



# CHESTER UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT



## **SCHOOL REOPENING PLANS 2020 -2021**

**Chester Union Free School District**  
**Chester, New York**  
*chesterufsd.org*

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**Chester Elementary School**

Catherine O'Hara, Principal, Chester Elementary School

**Chester Academy**

John Flanagan, Principal, Chester Academy  
Rolando Aguilar, Assistant Principal & Athletic Director

## *Acknowledgements*

We would like to acknowledge and express our most sincere appreciation to the following members of our school community who served on the District's Reopening Committee:

### **Chester Union Free School District Schools Reopening Committee**

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Sandra Nagler	Chester UFSD Board of Education, Vice President
Rolando Aguilar	Chester Academy Assistant Principal & Athletic Director
Elise Boyle-Biagini	Chester Teachers Association - Chester Elementary School
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*Special thanks to the Orange-Ulster BOCES Instructional Council (BIC) comprised of curriculum and instruction leaders from school districts in Orange County for their assistance in developing the template for this plan.*

*Thank you, also to other members of our school community who participated in sub committees and otherwise contributed to the work of the Reopening Committee.*

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# CHESTER UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

64 Hambletonian Avenue, Chester, New York 10918

[www.chesterufsd.org](http://www.chesterufsd.org)

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Denis M. Petrilak

## BUSINESS OFFICIAL

Erin Brennan

## DISTRICT CLERK

Debra Lys

July 31, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

*On behalf of the Board of Education, I want to take this opportunity to touch base with all of you as we prepare to reopen the Chester School District, during this unprecedented time in our lives.*

*As you all know, New York schools were directed to close by Governor Cuomo in March, and subsequently were directed not to reopen. Thankfully, due to forward thinking in recent past years, we had previously created a technology plan that helped the District convert to online, or virtual learning, in a matter of days. While we all can agree that in-class, teacher-student interaction will always be the best form of student learning, Chester teachers, students and parents all worked together to ensure our students made the most of the challenging situation. Our ability to offer Chromebooks to our students is a testament to the commitment our community has made to our students.*

*In May, schools were directed to start to create reopening plans, and our District created our Schools Reopening Committee which has been working every hour of the day to create a plan that follows all safety guidelines. As you prepare to review the plans the committee created I want to reiterate that **the top priority of the Board of Education and our school district is to safely reopen our schools and resume regular in-person attendance in schools as soon as possible.***

*At our July 22<sup>nd</sup> Board of Education meeting, the District announced that our comprehensive reopening plan, required by New York State, will be submitted to the state by July 31st, as required. Some of these plans include K-6 students attending school in-person 5 days a week, on a shortened day to begin the year, with social distancing and limited movement around the school building. We will also be resuming our partnership with the YMCA for before and after school childcare services. Grades 7-12 will follow an in-person hybrid model with shortened days at the Academy on a 2 or 3 day per week schedule. These plans are preliminary and there are a lot of specific details which have not yet been finalized by the state. Following the submission of our plans, Governor Cuomo has stated that he will be making an announcement in the first week of August, which will tell us if schools will be opening on time in September, broadly as a state, or regionally.*

*As you can see, there is a lot going on. Regardless of our final plan, I want you to know that our entire administration, teachers and staff are preparing to provide the best education to your children, in the safest and healthiest environment. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we move forward into the new school year.*

Frank Sambets  
President  
Chester Board of Education

## Introduction

In the Chester Union Free School District our highest priority is the health and safety of our students and staff. When the 2020-2021 school year begins, schools will look much different than previous years due to COVID-19 and health and safety measures that continue to evolve. This School Reopening Plan will define clear guidance for the reopening of our schools and aligns with the regulations developed in collaboration with New York State Department of Health and the New York State Education Department. The areas outlined in this plan represent the myriad considerations the Chester School District will address to reopen schools safely and to sustain their safe operation. It is important to note that our plan retains a strong focus on academic instruction to enhance student performance and address learning loss. An emphasis on the social-emotional needs of our students and staff is a priority and therefore is addressed within our plan.

This plan includes procedures that will be followed in the following schools:

Chester Elementary School (Grades K – 5)  
Chester Academy (Grades 6 – 12)

To be clear, the health and safety of our students, our staff, and their families is our top priority. We have developed a plan that intends to insure that students and employees feel comfortable and safe returning to school.

Our reopening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

It is possible that we may need to alternate between in-person and remote learning throughout the year due to recommendations and guidance from our partnering agencies, and stay-at-home orders from the Governor. The level of infection, the spread of the virus and response to the disease in our community will be at the forefront of decision making as we move to open our schools.

Denis M. Petrilak, Superintendent of Schools, will serve as the district's COVID-19 Coordinator. He will serve as a central contact for schools and stakeholders, families, staff and other school community members and will ensure the district is in compliance and following the best practices per state and federal guidelines.

Of course, as with every plan being developed throughout New York State, **this document is fluid and will change as necessary based on guidance from the state, CDC, and NYSED and**

***in consideration of our families and our staff.*** We strongly believe the services described throughout this plan are in the best interests of our students, families, staff, and community.

### **Note About the School Calendar**

The 2020 – 2021 Student Calendar for the Chester School District was approved by the Board of Education on February 12, 2020, prior to the closing of schools due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. The starting date for students is currently scheduled for September 2, 2020. However, it is anticipated that the starting date of school may be delayed due to new necessary staff training prior to the beginning of school. If there is a change to the starting date for students that change will be communicated promptly to parents / guardians via School Messenger, the District website, and social media (Facebook, Twitter).

### **Guiding Principles**

The development of this plan was guided by and grounded in the following guiding principles:

1. Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff;
2. Providing the opportunity for all students to access education in the fall;
3. Monitoring schools, students, and staff. When necessary, modifying schedules to appropriately contain COVID-19 spread;
4. Emphasizing equity, access, and support to the students and communities that are emerging from this historic disruption;
5. Fostering strong two-way communication with partners, such as families, educators, and staff;
6. Factoring into decision making the challenges to the physical safety, social emotional well-being, and the mental health needs of our students caused by school closure; and
7. Considering and supporting diversity in our schools and school districts as we provide education is essential.

### **Communication & Family and Community Engagement**

To help inform our reopening plan, the Chester School District has sought feedback and input from stakeholders, including administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/guardians of students, local health department officials and health care providers, employee unions and community groups. Engagement efforts included online surveys, virtual forums/meetings and one-on-one conversations.

The district remains committed to communicating all elements of this reopening plan to students, parents and guardians, staff and visitors. The plan is available to all stakeholders via the district website at <https://www.chesterufsd.org> and will be updated throughout the school year, as necessary, to respond to local circumstances.

As part of its planning for the reopening of schools and the new academic year, the district has developed a plan for communicating all necessary information to district staff, students, parents/guardians, visitors and education partners and vendors. The district will use its existing communication modes – including the district website and social media (Facebook, Twitter) as well as appropriate signage and training opportunities to support the dissemination of consistent messaging regarding new protocols and procedures, expectations, requirements and options related to school operations throughout the pandemic.

### **Chester Union Free School District Communication Goals**

- To encourage all students, faculty, staff, and visitors through verbal and written communication to adhere to NYSED, CDC, and DOH guidance regarding the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), specifically acceptable face coverings - a face mask covering the nose and mouth, when a social distance cannot be maintained.
- To provide regular updates about health and safety, scheduling, and all other information important to faculty, staff and families.
- To provide information to families through a wide array of platforms including mail, email, telephone calls, text messaging, social media and website postings.
- To provide information on how families can access technology and receive technical support to assist with utilization and maintenance of equipment.

The Chester School District developed communication materials accordingly, including the creation of sample messages/letters for COVID-19 cases or potential cases for various school audiences. We will utilize communication methods used by the district to inform the school community. Information will be dispersed in a variety of platforms that include:

- District website
- School Messenger
- Online training
- Correspondence (letters) to homes
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter)

Clear messaging will be prepared and consistently communicated before re-entry, on the first day, during the first week, throughout the first month, and continuously throughout the year.

Ongoing communication will provide information on the following topics:

- Who to contact with questions, concerns or suggestions.
- The facts as we currently know them (NYSDOH, CDC).
- The importance of social distancing, monitoring symptoms of COVID-19 and when to stay home.
- Protocols for entrance (screening) and the review process for staff calling in sick.

- Reminders for staff to stay home if they feel sick.
- Requirements for social distancing in bathrooms, break rooms, hallways, etc. including the installation of social distancing markers on the floors, etc.
- Proper hand hygiene.
- Proper respiratory etiquette (i.e., coughing or sneezing into your elbow if a tissue is not available).
- Personal responsibility for students and staff and the individual's work area.
- District policies/procedures, including how to properly wear and dispose of PPE.
- The availability of free/reduced meals applications if family circumstances change eligibility status.

## **Health and Safety**

The health and safety of our students, our staff and their families is our top priority. We want students and employees to feel comfortable and safe returning to our schools. Our reopening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

The following protocols and procedures will be in place in all Chester School District schools for the 2020-2021 school year. Anyone with questions or concerns should contact our COVID-19 Safety Coordinator at [denis.petrilak@chesterufsd.org](mailto:denis.petrilak@chesterufsd.org).

In addition, parents/guardians are encouraged to contact your school nurse with questions about your child's health needs:

**Chester Elementary School**  
 Mary Mulvihill, School Nurse  
[mary.mulvihill@chesterufsd.org](mailto:mary.mulvihill@chesterufsd.org)  
 845.469.2178 ext. 2209

**Chester Academy**  
 Gina Straub, School Nurse  
[gina.straub@chesterufsd.org](mailto:gina.straub@chesterufsd.org)  
 845.469.2231 ext.3315

**New York State 24 Hour Coronavirus Hotline**  
 888.364.3065

**Orange County Department of Health**  
 845.291.2332

For more information about how health and safety protocols and trainings will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit the Communication/Family and Community Engagement section of our reopening plan.

To ensure employees and students comply with communication requirements, The Chester School District will:

- Post signage throughout the buildings to remind personnel to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning/disinfecting protocols. A schedule of signs and a location map will be drafted by facilities in collaboration with the building principals.
- Establish a communication plan for employees, visitors, and parents/guardians with a consistent means to provide updated information. This will be accomplished through:
  - Website
  - Email
  - Social media
  - Mailings
  - School Messenger
  - Traditional media outlets
- Maintain a continuous log of every person, including staff, workers, and visitors, who may have close contact with other individuals at the work site, school, or area; excluding deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means.
- Upon learning of a student, visitor, or staff member testing positive for COVID-19, the school district will immediately notify state and local health departments and cooperate with Orange County Department of Health contact tracing efforts, including notification of potential contacts, such as workers or visitors who had close contact with the individual, while maintaining confidentiality required by state and federal law and regulations

### **Facility Entry**

- With the possible exception of student bus arrival, whenever feasible, entry and egress in and out of all buildings will be limited to a single location. If applicable, a single point entry and single point egress will be identified to minimize cross traffic. All entry to the buildings will occur through the main entrance to a check-in point.
- PPE must be worn by all individuals, students, staff, and visitors on Chester School District property when social distancing cannot be maintained.
- PPE, proper face covering includes, but is not limited to, a surgical mask, cloth mask, balaclava or bandana and must completely cover the individual's mouth and nose.
- A plastic face shield alone is not an acceptable face covering.
- **All individuals are encouraged to utilize their own face mask / covering**, however face coverings can and will be provided for all staff and anyone else who needs one by the Chester School District daily.

