



Brown Middle School Handbook for Distance and Hybrid Learning Fall 2020

“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.” ---Helen Keller

“Communities, and individuals who experience trauma are agents in restoring their own well-being.” -Shawn Ginwright

**“You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.”
--Christopher Robin**

**“I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better.”
---Maya Angelou**

“Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is to not stop questioning.” - Albert Einstein

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September 2020

Dear Brown Community,

I want to welcome you all to the 2020-2021 Brown Middle School year. While this is not the beginning of the year any of us had imagined, I want to assure you that our faculty and staff are preparing to build the best possible educational program for your children.

Our faculty has returned to work using our teacher professional days to plan a year unlike any other. They will be working hard to prepare for students to begin school in a distance model for our first term on Wednesday, September 16. Our first goal is to build community and connections with our students. We plan to do this through our teams and our advisory program.

Our custodians have thoroughly cleaned the building and our facilities director has made sure all ventilation systems have been inspected and are functioning properly. While we are not able to implement the hybrid model and welcome students into classrooms for the September start of school, we are hopeful that in November we will be able to do so.

Teams:

We are diligently working around the clock to get our distance learning schedule ready for the opening of school. As we do each year, we will be assigning students to a grade level team of Brown teachers, regardless of your family's preference for the hybrid or distance-only model. Prior to Sept 16, team teachers will be working out plans to introduce themselves to their students. There will be introductory letters from teams sent out prior to the start of school for students. In addition, families of students designated as high needs have been notified and will receive their in-person schedules. We will also be exploring ways to give students an opportunity in small groups to meet their teachers in person - perhaps outdoors - for a getting to know you activity (with masks and at a safe physical distance).

Advisory:

Our advisories have always been a special part of our community because students remain with the same advisor throughout their three years at Brown. This year, advisors and co-advisors will also be taking on the role of family liaisons. You will be receiving postcards and phone calls from advisors in the days leading up to the start of school to check in and welcome you to this

new school year. Your child's advisor will be a resource for you and can answer your questions or connect you with someone who can answer them.

Distance schedule:

Remote learning will look significantly different this fall in comparison to this past spring. Classes will be live sessions with instruction happening for students synchronously. Students must attend all of the zoom portions of their classes and attendance will be taken. The schedule follows a regular 5-day pattern which will provide consistency for families at home.

Students will be taught how to use their NPS Gmail accounts as well as Google calendar. Invitations to their weekly Zoom classes will be sent through Gmail with the Zoom links embedded in the invitation. We plan to teach students to check their Gmail on a regular basis and to use their calendars daily. This will help with some of the organizational struggles students experienced in the spring.

We will again use the Schoology platform for class curriculum and assignments. This is a platform that is used throughout Newton's secondary schools. Teachers will work to create their Schoology class pages with similar formats to help students navigate their course work. Teachers will also be teaching students how to navigate their Schoology accounts throughout the distance learning process during their zoom classes.

New students:

For our incoming 6th graders and students who are new to Brown, our teachers and counselors are prepared to make the entry into Brown Middle School a positive one. As we begin to share information with you regarding your team placement, advisor, and counselor, please reach out if you have questions or concerns. This year we are all new to this environment and this is a first experience for all of us!

Our Bear Beliefs:

Please know we are very excited to welcome you all to our community. At Brown, our mascot is the Bear and we use the Bear Beliefs to guide us. They are going to prove to be invaluable this year and I share them with you here:

- Be Here**
- Be Safe (& Kind)**
- Set Goals**
- Be Honest**
- Let Go and Move On**

For returning 7th and 8th graders, these are very familiar - however I have added "Be Kind" to the list. I feel that we will all need to be kind to ourselves and to each other. Each of us has experienced a world we never imagined over the past 5 months. We have faced the pandemic of COVID-19 and the pandemic of racism in our country. Some of us have lost loved ones, or

experienced fear or felt the sting of discrimination. However, I have also seen many of us take this time to learn, to grow and to take action. We have seen a growing awareness of the experiences of those in marginalized communities. Our faculty members have taken part in professional development programs regarding anti-racist and culturally responsive teaching practices. They have honed their skills in technology and worked to develop engaging lessons in a virtual classroom. They have read books and attended workshops on trauma sensitive teaching and social emotional supports. Our teachers are ready to create an environment that will help your child feel a sense of belonging, safety and connection. We all must continue to be empathetic and give grace to one another in order to move forward as a school community.

