SCHOOL REOPENING PLANS

2020 -2021

APPROVED BY THE CHESTER UFSD BOARD OF EDUCATION ON AUGUST 12, 2020.
REVISED & APPROVED APRIL 28, 2021.
Chester Union Free School District
Chester, New York
chesterufsd.org

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Sandra Nagler, Vice President
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John Pasichnyk

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Rachel Loftus, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Edward Spence, Director of Technology & Curriculum
Matthew DeRosa, Director of Facilities

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**

- Denis Petrilak: Chester UFSD Superintendent of Schools
- Frank Sambets: Chester UFSD Board of Education, President
- 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
- Erin Brennan: Chester UFSD Business Official
- Bridget Kaseta: Chester Elementary School PTA
- Lisa Edwards: Chester Teachers Association - Chester Academy
- Caroline Farrell: Student – Chester Academy
- John Flanagan: Chester Academy Principal
- Matthew DeRosa: Chester UFSD Director of Facilities
- Patricia Goodrich: Chester UFSD CSEA Unit President
- Julie Miller-Cruz: Chester Academy PTSA
- Rachel Loftus: Chester UFSD Director of Pupil Personnel Services
- Mary Mulvihill: School Nurse- Chester Elementary School
- Catherine O’Hara: Chester Elementary School Principal
- Edward Spence: Chester UFSD Director of Technology & Curriculum
- Michele Thompson: Chester Teachers Association – Chester Academy
- Joanne Valastro: Chester UFSD Assistant to the Superintendent
- Hank Werte: Chester Satellite Principal (OU BOCES)

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This plan was originally developed and approved during the spring and summer of 2020. Subsequent to its approval, as the Covid-19 Pandemic progressed, new guidance from the CDC, New York State, Orange County, and other national and international health organizations emerged to meet new challenges presented by the pandemic. This guidance included new protocols and mandates that were required to be implemented by all schools. Many of these new requirements were consistent with elements of the plan as it was originally developed and did not require modifications to the original plan.

On April 9, 2021 the New York State Department of Health issued its revised Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools during the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency document (Interim Guidance). This Interim Guidance contained new requirements that superseded elements of the original plan, and in addition, it requires that the original plan be updated to contain the new guidance.

These Revised School Reopening Plans reflect changes made to the original plans based on the Interim Guidance, and other mandated, recommended, or adopted practices. An addition to the original plans is an Appendix which contains the April 9, 2021 revised Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools during the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency document. It should be noted that this Interim Guidance document contains the following statement in its opening paragraphs:

"Each school/district must meet the minimum standards set forth in this guidance and reflect engagement of school stakeholders and community members, including but not limited to administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/legal guardians of students, local health departments, local health care providers, and where appropriate affiliated organizations (e.g., union, alumni, and/or community – based groups)."

Changes to the original plans will appear in bold print. The revisions contained in these plans are the result of community engagement through public Board of Education meetings, review by the Chester Union Free School District School Reopening Committee, and final approval by the Chester Board of Education.

The Interim Guidance document supersedes any previous recommendations or requirements. The revisions contained in this plan attempt to update the original plan with changes required by the Interim Guidance. Every effort has been made to identify areas where updates were required. In instances where information contained in the plan conflicts with information contained in the Interim Guidance document the Interim Guidance shall take precedence.
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 22nd 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. Petrila, 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](https://www.chesterufsd.org) and will be updated throughout the school year, as necessary, to respond to local circumstances.

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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 (emails, 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.

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• 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.

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
845.469.2178 ext. 2209

Chester Academy
Gina Straub, School Nurse
gina.straub@chesterufsd.org
845.469.2231 ext.3315

New York State Covid-19 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.

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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, two-ply cloth mask, 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 on paper or in the Live Safe app.
• 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 three (3), or six (6) foot lengths as appropriate 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.