## **Daily Health Screening**

- Prior to entering all Chester School District locations, individuals must complete a medical screening questionnaire.
- Staff should complete this screening prior to arriving at work.
- Although filing of the health survey is preferred to be done online, paper copies of the questionnaire for visitors will be available at check-in points.
- Staff will be required to monitor their own temperatures and symptoms prior to arrival on campus and throughout the day. Staff members who exhibit symptoms must contact their supervisor immediately and await further instruction.
- Students and visitors will be screened for temperature at arrival.
- Parents are required to monitor for temperatures and symptoms prior to sending their child on a bus, however students will be screened at arrival for temperatures.
- Visitors will have their temperatures taken upon arrival.
- All staff must sign in and out of each building at the check-in point each time they enter and exit the building.
- For multiple individuals entering the building simultaneously, they will be required to stand at the marked out locations on the floor, maintaining social distance until they can be signed in and screened.
- Corridors will be created (outside) where individuals can enter the facility when in-person screening is utilized.
- Multiple lines and entrances will be coordinated, if needed to reduce crowding.
- Markings (whether in tape or otherwise) will be placed on the ground or in the corridor to indicate six (6) foot lengths to provide for greater social distancing for individuals while in line.
- Only after all individuals have been accounted for, cleared through the medical screening and wearing proper face coverings, will access to the building be granted.
- Should a person fail the medical screening, specific procedures should be followed. Please reference the Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Case section for guidance.

## **Social Distancing**

- All individuals on Chester School District premises must maintain social distancing and use PPE when social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Proper social distancing is defined as a six (6) foot separation between individuals. Individuals may remove face masks in private offices. However in common areas, such as breakrooms, hallways or bathrooms, the face covering must be worn.
- For activities which require projecting the voice (e.g. singing), playing a wind instrument, or aerobic activity resulting in heavy breathing, a distance of 12 feet in all directions will be maintained as the standard for social distancing for these activities.

- Class rosters will not exceed the number of students who can be appropriately socially distanced within the teaching area. Student movement around the school building will be minimized by keeping student cohorts in the same room for the duration of the school day.
- School bus arrivals and departures will be staggered to facilitate social distancing of students disembarking were boarding school buses.
- Ensure six (6) foot distance between personnel, unless safety or core function of the work activity requires a shorter distance. Any time personnel are less than six (6) feet apart from one another, personnel must wear acceptable face coverings.
- Tightly confined spaces will be occupied by only one individual at a time, unless all occupants are wearing face coverings. If an area is occupied by more than one person, keep occupancy under 50% of maximum capacity.
- Social distance separation will be using tape or signs that denote six (6) feet of spacing in commonly used and other applicable areas on the site (e.g., clock in/out stations, health screening stations, reception areas).
- In-person gatherings will be limited as much as possible and we will use tele- or video-conferencing whenever possible. Essential in-person gatherings, such as meetings, will be held in open, well-ventilated spaces with appropriate social distancing among participants.
- Designated areas for pick-ups and deliveries will be established, limiting contact to the extent possible.
- Where social distancing cannot be maintained, and/or necessary interactions with people need to occur, polycarbonate protective barriers will be installed. These will be neatly supported from the ceiling grid, or a table top barrier will be provided.

### **Face Masks / Face Coverings**

Face masks have proven to be one of the most important tools in slowing or reducing the spread of Coronavirus. Proper face covering includes, but is not limited to, a surgical mask, cloth mask, balaclava or bandana and must completely cover the individual's mouth and nose.

- Face masks must be worn by faculty and staff at all times, except for short breaks where social distancing can be maintained.
- Face masks must be worn by students at all times, except for scheduled “mask breaks” where social distancing can be maintained.
- Face masks must be worn by all individuals, students, staff, and visitors at all times and whenever social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Face masks must be worn by students at all times while on a school bus.
- Face masks must be worn in a manner that properly covers the mouth and nose.
- Parents / guardians will be asked to provide a suitable face mask for each child who attends school. In addition, the district will maintain an emergency supply of masks for individuals who need one.

- Training on wearing the mask properly and reducing contamination when removing and disposing of a mask will be provided along with proper hand washing techniques, and other prevention related practices and modifications. Principals will coordinate this training.
- Students who do not comply with the face mask requirement may be subject to discipline, including removal from school.

### **Personal Hygiene - Hand Washing**

Students and staff must practice good hand hygiene to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Schools will plan time in the school day schedule to allow for hand hygiene. Hand hygiene includes:

- Signage encouraging hand washing and correct techniques;
- Traditional hand washing (with soap and warm water, lathering for a minimum of 20 seconds), which is the preferred method. This can be accomplished by singing or humming the happy birthday song twice;
- Adequate facilities and supplies for hand washing including soap and water;
- Use of paper towels or touch-free paper towel dispensers where feasible (hand dryers are not recommended as they can aerolize germs);
- Use of no-touch/foot pedal trash can where feasible;
- Extra time in the schedule to encourage frequent hand washing.
- Students and staff should wash hands as follows
  - Upon entering the building and classrooms;
  - After sharing objects or surfaces;
  - Before and after snacks and lunch;
  - After using the bathroom;
  - After helping a student with toileting;
  - After sneezing, wiping, or blowing nose or coughing into hands;
  - Anytime hands are visibly soiled;
  - When handwashing is not available use a hand sanitizer;
- Hand Sanitizer - At times when hand washing is not available students and staff should use a hand sanitizer.

### **Visitor and Vendor Practices**

- No outside visitors or volunteers will be allowed on school campuses, except for the safety and well-being of students. Parents/guardians will report to the security desk (Chester Elementary School) or front office and not go beyond unless it is for the safety or well-being of their child. Essential visitors to facilities will be required to wear face coverings and will have restricted access to our school buildings.

## **Visitors**

- All visitors must be wearing proper PPE prior to entering any building and it must be worn at all times when a six (6) foot social distance cannot be maintained.
- All visitors check in at Security for temperature screening and to fill out the COVID-19 CHECK- IN SCREENING. The visitors must sign in.
- No visitor should enter a building unless necessary. All meetings should be held outside or via virtual meetings when possible.
- All visitors must sign in and out at the main entrance of each building stating their destination at that building for contact tracing. All visitors should be accompanied by a staff member.
- Should a visitor become ill while on campus, they must alert the staff member they are visiting to report the issue and then immediately seek medical attention.
- At the end of each day, the receptionist/designee must scan the sign-in/out documents and send them individually to the building principal. Each document must be named indicating the location and date, following this format: LOCATIONMMDDYYYY

## **Vendors**

- All vendors must be wearing proper PPE prior to entering any building and it must be worn at all times when six (6) foot social distance cannot be maintained.
- All vendors must sign in and out at the main entrance of each building stating their destination at that building for contact tracing. All vendors must fill out the COVID-19 screening questionnaire, including a temperature check.
- All vendors should be accompanied by a staff member.
- No vendor should enter a building unless necessary for completion of their job. All meetings should be held outside or via Google Meet when possible.
- Should a vendor become ill while on campus, they must alert the staff member they're visiting to report the issue and then immediately seek medical attention.
- At the end of each day, the receptionist/designee must scan the sign-in/out documents and send them individually to the building principal. Each document must be named indicating the location and date, following this format: LOCATIONMMDDYYYY

## **Training**

The Chester School District will train all personnel on new protocols and frequently communicate safety guidelines. Training on the precautions listed below will be conducted either remotely or in person. Social distancing and face coverings will be required for all participants if training is conducted in person. Training material is designed to be easy to understand and available in the appropriate language and literacy level for all workers.

The Chester School District will ensure all students are taught or trained how to follow new COVID-19 protocols safely and correctly, including but not limited to hand hygiene, proper face

covering wearing, social distancing, and respiratory hygiene. Additional training will be provided in:

- Prevention of disease spreads by staying home when they are sick.
- Proper respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
- Avoiding the use of communal objects. If communal objects must be used, provide information on proper disinfection procedures between uses. Examples of communal objects include, but are not limited to, other workers' phones, desks, offices, computers or other devices, other work tools and equipment.
- Up-to-date education and training on COVID-19 risk factors and protective behaviors (i.e., cough etiquette and care of PPE).

### **Training for Screeners**

The Chester School District will identify individuals familiar with CDC, OSHA protocols, and DOH guidelines in each building who will be a trained screener. Screeners will wear appropriate employer-provided PPE, including at a minimum, a face covering. If social distancing or barrier/partition controls cannot be implemented during screening, PPE should be used when within six (6) feet of an individual.

### **Training Topics for All Staff and Substitutes**

- Proper hand washing / proper hand hygiene.
- Proper cough and sneeze etiquette
- Social Distancing
  - Provide training for faculty/staff on how to address close contact interactions with students as part of every day job tasks.
- Operating procedures (various by building)
  - Entrance into the building
  - Cleaning procedures
  - Sick child pick up
  - Staff who are sick or suspected to be sick.

### **Suspected or Confirmed COVID Cases**

- Emergency Response - Students and staff with symptoms of illness must be sent to the health office. A school nurse (Registered Professional Nurse, RN) is available to assess individuals as chronic conditions such as asthma and allergies or chronic gastrointestinal conditions may present the same symptoms as COVID-19 but are neither contagious nor pose a public health threat. Proper PPE will be required anytime a nurse may be in contact with a potential COVID- 19 patient
- Isolation - Students suspected of having COVID-19 awaiting transport home by the parent/guardian will be isolated in a room or area separate from others, with a supervising adult present utilizing appropriate PPE. Multiple students suspected of COVID-19 may

also be in this isolation room if they can be separated by at least 6 feet. If they cannot be isolated in a separate room from others, facemasks (e.g., cloth or surgical mask) will be provided to the student if the ill person can tolerate wearing it and does not have difficulty breathing, to prevent the possible transmission of the virus to others while waiting for transportation home. Students should be escorted from the isolation area to the parent/guardian. The parent or guardian will be instructed to call their health care provider, or if they do not have a health care provider, to follow up with a local clinic or urgent care center; Other considerations include:

- Closing off areas used by a sick person and not using these areas until after cleaning and disinfection has occurred;
  - Opening outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area
  - Waiting at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfection. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible;
  - Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, such as offices, classrooms, bathrooms, lockers, and common areas.
  - Once the area has been appropriately cleaned and disinfected it can be reopened for use.
  - The Orange County Health Department will be notified about individuals with close or proximate contact with the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.
  - Individuals without close or proximate contact with the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 can return to the area and resume school activities immediately after cleaning and disinfection.
- Notification: The Orange County Health Department will be notified immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result by an individual in school facilities or on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff and visitors.

