on the NEO website [www.neoadulted.org](http://www.neoadulted.org).

### **REMEDICATION AND LEARNING RECOVERY**

#### **Students who are enrolled in New Vistas High School may, if they meet the MENTAL HEALTH**

NEO understands the importance of mental health and the role that it plays in all our lives and are doing what we can to support the mental health of employees, students, and families during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing resources, services, and professional development opportunities.

New Vistas students and parents have access to the school's counselor, social worker, and Student Support Services team. Advisory teachers, classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators are all ready to assist in any way. Any student who needs social or emotional assistance should reach out to a school counselor by calling NEO at 219-850-4448.

NEO's Adult Education students who are in need of mental health support should notify their teacher who will make a referral to the program director who will provide these students with information on available supports and resources.

NEO employees are encouraged to seek support through their own network, through NEO's social worker, and through FinFit.

### **VACCINATIONS**

Being fully vaccinated is the best way to prevent serious illness, hospitalization, or death as a result of contracting COVID-19. Information about the different types of COVID-19 vaccinations, possible side effects, and information about who is eligible for the vaccination can be found here [Vaccines for COVID-19 | CDC](#)

NEO will also make every effort to support employees and students in their efforts to get vaccinated against vaccination locations. [COVID-19 Vaccination Locations](#)