Wishing you all health and the best as we start this new journey together.

Kim Lysaght
Principal

What we believe: The Overarching Values of Our Model

Our model of instruction for fall 2020 is grounded in Newton Public School's core values of equity and excellence, but informed by the need to address the current challenges posed by the public health crisis and racial strife that has disproportionately impacted our families of color and disrupted the structures through which we typically support students socially, emotionally and academically.

As noted in the visual below, our model is student-centered with parallel and concurrent support, engagement and healing embedded for each member of the community who supports our children.



Health and Safety - Match specific structures and strategies to current community conditions and public health best-practices to ensure that students and staff are safe at school

Academic Engagement - Develop universally designed instructional practices, with multiple entry-points to ensure accessibility to all students, factoring in students' cultural experiences and current realities, to ensure engagement. Our focus will be on students as learners and individuals and not just about unfinished teaching and learning (from [ABRSD Plan](#)).

Family and community connection - Communicate with families and staff using a variety of methods (email, phone calls, texts, translators) in order to not only share information, but create *dialogue* about student and family needs. Create a responsibility to connect with every family, especially our most vulnerable and those of our struggling students. Work to understand and support NPS staff and their family and health situations as they establish routines for the school year.

Safe, Supportive, and Equitable Learning Environments - Develop trauma-informed, healing-centered environments that prioritize interpersonal relationships and community connections for students and for staff. Focus on:

- Engaging in practices that affirm diverse social and cultural identities;
- Cultivating a sense of belonging and community;
- Providing structures for physical and emotional safety;
- Using engaging, relevant, and culturally responsive instruction built on an understanding of how children and adolescents grow and develop socially, emotionally, and academically;
- Creating space for student voice and agency;
- Offering frequent opportunities for students to discuss and practice anti-racism and develop collaborative solutions to address inequities; and
- Providing tiered supports that meet the needs of all students. (From CASEL [REUNITE RENEW THRIVE](#))

I. Overview of Distance and Hybrid Models

Overview of the Distance Model

From Sept. 16 - Nov. 16 students will attend classes remotely. A model of the distance schedule is below. Some students that are considered “high needs” will be attending in-person school during this time.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30 - 8:50	Advisory (20 mins)	Advisory (20 mins)	Advisory (20 mins)	Extension (25 mins)	Advisory (20 mins)
8:55 - 10:00	A (65 mins)	F (65 mins)	A (30 mins) 8:55 - 9:25 B (30 mins) 9:30 - 10:00	D (65 mins)	C (65 mins)
10:05 - 11:10	B (65 mins)	G (65 mins)	C (30 mins) 10:05 - 10:35 D (30 mins) 10:40 - 11:10	F (65 mins)	D (65 mins)
11:15 - 12:20	Extension 6/7 Extension 8 WL F block Extension 8 WL G block	A (65 mins)	Extension 6/B Extension 7 WL C block Extension 7 WL D block	G (65 mins)	Extension 7/B Extension 6 WL A block Extension 6 WL B block
12:20 - 12:50	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:50 - 1:55	C (65 mins)	B (65 mins)	F (30 mins) 12:50 - 1:20 G (30 mins) 1:25 - 1:55	A (65 mins)	F (65 mins)
2:00 - 3:05	D (65 mins)	C (65 mins)	Flex Time	B (65 mins)	G (65 mins)
3:15 - 4:00	Extra-Curriculars (45 mins)	Extra-Curriculars (45 mins)	Extra-Curriculars (45 mins)	Extra-Curriculars (45 mins)	Extra-Curriculars (45 mins)

To help students manage their schedules, they will receive invitations that include links to their zoom classes through their NPS gmail. At the beginning of the year, teachers

show students how to set up their google calendars so that these classes and corresponding links are easily accessible. Attendance all at classes is required.