### **Contact Tracing**

Orange County Department of Health officials assume the task of contact tracing, once notified. To ensure the school district and its employees comply with contact tracing and disinfection requirements, the Chester School District will do the following:

- Have a plan for cleaning, disinfection, and notify the Orange County Department of Health, in the event of a positive case. In the case of an employee testing positive for COVID-19, CDC guidelines will be followed regarding cleaning and disinfecting the building or facility if someone is sick.
- Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.

- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and copier machines.
- Vacuum the space if needed. Use vacuum equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, if available.
- Consider temporarily turning off room fans and the central HVAC system that services the room or space, so that particles that escape from vacuuming will not circulate throughout the facility.
- Workers without close contact with the person who is sick can return to work immediately after disinfection.
- Maintain a check-in log for visitors to the building. Information collected would include name, telephone number, address, destination in building.

### **Return to School After Illness**

The Chester School District has established protocols and procedures, in consultation with the Orange County Health Department, about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment at school. This protocol includes:

1. Documentation from a health care provider following evaluation
2. Negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result
3. Symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation

The district will refer to DOH’s “Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure” (May 30, 2020) regarding protocols and policies for faculty and staff seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after the faculty or staff member had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19.

The district requires that individuals who were exposed to the COVID-19 virus complete quarantine and have not developed symptoms before returning to in-person learning. The discharge of an individual from quarantine and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the Orange County Department of Health.

### **Vulnerable Populations**

modifications to social distancing and PPE will be made available for certain student or staff populations, including individuals who have hearing impairment or loss, students receiving language services, and young students in early education programs, to to ensure access to educational programs and minimize COVID-19 exposure risk for students, faculty, and staff, to the greatest extent possible.

Families with children who live with household members who are in high risk groups may wish to consider using the Remote Learning model, when available, to minimize risks to household members. For more information about Remote Learning please see the Teaching and Learning section of this plan.

### **Closure Considerations**

When a person has been identified (confirmed) or suspected to be COVID-19 positive; the process in the Chester School District could include:

- Having school administrators collaborate and coordinate with local health officials to make school closure and large event cancellation decisions.
- Establishing a plan to close schools again for physical attendance of students, if necessary, based on public health guidance and in coordination with the Orange County Department of Health.
- Developing a plan for continuity of education, medical and social services, and meal programs and establish alternate mechanisms for these to continue.
- Implementing as needed short-term closure procedures regardless of community spread if an infected person has been in a school building. If this happens, CDC recommends the following procedures:
  - Closing off areas used by ill person(s) and locking off area(s), signage can also be used to ensure no one enters the area.
  - If possible, wait 24 hours before you clean and disinfect.
  - If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as possible.
  - Do not use the area(s) until cleaning and disinfection has taken place.
  - Opening outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
  - Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and
  - common areas) used by the ill person(s), focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.
  - Communicating as soon as possible with staff, parents, and students.
- Using Orange County Department of Health guidance/procedures for when someone tests positive.
- In consultation with the Orange County Department of Health, a school official may consider whether school closure is warranted and period of time (prior to re-opening) based on the risk level within the specific community as determined by the Orange County Department of Health.
- In accordance with guidance for quarantine at home after close contact, the classroom or office where the COVID-19-positive individual was based will typically need to close temporarily as students or staff quarantine.

- Additional close contacts at school outside of a classroom should also quarantine at home.
- Closing of schools could be a regional decision.
- Thresholds will be determined on a case-by-case basis dependent on the numbers (school closures may be a response).
- School closures will be communicated via the school website, School Messenger, and social media (Facebook, Twitter).

Buildings may consider closing if required cleaning products (bleach and water can be used as a cleaning product) and PPE are not available.

### **Social Emotional Well-Being**

The New York State Education Department Reopening Guidance aptly cites that “academic learning cannot be effective until the basic human needs for physical and emotional safety are met.” With this at the forefront of our minds, the Chester School District is establishing plans to meet the increased needs of our students and staff during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Social-Emotional Learning Advisory Council will be established, consisting of students, family members, members of the board of education, teachers, school counselors/pupil personnel service providers, community-based service providers, community members and school administrators. This task force team will convene to review our School Counseling Program Plan that has been revised to support students and staff upon re-entry to the building/learning environment for the 2020-2021 school year; this includes a means to identify and actively support student and staff mental health concerns. The team will identify best practices in providing mental health resources to staff, students and families from school and community service resources.

Research shows the importance of mental and emotional well-being for students and staff, which has both psychological and academic outcomes. We know that after this prolonged closure, many of our students and staff will require social-emotional support to help them re-engage and reenter work and school. As a district, our commitment is to create emotionally and physically safe, supportive and engaging learning environments that promote all students’ social and emotional development. The pandemic has increased the importance of creating conditions that help students practice empathy, create social bonds across distance and adapt to new learning experiences. Counselors and school based health programs will play an extremely important role in the adjustment period when buildings reopen.

School faculty and staff will have opportunities for professional development regarding how to talk with and support students during and after the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency. Additionally, all Chester School District employees have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which offers many free services including face-to-face and virtual counseling. Information about all social-emotional supports will be made widely available to the Chester community through the District website.

A Social Emotional Learning curriculum will be implemented district wide. This will help provide support for developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty and staff. It will also give opportunity for learning about topics such as diversity and equity.

The following considerations guided our building level planning:

### **Emotional Reactions to Coming Out of Quarantine Which May Include:**

- Mixed emotions, including relief after quarantine.
- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones.
- Stress from the experience of monitoring yourself or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Sadness, anger, or frustration because friends or loved ones have unfounded fears of contracting the disease from contact with you, even though you have been determined not to be contagious.
- Guilt about not being able to perform normal work or parenting duties during quarantine.
- Other emotional or mental health changes.

### **Addressing Social-Emotional Health**

- Establish/sustain a culture that supports and emphasizes mental health services available for faculty, staff, students and families
- Assist in adequate training for staff/faculty as requested to assist them in understanding:
  - Social Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making
  - The warning signs for quarantine related mental health needs
  - How to access crisis support and other mental health services

### **What Mental Health Professionals Can Do In Schools**

- Educate staff, parents, and students on symptoms of mental health needs and how to obtain assistance
- Promote social emotional learning competency and build resilience
- Help ensure a positive, safe school environment
- Teach and reinforce positive behaviors and decision-making
- Encourage good physical health
- Help ensure access to school-based mental health supports; facilitate the expansion of school based mental health supports

### **Contact Information for Social & Emotional Health Resources**

#### Chester Elementary School Counselors

Ms. Ringel, School Social Worker:	<a href="mailto:lisa.ringel@chesterufsd.org">lisa.ringel@chesterufsd.org</a>
Ms. McKay, School Psychologist:	<a href="mailto:emma.mckay@chesterufsd.org">emma.mckay@chesterufsd.org</a>

Chester Academy School Counselors

Ms. Cuomo, School Counselor (grades 6-8): [jennifer.cuomo@chesterufsd.org](mailto:jennifer.cuomo@chesterufsd.org)  
Ms. McKenzie, School Counselor (HS): [jenny.mckenzie@chesterufsd.org](mailto:jenny.mckenzie@chesterufsd.org)  
Ms. Sternemann, School Counselor (HS): [yvonne.sternemann@chesterufsd.org](mailto:yvonne.sternemann@chesterufsd.org)  
Ms. Azzaro, School Psychologist: [monica.azzaro@chesterufsd.org](mailto:monica.azzaro@chesterufsd.org)

Orange County Department of Mental Health  
[www.orangecountygov.com/616/Mental-Health](http://www.orangecountygov.com/616/Mental-Health)  
845-291-2600

Employee Assistance Program (for district employees)

Confidential 24 hour service.  
1.800.962.7487

## **Facilities**

### **Cleaning and Sanitizing**

- Custodial staff will clean and disinfect frequently touched items and surfaces every day. These items include desks, tables, counters, light switches, doorknobs, handles, handrails, toilets and sinks.
- Custodial staff have been trained in COVID19. They will wear the appropriate PPE as recommended by the cleaning product manufacturer or at a minimum a mask and gloves.
- The cleaning plan conforms to guidance provided by the CDC for K-12 school buildings.
- Chester School District cleaning products are listed on the EPA schedule of products certified to kill the corona virus. To be effective the surfaces must be free of dirt and grime. We have selected products that clean and disinfect. We will follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation to safely use the product.
- We are planning for the use of electro-static sanitizing sprayers but at the time that this plan was developed they are on backorder. Upon receipt of these sprayers and prior to their use custodial staff will receive training on the proper use of the sprayers.
- The district will provide and maintain hand hygiene stations around the school, as follows:
  - For handwashing: soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels.
  - For hand sanitizing: an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical.
- Accommodations for students who cannot use hand sanitizer will be made.
- Regular cleaning and disinfection of the facilities will occur, including more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk and frequently touched surfaces. This will include desks and cafeteria tables, which should be cleaned and disinfected between each individual's use. Cleaning and disinfection will be rigorous and ongoing and will occur at least daily, or more frequently as needed.
- The district will ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms. Restrooms should be cleaned and disinfected more often depending on frequency of use.

## **Signs and Messages**

Signs will be posted in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs (such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face cover image icon).

## **When Students Eat in Classrooms**

- Train teachers on food allergies, including symptoms of allergic reactions to food.
- Train all non-food service staff on any meal service-related activities they will be responsible

## **Facilities Use and Maintenance**

### **Physical Footprint**

The Chester School District has no plans to expand or modify the physical structures or provide permanent barriers in any space. Temporary rearranging of furniture, fixtures and equipment, and installing plastic screens may be necessary. If it is determined that the district needs to expand or change physical spaces the services of a registered architect will be engaged and a request will be filed with the New York State Education Department Office of Facility Planning.

### **General Considerations**

- Doors - Many of our “fire” doors are already held open using an electro magnet tied into our fire alarm system. These are designed to release when an alarm condition is present. Doors designated as fire rated doors (they have a door closure) cannot be “chocked” open. Other non -fire rated doors can be evaluated to determine if holding them open would be of benefit to no touch operation.
- Plumbing – Custodial staff will clean and disinfect all public plumbing fixtures (sinks, toilets, urinals) daily. Sinks and faucets will be adjusted or replaced to maintain the proper water flow duration for hand washing.
- A hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection log will be maintained in the school building. The logs will include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection, frequency of cleaning/disinfection and staff responsible for cleaning/disinfection. I get a chance to

### **Office Areas**

- All offices will be limited to 50% the rated occupancy for the space. Offices must normally maintain a minimum of 150 sq. ft. per individual.
- Where applicable all offices and small spaces will be limited to one (1) individual at a time.
- In a multiple occupant office, occupancy will be reduced to 50% normal load in addition to maintaining at least 6ft of separation between individuals.
- Additional protective barriers such as polycarbonate screens or strip curtains will be utilized to create a physical separation without hindrance to egress or airflow.
- Workstations will be reconfigured so that employees do not face each other, or establish partitions if facing each other cannot be avoided

- Face coverings should be worn in these multiple use office settings.
- Additional breaks may be allotted to allow individuals time to leave the space to remove their masks. Specific determination of these conditions will be determined by the individual's program supervisor.
- Where possible will establish additional shifts to reduce the number of employees in the worksite at one time
- Stagger shift start and end times greater than normal when possible (while still ensuring safe operations), to eliminate employees from congregating during the shift change-over, and from overcrowding at entrances and exits
- Reduce tasks requiring large amounts of people to be in one area
- Employees will be encouraged to use virtual meeting tools, including phone and virtual teleconference, in lieu of in-person meetings, whenever possible
- If in-person meetings are essential, consider limiting meetings to 10 people or less depending on local, state, and federal guidelines.

