



GREATER NEW BEDFORD REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

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Preparation • Passion • Perseverance

August 20, 2021

Dear GNB Voc-Tech Families:

Welcome back! It's hard to believe that the summer has passed so quickly and we are preparing to begin another school year. We are in the final stages of preparing for our Freshman Orientation next Tuesday, August 24th, as we welcome the Class of 2025 to our campus with their families. Our school year begins on **Monday, August 30th for Freshman Only** and **Tuesday, August 31st for ALL students**. Student schedules will be available in Aspen on Monday, August 30th. Please note that the doors to school will open at 7:15 a.m. to begin the school year.

Last year was undoubtedly one of the most challenging for all of us. The ongoing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose challenges that impact our daily lives. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) guidance is clear that schools will open, five days a week, with full in-person learning. We all recognize the importance of in-person instruction and learning for all students and we all share a collective responsibility to work collaboratively at keeping one another safe amid a historic pandemic. We are asking students to fill out a [Voluntary Student Vaccination Status Survey](#). If you choose not to disclose your vaccination status, we will assume you have not been vaccinated and you may be subject to quarantine if you are considered to be a close contact.

First, in order to facilitate a safe return to school, **we will implement universal masking for all staff, students, and visitors regardless of vaccination status. The universal masking policy is effective Monday, August 23rd, 2021.** The healthcare data for our region, city, and towns continues to reflect that this is a necessary safety measure for us to return to school. This vital safety measure is consistent with MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education/ Department of Public Health guidance.


Secondly, we will implement a BinaxNow Testing program. Testing by this program will help ensure that individuals who are asymptomatic and have close contacts with others may remain in school pending testing. Parental consent for participation in the BinaxNow Testing program is required. When individuals present symptoms at school, with parental consent, samples will be collected using the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test. Those testing negative with isolated/mild symptoms **may remain** in school. Individuals who are deemed to have close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual at school **may** have samples collected using the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test. Individuals who test negative would be permitted to stay in school under the 'Test and Stay' protocol. Tests would be administered five consecutive days beginning from the date of exposure. Please see attached documents for more information.

As we collaborate with local organizations to increase vaccination rates in our region, **we will partner with the New Bedford Board of Health and the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center to host two vaccine clinics at our school.** The first will be held on August 24th from 12:00 p.m.- 2:00 p.m. and the second will be held on September 14th from 3:00 p.m.- 6:00 p.m. Both the Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccines will be available, though persons under 18 years of age are not eligible to receive the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

People who receive the Pfizer Vaccine on August 24th would be able to receive their second dose on September 14th (first doses for those who miss the August 24th date will also be available on September 14th). Finally, **persons aged 12 through 17 must complete a parent permission form in order to receive the vaccine.**

I know we are all committed to working together for the benefit of all of the members of our school community. Here is a link to both the school calendar [one-page School Calendar](#) and the cycle calendar [Cycle Calendar](#) as you prepare for the school year. I hope you all enjoy the remaining days of summer and I look forward to seeing everyone later this month!

Sincerely,



Michael P. Watson
Superintendent-Director

Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all students. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, genetics, ancestry, limited English proficiency, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, homelessness, immigration status, military status or veteran status in its education programs and activities, including admission to or employment in such programs or activities.

Michael P. Watson
Superintendent-Director

Robert J. Watt
*Executive Director of Operations
and Compliance*

Warley J. Williams, III
Principal

Pamela Stuart
School Business Administrator

Proudly Serving the Towns of Dartmouth and Fairhaven and the City of New Bedford

MASK/FACE COVERING PROTOCOLS

ALL FACULTY, STAFF, STUDENTS, FAMILIES AND VISITORS TO GREATER NEW BEDFORD REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL MUST WEAR A MASK/FACE COVERING