Classes are 65 minutes to allow for more time for teachers to provide a variety of engagement opportunities during the lesson. For example, a teacher may begin class with an opening break out group discussion. The teacher would bring the class back together for a lesson and then ask students to complete an activity that allows them to move/turn away from the screen. At the end of class students would return to the screen for conclusions/discussion/reflection with the teacher to allow teachers to check for understanding. It is our goal to limit the amount of asynchronous work for students.

Extension time is a more flexible time where students are able to get extra help from teachers. At the beginning of the year, this time will be used to allow teams to build community as well as learn the technology tools they will need to use.

Advisory meets 4 times per week first thing in the morning and is an opportunity to connect, share, play and reflect. The city-wide middle school advisory committee has prepared many lessons to be used throughout the year. This is also a place where we will share and discuss the One School, One Book read of *New Kid* by Jerry Craft. We are excited because we have the opportunity to have the author speak to our students sometime in the fall!

Overview of The Hybrid Model

We are slated to begin our hybrid model on November 16. More information will be coming as we approach that date. In hybrid, students will be divided into cohort A (Mon./Tues) or B (Thurs./Fri.) for in-person learning. Accommodations have been made for family members to be included within the same cohort of learning.

Students that are distance-only will also be included in their same classes as they were in September. At the times that in-person learning is happening with their cohort, we will be providing them with the same lesson virtually.

Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday	Thursday		Friday	
Cohort A	Cohort B	Cohort A	Cohort B	Cohort A/B	Cohort A	Cohort B	Cohort A	Cohort B
A (45 mins) In-Person	A Independent Work at Home	D (45 mins) In-Person	B Independent Work at Home	Advisory (40 mins)	B Independent Work at Home	B (45 mins) In-Person	A Independent Work at Home	A (45 mins) In-Person
B (45 mins) In-Person	F Independent Work at Home	F (45 mins) In-Person	G Independent Work at Home	A (40 mins) Remote	G Independent Work at Home	G (45 mins) In-Person	F Independent Work at Home	F (45 mins) In-Person
C (45 mins) In-Person	C Independent Work at Home	G (45 mins) In-Person	D Independent Work at Home	B (40 mins) Remote	D Independent Work at Home	D (45 mins) In-Person	C Independent Work at Home	C (45 mins) In-Person
E/Ext (45 mins) In-Person	E/Ext Independent Work at Home	E/Ext (45 mins) In-Person	E/Ext Independent Work at Home	C (40 mins) Remote	E/Ext Independent Work at Home	E/Ext (45 mins) In-Person	E/Ext Independent Work at Home	E/Ext (45 mins) In-Person
Grab & Go Lunch + Dismissal (Teacher Lunch & Meetings - 1hr 45min)		Grab & Go Lunch + Dismissal (Teacher Lunch & Meetings - 1hr 45min)		Lunch	Grab & Go Lunch + Dismissal (Teacher Lunch & Meetings - 1hr 45min)		Grab & Go Lunch + Dismissal (Teacher Lunch & Meetings - 1hr 45min)	
				D (40 mins) Remote				
Advisory (20 mins)		Advisory (20 mins)		E/Extension (40 mins) Remote	Advisory (20 mins)		Advisory (20 mins)	
D (30 mins) Remote		A (30 mins) Remote		F (40 mins) Remote	A (30 mins) Remote		B (30 mins) Remote	
F (30 mins) Remote		B (30 mins) Remote		G (40 mins) Remote	F (30 mins) Remote		G (30 mins) Remote	
DG (30 mins) Remote		C (30 mins) Remote			C (30 mins) Remote		D (30 mins) Remote	
Extra-Curriculars (45 mins) Remote		Extra-Curriculars (45 mins) Remote			Extra-Curriculars (45 mins) Remote		Extra-Curriculars (45 mins) Remote	

Cohort A	Mornings	Lunch	Afternoons
Mon/Tues	In-person 4 45-min classes	Grab and Go Lunch Commute home	Remote (whole class zoom) Remote (whole class zoom) Remote (whole class zoom)
Wed	Remote (whole class zoom)	Lunch at home	
Thurs/Fri	Remote Asynchronous and Independent Learning	Lunch at home	

Cohort B	Mornings	Lunch	Afternoons
Mon/Tues	Remote Asynchronous and Independent Learning	Lunch at home	Remote (whole class zoom) Remote (whole class zoom) Remote (whole class zoom)
Wed	Remote (whole class zoom)	Lunch at home	
Thurs/Fri	In-person 4 45-min classes	Grab and Go Lunch Commute home	

Students identified as “high needs students” will have a differentiated plan based upon their individualized needs that may involve participation in scheduled learning activity with both or some from Cohort A and B.

