



# SY22 Full Return Guide For Families

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## SY22 Reopening Guide

# Overview

All families should prepare to attend in person on [September 3, 2021](#). Per the [ISBE resolution on 5/19](#), instruction in the fall will be in person.<sup>1</sup>

While we know in-person learning is most effective, we also understand that this return to in-person schooling will be a big shift for students, families, and staff after spending over a year in a remote setting. Noble is committed to working with families and staff to help make that transition as smooth as possible.

In this spirit, we offer the following plan for our return to school this year. Our north star for the creation of this guidance is the belief that our students need to be back in our schools--in a safe way.

We strongly encourage those who are eligible to receive vaccinations to do so prior to the start of the school year as it will help our broader Noble and Chicago community return to some sense of normalcy.

## Health and Safety Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for staff, students, and families who are in our school buildings. They are grounded in science and developed with the best information available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Chicago Department of Public Health, the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois State Board of Education, and Chicago Public Schools. These guidelines will continue to evolve as public health conditions change.

Combined, these guidelines layer key risk mitigation strategies in order to help keep our community safe as we fully return to in-person learning. Collectively, the core strategies recommended by public health authorities and outlined in this guide are:

1. Vaccination: currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Universal masking.
3. Frequent testing, especially for unvaccinated individuals.
4. Air quality, including ventilation and purification.
5. Contact tracing, including isolation and quarantine when necessary.
6. Physical distancing where possible.
7. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette.
8. Staying home when sick, especially with core symptoms of COVID-19.
9. Cleaning and disinfection.

These mitigation strategies, when layered together, provide the greatest potential for reducing transmission of the virus. No single measure is sufficient in and of itself.

Each campus will adopt and implement these strategies to the largest extent possible, noting again that a layered approach is essential for limiting spread. The following sections provide more detail on these core mitigation measures as well as other steps Noble is taking to create safe & healthy spaces.

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<sup>1</sup> \*Note on Medically Fragile: As we anticipate our scholars returning to in-person learning on September 3, we should also anticipate that a very small fraction of our students (~1 student/campus on average) with severe medical conditions may be identified as “medically fragile and unable to return to in-person by their treating physician.” More can be found [here](#) around Noble’s policy for campuses and families who believe they may qualify for “medically fragile” labels and, thus, remote learning.

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### Vaccination of Staff and Students

The single most important thing we can do to protect our staff, students, and families is to get as many people vaccinated as possible before the start of school on 9/3. We estimate that at least 80% of our staff are already vaccinated, which stands as the most important thing done so far to create safe spaces in our schools this year. We strongly encourage our students, families, and staff who are not vaccinated to get the shot prior to the start of school. Anyone in our Noble community can go [here](#) to learn more about the vaccine and [here](#) to find a location to be vaccinated.

We would like all Noble staff to voluntarily choose to disclose (to Noble Human Resources) their record of being fully vaccinated. Staff will be emailed a process for submitting their vaccination status.

In addition to the universal masking requirement, any staff member who has not shared a record of being fully vaccinated must quarantine if it is determined that they were in close contact with someone who has the virus. (Vaccinated staff do not need to be quarantined if they are symptom-free.)

We will also ask families to share the vaccination records of their scholars as part of our orientation paperwork. Campus staff will reach out to you in the coming weeks with the process for doing this. Similar to staff, fully vaccinated students will not need to quarantine as a close contact under most circumstances.

### Universal Masking

Face masks must be worn over the mouth and nose at all times by staff, students, and visitors when inside a Noble school unless there is a disability related or religious reason for not doing so. Persons exempted by Noble from wearing a face covering must wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield. Masks may be removed for outdoor activities.

### Personal Protective Equipment

All Noble locations will be provided with the following PPE. Items that are not reusable will be restocked on a frequent basis.

- Disposable 3-ply surgical face masks
- Cloth face masks
- Face shields (for limited use)
- HEPA air purifiers
- Hand sanitizer
- Touchless hand sanitizer stations
- Disinfecting wipes
- Anti-microbial stickers on high-touch surfaces
- UV sanitizing stations and wands
- Lidded trash cans
- Clear/protective barriers
- Door stops
- Paper towels & soap
- Tissues

(For Care Rooms Only)

- Room divider
- KN95 masks
- Isolation gowns (medical Level-1 equivalent)
- Shoe covers
- Safety goggles
- Gloves

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### COVID Testing for Staff and Students

Noble will offer weekly in-school COVID testing for staff and students. Test administration will be performed by [Med-Call](#) and the lab work will be completed by [Shield Illinois](#).