Physical Distancing
• All individuals on Chester School District premises must maintain physical distancing and use PPE when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
• Proper physical distancing is defined as a three (3) or six (6) foot separation between individuals. Please see the Interim Guidance document in Appendix A for physical distancing requirements.
• 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 physical distancing for these activities.
• Class rosters will not exceed the number of students who can be appropriately physically 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 at Chester Elementary School.

- School bus arrivals and departures will be staggered to facilitate **physical** distancing of students disembarking were boarding school buses.
- Ensure **three (3) or six (6) foot** distance between personnel.
- 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.
- Physical distance separation will be using tape or signs that denote **three (3) or 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.

**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 or **two-ply cloth mask** and must completely cover the individual's mouth and nose.

- **Please see Appendix A for a detailed description of requirements pertaining to face masks.**
- Face masks must be worn by **all individuals in all classroom and non-classroom settings.**
- 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.

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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 three (3) or 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 three (3) or 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. Physical 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
- Physical 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 will direct school personnel in 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 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: lisa.ringel@chesterufsd.org
Ms. McKay, School Psychologist: emma.mckay@chesterufsd.org

**Chester Academy School Counselors**
Ms. Cuomo, School Counselor (grades 6-8): jennifer.cuomo@chesterufsd.org
Ms. McKenzie, School Counselor (HS): jenny.mckenzie@chesterufsd.org
Ms. Sternemann, School Counselor (HS): yvonne.sternemann@chesterufsd.org

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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 coronavirus. 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.
- **The district utilizes electro-static sanitizing sprayers daily to disinfect all areas and surfaces.**
- 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 must 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.
• Physical 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

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• 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 3 or 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 physical distancing of no less than 3 or 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.
  o Bean bag chairs
  o Upholstered couches or chairs
  o Area rugs
• Reconfigure space to ensure social distancing.
  o Tables will be limited to one individual at a time where applicable.
  o Polycarbonate barriers may be installed to create a physical barrier.
  o Desks should be arranged so as to not face each other.
• Small reading nook use should be discontinued unless:
  o limited to one person at a time.
  o 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 will be installed in place of the drink spout.
• 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 3 or 6 feet of space between students and staff during the Shelter-In-Place
- Use of face coverings throughout the event may be considered
- If 3 or 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 3 or 6 feet of space between students and staff during the Hold-In-Place.
- Use of face coverings throughout the event may be considered.
- If 3 or 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 3 or 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 three (3) or six (6) feet of space between students and staff in the area.

Lockdown

During a Lockdown, it may become necessary to have less than 3 or 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 a “grab and go” manner in the lobby of both schools. 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 by sanitized by food service staff and readied for lunch. Staff will be physically 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 at Chester Elementary School. At Chester Academy lunch will be served in a “grab and go” manner in the cafeteria where individual desks will be used for eating and will be physically separated 6 feet from one another. 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
All meals will be free of charge to all students.

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 physical distancing (i.e. 3 or 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 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 3 or 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 physically 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 CUFSD School Reopening Plans REVISED APRIL 28, 2021
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:

CUFSD School Reopening Plans REVISED APRIL 28, 2021
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 physical distancing. Class size will reflect the need to ensure that students’ desks/seats are positioned no less than three or six feet apart. Accommodating a three or six-foot radius around students will necessitate the identification of additional rooms and common-area spaces that can be converted into classrooms.

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Our schools will minimize the movement of students. This includes having some 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**

No changes of choice of instructional model will be permitted after April 26, 2021.

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

As of April 6, 2021 Chester Elementary School will operate on a full-day, five day/week schedule for in-person learners.

Chester Elementary School Remote Model

As of April 6, 2021 Chester Elementary School will provide direct instruction to remote students on a modified schedule on a daily basis.

Student Schedules: Chester Academy

Chester Academy: In-Person Hybrid Learning Schedule

As of February 8, 2021 Chester Academy will provide daily full-day in-person learning for students in Grade 6.