Cohorts and On-Team Classes

Students will travel to all on-team classes based upon a small cohort of 8-12 students which consists of their team homeroom groupings.

Multi-Team Classes

A second similarly sized cohort will be created for students for World Language/Arts Rotation and PE/Wellness classes. Students will travel in this cohort for all of their multi-team classes.

II. Overarching Safety Requirements

Building a Culture of Safety and Mutual Responsibility

At Brown Middle School, we use the Bear Beliefs to guide our actions.

1. Be Here
2. Be Safe (& Kind)
3. Be Honest
4. Set Goals
5. Let Go and Move On

These shared values align with the guiding principles of “taking care of ourselves, taking care of others, and taking care of our community.” In our return to school this year, we will lean heavily on these values to create a culture around safety that is based upon the premise of our responsibility to others. We added to our Bear Beliefs the need to Be Kind. In a time where many of us are feeling a good amount of anxiety, it is critical that we see each other as fellow human beings who are all navigating a new world, and that we, faculty, staff, students and families, treat each other with empathy and grace.

In the first weeks of in-person school we will introduce the expectations around safety in our “new normal” through interactive modeling and positive reminders, holding each other accountable for the well being of our community. Families and faculty will play an integral role in modeling, practicing and reinforcing expectations. In addition, there will be visual reminders of the safety precautions listed below posted throughout the building.

The health and safety of staff and students is the primary driver of our school educational operations. Following the most up-to-date guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the MA Department of Health (MA DPH), and Newton Health and Human Services Department (NHHS), Brown has developed personal safety and building operations protocols that prioritize the health of staff and students. In accordance with those guidelines, we will work as a school community to develop a culture around the following four pillars of safety:

❖ **Physical Distancing**

We have worked with our custodians and the heads of facility on developing protocols that will reinforce the guidance of 6 ft of distance between individuals while in the building to minimize exposure.

Impact on Classrooms: As a result of a feasibility study of our building, we have arranged classrooms in a way that maintains a 6 feet distance between individuals when stationary for more than 10 minutes. We were able to accomplish this with smaller cohorts of students in each class as structured by the hybrid model. Based upon NHHS guidance, brief contact closer than 6 feet in a classroom is acceptable.

Impact on Hallways: A plan has been created for adult supervision in the hallways to reinforce safe distancing. Based upon NHHS guidelines, two-way traffic in the hallways is acceptable as individuals will only briefly pass others closer than 6 feet.

❖ Face Coverings

[Mask/face covering protocol](#) from NPS School Committee

The Newton School Committee requires masks/face coverings that cover the nose and mouth for all grades per school committee policy. Only those who have a medical, behavioral or related conditions making it unsafe, or, due to developmental age or disability or other extenuating circumstances that are a barrier to wearing a face mask or face covering will be exempt from the mask and face covering requirement. Face shields or physical barriers may provide an alternative in some instances.

In accordance with MA Department of Public Health and CDC guidelines face coverings must:

- Cover the nose and mouth;
- Fit securely and comfortably against the side of the face;
- Be secured with ties or ear loops;
- Allow for breathing without restriction;
- Be able to be laundered without damage or change of shape;
- Be made of at least two layers of material;
- Face coverings may not have an exhalation valve or vent

Expectations:

- All people should wear a face covering/mask throughout the day except while eating, drinking, or during mask breaks. This includes while riding the buses or vans.
- Masks/face coverings should be provided by the student/family, but extra disposable face masks will be made available by the school for students who need them. (A back-up supply of masks will be kept in the main office and nurse's office.)
- Face coverings/masks that become wet or soiled should be removed, stored or discarded and replaced with a new mask.

