8-2-21

Dear NMSBVI Staff,

Welcome to the 2021-2022 School year! As you know, we are back to full in-person learning and we are very excited to welcome students and staff on campus. The New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired holds the health and safety of our students, families, and staff at the top of our list of priorities. NMSBVI also stresses the importance of education for all of our students. This upcoming school year, there is an even greater need to stress education across all areas including academics, social-emotional well-being and safety and hygiene. We are excited to return to full in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year.

We are committed to the safety and well-being of students and staff. We continue to practice all required COVID Safe Practices in our buildings. For more information, please look at our website at [www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us](http://www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us) . NMSBVI will also be following the mandates and recommendations in the New Mexico Public Education Department’s Toolkit, which can be found here: <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/back-to-school-guidance/> . We require students and staff to stay home from school if they are exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms that are not related to other chronic conditions. Mandatory quarantines will remain in place under certain circumstances.

During this school year, NMSBVI intends to continue to promote technology skills, so a Blended Learning Model will be adopted by most classes. This model supports in person learning with lessons or homework that can be accessed online. The model will also support our focus on teaching early technology skills needed to access these online lessons and activities.

NMSBVI will not be offering a remote learning model as an option for families for the 2021-2022 school year unless the state mandates another school closure. However, if a student is required to quarantine for a long period of time, NMSBVI will provide remote learning assignments in an asynchronous manner to continue that student’s educational program if the student is well enough to participate. If a child is unable to wear a mask at school, we are working on options for those few students.

Because we are fully re-opening, **all staff are required to be on campus for their full work schedules.** If you are planning on completing SafeSchools, participating in remote defensive driving class, or attending a remote conference that is a full day or half day, you may work from home, but you will need to complete an Activity Request and note on there that you will be working from home that half day or full day during your regular work hours. It will need to be completed and approved in advance. You will be expected to return to campus after the half day in order to complete your workday.

School will look similar to our full re-opening in April, 2021.

* Temperature checks will be required both prior to coming to campus and upon arrival for all staff and students. (*The Dr. Owl COVID19 screening tool is no longer required).*
* *Students and staff will not be allowed on campus if they are experiencing COVID19 symptoms. If a student or staff member has chronic conditions with symptoms similar to COVID19, they may submit a doctor’s note.*
* Face masks will be required for all staff and students in all buildings, regardless of vaccination status (with some exceptions for students who cannot wear a mask due to medical reasons). If a staff member is alone in an office or classroom, with no one else, that staff member may remove his/ her mask. The staff member is required to wear a mask if anyone wants to enter the room.
* *Masks will not be required outside, during naps, or during meals.*
* We will enforce physical distancing as much as possible.
* Staff who have not provided proof of being fully vaccinated will be required to participate in surveillance testing. We are required to test 25% of those staff each week, so expect to test once per month. You can use a VAULT test, a PCR test, or come to health services for a BinaxNOW test.
* All staff are asked to have a VAULT test on hand in case you are required to take a COVID test. You can order one here:

 <https://learn.vaulthealth.com/nm/>

* We will require frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing for all students and staff
* Water fountains may not be accessible. Please bring water bottles.
* Breakfast and lunch will take place outside whenever possible. The dining room will be open to students. *We ask that staff who are not working with students eat elsewhere.*
* Dorm suites will be single occupancy only.
* Visitors will be limited to only those who are essential for the functioning of the school. All visitors will be required to complete the Dr. Owl screening and wear a mask while indoors on campus.
* **Please know that these mandates and practices are subject to change**

**These new procedures and mandates begin on August 3, 2021.**

I am so happy to have everyone back at work. Thank you for your ongoing flexibility, commitment, and expertise.

Let’s have a fantastic year!

Patty

**Patricia Beecher**

**Superintendent**

**New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

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