As of February 8, 2021 Chester Academy will provide the following schedule for in-person learners in Grades 7-12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mondays</td>
<td>Asynchronous instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesdays-Wednesdays</td>
<td>In-Person Synchronous Instruction Group A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remote Synchronous Instruction Group B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursdays-Fridays</td>
<td>In-Person Synchronous Instruction Group B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remote Synchronous Instruction Group A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chester Academy: Remote Learning Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mondays</td>
<td>Asynchronous Instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesdays-Fridays</td>
<td>Remote Synchronous Instruction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 and safety guidelines and physical 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

CUFSD School Reopening Plans REVISED APRIL 28, 2021
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
Daily (Chester Elementary School) and Period (Chester Academy) attendance will be taken each day (CES) and each period (CA) for in-person and remote students.

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- April 23, 2021
*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: April 19 – June 12 (tentative end date)
*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
- 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/
- New York State Department of Health April 9, 2021 Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools during the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency: https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Pre-K_to_Grade_12_Schools_MasterGuidance.pdf
- 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°F (100.1°F 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.
Appendix A

New York State Department of Health April 9, 2021 *Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools during the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency*

https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Pre-K_to_Grade_12_Schools_MasterGuidance.pdf
When you have read this document, you can affirm at the bottom.

As of April 9, 2021

Purpose

This Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency ("Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Schools") was originally created in August 2020 to provide all elementary (including pre-kindergarten), middle, and high schools, as well as their employees, contractors, students, and parents/legal guardians of students with precautions to help protect against the spread of COVID-19 for schools that are authorized to provide in-person instruction in the 2020-2021 school year. This April 2021 update is intended to align this guidance with the most recent recommendations from the Centers from Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on how to prioritize safe in-person learning in schools while adhering to layered mitigation strategies.

This guidance is intended to address all types of public and private (both secular and non-secular) elementary (including pre-kindergarten), middle, and high schools. Each school/district must meet the minimum standards set forth in this guidance and reflect engagement with school stakeholders and community members, including but not limited to administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/legal guardians of students, local health departments, local health care providers, and, where appropriate, affiliated organizations (e.g., union, alumni, and/or community-based groups). Specifically, each school district, BOCES, charter school, and private school must develop, in conjunction with opportunities for local community feedback from parents, community members, teachers, staff, and local health departments, and post online a plan that, at minimum, covers:

1. Reopening of school facilities for in-person instruction,
2. Monitoring of health conditions,
3. Containment of potential transmission of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19), and
4. Closure of school facilities and in-person instruction, if necessitated by widespread virus transmission.

Responsible Parties must work with these same stakeholders to make decisions regarding the updating of plans. The NYS Department of Health does not review or approve revisions to school reopening plans, which have been previously approved. Modified plans must be posted online, shared with Local Health Departments and the State Education Department. Local Health Departments are the entity charged with ensuring the enforcement of these minimum standards.

Core Health and Safety Principles and Definitions

- **Responsible Parties:** Responsible Parties shall be responsible for developing the plan, and meeting the standards set forth herein. For school districts and BOCES, the district superintendent, or another party as may be designated by the district superintendent, and for private and charter schools, the head of school, or another party may be designated by the head of school, is the Responsible Parties.
The designated party can be an individual or group of individuals responsible for the operations of the school or schools.

- **Face Masks:** Responsible Parties must maintain protocols and procedures for students, faculty, staff, and other individuals to ensure appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is used to protect against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus when on school grounds and in school facilities. Specifically, appropriate PPE means, at least, an acceptable mask, which is required to be worn by all individuals in all classroom and non-classroom settings, including but not limited to hallways, school offices, restrooms, gyms, auditoriums, etc. All visitors must wear masks. Masks should have at least two layers of material (e.g. 2-ply). However, Responsible Parties should allow students to remove their mask during meals. Acceptable masks include but are not limited to cloth-based masks (e.g., homemade sewn, quick cut,), and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose. Please refer to the updated Face Masks and Coverings for COVID-19 for recommendations on how to wear masks, how to improve mask protection, a list of which masks are NOT recommended, as well as how individuals can protect themselves while putting on and taking off a mask.