- Larger shared spaces such as the cafeteria, exercise room and gyms, in addition to the outside fields and under the tent will be available on a rotational basis for classes for masks and physical breaks.
- Families are asked to practice the routine of wearing face masks at home to help reinforce school expectations.

When we wear masks we lose some of the elements that can increase trust and connection: our facial expressions are hidden and must be guessed or assumed.

- Many who have experienced traumatic events may anticipate initial interactions as negative with their heightened vulnerability and vigilance.
- Many may misinterpret tone of voice and body language.
- Many may perceive mask wearing as a statement against them rather than as a safeguard/ protective measure for them.
- Many of our BIPOC students, faculty and staff have either experienced or witnessed incidents where by wearing masks they have been questioned or charged.
- A few cannot wear masks due to medical issues.

We are a community: each of us brings our own narrative to what wearing a mask means. At this point in time, we know that wearing a mask keeps those around us safer. It is one very important piece in being able to be together. This is a protective factor: it is a medical issue. We are in this together and will be wearing masks to keep you as safe as we can. The expectation is that all those who can medically do so will wear masks. Students with learning challenges surrounding mask wearing will be provided with instructional opportunities. Students may not enter classrooms or offices without masks (unless they are exempt for medical and related reasons as stated above).

References:

Fultz, K. (2020). *Being trauma informed in a covid-19 world*. Retrieved on 14 August 2020 from [Being Trauma Informed in a COVID-19 World and resources for domestic violence](#).

Thomas, A. (2020). *Why I don't feel safe wearing a face mask*. Retrieved on 15 August 2020 from [Boston Globe OpEd](#).

Mask Breaks

- Scheduled mask breaks will occur at planned times scheduled during the day in locations and under circumstances when we can safely ensure that students are more than 6 feet away from each other or in an outdoor space.
- These mask breaks will be approximately 5 minutes, which falls under the 10 minute time when public health officials determine someone is considered in “close contact”.
- Additionally, mask breaks for students will be fully supervised by faculty to ensure compliance with safe physical distancing.
- Staff/students should bring a clearly labeled bag or container to store their mask for mask breaks and while eating
- Procedures for proper removal and placement of masks when 6 feet apart which includes:
 - Sanitize hands before removing mask
 - Remove mask, handling only by the ties or ear loops
 - Do not touch the outside or inside of the part covering the face
 - Once removed, hold the outer edges of the mask, fold the mask in half with the inside of the mask touching and place in a labeled bag or container
 - Sanitize hands before replacing the mask
 - Masks/face coverings should never be shared
- **Tent:** Brown Middle School, like the other secondary schools in Newton, will have access to a large tent which will be set up behind our school up on the hill. It will be 3300 square feet and can accommodate up to 250 people at a physical distance of 6 ft apart. Classes will be able to use this space for scheduled physical and mask breaks. Additionally, our PE classes will have access to it in the case of inclement weather.

Face shields

- Students with medical or other behavioral, developmental, or health-related conditions who are exempted from wearing regular face coverings may have the option of wearing a face shield. This will be determined in collaboration with the school nurse.
- Face shields will be supplied and may be worn (in addition to masks/face coverings) by staff who will be working closely with students who are unable to wear masks/face covering and/or if a 6-foot distance cannot be maintained (ie providing 1:1 care), or if supporting students through self-care tasks where universal precautions are utilized (ie toileting)

- Staff may wear a mask/face covering AND shield until a distance of greater than 6 feet has been reached; at that time, the mask/face covering may be removed and solely the shield will remain for the lesson
- Staff will sanitize hands before removing mask/face covering and after replacing mask/face covering
- Staff should don gloves to disinfect the shield at the close of every school day or if it is dirty and disinfect with alcohol wipe or disinfecting spray and a paper towel. Do not use glass cleaner.
- Staff should not share shields.

❖ Hygiene

- Hand sanitizer will be placed by school entrances and in school rooms. Wash/sanitize hands upon arrival to school and frequently throughout the day. Students will be allowed to have a personal supply of hand sanitizer
- Students will be permitted to be within 3 ft of each other while wearing masks while washing their hands in the bathroom to maximize the availability of sinks.
- Regular cleaning schedules for custodians includes enhanced protocols (high touch surfaces).
- Sanitizing wipes will be available in classrooms for use on surfaces in between whole school sanitizing. Students may also bring in their own supplies.
- Classroom donations of cleaning, wipes and hand sanitizer are welcome.