Testing is available one day per week, from 8:30 am - 3:30 pm, at each campus. The specific day per week for each campus is available [here](#) and [here](#) are the testing locations at each campus. While onsite, staff and students will have the option to receive a free [polymerase chain reaction](#) (PCR) test. The test is highly accurate and noninvasive as it only requires saliva to be dribbled into a test tube (i.e., no nasal swab). This kind of regular preemptive testing, particularly of asymptomatic staff and students, significantly improves our ability to quickly identify COVID-19 hotspots before they spread, providing critical, real-time information that is key to minimizing transmission.

Campuses will find a location where the testing can take place with a reasonable degree of privacy.

Campuses will work to make testing available to students, possibly allowing students to use class, advisory, or lunch time so they can get a test. For a given student, the entire testing process (walking to and from the location, waiting in line, checking in, providing a sample, etc) should take roughly 15-20 minutes per week. Because testing is such an important mitigation strategy, campuses will maximize the entire 8:30am - 3:30pm window for testing, including advisory and instructional time, to ensure as many students are testing as possible. (Roughly 2-4 students will be able to test concurrently.)

Individuals who are tested will receive their results no more than 36 hours after the sample is taken. Test results for students are only visible to Noble upon consent by parent/guardian. Consent forms for students will be distributed by campus staff during orientation and the first weeks of school.

All Noble staff are welcome to utilize weekly testing. All staff who have not shared a record of being fully vaccinated will be required to complete a weekly saliva test with our SHIELD Illinois partners. Follow-up for unvaccinated staff will begin the week of August 23, with the expectation of testing happening by the week of August 30 and recurring every week. (Fully vaccinated means at least two weeks after your final vaccine dose.) Unvaccinated staff will be required to share their results with Noble.

### Air Purification and Ventilation

Noble purchased 1,500 HEPA-certified air purifiers for use in classrooms, main offices, conference rooms, common areas, multipurpose rooms, restrooms, and gymnasiums. Campuses will place a unit in each classroom and multiple purifiers in larger spaces (e.g., 3-5 purifiers in a gym or multipurpose room). Filters will be changed every 3-6 months depending on use. Learn more about HEPA filters and air purifiers [here](#).

Where possible, ventilation systems have been modified to allow for more fresh air to be circulated throughout the building. [MERV13 air filters](#), some of the highest-rated filters available today, have also been added to many of these systems as another safeguard against the transmission of infectious aerosols.

All Noble schools passed air quality tests performed last school year. We will continue to perform air quality tests of our schools and make adjustments as needed based on the findings.

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Windows and interior doors will be opened when possible and safe to do so to increase cross ventilation in the room.

### Core Symptoms of COVID-19

Sections below reference “core symptoms” of COVID-19 which are of particular concern. These symptoms are: a fever, cough, muscle aches, nausea/vomiting, and loss of taste or smell.

### Contact Tracing and Quarantine

Responding quickly and efficiently to a case of COVID-19 inside one of our schools is an essential part of our plan to slow the spread of the virus. Upon learning of a positive case, we will perform contact tracing. We will also implement quarantine measures as dictated by each individual case.

#### Contact Tracing

Contact tracing involves identifying people who have COVID-19 and the people who they came in close contact with for 14-days prior to the day they first experienced symptoms. Close contacts are defined as persons who are not consistently masked and within 6 feet of the infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. Timely and accurate contact tracing helps us slow the spread of the virus and notify possible close contacts that they may want to monitor for symptoms and get a test.

Please note that we only perform contact tracing when an infected staff member or student was inside one of our schools during a time when they may have been infected (i.e., we do not perform contact tracing for people who were not inside our schools when they may have been infected). Contact tracing for exposure outside of schools is the responsibility of CDPH.

The contact tracing process, which will be led and performed by the Noble Support Team (NST) Operations department, must be completed as quickly as possible after we learn of a positive diagnosis of someone who was recently in our buildings. Therefore Noble will perform contact tracing seven days per week, including on evenings, weekends, and holidays.

Staff must notify the NST contact tracing team as soon as they learn of a person who was recently inside of one of our schools has a confirmed case of COVID-19.

After receiving this notification, a member of the contact tracing team will reach out to the infected individual to ask if they were in close contact with anyone when last in school. If tracing a student, the team will use their schedule along with an interview as an additional way to determine possible close contacts, particularly during lunch, team sports, and with siblings. Individuals determined to be in close contact with someone who has a confirmed case of COVID-19 will be notified by their campus.