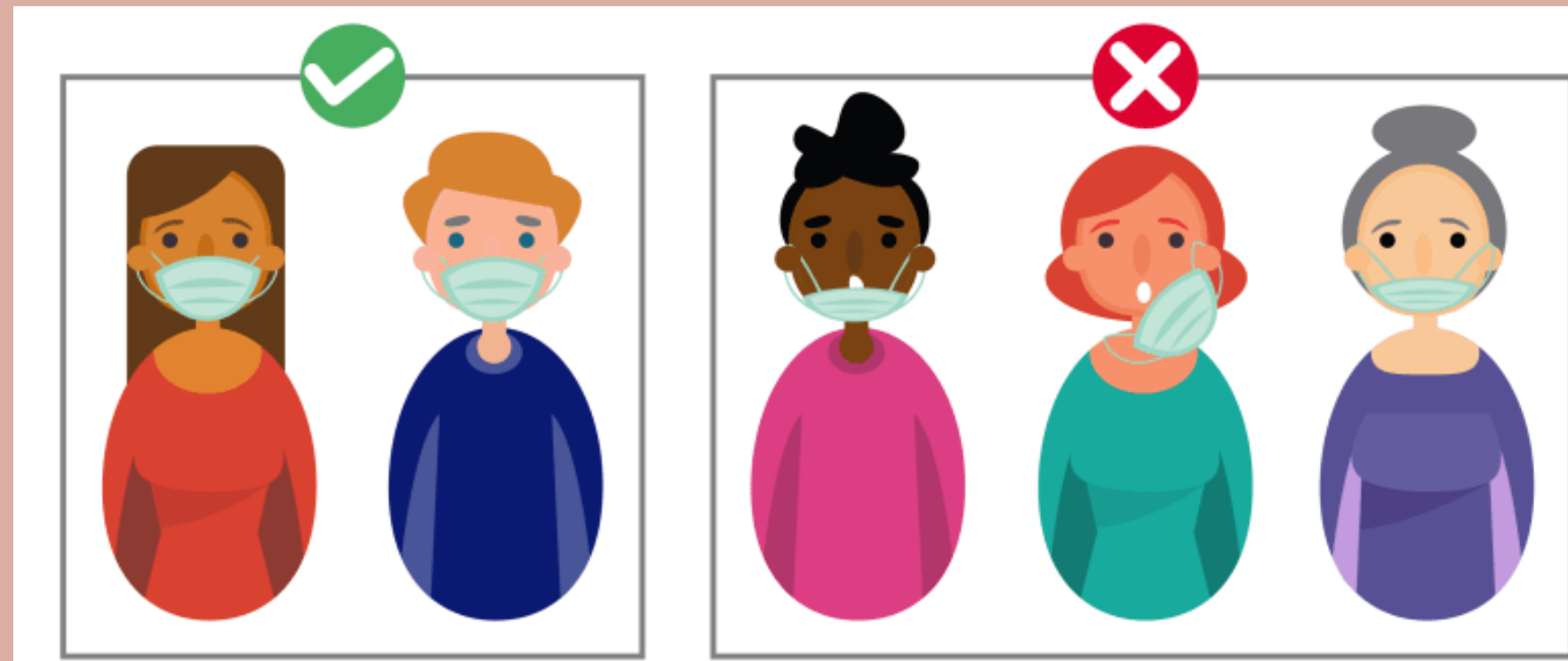
How to wear your mask/face covering

Acceptable

Not Acceptable

Acceptable mask/face coverings include:

- multi-layered cotton masks
- disposable masks
- KN95/95 masks



Not Acceptable mask/face coverings include:

- neck gaiters
- open chin triangle bandanas
- coverings containing valves
- mesh material or holes

Students must wear a mask/face covering on school transportation

Masks/face coverings must cover both your mouth and nose



TESTING PROTOCOLS

The Greater New Bedford Regional School District is participating in the BinaxNOW testing program.