❖ Avoid Exposure to Illness

- Staff and Students will be required to complete a [daily health assessment](#) at home prior to coming to school.
- Anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms, is being tested for COVID-19, or tests positive for COVID-19 must stay home for the amount of time required by their primary care physician and/or health department.
- Anyone who develops symptoms during the school day will be dismissed.
- Anyone who is determined by a health department to be a close contact of someone who is positive for COVID-19 must remain out of school for the length of time required.
- Our school-based health professionals are a resource for our school community our nurse, Mary Petry, can be reached at petrym@newton.k12.ma.us

Health Protocols In Case of Illness

At Brown, we have reclaimed the mail room (between the main office and the nurse's office), as a medical waiting room for any student who is symptomatic. If a student is showing symptoms, the teacher should call the nurses office and the student should report to the nurses office immediately (Alternatively, the teacher can call for the nurse to come up to get the student.) That student will be supervised by a school medical professional while the nurse contacts the parent/guardian to pick them up from school. The student will not take the bus home.

Staff members who exhibit symptoms during the school day will be asked to leave immediately and will contact their primary health care physician and local public health authorities to begin the process of testing and contact tracing.

For more specific information regarding Covid-19 Scenarios, please see this [Powerpoint from Newton HHS regarding Covid-19 Scenarios](#).

III. Building Operations:

For Sept. 16- Nov. 16, for students who attend in-person learning:

Arrival Protocols

Students may:

assemble under the tent at a safe distance from one another

Enter the cafeteria, use hand sanitizer, pick up breakfast if ordered, and sit in designated seats.

Buses: As buses arrive, students will enter the building through three possible routes. Each grade will be assigned to a specific entry door to allow for more physical distancing. Students will be required to be wearing a mask over their mouth and nose and to use hand sanitizer from the dispensaries at each entrance.

Grade	Entrance
8th	Door at patio near cafeteria

7th	Front door
6th	Door on far right (when facing the building) near 6th grade wing
Walkers:	Front doors
Bikes	Front doors
Vans:	Drop off at back door near music room

Dismissal Protocols

Students	Exit plan
6th graders	Staggered format - exit by way of door at end of 6th grade hallway
7th grade	Staggered format - exit by way of front door
8th grade	Staggered format - exit by way of cafeteria doors

Parking (staff and visitors)

Visitor Policy

Due to concerns for public safety, visitors to the school will be significantly limited. There will be a slotted window in the front vestibule to communicate with front office staff and a table for items to be dropped off in the front lobby only when essential.

Meetings/Conferences

While we continue to prioritize our partnership with parents and guardians. In order to ensure the safety of all parties, parent/Teacher, 504 and IEP meetings will be conducted virtually via Zoom or Google Meet in order to honor the physical distancing requirements. In-person meetings will only be granted for special circumstances to be determined by the Principal and Assistant Principals.

Front Office

Access to the front office will be limited. Faculty will be asked to call the front office with specific needs instead of entering the office. Mailboxes have been moved to the copy room.

Copying and Printers

While remote learning will result in less copying, we realize there may be some need for classroom teachers to copy items for their in-person sessions. The 1st and 2nd floor copiers can be used by teachers as needed. Limit occupancy of the copy room to no more than two people. Hand sanitizer and wipes will be available at the entrance to these rooms. In addition, markers will be placed on the walls 6 feet apart for faculty who may be waiting in line to use the copier.

Backpacks and Lockers

For the 2020-2021 school year, students will not have access to lockers due to public health concerns related to potential crowding and congregation challenges. For just this year, students will be allowed to carry backpacks to each class and through the hallways. As noted previously, NPS will be issuing each student a personal Chromebook for school use. We ask that families purchase a backpack that can secure these devices.

Hallways

Passing in the hallway is considered safe provided that everyone is wearing a mask and sustained contact does not exceed 10 minutes. As a result, there will be two-way traffic in the hallways monitored by faculty. In the first weeks of in-person learning we will use interactive modeling and practice to reinforce safe physical distancing in the hallway.