### **Conference Rooms**

- Will limit in-person meetings, if virtual meetings are not feasible.
- If meetings are to occur in person, they will be conducted in a quick manner.
- Social distancing among participants will be required.
- Lingering and socializing before and after meetings should be discouraged.

### **Break Rooms and Lunch Rooms**

- Breakroom use is discontinued if a minimum of 6 ft. separation cannot be maintained when consuming food or drink.
- Staff are advised to take their lunch and breaks in their private offices or classrooms; in their vehicles or outside at the picnic table throughout the campus.
- Staggered break schedules may be utilized to assist with separation concerns.
- If staff wish to take breaks together they must do such in a large space or outside, where at minimum 6ft. of separation can occur.
- Amenities that are handled with high contact frequency, such as water coolers, coffee makers, and bulk snacks will be replaced with alternatives where possible.
- Communal meals will not be provided to employees, and food will not be available in common areas where employees may congregate.

### **Copier Rooms/Areas**

- Congregating in copier rooms/areas is discouraged.
- Cleaning supplies will be provided at copier stations.
- Staff are encouraged to wipe down touch surfaces prior to and post use.

### **Elevators**

- One person in an elevator at a time, except when accompanying a student, in which case a face covering is required for both occupants.
- Elevators will be frequently disinfected daily.

## **Restrooms**

- All bathrooms regardless of size will be limited to one person at a time.
- Individuals must knock before entering a bathroom to ensure there is no other occupant present.
- In special circumstances where a student must be assisted in the use of the lavatory, the adult present must be wearing all applicable personal protective equipment including a face covering and when medically applicable, the student will be wearing a proper face covering as well.
- Signage will be posted on entry indicating one person at a time.
- Touchless water fixtures will be installed where applicable.
- Entry doors to bathrooms will be left open where applicable to reduce the need to handle.

## **Hallways/Stairwells**

- Where feasible hallway traffic may be limited to single flow direction.
- Where single flow is not applicable, bi-direction traffic will be permitted.
- Directional flow will be identified by indications on the floor/stairs
- Adequate distancing will be obtained between all individuals by taped off lanes on the corridor floors/ stair treads.
- All individuals must also allow for adequate space between when traveling in the same direction.

## **Classrooms**

- Occupancy in each classroom will be specific and determined based off of the actual square footage of usable space.
- Each student, teacher and support staff will receive not less than 6 ft. of separation from others.
- Additional considerations will be taken to account for space utilized for classrooms and teaching material.
- Overall class sizes will be reduced to accommodate all safety parameters.
- Students, teachers and support staff will be required to wear a proper face covering.
- Where possible special teachers and PPS staff will travel to the classroom to provide instruction.
- Restrict items in the classroom to that of obvious use.
  - Remove any unnecessary furniture.
  - Remove any soft surfaces that are difficult to disinfect such as:
    - Area Rugs
    - Soft fabric chairs

## **Nurse Stations (Health Offices)**

- All students and staff are required to wear appropriate face coverings.
  - N95 Respirator use for nurses should be limited to situations of suspected COVID-19
  - Nurses must receive proper training and fitment of N95 Respirators prior to use.

- Where applicable, nurse stations should be reconfigured to:
  - Maintain social distancing of no less than 6ft.
  - Create “sick” and “well” zones.
- Students that receive daily medication should be treated separately from students presenting with symptoms of illness.
- Nebulizer treatments should be conducted in a separate isolated space with adequate fresh air circulation.
  - Physical separation will be achieved by utilizing:
    - Individual exam rooms
    - Polycarbonate barriers
    - Retractable dividing curtain walls.

### **Isolation Room/s**

- Individuals presenting with symptoms representative of COVID-19 should be immediately isolated to reduce risk of transmission.
- A separate room will be utilized where applicable.
- Where applicable, separate, independent room/s with a door in close proximity to the exterior will be utilized for quarantining individuals who present with symptoms representative of COVID-19.
- Where excess space is not available. Nurse stations will be equipped with dividing curtains allowing for both a physical divide and at minimum 6ft of separation.
- These rooms have been identified in each building
  - (Chester Elementary School) - Room # 145
  - (Chester Academy) - Room # 105A

### **Security Vestibule/Reception Areas**

- Security Stations will remain at all entrances of each building.
- Where a multi-entrance design is used, additional security posts will be considered.
- They will serve as the primary location for accounting for all individuals entering and exiting the building.
- Polycarbonate barriers are recommended to protect all individuals.
- Floor demarcations have been installed to indicate where visitors shall stand to maintain social distance.
- Reception areas have had seating removed or adequately spaced to provide at minimum of 6ft of separation.
- Frequently touched materials such as magazines have been removed.

### **Computer Labs**

- The use of shared space and equipment use will be limited where feasible.
- Blocks of computers will be sectioned off to ensure social distancing is maintained.
- Tables of computers will be reconfigured so as to not face each other or a polycarbonate barrier will be installed to create a physical barrier.
- Cleaning and disinfection of computer labs and keyboard will be frequent
  - Keyboards should be wiped and disinfected before and after each use.
  - Keyboard covers may be utilized to aid in the cleaning and disinfection process.

- Students should be instructed to wash hands prior to and after touching the keyboards along with other frequently touched surfaces.

### **Library Spaces**

- Remove all soft covered surfaces that cannot be properly cleaned and disinfected.
  - Bean bag chairs
  - Upholstered couches or chairs
  - Area rugs
- Reconfigure space to ensure social distancing.
  - Tables will be limited to one individual at a time where applicable.
  - Polycarbonate barriers may be installed to create a physical barrier.
  - Desks should be arranged so as to not face each other.
- Small reading nook use should be discontinued unless:
  - limited to one person at a time.
  - cleaned and disinfected routinely
- Borrowing of materials such as books may need to be discontinued if adequate disinfection cannot be achieved.
- Create directional traffic flow patterns between bookcases to ensure social distancing

### **Entry Points**

- Hand sanitizer will be available near the main entrances of each building.
- Alcohol based hand sanitizer will be available in each entry, all corridors, and each classroom.

### **Water Fountains**

- As required by New York State Code a potable water supply will be provided per 150 occupants, but not less than one source per floor.
- Automatic/touchless bottle filling equipment is installed in place of the drink spout.
- Additional bottle filler stations will be installed where necessary.
- These appliances will be routinely cleaned and disinfected.

### **Floor Demarcations**

- All entrances or areas of static wait have floor signage installed allotting for a minimum of 6ft of separation between all individuals
- All Corridor floors and Stairway treading have been fitted with stripping to indicate directional traffic flow and social distancing.
- Corridor doors will all be affixed open using electromagnetic hold-open devices to minimize the need to touch doors.

### **Ventilation**

The Chester School District will provide an indoor environment that is safe, healthy and conducive to learning by ensuring sufficient ventilation and fresh air to all spaces of occupancy.

Coronavirus is spread through an aerosol, meaning particles that become airborne. Facility managers evaluate and adjust systems to increase the amount of outside air up to 100 percent and/or increase the level of filtration to remove fine particulate, generally by installing filters rated a MERV 13 or higher.

At Chester Academy, we will adjust the amount of outside air daily. The setting we choose will depend on outside temperature and humidity and the ability for our mechanical systems to maintain good indoor air quality. Due to the use of air handling that use both a supply and return fan and operating on static pressure through the use of variable frequency drives, we have been able to install MERV 13 filters in units at Chester Academy.

At Chester Elementary School air handling systems are set to bring in a healthy amount of outdoor air. The Elementary School uses constant volume single fan control and so the installation of a more restrictive filter is not recommended by the manufacturer. More frequent maintenance and inspection of ventilation systems will occur to ensure the availability of healthy air and to mitigate extra strain on systems.

## **Emergency Response Protocols & Drills**

The 2020-2021 school year may include hybrid models of the traditional school day. Emergency response drills, including evacuation and lockdown drills, may be spread across the different student populations dependent on the day each population is present the day the drills are scheduled.

### **Shelter-In-Place**

Areas will be identified in each school that will be used for the Shelter-in-Place along with areas that cannot be used due to certain types of environmental hazards (i.e.: high winds, tornado, etc.). Shelter-In-Place protocols will be the same with the following changes:

- Provide 6 feet of space between students and staff during the Shelter-In-Place
- Use of face coverings throughout the event may be considered
- If 6 feet between staff and students cannot be achieved, face coverings should be worn at all times during the event
- Plan to have extra face coverings on hand in the event that a person does not have one
- Listen for updates and respond accordingly

### **Hold-In-Place**

Hold-In-Place protocols will be the same the following changes:

- Provide 6 feet of space between students and staff during the Hold-In-Place.
- Use of face coverings throughout the event may be considered.

- If 6 feet between people cannot be achieved, face coverings should be worn at all times during the event.
- Plan to have extra face coverings on hand in the event that a person does not have one.
- Listen for updates and respond accordingly

### **Emergency Evacuation**

Emergency evacuation protocols will be routinely the same with some minor adjustments.

- Identify areas outside of the building in advance that will allow 6 feet of separation of students and staff. Verify that students and staff will not impede emergency responders.
- In an effort to get all staff and students out of the building as quickly and efficiently as possible, face coverings should be worn at all times.
- Plan to have extra face coverings on hand in the event that a person does not have one.
- Identify, in advance, who will be holding the door to get out of the building, therefore reducing the amount of people touching the door hardware when leaving the building. Personnel that will be conducting this task may be assigned to holding the door for one or more classrooms or until confirmation that everyone has vacated the building
- As written in the established protocols, bring all necessary items needed and consider adding the following items: extra face coverings, in the event a face covering becomes unusable and hand sanitizer
- If no extra face coverings are available, instruct anyone that does not have a face covering to use their shirt to cover their nose and mouth during the event

### **Lockout**

Lockout protocols will be the same, besides maintaining six (6) feet of space between students and staff in the area.

### **Lockdown**

During a Lockdown, it may become necessary to have less than 6 feet of separation between people. If this is the case face masks will be required at all times and every attempt should be made to distance people as close to 6 feet apart as possible. In order to protect life safety, lockdown protocols will be mostly the same process as they have been conducted in the past.

- Evaluate, in advance, if there is room to social distance without being in the line of sight.
- Face coverings should be worn during the event at all times.
- Plan to have extra face coverings on hand in the event that a person does not have one.
- Instruct anyone that does not have a face covering to use their shirt to cover their nose and mouth during the event.

## **Child Nutrition – School Breakfast & School Lunch**

The Chester School District will be providing meal service that is available to all students both in-person and learning remotely utilizing the current food safety standards and enhanced safety protocols to reduce the risk of transmission of Covid-19 and other pathogens. All meal services will comply USDA Child Nutrition Program requirements.