In the event of a positive case, an email or text from the campus will be sent to the entire community indicating that a positive case occurred and that close contacts will be notified individually.

#### Quarantine

Quarantining allows close contacts to monitor themselves during the time period in which they could develop symptoms. It can take 2-14 days to show symptoms, so you may not know for up to 14 days if

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you are infected. The purpose of a quarantine is so that you do not pass on the infection to anyone else, even if it turns out that you are not infected.

Noble's quarantine policies are informed by the Chicago Department of Public Health and may change as CDPH revises its guidance.

Quarantine rules will follow the process outlined in [this chart](#).

## Physical Distancing Where Possible

The State of Illinois requires all students to be back in school this year unless they have a medical exemption. This means that requiring a specific distance between students is often not possible for most schools in Chicago, including Noble, due to space constraints. **Therefore there is no universal physical distancing requirement at our campuses this year.** However, campuses will increase the distance between students when it is possible to do so. This--along with vaccines, masks, and air purifiers--provides our best opportunity to create safe spaces. When having 1:1 or small group meetings with students, staff will pay attention to distancing and increase where possible.

Finally:

- one way hallways are not required;
- there are no distancing requirements during passing periods or when in restrooms or locker rooms; and
- Physical fitness rooms may be used and sports equipment may be shared.

## Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

The following measures to contain respiratory secretions are recommended for all individuals.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
- Use the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of the tissue after use
- Perform hand hygiene (e.g., hand washing with non-antimicrobial soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub, or antiseptic handwash) after having contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials

Schools will be provided with an ample supply of items to support healthy hygiene behaviors so they can be distributed throughout classrooms, hallways, restrooms, and common areas. Supplies include but are not limited to soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, and tissues.

## Staying Home When Sick

### When to Stay Home

A vaccinated or unvaccinated staff member, student, or any other visitor should not enter a Noble school or participate in school-sponsored activities if:

- they are ill
- they have been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the past 14 days
- they have a fever or any core symptoms of COVID-19
- they are awaiting a COVID-19 test result

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- They are not vaccinated and have been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days; (vaccinated individuals may come to school even if they were in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, but are required to complete a negative test if the close contact is a member of the immediate household; if not an immediate household member, a test is recommended after 3-5 days)
- They are currently required to quarantine as described above

If you stay home because of COVID symptoms, you should test immediately and can return to school with a negative test once symptoms end. The test can be either lab-based or an over-the-counter rapid test.

Chicago's Emergency Travel Order was changed to an Advisory on June 29, therefore there are no longer mandatory quarantine periods related to travel. However, unvaccinated students and staff traveling from high risk locations are advised to obtain a negative COVID-19 test result no more than 72 hours prior to arrival in Chicago or quarantine for a 10-day period upon arrival. Vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine or receive a negative test. Please go [here](#) for more on the city's Advisory.

### Daily Health Screening

- Prior to coming to a Noble school, all staff, students, and visitors are asked to assess their own health. The guidance for this "self-check" is [here](#).
- Students who are symptomatic will go to a designated onsite Care Room to wait until they are picked up by a parent, guardian, or designated emergency contact. (Campuses will use existing practice for signing students out early.) If the student can not be picked up, and the parent or guardian emails or texts consent (saved in PowerSchool), the student may go home unescorted. Verbal permission that is immediately logged in PowerSchool is also sufficient as a method of last resort.

Students in this Care Room must wear masks, remain at least six feet apart from each other, sanitize their hands, and have access to a restroom as needed. Please go [here](#) for additional guidance for the Care Room. Visits to the Care Room by students will be logged.

If parental consent has already been obtained, the student will be given a rapid test at the school site. If parental consent has not yet been obtained and supplies are available at the school, students may be given a rapid test to take home along with an information sheet for families.

- Students who are suspected of being symptomatic, but who refuse to confirm symptoms should be encouraged to be transparent, but can be required to go to the Care Room if core symptoms are obvious to staff. Staff will try to ensure concerns about symptoms are reasonable before following this course.
- In accordance with the guidance from the [Chicago Department of Public Health](#), persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation and return to school under the following conditions:
  - At least 14 days have passed since symptom onset, and
  - At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and



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- Other symptoms have improved.
- For students who leave school with symptoms, either a note from a medical professional or evidence of a negative COVID test will be required before returning to school. A picture of a home-based test is sufficient evidence for this requirement. Absent a negative test or a note, the student will be assumed to be positive for COVID and subject to the requirements above.