- **Physical Distancing:** Responsible Parties must maintain protocols and procedures for students, faculty, and staff to ensure appropriate physical distancing to protect against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus when on school grounds and in school facilities.

- **Spaces:** To reduce density, Responsible Parties should consider and assess additional and/or alternate indoor space(s) that may be repurposed for instruction or other required purposes in support of in-person instruction within the school facility, school grounds, municipal facilities, municipal grounds, or community (e.g., community centers), as well as outdoor space(s) where health and safety conditions (e.g., allergies, asthma) allow for such potential usage.

- **In-Person Instruction:** To ensure equity in education, Responsible Parties should prioritize efforts to return all students to in-person instruction. However, based on the dynamic nature of local community transmission of the COVID-19 virus, a phased-in approach or hybrid model combining in-person instruction and remote/distance learning in cohorts may be necessary at various times through the 2020-2021 school year. In planning for these approaches and models, school plans should indicate if certain students will be prioritized to return to in-person instruction first or more frequently based on educational or other needs (e.g., early grades, students with disabilities, English language learners), given requirements for equity, capacity, physical distancing, PPE, feasibility, and learning considerations. Responsible Parties should consider prioritizing in-person instruction for students with disabilities who require special education and related services directly provided in school environments, as well as student populations that are at greater risk for learning loss.

- **Cohorts:** Responsible Parties should “cohort” students, to the extent practicable, to limit potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Cohorts, particularly for younger students, are self-contained, pre-assigned groups of students with reasonable group size limits set forth by the Responsible Parties in their plans. Responsible Parties should enact measures to prevent intermingling between cohorts, to the extent possible (e.g., separation by appropriate physical distancing, particularly if there are multiple cohorts in one area). Responsible Parties should make reasonable efforts to ensure that cohorts are fixed — meaning contain the same students — for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Faculty may instruct more than one cohort so long as appropriate physical distancing is maintained. At some levels of community transmission, cohorting is recommended if a school is using less than six feet of physical distance in classrooms. Please refer to Table 2 in the CDC guidance for more detail.

- **Screening:** Responsible Parties must implement mandatory health screenings, including temperature checks, of students, faculty, staff, and, where applicable, contractors, vendors, and visitors to identify any individuals who may have COVID-19 or who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Specifically, all individuals must have their temperature checked each day. If an individual presents a temperature of greater than 100.0°F, the individual must be denied entry into the facility or sent directly to a dedicated area prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home. Responsible Parties
must also use a daily screening questionnaire for faculty and staff reporting to school; and periodically use a questionnaire for students, particularly younger students, who may require the assistance of their parent/legal guardian to answer. Remote health screening (e.g., by electronic survey, digital application, or telephone, which may involve the parent/legal guardian) before any individual reports to school, is strongly advised.

- **Transportation:** Consistent with State-issued public transit guidance, Responsible Parties must develop protocols and procedures, which include that individuals must wear acceptable masks at all times on school buses (e.g., entering, exiting, and seated), and that individuals should maintain appropriate physical distancing, unless they are members of the same household. Responsible Parties should encourage parents/legal guardians to drop off or walk students to school to reduce density on buses.

- **Food Services:** Responsible Parties must continue to provide school breakfast and/or lunch to students who were previously receiving school meals, both on site and remote. For students on site, Responsible Parties must provide meals while maintaining appropriate physical distancing between students. Students do not need to wear masks when seated and eating so long as they are appropriately physically distanced. Responsible Parties may serve meals in alternate areas (e.g., classrooms) or staggered meal periods to ensure physical distancing and proper cleaning and disinfection between students.