*Since March of 2020 the District has been providing meals to all interested students free of charge. Upon our return to school this will not be the case for all students.* To communicate this, and to recognize the changing financial conditions caused by the shut-down, we have posted free and reduced meal applications and instructions on our website in both English and Spanish. We will continue to announce the availability of free and reduced meals for qualifying students on the district website, social media, and School Messenger communications to the Chester community.

### **Breakfast for In-Person Learning Students**

In-person student breakfast will be provided in the classroom utilizing insulated rolling carts for delivery and disposable place settings. The meal will include all the required components. At service time the students can remove their masks and maintain their distancing. No sharing of meals or meal components will be allowed. Upon conclusion of the meal the student will use the included hand wipe to clean their desk and then clean their hands, replace face covering and dispose of the setting in trash receptacles at the front of the room, according to the lunch monitor's directions.

During breakfast service attendance will be taken along with the students' lunch order. Where age appropriate, they will be asked for their choice of hot lunch, sandwich or salad.

Upon return to the kitchen food delivery rolling carts will be sanitized by food service staff and readied for lunch. Staff will be socially distant whenever possible and wear face coverings and gloves at all times in the kitchen.

### **Lunch for In-Person Learning Students**

Lunch service will commence on a three (Chester Elementary School) or four (Chester Academy) run schedule using insulated food delivery carts and disposable place settings. As with breakfast there will be NO sharing of food. Face coverings can be removed during eating and 6 feet distancing must be maintained. Wipes will be provided for students to clean their hands and desks prior to putting on face coverings and disposing of the service settings.

Serving carts and kitchen equipment will be cleaned and sanitized at the end of each school day.

All meal services will be identified for items containing possible allergens. Additionally, communications with the nurses and parents will be ongoing about the dangers and importance of food allergies.

### **Meals for Students on Remote Instruction**

Students on remote instruction will have the opportunity to receive “grab-and-go” meals consisting of all the required meal components. With advance notice, grab-and-go meals can be picked up at the school building on the day before the student is scheduled for remote learning.

### **Payment for Meals**

Lunch money will be collected using our parent portal “My School Bucks” and cash and check payments accepted in sealed envelope. USDA waivers are being requested where they are required.

### **Links**

NYS Child Nutrition <http://www.cn.nysed.gov/>  
USDA <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn>

### **Transportation**

The Chester School District will provide student transportation services that are consistent with current policies. In addition to our policies, and as a result of the current public health crisis, please note the following changes or modifications to previous policies.

Students will be required to wear masks on the bus, however, students whose physical or mental health would be impaired are not required to wear a face covering, but must be appropriately socially distanced.

In accordance with New York State Education Department guidance, “pursuant to New York State Department of Health guidance, schools must ensure that appropriate social distancing (i.e. 6 feet/barriers) is maintained between individuals while in school facilities and on school grounds (inclusive of students, faculty, and staff), unless safety *or the core activity requires a shorter distance.*” Bus transportation is considered a core activity and in those instances when social distancing is not possible on the bus the wearing of face masks on the bus will be strictly enforced. Parents / guardians may consider driving or walking students to school to reduce density on buses.

The loading and unloading of students will be configured to minimize contact and students will be required to sit with members of their family / household group.

All buses that are used every day by districts and contract carriers will be cleaned/ disinfected a minimum of once a day. High contact areas will be wiped down after each tier is unloaded.

School buses MAY NOT be equipped with hand sanitizer due to its combustible composition and potential liability to the carrier or district. School bus drivers, monitors and attendants must not carry personal bottles of hand sanitizer with them on school buses.

Wheelchair school buses will configure wheelchair placement to ensure social distancing of 6 feet.

Whether school is in session remotely or otherwise, pupil transportation will be provided to nonpublic, parochial, private, charter schools or students whose Individualized Education Plans have placed them in an out of district placement whose schools are meeting in in-person sessions.

All students are entitled to transportation by the district to the extent required by law. Transportation departments do not have the ability or the right to deny transportation for children who are in foster care, homeless or attend private or charter schools. Parents who may have missed the due date to request out of district transportation due to a reasonable excuse may file a 310 appeal with the Commissioner of Education.

### **School Bus Staff**

School bus drivers, monitors, attendants and mechanics shall perform a self-health assessment for COVID-19 before arriving at work. If personnel are experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19 they should notify their employer and seek medical attention. Transportation personnel must wear face coverings at all times in and around the bus and drivers, monitors and attendants will wear gloves any time they are required to have physical contact with a student.

Transportation personnel will be trained through periodic refreshers on the proper use of personal protective equipment as well as on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19. In line with CDC recommendations, Quality Bus Service has implemented screening of employees for COVID-19 symptoms on a daily basis prior to the start of their first shift of the day. The screening consists of a temperature check using a non-contact thermometer and asking questions to determine whether employees have symptoms of COVID-19. If an employee's temperature is 100.4 or greater, or if the employee is experiencing any other symptoms of COVID-19, the employee is sent home. Before returning to work after being sent home, employees must either:

- Have clearance from their health care provider or public health official, or
- Three days must have passed without a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and since any symptoms of respiratory infections were present, and at least ten days have passed since their symptoms first appeared.

### **Parent / Guardian Pre Screening of Students Prior to Entering Buses**

As was outlined in the Health and Safety section of this guidance, all parents/guardians will be required to ensure their child/children are not experiencing any signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and do not have a fever of more than 100 degrees prior to them boarding their method of transportation to school.

Students must wear an appropriate face covering when entering, existing and while riding on a school bus. Students who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering, including students where such covering would impair their physical health or mental health are NOT subject to the required use of a face covering. Transportation will not be denied those students and they will be required to socially distance on the bus.

Students who do not have a mask cannot be denied transportation but will be provided one by the bus driver.

### **Pupil Transportation Routing**

The Chester Union Free School District has developed multiple routing scenarios to accommodate different instructional scheduling options including in-person and hybrid models of in-person and remote learning.

Information about school bus routes will be available to parents via the school website. Students attending non-public schools and/or special education out-of-district schools will be provided transportation on days those schools are conducting in-person education when or if Chester is not. Parents who may have missed the due date to request out of district transportation, which was extended to May 9, 2020, due to a reasonable excuse may file a 310 appeal with the Commissioner of Education.

### **Teaching and Learning**

In an effort to ensure high-quality teaching and learning a continuity of learning plan has been developed for the 2020-2021 school year. This plan considers and plans for teaching and learning **In-Person**, **Remotely**, and through **In-Person Hybrid** models of instruction. Our plan assures that instruction is aligned with the New York State Learning Standards and assures equity as well as quality for all learners.

**At the time of the publication of this reopening plan (July 31, 2020) it has not yet been determined when schools will open and which instructional models may be approved by the New York State Education Department. When that information is available it will be posted on the school district website and will be sent to parents/guardians via School Messenger.**

Equity is at the heart of all school instructional decisions. All instruction in our district will be designed so that whether it is delivered in-person, remotely, or through an in-person hybrid model due to a local or state school closure, there are clear, comprehensive, and accessible learning opportunities for all students. Such opportunities will be aligned with state standards.

Our teaching and instructional plan outlines routine, scheduled times for students to interact and seek feedback and support from their teachers. Our plan is centered on instruction and academic programming that includes regular and substantive interaction with an appropriately certified teacher regardless of the delivery method (e.g., in person, remote or in-person hybrid).

Our teaching and learning plan includes a clear communication plan for how students and their families/caregivers can contact the school and teachers with questions about their instruction and/or technology. This information will be accessible to all, available in multiple languages, widely disseminated, and include clear and multiple ways for students and families to contact schools and teachers (e.g., email, online platform, and/or by phone) in an effort to assure learning for all.

As indicated previously, the 2020 – 2021 Student Calendar for the Chester School District was approved by the Board of Education on February 12, 2020, prior to the closing of schools due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. The starting date for students is currently scheduled for September 2, 2020. However, it is anticipated that the starting date of school may be delayed due to new necessary staff training prior to the beginning of school. If there is a change to the starting date for students that change will be communicated promptly to parents / guardians via School Messenger, the District website, and social media (Facebook, Twitter). Acknowledging the challenges that our teachers and staff have faced this spring delivering remote instruction under stressful circumstances, the district will focus Superintendent Conference days on providing support to staff in the areas of social-emotional health and technology integration.

As we enter the new school year, teachers will be encouraged to spend time building relationships, supporting students with the transition back to school, and teaching social distancing etiquette at developmentally appropriate levels.

Assessing student learning gaps or areas of need will be critical. Formative assessment before a unit of instruction to assess student understanding of pre-requisite skills will be common practice.

Acknowledging that the typical content in a given grade level or course may need to be adjusted, content will be prioritized to ensure that students receive instruction for the prioritized learning standards, key understandings, and skills necessary for students' success in future study.

Grading practices will follow a standards-based framework designed to provide direct feedback regarding students' mastery of course content.

Given the possibility that communities may experience spikes in COVID-19 cases at any point during the school year, which may prompt short or long-term school closures, our district has developed schedules that can continue in a fully remote environment.

Remote learning opportunities for secondary students will include a greater emphasis on synchronous instruction, with teachers finding ways to provide live instruction and lessons to students. While recording of live lessons is still essential for students unable to attend at a scheduled time, teachers will ensure that their students are directly engaged with them and their class peers in experiential learning on a regular basis.

To ensure high-quality remote learning experiences, we will standardize the use of a single online learning platform, to the extent possible, and develop a common, coordinated set of guidelines for teachers to follow when using the platform with students.

### **Teaching and Learning - Communications**

Good communications between the home and school are critical to student success. Parents / Guardians are encouraged to direct any questions about our Teaching and Learning Plan or our Technology Plan to the following:

**Chester Elementary School**  
Catherine O’Hara, Principal  
catherine.ohara@chesterufsd.org  
845.469.2178

**Chester Academy**  
John Flanagan, Principal  
john.flanagan@chesterufsd.org  
845.469.2231

**Chester UFSD Technology**  
Edward Spence, Director of Instruction & Technology  
espence@chesterufsd.org  
845.469.2231

### **In-Person Learning Model**

In-Person Learning refers to students attending school in-person and receiving instruction in a face-to-face manner from teachers. In the unlikely event that there are no restrictions to school reopening it would most likely include a traditional school schedule.

In-person learning that occurs on a shortened school day or a reduced number of in-person days is referred to as *In-Person Hybrid Learning*.

### **Remote Learning Model**

Remote Learning refers to a model in which students receive instruction at home, online, using technology, with instruction provided remotely by teachers. Students who are on remote learning do not attend school but may participate in the school meals program. The Chester school district provides all students with a Chromebook, upon request, to assist with remote learning.

### **In-Person Hybrid Learning Model**

In-Person Hybrid Learning is a model in which students attend school in person for a portion of the school day, or a portion of the school week, and supplement their learning with additional online instruction provided remotely by teachers. It is a combination of in-person and remote learning. The Chester school district provides all students with a Chromebook, upon request, to assist with any remote learning.