See the additional guidelines below:

- Moving in the hallways they can be closer than six feet for brief periods of time.
- Students can move in opposing directions in the same hallway/stairwells if they stay on the opposite sides of the hall and move in a single-file line.
- Water fountains should be used only to refill a bottle and not to drink from.
- In order to control crowds and movement of students at dismissal, teachers will be present in the hallway to monitor for safety.
- When moving around the school, individuals should leave at least an arm's length of distance between themselves and others
- The maximum number of people using an elevator at a time is two.

Student Bathrooms:

- Bathrooms will be considered “at capacity” when there is one student in every other stall and one at each of the sinks.
- Masks must be worn at all times.
- Bathrooms will not be used for a mask break due to the close proximity to others.
- We will designate other areas for breaks. Students will be expected to leave the bathroom if it is filled and wait lined-up outside of the door at a 6ft physical distance.
- Students using the facilities MUST exit as soon as they are done.

Faculty Lounge

Teachers are welcome to use the faculty room and must keep a 6 foot distance while there.

Outdoor spaces***Brown Middle School Outdoor sign up:***

As with uses of the tent, teachers will sign-up for classrooms to have access to a variety of outdoor and indoor spaces for mask breaks. Because of their large enrollment, PE classes will be prioritized for use of the larger spaces.

Frequently Asked Questions:

For contact information at Brown: Please go to the Brown website [here](#). Click on Classrooms & Staff, and then choose Staff Directory.

For Health and Safety Questions: Please click this [link](#) for answers to FAQs regarding testing, protocols for students with symptoms.

Will students be allowed to wear the blue medical disposable masks? Yes, students can wear these masks. They should be at least two layers and cover the nose and mouth completely and fit well over the bottom half of their faces.

From the Transportation Department: Thank you to everyone for their prompt response to our transportation registration inquiries. Our student services team is reaching out to families who are eligible for van service, but have not yet indicated their transportation preference. Next week, students who are utilizing NPS transportation will receive detailed information about bus passes, start dates, and safety protocols. Please read this information carefully as it will be very important to follow the operational guidelines put in place by our transportation department. *Important: we cannot accommodate students who have not registered for the bus and do not have a bus pass due to physical distancing and ridership limitations.*

Bus transportation for high needs students attending school in-person daily will begin on Monday September 21 and specialized van service for these students will begin on Tuesday, September 29. We are asking the families of high needs students beginning in-person learning prior to these dates to assist with transporting your child to school as we work to complete the highly complex transportation schedule.

School and Schedule:

Will students in distance be in classes with students in hybrid once we move to hybrid? Yes, at the middle schools we are keeping students connected to their teams and their team teachers in both distance and hybrid. Students will attend classes with the same teachers and will be with their teammates in the virtual classes and will learn the same curriculum.

How will advisory work when we move to remote? When we begin the hybrid learning, advisory will move to right after lunch in the schedule. Students will all attend at home remotely so we can maintain our advisory groupings.

How will the ELL schedule be implemented? Christina Rossi (rossic@newotn.k1.ma.us) and Mary Radonich (radonichm@newton.k12.ma.us) will be in touch with families of ELL students. They will hold zoom classes and provide support for students at extension as well.

Will there be homework? There will not be the traditional nightly homework assignments as the classes are designed to have students learn the content and do the skill building during the class. Teachers will assess students based on their learning in the class. There will be homework when students need to study for an assessment or complete a long term project or writing assignment. The reason for this is that we recognize that the time spent on zoom will be taxing for everyone. Therefore we are providing longer class meetings to allow students to do the actual work in the class and then have time for outside activities in the afternoon.

Can we opt out of hybrid and change to Distance in November? We will honor requests to move from hybrid to distance, however it may involve some changes to a student's schedule because of the complexity of the groupings. We will still keep the student on their team with their team teachers.

What are the plans for mask breaks? Students will be given mask breaks outside in a supervised setting. These will occur once in the morning (and for students who will remain in the afternoon - mask breaks during lunch and one more time in the afternoon).