- **Ventilation and Filtration:** Indoor air quality should be improved by increasing outdoor air delivery to the building (ventilation) and removing particulates/viral particles from the air (air filtration) to the greatest extent possible. Ventilation and filtration together can reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

- **Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection:** Responsible Parties must adhere to and promote hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection guidance set forth by DOH and the CDC. Responsible Parties must train all students, faculty, and staff on proper hand and respiratory hygiene. Responsible Parties must maintain logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection, as well as identify cleaning and disinfection frequency for each facility and area type and assign responsibility to staff. For additional information and for materials to display in school, please refer to the updated Stop the Spread of Germs.

- **Contact Tracing:** Responsible Parties must notify the state and local health department immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result by an individual within school facilities or on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors. In the case of an individual testing positive, Responsible Parties must develop and maintain plans to support local health departments in tracing all contacts of the individual, in accordance with the protocols, training, and tools provided through the New York State Contact Tracing Program. Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state law and regulations. Responsible Parties must cooperate with all state and local health department contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine efforts. Consistent with Executive Order 202.61, Responsible Parties must continue to make reports to the New York State Department of Health COVID-19 School Report Card Dashboard every day that school is in session, regardless of whether any new tests have been reported or whether the school was completely remote on that day.

- **Return to School:** Responsible Parties must establish protocols and procedures, in consultation with the local health department(s), 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.

**Plan Requirements**

**Reopening of in-person instruction** includes protocols and procedures for restarting school operations including students, faculty, and staff returning to in-person instruction. At a minimum, plans must incorporate the following:
• **Capacity:** Phasing and quantity of students, faculty, and staff allowed to return in-person, considering factors such as ability to maintain appropriate physical distance, personal protective equipment (PPE) availability, local medical capacity, and availability of safe transportation;

• **Physical Distancing:** Protocols and procedures for students, faculty, and staff to ensure appropriate physical distancing when on school grounds and in school facilities;

• **PPE and Masks:** Protocols and procedures for students, faculty, staff, and other individuals to ensure appropriate PPE is used to protect against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus when on school grounds and in school facilities. Plans for all students, faculty, and staff to have the required PPE (i.e., acceptable masks) before entering school facilities, grounds, or any other space owned or administered by the school or school district (e.g., school buses);

• **Operational Activity:** Determinations on how classes, shared spaces, and activities may be adapted in various phases of learning and operations (e.g., identify which, if any, students will be offered alternate approaches, such as alternative schedules or hybrids of in-person and remote learning; how additional and alternative—school and non-school—spaces can be used for, or in support of, in-person instruction; how such schedules could be administered to create overlap for students from the same household; how shared spaces, such as cafeterias, libraries, and gymnasiums, will be modified and used, if and how cohorts will be implemented). Policies regarding field trips, and visitors considering risks for COVID-19 transmission, as well as protocols and procedures for physical distancing, PPE usage, and cleaning and disinfection, which may include conducting virtual events, should be developed;

• **Restart Operations:** Plans to safely reopen facilities and grounds, such as cleaning and disinfection, and restarting building ventilation, water systems, and other key facility components, as applicable;

• **Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection:** Protocols and procedures for school-wide cleaning and disinfection of classrooms, restrooms, cafeterias, libraries, school buses, and all other school facilities, as well as training and promotion of hand and respiratory hygiene among all individuals in school facilities and on school grounds;

• **Extracurriculars:** Policies regarding extracurricular programs and which activities will be allowed, considering physical distancing, PPE usage, and cleaning and disinfection, as well as risk of COVID-19 transmission. Policies should consider how to maintain cohorts, if applicable, or members of the same household. Responsible Parties must refer to DOH’s “Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency” (March 25, 2021) to assist in development of these policies and the conduct of school-sponsored sports. If school is closed for in-person education during the school year due to an increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases, school-sponsored sports must be suspended until in-person education is resumed;

• **Before and Aftercare:** Policies regarding before and afterschool programs, considering physical distancing, PPE usage, and cleaning and disinfection requirements, as well as risk of COVID-19 transmission. Policies should consider how to maintain cohorts, if applicable, or group members of the same household;

