



Nicaragua Christian Academy

*"ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE WITH A CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION"*



# Health Protocols: August 2022

## Introduction

The NCAI leadership teams continue to carefully monitor all available data regarding COVID-19 in Nicaragua and around the world. We are currently seeing multiple conditions that support reductions in our health protocols:

- The number of Covid cases has dropped dramatically in the past few months throughout the world.
- The latest strains of Covid are less likely to result in hospitalization or serious health issues.
- Many countries have greatly reduced or eliminated many of their COVID-19 health protocols.
- A high percentage of Nicaraguans are vaccinated. 82% have received at least 1 vaccine dose, and 61% are fully vaccinated. ([Source](#))
- Informal reports from people in the medical community indicate that local hospitals have low numbers of cases and that Covid is on the decline in Nicaragua.
- The conditions on our campus are optimal for reducing the risk of transmission, since most classrooms and other areas are open with plenty of ventilation.

## Health Protocol Changes Beginning August 2, 2022

The following updates to our health protocols will be implemented on Tuesday, August 2.

- The use of face masks will be optional at all times (including indoors and outdoors). It is the responsibility of parents to decide whether or not their children should use face masks while at school. We strongly encourage everyone to consider their own health risks and the health risks of others in their family and community to inform decisions about use of masks.
- There will be no restrictions on classroom desk spacing and capacity limits.

## Summary of Active Health Protocols to Mitigate Risks

The following protocols remain active and are considered important to mitigate health risks in our school community.

1. **Ongoing health checks:** Parents should continue to check the health of their child on a daily basis and report symptoms to the school nurse.
2. **Exclusion of sick people:** We will continue to require that sick people, especially those who may have Covid-like symptoms, stay off campus according to our established symptom scale.
3. **Handwashing:** Strongly encouraged and emphasized at critical times of the day, including before/after eating and before entering computer labs.
4. **Sanitization:** Alcohol spray is available many places around campus, including upon arrival to school events
5. **Restricted campus access:** During the school day, campus access is restricted to staff, students, and people who have an appointment. Visitors will be screened before entering.
6. **Social distancing considerations:** Many events will still include additional spacing between chairs to provide a safer and more comfortable environment and reduce risk of contagion.

## Health Protocols Review

These health protocols will be reviewed before the beginning of each semester and revised as necessary and appropriate. In the event of a major development resulting in significantly increased risks of hospitalization or death, the policy will be reviewed sooner, including possible reinstatement of masking requirements and/or other health protocols.

## Detailed Description of Health Protocols

If you are not already familiar with our health protocols from last year, please read the following section carefully.

## Philosophy

The mission of NCA is “developing spiritual, social, physical and academic excellence in students so that they can be active disciples of Jesus Christ.” The best way to accomplish this mission is through personal and physical presence interactions between students and teachers. Physical presence classes provide the structure, socialization, and stability that are essential to the long-term development of children. As such, we recognize that physical presence education is the preferred mode of teaching and learning for our children.

Our mission to disciple our students, and our relationship with Jesus Christ, compels us to act in love toward all members of our school community. We recognize that COVID-19 has affected the members of our school community in many different ways, and that there are many different underlying philosophies and responses to the situation. Our health protocols are designed to consider three main underlying principles:

1. Mitigate actual health risks according to current recommendations from health authorities;
2. Maintain consistent Christian testimony by respecting authorities and the measures they recommend to slow the pandemic;
3. Demonstrate love toward all members of our school community, striving toward a balanced policy that takes into account the perceptions of parents, students and staff, without being controlled by fear.

## Strategies

The primary strategies implemented by NCAI to mitigate health risks are:

- Adequate ventilation in most areas of campus
- Strict exclusion of sick people
- Campus access restricted to staff, students, and people who have an appointment
- Use of masks encouraged in cases of higher risk for self or others
- Social distancing practices built into many school activities
- Culture of handwashing upon arrival and before/after key transitions
- Alcohol spray available many places around campus and upon arrival for events

## Adequate Ventilation

One benefit of our widely open-air campus is that most classrooms have a lot of fresh air entering on a regular basis. We conducted smoke tests in all buildings to watch natural air movement patterns and ensure rapid dispersion of air that could contain airborne particles. In classrooms where less natural air movement existed, additional ventilation was installed. Aside from certain air-conditioned classrooms and common spaces, all teaching areas of campus exceed recommended air renewal rates, which is believed to greatly reduce the risk of transmission of the virus.

## Exclusion of Sick People

Anyone who is sick with a contagious illness should not come to school until the period of contagion has passed, including 24 hours without fever or fever-reducing medication. The school

nurse will decide borderline cases based on our symptom scale. People who have symptoms that seem to indicate probable COVID-19 infection will be excluded for 5 days unless an alternative diagnosis or testing rules out COVID-19.

Students who are absent due to illness should communicate with their teachers to request make-up assignments.

## Restricted Access to Campus

In order to reduce health risks for our school community, parents and visitors will not be permitted to enter the secure areas of our campus before or during school hours unless they have an appointment with a teacher or staff member.

## Face Masks

**Family decision:** Face masks are considered optional at all times, including indoors and outdoors.

It is the responsibility of parents to decide whether or not their children should use face masks while at school. We strongly encourage everyone to consider their own health risks and the health risks of others in their family and community to inform decisions about use of masks.

## Handwashing

Students will be encouraged to wash their hands upon arrival at school, before and after eating, and before entering the computer labs.