## Cleaning and Disinfection

Schools will be cleaned and disinfected each evening, with spot cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas taking place throughout the day.

Rolling carts with ultraviolet disinfection systems will also be used periodically as an additive measure of protection against the virus.

## School Operations

### Food Service

Food service will return mostly to our pre-COVID-19 processes, where we will have hot and cold meals available in our dining rooms and at grab-and-go stations.

There are, however, two changes that will take place this year in an effort to increase safety and efficiency in the service line. First, meals will be free for all students regardless of family income status. Therefore IDs are not required, which will speed up the time it takes to get a meal and be seated. Second, there will not be any salad bars for at least the first semester. Instead students will be offered pre-packaged salads.

Campuses will consider reasonable and practical ways in which students can be spread out during lunch periods. There is no mandatory physical distancing requirement, though some campuses may be able to execute practices like open lunch and eating outside to help relieve density issues in our dining rooms.

Students are permitted to eat and drink in classrooms as the campus believes it is possible and practical to do so. Masks should be taken down momentarily to eat and drink, but should be back in place thereafter.

### Drinking Fountains

Drinking fountains may be used.

### Elevators

There are no limits on the number of people who can be in an elevator, however campuses will take reasonable and practical measures to limit density.

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### Emergency Drills

All emergency drills will be completed as they would have been prior to the pandemic.

### Lockers

Lockers may be used as they were prior to the pandemic, including the use of double-stacked and shared ones. Campuses will space out lockers if it is possible and practical to do so.

### Musical Instruments

Musical instruments may be shared, because the risk of surface contact with COVID-19 is low as long as proper cleaning occurs. For this reason, shared instruments must be cleaned and disinfected between uses. Before distributing an instrument that has been shared, use alcohol wipes, swabs, or disinfectant solution to thoroughly clean both the outside and the inside of the mouthpiece. It is also essential to maintain overall cleanliness via the use of cleaning rods, swabs, mouthpiece brushes, etc., as this is necessary to prevent buildup of residue within the instrument.

For wood instruments any excess amount of liquid can be damaging. Please be judicious and sparing outside of the mouthpiece area that needs cleaning. In addition, certain cleaning products that can be used on the mouthpiece should not be used around the pads associated with a woodwind instrument's keys (e.g. flute, clarinet, saxophone, etc.).

Campus will consider placing bell covers, such as [these](#), on woodwind and brass instruments.

### Off-Campus Student Activities

Off-campus student activities, including field trips and events with overnight stays, are permitted and must follow standard Noble policies. Staff will research the safety protocols of the intended destinations in advance and work to ensure they are followed (e.g., if a particular destination calls for some degree of physical distancing, then we should adhere to their policy).

Other reasonable measures will be taken as well, including spreading out as much as possible on buses, decreasing the number of people in one hotel room as possible, and wearing masks when indoors. Because students in shared hotel rooms will be unmasked while sleeping, parents will be informed of the limited but elevated risk with doing so.

### School Supplies

School supplies may be shared with and between students.

### Technology

#### Chromebooks

Students who have not yet received a Chromebook will receive one this year. This includes all incoming 9th graders. Each campus will also be provided at least two fully stocked Chromebook carts.

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Since access to carts will be very limited going forward, students are expected to bring their Chromebooks with them to school if a laptop is needed for the day's work. Students may borrow a laptop for the day if they forget to bring their Chromebook to school, however, loaner devices are limited so there is no guarantee that one will be available. Student Chromebook support will be provided by IT staff on-campus during the school day.

Students will be asked to acknowledge an acceptable use policy at the start of school. This policy will outline the expectations for care and use of the laptop. It will also state that there will be a charge of \$150 to replace a Chromebook that is lost, stolen, or broken.

### Hotspots

Students who currently have Noble-provided Internet hotspots will be able to continue to use them until at least the end of the first semester. Students who do not have access to the Internet outside of school will be provided a hotspot for use during the first semester. In addition, nearly 80% of our families qualify for a free high-speed Internet connection at home for up to four years through a program called [Chicago Connected](#). Families can go [here](#) to check on their eligibility for the service and they email [chicagoconnected@nobleschools.org](mailto:chicagoconnected@nobleschools.org) with questions.