• **Vulnerable Populations:** Policies regarding vulnerable populations, including students, faculty and staff who are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness, and individuals who may not feel comfortable returning to an in-person educational environment, to allow them to safely participate in educational activities and, where appropriate, accommodate their specific circumstances. These accommodations may include but are not limited to remote learning or telework, modified educational or work settings, or providing additional PPE to individuals with underlying health conditions. Responsible Parties must also identify and describe any modifications to physical distancing or PPE that may be necessary 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, ensuring that any modifications minimize COVID-19 exposure risk for students, faculty, and staff, to the greatest extent possible;
• **Transportation:** Consistent with State-issued public transit guidance, protocols and procedures, which include that individuals must wear acceptable masks at all times on school buses (e.g., entering, exiting, and seated), and that individuals should maintain appropriate physical distancing, unless they are members of the same household. Responsible parties should maximize the distance between students on school buses (for example, seat children one child per row and skip rows), when possible. When safe, ventilation can be improved by opening windows. Responsible Parties should encourage parents/legal guardians to drop off or walk students to school to reduce density on buses. School districts should also consider engaging more buses to keep density low while supporting families who cannot bring students to school themselves. Protocols and procedures should include how school buses will be adapted to keep students and staff safe (e.g., how masks will be provided to students in need, how members of the same household will be seated together, how physical distancing will be conducted on buses, whether bus schedules will be adapted to accommodate reduced capacity, whether any health screening will be conducted at home before students board buses, how parents/legal guardians will be encouraged to drop off or walk students to reduce density on buses);

• **Food Services:** Protocols and procedures for onsite and remote food services for students, considering appropriate physical distancing and any modifications to service that may be necessary (e.g., providing meals in a combination of classrooms and cafeterias, staggering meal periods). Measures to protect students with food allergies if providing meals in spaces outside the cafeteria. Protocols and procedures must also include how students will perform hand hygiene before and after eating, how appropriate hand hygiene will be promoted, and how sharing of food and beverages will be discouraged. Additionally, protocols and procedures must account for cleaning and disinfection prior to the next group of students arriving for meals, if served in the same common area (e.g., cafeteria);

• **Mental Health, Behavioral, and Emotional Support Services and Programs:** Available resources and referrals to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional needs of students, faculty, and staff when school reopens for in-person instruction (e.g., how they will identify and support students having difficulty with transitioning back into the school setting, especially given the changed school environment). Any training for faculty and staff on how to talk with, and support, students during and after the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency, as well as information on developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, and staff; and

• **Communication:** Communications plans for students, parents/legal guardians of students, faculty, staff and visitors that includes applicable instructions, training, signage, and a consistent means to provide individuals with information. Plans should describe how schools will communicate with students and families about preparing for the upcoming year, which should include adapting to physical distancing requirements, properly wearing masks, and proper hand and respiratory hygiene. Consider developing webpages, text and email groups, and social media to disseminate information. Schools should develop communication plans in multiple languages, as necessary.

**Monitoring** includes protocols and procedures to track health conditions at schools. At a minimum, plans must incorporate the following:

• **Screening:** Protocols and procedures for mandatory health screenings, including temperature checks, of students, faculty, staff, and, where applicable, contractors, vendors, and visitors to identify any individuals who may have COVID-19 or who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Responsible Parties should consider limiting the number of visitors permitted on school grounds or in school facilities, and, if visitors are allowed, screening of such visitors;

• **Testing Protocols:** Process for the provision or referral of diagnostic testing for students, faculty, and staff for COVID-19, in consultation with local health department officials, when needed, which should include plans for testing of unvaccinated symptomatic individuals, close contacts of COVID-19 suspected or confirmed individuals, and individuals with recent international travel as designated
through the New York State Travel Advisory, before allowing such individuals to return to in-person to the school;

- **Testing Responsibility**: Identification of who in the community is responsible for referring, sourcing, and administering testing (e.g., local health department testing site, physician offices, hospital system);

