## 4621 Castor Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19124



Dear Northwood Academy Charter School Parents & Families,

The first day of school is Monday, August 29th and we are excited to welcome our students and staff back to our classrooms for in-person learning. Northwood Academy Charter Executive Team and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) have been working closely throughout the summer, monitoring local COVID-19 conditions, and following federal and local public health guidance to determine the best health and safety measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 as students return to school.

For the first 10 days of the new school year – from August 29 through September 9 – all students and staff will be required to wear masks while in school, regardless of the COVID-19 Community Level. This is an extra precaution for everyone's health and well-being since increased end-of-summer social gatherings may heighten the risk of exposure to COVID-19. Masking may then become optional under specific circumstances.

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Masking will be *optional* for students and staff **except**:

- for the first 10 days of the new school year August 29 through September 9.
- when the COVID-19 Community Level is high according to the CDC COVID-19 Community Level Indicators. In this instance, the School will notify families and staff that indoor universal masking will be required in school, school buses and offices until the Community Level returns to medium. At a Community Level of medium, masking is strongly recommended.
- in specific instances where universal masking may be required, regardless of the COVID-19 Community Level, including:
  - classroom- or school-wide outbreak,
  - or upon return from extended breaks and holidays when increased social gatherings may heighten the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Students and staff who have been exposed to COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, are no longer required to quarantine at home unless COVID-like symptoms are present. Instead, they may return to school but are required to wear a mask for 10 days.

Isolation	Students who test positive for COVID-19 are required to isolate at home for at least 5 calendar days.  Parents/guardians must also notify the school nurse. If symptom-free after 5 days of isolation, students may return to school but must wear a high-quality (N95 or KN95) mask for an additional 5 days.
Student Testing	School nurses will provide COVID-19 testing for students who begin to show symptoms during the school day. In case of an outbreak at a school, a testing vendor will provide additional on-site testing support. A signed parental consent form on file at the school is required for student testing to occur, so please submit the completed form to the school nurse. All families must submit a new consent form for the 2022-2023 school year.
Vaccines	COVID-19 vaccines are encouraged but <b>not</b> required for students, including student athletes. Children six months of age and older are now eligible for the primary COVID vaccine and those five and older are eligible for booster shots. To learn more about vaccines and where to get them, visit the <a href="Covid-19 Information Hub">Covid-19 Information Hub</a> , the City of Philadelphia's website <a href="here">here</a> or <a href="www.vaccines.gov.">www.vaccines.gov.</a>
General Health & Hygiene	The School will be equipped with high-quality masks, hand sanitizer stations, and air and surface purifiers to further promote healthy learning environments. To further support the health and well-being of everyone in our schools, families are asked to monitor their child's health and keep them home if they are sick, and practice proper hand-washing and mask wearing with their child.

Monkeypox may also be top of mind for our families and staff. Please know that we are working closely with PDPH to monitor the situation, and we will seek guidance from PDPH and the Centers for Disease Control to identify any needed safety measures for our schools. We will update you as more information is available. In the meantime, we will continue to implement enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures daily in schools and offices, paying special attention to high-touch areas such as bathroom facilities, desks and doorknobs.

As COVID-19 and other public health matters continue to evolve, so too will our response. The last several years have taught us all that by working together and remaining flexible as needed, we can support the healthy in-person learning environments our students need. We look forward to working together with you as we welcome students back to school on August 29th.

Sincerely,

Corey Keith, Director of Operations

Dr. Lisa Knox-Brown, Chief of Staff