When In-Person Hybrid Learning is used the number of students in each of our classrooms will be reduced to adhere to CDC guidance regarding proper social distancing. Class size will reflect the need to ensure that students’ desks/seats are positioned no less than six feet apart. Accommodating a six-foot radius around students will necessitate the identification of additional rooms and common-area spaces that can be converted into classrooms.

Our schools will minimize the movement of students. This includes having students eat lunch in their classroom instead of the cafeteria and eliminating assemblies, field trips and other large-group activities. Special-area subjects (e.g., art, music, physical education) may be pushed into the classroom or may be taught remotely. Whenever possible students will utilize outside space for physical education instruction. We will adhere to 12 feet between students when engaging in physical activity.

To the extent possible, students will remain in small cohorts if/when leaving the classroom, such as for recess or any necessary transition, so as to reduce their exposure to additional students.

For information on school schedules, visit the School Schedules section of our reopening plan.

## **Parent/Guardian Choice of Instructional Model**

The Chester School District will be in compliance with all federal, state, and local health and safety regulations to ensure that our students and staff can safely return to school. Nevertheless, our district understands that some parents/guardians may prefer to have their children learn remotely, even if in-person learning is approved and offered by the district during the Coronavirus Pandemic. Parents/guardians who elect to have their children receive remote instruction must understand that it is often more academically, socially, and emotionally beneficial for students to receive in-person instruction. Parents/guardians should also carefully consider difficulties that students may experience transitioning between remote and in-person learning.

**Parents/guardians who elect to have their children receive remote learning should provide the school with a minimum of one week's notice before the time that they would like remote learning to begin. This advance notice is necessary for instructional and technological planning.**

**Also, parents/guardians who wish to have their children returned to in-person learning from remote learning should also provide school with a minimum of one week's notice before the time that they would like to have their children return to in person schooling. This advance notice is necessary for instructional planning and to ensure that busing and classrooms can be appropriately configured to safely accommodate the students return to school.**

## **Student Schedules**

### **Chester Elementary School**

The Chester Elementary School schedule, as explained in the teaching and learning section, includes plans for traditional in-person instruction, remote instruction as well as an in-person hybrid of both in-person and remote. Each model includes regular substantive interaction between teachers and students inclusive of academic and social-emotional support. As indicated previously, a decision about how instruction will be delivered will be determined by New York State requirements and local decisions

### **Chester Elementary School (Traditional) In-Person Model**

We will follow the Chester Elementary School traditional schedule only when the DOH and CDC guidelines ensure the safety for all students and staff to return following this model. The traditional schedule reflects each class rotating through the specials (Art, Music and Physical Education) on an A, B, C, or D day. Communication to parents/families will be transparent in regard to a transition to this model from the hybrid and/or remote models outlined below.

### **Chester Elementary School Remote Model**

If it is determined that a remote model will be used we will continue with the previous remote schedule focusing on two content areas per day in a weekly rotation. Schedules for classroom teachers will be emailed to parents as well as shared in Google Classroom. Google Meets will be scheduled to address both social emotional support needs as well as academic. These will be conducted in small group meetings as well as full class. Schedules/assignments will be posted each Friday for the week that follows. This provides students/families with additional time to prepare their home schedules as well as reach out with any support needs. As mentioned daily opportunities for small group support will be provided to all students.

### **Chester Elementary School In-Person Hybrid Model**

The Chester Elementary School In-Person Hybrid model reflects daily in-person instruction for a portion of the day for five days per week with remote learning at the end of each day as scheduled/supported by each classroom teacher.

Each class will be divided into two cohorts: a Blue Group, and an Orange Group that follow one of two schedules on an alternating basis: Schedule #1, Schedule #2. This results in class sizes with a range of eight to eleven students as well as provides all students with an opportunity for individualized instruction combined with targeted social-emotional support and well-being.

## CES Schedule 1: Classroom Teacher

- Cohort class sizes range from 8 to 11 students which provides an opportunity for individualized academic as well as social-emotional support.
- Opportunity to support student needs with software applications/programs used both in and outside of the classroom in all models of instruction.
- Opportunity for movement and physical activity will be embedded within each grade level schedule to the extent that honors social distancing protocols both within and outside of the classroom. Social emotional and physical well-being are interconnected within the school day.
- Hands-on interactive learning experiences will be provided throughout the instructional blocks of the day. Personalized bins of materials (scissors/manipulatives/reading texts) will be provided to ensure use designated solely to one student.
- Students will be socially-distanced within the classroom to the NYS DOH guidelines of 6 feet apart.

<b>CES Schedule 1: Classroom Teacher (Tentative)</b>	
8:30 - 8:45	Staggered Arrival from Buses. Breakfast in Classroom (optional).
8:45 - 9:00	Parent Drive Up / Drop Off at Front of Building Breakfast in Classroom (optional).
9:00-9:30	Core Area Instruction (Reading, Math, Social Studies, Science, SEL)
9:34-10:04	
10:08-10:38	
10:42-11:12	
11:16-11:46	Grades K, 1 Lunch (in classroom). Grades 2-5 Core Area Instruction
11:50-12:20	Grades 2, 3 Lunch (in classroom). Grades K, 1, 4, 5 Core Area Instruction
12:24-1:00	Grades 4, 5 Lunch (in classroom). Grades K, 1, 2, 3 Core Area Instruction
1:00 - 1:25	Staggered Dismissal to Buses
1:35 - 2:00	Parent Drive Up / Pick Up
<i>Note: Mask breaks and recess breaks will be provided periodically during the day by the classroom teacher.</i>	

## **CES Schedule 2: Specialists Support Daily Schedule**

- The three smaller cohorts from each grade level combine in a larger location with two teachers or one teacher and one support staff rotating through. Students will be socially-distanced within the room in adherence to the NYS DOH guidelines of 6ft apart.
- Opportunities will be provided for individualized academic as well as social-emotional support.
- Opportunity to support student needs with software applications/programs used both in and outside of the classroom in all models of instruction.
- Opportunity for movement and physical activity will be embedded within each grade level schedule to the extent that honors social distancing protocols both within and outside of the classroom. Social emotional and physical well-being are interconnected within the school day.
- Supports students' social-emotional and academic needs through participation in physical education, music, art/STEAM with certified teachers as well as provides instructional support opportunities and services (AIS reading, AIS math, speech, ENL) through certified teachers.

**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR SCHEDULE**

<b>CES Schedule 2: Specialists Support Daily Schedule (Tentative)</b>	
8:30 - 8:45	Staggered Arrival from Buses. Breakfast in Classroom (optional).
8:45 - 9:00	Parent Drive Up / Drop Off at Front of Building Breakfast in Classroom (optional).
9:00-9:30	Grade K: Reading Grade 1: Math Grade 2: Individualized Support Grade 3: Art / STEAM Grade 4: Music Grade 5: Physical Education
9:34-10:04	Grade K: Music Grade 1: Physical Education Grade 2: Art / STEAM Grade 3: Math Grade 4: Individualized Support Grade 5: Reading
10:08-10:38	Grade K: Math Grade 1: Reading Grade 2: Physical Education Grade 3: Individualized Support Grade 4: Art / STEAM Grade 5: Music
10:42-11:12	Grade K: Art / STEAM Grade 1: Music Grade 2: Math Grade 3: Reading Grade 4: Physical Education Grade 5: Individualized Support
11:16-11:46	Grade K: Lunch (in classroom). Grade 1: Lunch (in classroom). Grade 2: Music Grade 3: Physical Education Grade 4: Math Grade 5: Art / STEAM
11:50-12:20	Grade K: Individualized Support Grade 1: Art / STEAM Grade 2: Lunch (in classroom). Grade 3: Lunch (in classroom). Grade 4: Reading Grade 5: Math
12:24-1:00	Grade K: Physical Education Grade 1: Individualized Support Grade 2: Reading Grade 3: Music Grade 4: Lunch (in classroom). Grade 5: Lunch (in classroom).
1:00 - 1:25	Staggered Dismissal to Buses
1:35 - 2:00	Parent Drive Up / Pick Up

## Student Schedules: Chester Academy

### Chester Academy: In Person (Traditional) Model

In the unlikely event that there are no restrictions to full-time in-person reopening of schools Chester Academy will continue with its traditional nine period school day. Student schedules will be accessible through the Parent Portal on School Tool. This schedule will also incorporate the student's teacher of record for the courses they are taking. In the more likely event that schools will open with restrictions, including social distancing, Chester Academy will open in a remote or in-person hybrid model of instruction. Students will still be assigned the same teacher of record who will oversee the student's school work.

**Chester Academy: Typical In Person (Traditional) Schedule** (School begins 7:40 am, ends 2:24 p.m.)

Period	Class
1	English
2	Social Studies
3	Math
4	Science
5	Foreign Language
6	Lunch
7	Physical Education / Science Lab / Study Hall / CTEC
8	Elective / CTEC
9	Elective / CTEC / Study Hall

### Chester Academy: Remote Learning

If Chester Academy is using a Remote Learning model, teachers will use Google Classroom and will post assignments daily to the extent of engaging students for the equivalent of 180 minutes per week (this includes both synchronous and asynchronous instruction as well the estimated time of student engagement). Each teacher, based on their instructional discipline, would be given specific times for live synchronous instruction (Google Meet). A draft of that schedule is posted below. **This draft is subject to change and specific times would be communicated should we incorporate a full remote model.** Asynchronous instruction would be posted on days that a teacher does not have a synchronous meet.

**Synchronous** – All students receive instruction at the same time.

**Asynchronous** – Students work independently on their own schedule.

Please note that the schedule for synchronous instruction below is reflective of students in grades 7-12 using a Remote Learning model. Students working remotely will follow the daily instructions and assignment postings created by each of their teachers in Google Classroom.

**Chester Academy: Tentative Remote Learning Schedule**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
ELA	SS	ELA	SS	Health
Math	Science	Math	Science	PE
Music	World Languages	Health	World Languages	Music
FACS	Art	PE	Art	Tech
	Tech	FACS		

Students receiving special education related services would schedule times for synchronous Google Meets with their service providers.

**Chester Academy: In-Person Hybrid Learning Schedule**

The In-Person Hybrid model is a combination of in-person instruction and remote learning. Under the In-Person Hybrid model students would attend school two, or three days a week in grades 7-12 while students in the 6th grade would attend daily. Students would receive instruction in Math, Science, Social Studies and English in-person on days they are in the building, in addition to having two flexible periods to complete work that has been assigned remotely from their other non-core and elective teachers. Please see the section below for more information on this model.

**Chester Academy: In-Person Hybrid Learning Common Elements**

- The school day for students attending school in-person would start at 7:30 AM and would conclude at 12:15 PM.
- Students would be broken up into smaller cohorts (groups of 11-15 students based on the square footage of the classroom).
- Students would be assigned to 1 classroom and remain in that room for the day
- Students would not change classes, rather, teachers would rotate through each class
- Lunch would be served in the classroom, not in the cafeteria.
- All classrooms would be set up with desks 6 feet apart to observe social distancing
- Students will be required to wear masks in the classroom. Fresh air breaks will be provided throughout the day for students.
- The day will be broken up into six periods. Each period will consist of 45 minutes.
- Students will receive in-person instruction in English, Social Studies, Science, & Math.
- Two periods during each day will be designated as “specials” periods. During specials periods students will work on other, non-core and elective classes. This would include

World Languages, Health, Art, Music, Family and Consumer Sciences, Physical Education, STEM and Technology. This would not be direct, scheduled face to face instruction. These teachers will be available and circulating to assist students during these times.