### Transportation

All Noble practices and policies remain in effect for the transportation of students. In addition, staff are encouraged to:

- spread students out as much as possible on buses
- open windows when it is safe and possible to do so
- suggest students wear masks for the entirety of the trip

For students who receive transportation via CPS based on needs reflected in IEPs or 504 plans, transportation will be coordinated by Case Managers, Noble's Senior Director of Student Services, and ODLSS.

### Visitors including Non-Noble Instructors

All Noble visitors, including alumni, must follow a campus' check-in procedures. This must include providing their name and contact information and an affirmation they are not symptomatic for COVID. (This affirmation can be completed by referencing posters of symptoms that are posted in main entrances at Noble campuses.) All other relevant guidance in this plan applies to visitors as well (e.g., masks must be worn at all times).

## Student Experience

### Returning to In-Person

The first day of school is 9/3 and attendance is expected for all students.

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### Google Classroom

Noble will continue to require the use of Google Classroom to the extent that, at minimum, students can access materials should the need arise again for a quick pivot to remote learning, whether that pivot is the whole school or a more limited group of students required to quarantine.

### Medically Fragile Students

There may also be a very small number of students (~1 student/campus on average) who are considered “medically fragile” such that they are unable to return to in-person instruction this Fall. This policy, described in greater detail below, applies to such students.

Characteristics of students who may be identified as medically fragile:

- History of frequent absences which are directly related to their severe or life-threatening physical/medical condition.
- Has a documented diagnosis associated with or accompanying chronic illness that is so severe it impacts the student's school attendance.
- Any student whose illness and treatment frequently places him/her/them in extreme, precarious, or life-threatening circumstances.

#### **Application Process:**

In order for a student to be considered for a remote instruction opportunity at their campus, the guardian/parent must have the treating physician complete this [COVID-19 Health Eligibility form](#).

This completed form and any questions should be emailed to Bianca Severino, at [bseverino@nobleschools.org](mailto:bseverino@nobleschools.org), prior to August 23. The form may be emailed by either the parent/guardian or campus staff.

#### **Remote Instruction Options:**

Upon review of the Health Eligibility form, if the student qualifies as medically fragile after a review by the Senior Director of Student Services, the Noble Support Team will work collaboratively with the student's campus to create a remote instructional experience that allows the student the ability to attend classes remotely for the first semester.<sup>2</sup>

Alternatively, the student may enroll in CPS's Virtual Academy at their discretion. If a family chooses CPS's Virtual Academy, please share this [link](#). It includes details with qualifications as well as the necessary form for the treating physician to complete.

### Remote Accommodations

Remote learning will be reserved to those very rare students described above who are considered [medically fragile](#) (~1 student/campus on average ) or in quarantine. At least 5 hours per day of learning material is required for students enrolled in remote learning (this can include asynchronous and synchronous learning material). There are no minimum requirements for either asynchronous or synchronous modes of instruction.

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<sup>2</sup> The family will need to complete another Eligibility Form for Semester 2.

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Remote students are to receive campus-provided instruction enrolled in a regular set of classes, facilitated by Google Classroom, similar to their in-person peers. Campuses who have students who qualify for medically fragile-based remote instruction or have students on quarantine ensure a) remote access to all courses (using a variety of asynchronous material, live streaming/synchronous opportunities, office hours, etc.); b) ensure students have all the materials and technology needed to access course material; c) ensure students engage in five hours of learning (minimum) a day and receive frequent and formative grading and feedback; and d) are regularly engaged with an advisor.

Teachers should continue to utilize and update their Google classroom as a critical classroom communication tool to ensure that all students--those in-person, those temporarily home due to quarantine, or for those on long standing remote "medically fragile" status--can always access, engage in, and submit material critical to the course (e.g. syllabus, homework assignments). Campus administration (e.g. Grade Level Deans, Deans of Students, Principals) will assist and ensure that all students have appropriate access and receive at least the minimum required learning time.

## One-on-one and Small Group Student Support

Many roles--including paraprofessionals, learning specialists, social workers, culture specialists, and other staff--spend much of their time working 1:1 or in small groups with students. This work is very important and will continue. While supporting students in this way, staff will continue to adhere to masking guidance and maintain a reasonable distance from students where possible.

## Attendance

Noble's current attendance survey system will be modified to be used only with students receiving remote accommodations because they are medically exempt or in quarantine.

Students who are absent will have access to coursework via Google Classroom. Students who are medically able will be expected to do coursework remotely, but should not expect to receive synchronous instruction.

Students who have been asked to quarantine at home will not be marked absent, but will instead be tracked with a separate code.