The following are the types of testing to be available to students and staff:

- Symptomatic Testing (when individuals present symptoms while at school; individuals should not report to school if experiencing symptoms while at home): Shallow nasal swab samples are collected at school using the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test or another approved diagnostic test.
- "Test & Stay" (close contact testing): Shallow nasal swab samples are collected at school using the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test or another approved diagnostic test. Tests are administered daily from the first day of exposure for at least five (5) days.

The following testing will not immediately be available but the District retains the right to implement as needed:

- Routine COVID safety checks: Shallow nasal swab samples are collected at school and put into a single tube (maximum of 10 samples per tube). If a group tests positive, individual Follow-Up testing occurs at the school with BinaxNOW and/or individual PCR testing, as necessary.

Parents/guardians, faculty and staff should monitor their children and staff should monitor themselves for the below COVID-19 symptoms:

- Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Sore throat, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea when in combination with other symptoms
- Headache when in combination with other symptoms
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms



TESTING & QUARANTINE RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

Protocol A – For individuals who test positive

Duration: Self-isolation for COVID-19 positive cases is a minimum of 10 days after symptom onset or after positive PCR or antigen test, if asymptomatic.

Return to school: After 10 days AND once they have:

- Been without a fever for 24 hours (and without taking fever-reducing medications); and
- Experienced improvement in other symptoms; and
- Individuals who do not meet these criteria after 10 days may receive clearance from either public health authority contact tracers (the local board of health or Community Tracing Collaborative) or school health professional before returning to school.
- NOTE: Return to school will be based on time and symptom resolution.

Protocol B – Protocol for asymptomatic close contacts

Duration of Test & Stay: 7 days from the date of exposure

Return to school: Close contacts can remain in school and do not have to quarantine, as long as they:

- Are asymptomatic
- Wear masks in school at all times, other than when eating or drinking. When these individuals cannot be masked (i.e., when eating or drinking) they should maintain 3 feet of distance from other individuals.
- Take a rapid antigen test.
- NOTE: Return to school will be based on time and symptom resolution.

Protocol C – Protocol for asymptomatic close contacts

Duration: Dependent on symptom resolution

Return to school: Individuals may return to school after they:

- Have received a negative PCR test result for COVID-19.
- Have improvement in symptoms.
- Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Protocol C1 – Protocol for symptomatic individuals, not close contacts & choose not to test to return to school

Duration: Isolation is at least 10 days from symptom onset

Return to school: After 10 days, returning on day 11, assuming they:

- Have improvement in symptoms
- Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

If you choose not to disclose your vaccination status, we will assume you have not been vaccinated and you may be subject to quarantine if you are deemed a close contact.

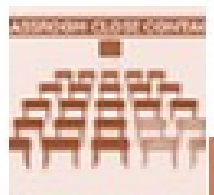
Close contacts are defined as individuals who have been within 6-feet of a COVID-19 positive individual while indoors, for at least 15 minutes during a 24-hour period.

CLOSE CONTACTS WHO ARE EXEMPT FROM TESTING & QUARANTINE



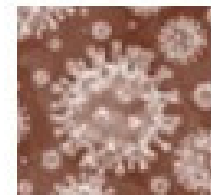
Asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts

- Individuals who are asymptomatic and fully vaccinated are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.



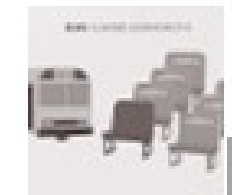
Classroom close contacts

- An individual who is exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual in the classroom while both individuals were masked, so long as the individuals were spaced at least 3-feet apart, is exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.



Close contacts who have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days

- An individual who has been previously diagnosed with COVID-19 and then becomes a close contact, is exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols if:
 - Exposure occurred within 90 days of the onset of their own illness AND
 - Exposed individual is recovered and remains without COVID-19 symptoms.



Bus close contacts

- Individuals on buses must be masked according to federal requirements. As such, individuals who are masked on buses when windows are open are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.