### 6th Grade Schedule

- 6<sup>th</sup> Graders attend school Monday – Friday from 7:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
- Students would be broken up into smaller cohorts (groups of 11-15 students based on the square footage of the classroom).
- See other points in *Chester Academy: In-Person Hybrid Learning Common Elements* above.
- 6<sup>th</sup> graders do not receive World (Foreign) Language instruction.

### Chester Academy: Tentative Typical 6<sup>th</sup> Grade In-Person Hybrid Learning Schedule

Period	Time	Class
	7:30 a.m.	Staggered bus arrival / drop off/ arrival
1	7:40 – 8:25	English
2	8:25 – 9:10	Social Studies
3	9:10 – 9:55	Math
4	9:55 – 10:40	Science
5	10:40 – 11:25	PE / Specials
6	11:25 – 12:10	Specials
	12:10 p.m.	Dismissal

### Grades 7 - 12

***Please note that as of the date of the publication of this plan (July 31, 2020) a final decision has not been made about the In-Person Hybrid Learning model for grades 7 to 12. Below please find two versions of schedules that are currently under consideration.***

## Option 1: 2 Day / Week Schedule

### Option 1: Chester Academy: 7th-12th Grade (2 Day / Week Schedule)

- Students in grades 7 -12 attend school 2 days per week and work remotely for 3 days per week.
- Students would be broken up into two groups.
- Group 1 would be attending school for two days per week. (Days TBD)
- Group 2 would be attending school for two days per week. (Days TBD)
- One day per week (TBD) would be designated as a remote learning day and will be used as a day for teachers to provide and plan for remote instruction, have office hours with students, collaborate on lessons, and receive professional development of best practices in remote instruction.
- Students would be broken up into smaller cohorts (groups of 11-15 students based on the square footage of the classroom).
- See other points in *Chester Academy: In-Person Hybrid Learning Common Elements* above.
- CTEC – Grades 11 & 12 only. Orange Ulster BOCES Career & Technical Education Program.
- Core area instruction (English, math, social studies, science) for CTEC students subject to CTEC schedule.

### Chester Academy: Tentative In-Person Hybrid Learning (2 Day / Week Schedule)

Period	Time	Class (Non-CTEC)	(CTEC)
	7:30 a.m.	Staggered bus arrival / drop off / arrival	
1	7:40 – 8:25	English	CTEC
2	8:25 – 9:10	Social Studies	CTEC
3	9:10 – 9:55	Math	CTEC
4	9:55 – 10:40	Science	CTEC
5	10:40 – 11:25	PE / Specials	English, Math, Social Studies, Science
6	11:25 – 12:10	Specials	
	12:10 p.m.	Dismissal	

## Option 2: Alternating Days “A-B” Schedule

### Option 2: Chester Academy: 7th-12th Grade Alternating Days “A-B” Typical Schedule

- Students in grades 7 -12 attend school on alternating (A or B) days
- Students would be broken up into two groups: “A Day Students” and “B Day Students.”
- “A Day Students” attend (in-person) school on A days and receive remote instruction on B days.
- “B Day Students” attend (in-person) school on B days and receive remote instruction on A days.
- All students attend in-person school for five days over a ten day, two week period.
- All students receive remote instruction for five days over a ten day, two week period.
- Students would be broken up into smaller cohorts (groups of 11-15 students based on the square footage of the classroom).
- See other points in *Chester Academy: In-Person Hybrid Learning Common Elements* above.
- CTEC – Grades 11 & 12 only. Orange Ulster BOCES Career & Technical Education Program.
- Core area instruction (English, math, social studies, science) for CTEC students subject to CTEC schedule.

#### “A” Group - Days of Attendance

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	A Day (In-Person)	B Day (Remote)	A Day (In-Person)	B Day (Remote)	A Day (In-Person)
2	B Day (Remote)	A Day (In-Person)	B Day (Remote)	A Day (In-Person)	B Day (Remote)

#### “B” Group - Days of Attendance

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	A Day (Remote)	B Day (In-Person)	A Day (Remote)	B Day (In-Person)	A Day (Remote)
2	B Day (In-Person)	A Day (Remote)	B Day (In-Person)	A Day (Remote)	B Day (In-Person)

**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR SCHEDULE**

## Option 2: Alternating Days “A-B” Schedule

### Chester Academy: Tentative In-Person Hybrid Learning (Alternating Days “A-B”)

Period	Time	Class (Non-CTEC)	(CTEC)
	7:30 a.m.	Staggered bus arrival / drop off / arrival	
1	7:40 – 8:25	English	CTEC
2	8:25 – 9:10	Social Studies	CTEC
3	9:10 – 9:55	Math	CTEC
4	9:55 – 10:40	Science	CTEC
5	10:40 – 11:25	PE / Specials	English, Math, Social Studies, Science
6	11:25 – 12:10	Specials	
	12:10 p.m.	Dismissal	

### Career and Technical Education (CTEC)

While planning for CTE instruction, whether in-person, remote or hybrid models, The Chester School District has collaborated with Orange-Ulster BOCES to ensure high school instructional plans are aligned. OU BOCES has developed models that ensure NYS Learning Standards, applicable industry certification requirements, clinical and work based learning hours have been met. In addition, their plans follow all New York State Department of Health health and safety guidelines and social distancing.

### Special Education Services

The Chester School District’s reopening plans provides a framework to ensure that all students with disabilities continue to have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living in the least restrictive environment (LRE). In consideration of the health, safety, and well-being of students, families, and staff, our plan is designed to enable transitioning between in-person, remote, and in-person hybrid learning environments to ensure the provision of FAPE consistent with the changing health and safety conditions that exist.

Special Education programs and services of the Chester School District provide equity and access for students with disabilities to be involved in and to participate and progress in the general education curriculum with access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the

unique disability related needs of students. While not all formats allow for maximum benefit to students, these programs and services can be provided in all formats (in-person, remote, or in-person hybrid). The district will ensure access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of students.

The Chester School District is committed to providing meaningful parent engagement in the parent's preferred language or mode of communication regarding the provision of services to his/her child to meet the requirements of the IDEA. Communication regarding plans specific to special education will be distributed and include methods for parents to reach out to the district with any questions or concerns.

The Chester School District will plan and support collaboration between the committees on preschool special education (CPSE) and committees on special education (CSE) and program providers representing the variety of settings where students are served to ensure there is an understanding of the provision of services consistent with the recommendations on individualized education programs (IEPs), plans for monitoring and communicating student progress, and commitment to sharing resources.

The Chester School District will maintain records to document the implementation of each IEP. With any known changes to student programs, parents / guardians will be notified and when necessary, updates will be made to IEPs through amendments and/or through changes made and documented at CPSE/CSE meetings. Quarterly progress monitoring notes will update student progress on individual goals.

Special education students in the Chester School District will be participating in a traditional live in person instruction, remote, or in-person hybrid instruction along with their grade level peers.

Following guidelines for social distancing, special education classrooms at Chester Elementary School will not need to participate in the split class cohort model of instruction highlighted in the Elementary Plan due to smaller class sizes that readily accommodate social distancing. Students in these classrooms will participate in learning in their own classroom with their teacher each day. They will, however, be assigned to a grade appropriate cohort to enable access to specials classes (physical education, art, music).

At Chester Academy, sixth grade special education students will attend school each day with their grade level peers. Students participating in the 8:1:1 ("Life Skills") classroom setting will also attend school daily as the ratio allows for safe social distancing each day. Special Education students in grades 7-12 who are not participating in an 8:1:1 ("Life Skills") classroom will participate in the in-person hybrid schedule.

For questions about Chester school district special education programs please contact:

**Rachel Loftus**

Director of Pupil Personnel Services

rachel.loftus@chesterufsd.org

845.469.221 extension 3750

## **World Languages and English as a New Language (ENL) Learning**

The Chester School District provides world language instruction in Spanish and French 7-12 and English as a New Language (ENL) instruction for ELLs/MLLs K-12. This assistance will be provided in all formats (live-person, hybrid, or remote).

Support of English language learners (ELLs) will be comprehensive, high-quality, and culturally responsive. If schools reopen using in-person or hybrid instruction we will complete the ELL identification process within 30 school days of the start of the school year for all students who enrolled during COVID-19 school closures in 2019-20, as well as all students who enroll during summer of 2020 and during the first 20 school days of the 2020-21 school year. After this 20 day flexibility period, identification of ELLs will resume for all students within the required 10 school days of initial enrollment as required by Commissioner's Regulations Part 154.

The Chester School District is committed to comprehensive, high-quality, and culturally responsive instruction for ENL students, we will provide the required instructional Units of Study to all ELLs based on their most recently measured English language proficiency level during in-person or hybrid instruction. Further, we will maintain regular communication with the parents/guardians and other family members of ELLs to ensure that they are engaged in their children's education during the reopening process which includes telephone contact, text messages, social media, emails and regular mail in their preferred language. We will provide all communications for parents/guardians of ELLs in their preferred language and mode of communication. We utilize OU BOCES regional translation service to assist with translation services. This service can translate live conversations as well as documents.

The Chester School District will provide professional learning opportunities for our district that support best practices and equitable instruction for ELLs as well as general education students to help address learning gaps caused by the COVID-19 school closures. The district also has access to the OUBOCES Professional Learning Catalog to support teachers to assure ENL and world language instruction is personalized and research-based.

In order to assure that students have opportunities to study world languages we are prepared to teach Spanish and French in the in-person, hybrid, or remote format upon reopening. With the

support of OUBOCES, we will provide professional learning opportunities to our district and the region that supports best practices in all three formats of instruction and cover equitable instruction for our ELLs, SWDs, and general education students who are studying world languages such as Spanish or French to help address learning gaps caused by the COVID-19 school closures.

Through using our district and BOCES resources, we are well prepared to reopen our schools and serve ELLs, MLLs, and students learning world languages as they expand their skills, knowledge, and facilities with languages.

## **Technology and Connectivity**

Access to technology is essential for continuity of instruction. The Chester School District has been committed to ongoing planning and implementation of district technologies to ensure equitable access for staff and students. The team has initiated plans that are mindful of student home access to reliable Internet and computers.

The Chester Union Free School District recently gathered data and asked teachers and families to identify their level of access to devices and high-speed broadband from their residence. Respondents indicated that the overwhelming majority of residents have access to high-speed Internet in their homes. The district will continue to assess the ongoing needs of our families for technology and connectivity (survey, interviews, school outreach, etc.).

In order to be prepared to support students and/or teachers who do not have access to the Internet or technology the district will take the necessary steps to meet their needs when possible.