How will RTI be addressed this year? Teachers will be using extension time and the longer class blocks to provide students with support when they struggle. Teachers may choose to create breakout rooms that allow for interventions during classtime as well as creating intervention groups that meet during extension time.

Can a parent request a change in a child's cohort or team? The scheduling of students this year has been highly complex and we have taken multiple factors into account while creating it. If you request a change for your child's cohort we will do our best, but there is not guarantee that we will be able to honor it.

How many students will be in school vs. distance learners? When we go to the hybrid model about 20% of our students will remain in distance learning.

What is flex time on Wednesdays last block? Flex time is an opportunity for teachers to provide extra help sessions, challenge opportunities, or other activities. These will be alternatives students may choose to join unless one is specifically assigned by a teacher for a student. Students will be informed of these options once the regular routines and schedules have been established.

In hybrid, if a child is sick, can they zoom into their classes? If a child is well enough to attend the remote sessions, they can certainly do that. We will not have the ability to zoom students into the in-person class. However, they can work on that at home (as they would if they were home sick in a normal year) and check in with the teacher at extension or the next class time.

Since lockers won't be used, will children be required to carry their binders? Students will need to have their chromebook and 2-3 binders in their backpacks. We will not be requiring students to carry heavy textbooks.

Will students get the Brown assignment notebooks this year? Yes, students will get these either at the meet and greet or the materials pick up car line on Tuesday, Sept. 15 from 5 - 6 in the driveway at Brown. There may be subsequent pick up car lines later in September as more materials arrive. If you are unable to pick up materials at any of these times, please contact the main office at 617-559-6900.

Will there be early release days? The only early release days this year will be on the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving and the last day of school. Students will be released at 11:30 on both of those days.

Technology:

Will there be Chromebooks for all students? Yes, all students will receive a Chromebook. They are scheduled to arrive in Newton in mid-September and distribution will begin as soon as they arrive. A survey was sent to parents on Aug. 31 if they need a Chromebook earlier than this. Notification regarding distribution will be coming as soon as the Chromebooks arrive.

Can students use their own devices (not those provided by the school)? Yes, students can use their own computers. They will need to be able to access their nps google accounts via the NPS website.

Will you be enabling any Parental Controls on the Chromebooks? No, You can't add parent controls to a chromebook managed by a Google for Education account. Google doesn't allow their parent controls to be active on a school managed device.

When attending in person, will the students need to bring their device? Yes, students will be using their Chromebooks throughout the year. Parents, please remind them to charge them fully each night as this is an expectation for in-person learning.

Would you make Video-On mandatory for Zoom class? Teachers will be explicitly teaching students the expected behaviors in their zoom classes. They will be encouraged to have their cameras on to promote interactions between their classmates and teachers. We plan to model this behavior and allow students to have backgrounds (school appropriate) as well.

When do students get their passwords (Aspen, NPS google drive and schoology)? Students will use the same passwords they used last year. For the students new to NPS, information will be sent to them regarding how to log in with their ID number. If you forgot your password, please call into the main office or reach out to your homebase teacher to reset it for you.

Will families of students with IEPs and 504s be contacted? Case managers for each student will be reaching out to families at the start of school to introduce themselves and assist with any questions you may have.

For additional information please click this [link](#).

Activities:

Will there be sports at Brown? As of September, competitive sports teams will not be happening at Brown. We are working to create opportunities for students to have in-person intramurals in a safe way. More information will be coming. We will have after school activities starting on Oct. 5. Some will be virtual and some will be in person.

Will there be math team? We are currently working on forming our math team.

Details from the league are as follows:

1. We will have a full year with 5 meets.
2. We will conduct these meets virtually.
3. We will delay the start to the season. The earliest we could have the first meet would be November/December.
4. We will end the season (meet 5) by late April/Early May.

When will students sign up for band and chorus? Matt Bailey-Adams (chorus director) and Devon Nelson (band and orchestra conductor) will be sending out notifications to families regarding sign ups for these activities during the first 2 weeks of school.

Will there be instrument lessons? Instrument lessons will have to be virtual this year. Please reach out to Devon Nelson, nelsond@newton.k12.ma.us for more information.