- Conduct and/or maintain an inventory of equipment and other assets.
- Identify which students, families, and staff have district assets in their possession.
- Procure, manage and/or maintain hardware, software, licenses, learning management systems, etc. to support and improve virtual instruction and student engagement.
- Identify professional learning needs for teachers and continue to support their development of skills and pedagogy in a virtual learning environment.
- Arrange a “Helpdesk” system for parents/students/teachers to report technical issues that might be experienced during remote learning. Communicate protocols to these stakeholders to inform them in advance of how to gain assistance in such cases.

The Chester Union Free School District will provide all students with access to learning materials and resources in multiple formats, wherever possible. Further, the district will support teachers through professional development and coaching on pedagogical methods that enable students to participate in multiple ways, so that they can demonstrate mastery of Learning Standards in remote or blended models through the use of both synchronous (i.e. Google Meet or other web conferencing tool) and asynchronous technologies (i.e. Google Classroom or other LMS).

In the event students do not have sufficient access to devices and/or high-speed internet, the district will assist families in securing Internet service and/or provide the students with alternate methods to access materials and instruction, i.e. pick up materials at school, drop off materials to students' homes, etc. The district will also schedule opportunities to connect with families to educate them on how to use the technologies and connect to the instructional activities.

***The Chester Union Free School District was the first school district to provide 1-to-1 Chromebooks to students/teachers starting in 2012. By utilizing NYS Smart Bond and local funding, as of 2019-2020, all students in grades 8-12 and faculty who request one receive a take-home Chromebook. Following the March 2020 COVID-19 school closings, the Chester Union Free School District made Chromebooks available additionally to all faculty and to K-7 students who requested one. For fall 2020, all Chester faculty will be receiving a brand-new Chromebook. Parents will have access to Parent Daily/Weekly Students Reports using Google Classroom.***

### **Attendance During Remote Learning**

Students will be required to check into their Google Classroom each day and interact online with their teacher as a measure of their daily attendance. Student daily check-ins will take place in Google Classroom and/or a shared Google Sheet. All check-ins are required from students by 2pm. After 2pm, the teachers will enter attendance into our School Tool Student (SIS) management system, School Tool.

## **Attendance, Attendance Reporting and Chronic Absenteeism**

### **Attendance and Attendance Reporting**

All schools in The Chester School District will take daily attendance whether school opens in September in- person, remote, or in-person hybrid. Attendance policies and procedures will be communicated with families and students prior to the start of the school year or if the instructional model changes during the year. Communications will take the form of building level parent letters/newsletters, School Messenger, emails, text messaging, and social media. Teachers will record daily attendance in School Tool, our student management system based on the required daily scheduled student contact and engagement. Daily reports will be generated to identify students who are absent and/or chronically absent. Contact with the families will be made daily to determine reasons for absence and needs or barriers the student may have to participate in daily lessons.

### **Chronic Absenteeism**

While there is no one-size-fits all approach to addressing chronic absenteeism, The Chester School District is committed to providing interventions to prevent and address health-related and mental health chronic absenteeism. We recognize that many factors will influence student attendance, and may be greatly impacted by the instructional models provided; in-person, hybrid, and remote. The Chester School District addresses chronic absenteeism through a combination of

school and community resources. Students with chronic absenteeism issues are referred to the school social worker at Chester Elementary School and to the appropriate school counselor at Chester Academy.

### **Encouraging Daily Attendance**

Regular attendance at school is critical to academic, social, and emotional growth and development. The Chester School District encourages regular school attendance through the following:

- Clear communication to families and students about the District Attendance Policy.
- Explaining the importance of regular school attendance to the entire school community.
- Tracking daily attendance and student engagement in one central, secure location with a tool that helps you can quickly see how these data points impact student behavior.
- Regular monitoring of attendance and communication with parents/guardians when patterns of absence emerge.
- Identification of students who may be at risk as determined by a pattern of absence.
- Development of intervention plans which may include: parent phone calls, home visits, counseling, instructional modifications, etc.
- Promoting a positive school culture and engaging instruction.
- Providing teachers and school leaders with multiple levels of support to help students stay more engaged and act positively.
- Helping students achieve positive social and emotional character development, while reinforcing the behaviors that contribute to a positive school culture.
- Using incentives and rewards to motivate regular school attendance and positive student behaviors where age appropriate.

### **Athletics and Extracurricular Activities**

Athletics and extracurricular activities are important to the overall development of students. The Chester School District understands how important this participation is to students and families and will endeavor to resume athletics and extracurricular activities as soon as it is safe to do so.

#### **Interscholastic Athletics**

In addition to following New York State Education Department and New York State Department of Health regulations, interscholastic athletics in New York State are also under the jurisdiction of the New York State Public High Schools Athletics Association (NYSPHSAA) and are subject to NYSPHSAA rules and requirements. Interscholastic sports programs will follow the guidance under the New York State Department of Health’s “Interim Guidance For Sports And Recreation During The COVID-19 Public Health Emergency,” As a result of the COVID19 pandemic, districts have delayed the Fall sports start date until Monday, September 21. With NYS approval

for the opening of schools in September and with appropriate social distancing, PPE usage, and cleaning and disinfection of equipment, the following will be implemented:

- Cancel NYS Fall Regional and State Championship events.
- Waive seven-day practice rule to enable greater opportunities for local participation.
- Maintain current practice requirements.
- Reducing travel - scheduling of games & contests with schools who are geographically closer.
- Schools would have the option, if permitted by state officials, to offer off-season conditioning workouts.

If the fall sports season is interrupted or impacted by COVID-19 crisis (i.e. state official guidance, school closings, cancelation of high-risk sports, etc.) then a condensed seasons plan will be implemented. This plan takes into consideration the competitive and interactive aspects of each sport and would include the following, with the stipulated dates being tentative.

#### Season I (Winter Sports)

Dates: Jan. 4-Mar. 13 (Week 27-36) 10 Weeks

\*Note: tentative dates Sports: basketball (girls & boys), indoor track & field (girls & boys), \*wrestling, \*competitive cheer. \* Because of the high risk nature of wrestling and competitive cheer, sports may have to be moved to Season II or season III.

#### Season II (Fall Sports)

Dates: Mar. 1-May 8 (Week 35-44) 10 Weeks

\*Note: tentative dates Sports: football, soccer (girls & boys), volleyball (girls & boys).  
Note: Weather will have an impact upon outdoor sports in some parts of the state in March and potentially early April.

#### Season III (Spring Sports)

Dates: Apr. 5-Jun. 12 (Week 40-49) 10 Weeks 33

\*Note: tentative dates Sports: baseball, softball, lacrosse (girls), outdoor track & field (girls & boys).

All coaches and advisors are recommended to participate in the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) “COVID-19 for Coaches and Administrators”, this is a free online course provided by NFHS to provide an awareness to the advisor:  
<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/covid-19-for-coaches-and-administrators>

## **Extracurricular Activities**

- All extracurricular activities and or clubs will follow state and local protocols regarding health and safety, this includes the areas of social distancing, PPE and cleaning/ disinfection.
- All extracurricular activities and or clubs will follow a modified format that may include restricted and or/limit use of school district facilities.
- All activities are recommended to use online technology for communication/meetings and or limit person to person contact.
- All advisors are recommended to participate in the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) “COVID-19 for Coaches and Administrators”, this is a free online course provided by NFHS to provide an awareness to the advisor:  
<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/covid-19-for-coaches-and-administrators>

## **Before & After School Child Care**

Before and after school childcare is available through a program run by the Middletown YMCA in Chester Elementary School. This program is independent of the Chester School District but works closely with the district and is required to be in compliance with all New York State and Chester School District health and safety protocols.

For more information about the extended day program for Chester Elementary School please contact:

**Middletown YMCA**  
Irene Rumsey  
845.344.9622

## **Staffing**

### **Teacher and Principal Evaluation System**

All teachers and principals will continue to be evaluated pursuant to the district’s approved APPR plan. The Chester School District will consider whether their currently approved APPR plans may need to be revised in order to be consistent with their plans for re-opening under an in-person, remote or hybrid instructional model. School leaders will continue to attend annually required Lead Evaluator training.

### **Certification, Incidental Teaching and Substitute Teaching**

All teachers will hold valid and appropriate certificates for teaching assignment, except where otherwise allowable under the Commissioner’s regulations (e.g., incidental teaching) or education law.

## Student Teachers

Student teachers from NYSED registered college or university programs can serve under the supervision of fully certified teachers in The Chester School District. Student teachers will follow all of the social distancing, mask wearing, health status reporting, and other COVID-19 procedures that the teachers follow. Student teachers will serve under the supervision of our full time certified teachers only. At no time will a student teacher be used as a teacher of record.

## Resources

- Chester Union Free School District webpage: [www.chesterufsd.org](http://www.chesterufsd.org)
- Orange County Department of Health: <https://www.orangecountygov.com/149/Health>
- New York State Education Department: <http://www.nysed.gov/>
- New York State Department of Health: <https://health.ny.gov/>
- Centers For Disease Control And Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/>
- NYS Child Nutrition <http://www.cn.nysed.gov/>
- USDA <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn>
- State Education Department Issues Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools (July 16, 2020)
- State Education Department Presents Framework of Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools (July 13, 2020)
- Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID- 19 Public Health Emergency, NYS Department of Health (July 13, 2020)
- Additional References
- Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (June 26, 2020)
- Interim Guidance for Food Services during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. (June 26, 2020)
- Interim Guidance for Office-Based Work during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. (June 26, 2020)
- Interim Guidance for Public Transportation Activities during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. (June 26, 2020)
- New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- New York State Education Department Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration COVID-19 Website

## What Parents / Guardians Can Do to Assist with a Safe School Reopening

- Check your child’s temperature each morning. Do not send your child to school with a temperature of more than 100° (100.1° or higher).
- Do not send your child school if he/she is sick.
- Complete the health screening questions for your child each morning.
- Make sure that the school has up-to-date **emergency contact information** for parents/guardians and an emergency back-up in case your child becomes ill.
- If you are contacted to pick up your child from school please do so promptly. Sick students awaiting pickup will be kept in an isolation room, possibly with other sick individuals (and socially distanced).
- Explain to your child what “social distancing” means. Help him/her to become familiar with a **six feet distance**.
- Teach your child proper hand washing procedures. Practice often at home.
- Please respect the school district’s “**No Visitors**” policy.
- Please respect the school district’s **no sharing of food** policy.
- Provide your child with a comfortable facemask for use on the bus and at school each day..
- Explain to your child the requirement to wear a face mask at school. Help him/her to understand the important role that facemasks play in keeping people safe and healthy.
- Help prepare him/her to be ready to wear the facemask at the bus stop, on the bus, and at school.
- It is recommended that parents begin familiarizing their children with mask wearing in the weeks before school begins. Start with short periods of time of mask wearing and gradually increase over time.
- Parents should model the use of facemasks whenever possible.
- If you are driving your child to/from school please follow the posted drop-off and pick-up times. The school does not have space to accommodate earlier drop-offs and later pick-ups. If you need before or after school childcare please contact the Middletown YMCA for information about their program at Chester Elementary School.