**Containment** includes protocols and procedures for how to respond to positive or presumed-positive cases, as well as preventative practices. At a minimum, plans must incorporate the following:

- **School Health Offices**: Protocols for safely caring for a student, faculty, or staff member if they develop symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day in accordance with the [Interim Guidance for School-Based Health Centers Regarding COVID-19 and the New York State Department of Health School-Based Health Center Dental Program Reopening Addendum](#);

- **Isolation**: Procedures to isolate individuals who screen positive upon arrival, or symptomatic individuals should they become symptomatic while at school, providing appropriate PPE for school health office staff caring for the symptomatic individual. Protocols for safe transportation, including pick-up arrangements, if applicable, for symptomatic students, faculty, and staff;

- **Collection**: Protocols for how parents or legal guardians should pick up their student with instructions that the student must be seen by a health care provider;

- **Infected Individuals**: Requirements that persons who have tested positive complete isolation and have recovered and will not transmit COVID-19 when returning to in-person learning. Discharge from isolation and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the local health department.

- **Exposed Individuals**: Requirements that individuals who were exposed to the COVID-19 virus complete quarantine and have not developed symptoms before returning to in-person learning (exceptions for vaccinated individuals and those with prior COVID-19 infection detailed below). Discharge from quarantine and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the local health department.

- **Vaccination**: In New York State, P-12 Teachers and staff have been eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine since January 11, 2021. Asymptomatic fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine if exposed to COVID-19.

- **Previous COVID-19 infection**: Asymptomatic individuals who have recovered from laboratory confirmed COVID-19 infection during the previous 3 months do not need to quarantine if exposed to COVID-19.

- **Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection**: Adherence to, and promotion of, hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection guidance set forth by DOH and CDC, including strategies for cleaning and disinfection of exposed areas and appropriate notification to occupants of such areas;

- **Contact Tracing**: Plans to support local health departments in contact tracing efforts using the protocols, training, and tools provided through the [New York State Contact Tracing Program](#);

- **Communication**: Plans to share protocols and safety measures taken by the school with all relevant parties including parents/legal guardians, faculty, staff, students, and the local community.

- **Closure** includes contingency plans, protocols, and procedures for decreasing the scale or scope of in-person education, and/or closing the school. At a minimum, plans must incorporate the following:

- **Operational Activity**: Determination of which operations will be decreased, or ceased and which operations will be conducted remotely; include process to conduct orderly closures which may include phasing, milestones, and involvement of key personnel; and

- **Communication**: Plan to communicate internally and externally throughout the closure process.
State-Issued Guidance and Minimum Standards

Pre-K through Grade 12 schools involve a variety of activities depending on their specific educational and extracurricular programs and services, and, as such, should reference relevant “industry-specific” guidelines provided by DOH — and available on the New York Forward website — for operations of food services, office workspaces, transportation, and other activities, as applicable. Specifically, operations of cafeterias and other food services must operate in accordance with “Interim Guidance for Food Services During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (March 19, 2021)” with additional precautions for students that are contained herein, such as physical distancing between students or cohorts of students. Administrative functions must operate in accordance with “Interim Guidance for Office-Based Work during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.” Transportation services administered by the school must operate in accordance with “Interim Guidance for Public Transportation Activities during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency” with additional precautions that are contained herein. Interscholastic athletics must follow DOH’s “Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency” (March 25, 2021) “for the conduct of school-sponsored sports. If school is closed for in-person education during the school year due to an increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases, school-sponsored sports must be suspended until in-person education is resumed. Further, Responsible Parties hosting competitive play must follow the Department’s guidance, restricting spectators to no more than the greater of two spectators per player or 100 spectators indoors or 200 spectators outdoors, and, where required, implementing and enforcing rules for appropriate physical distancing, masks, and cleaning and disinfection, as such guidance is updated from time to time.

Standards for Responsible School Activities in New York State

No school activities can operate without meeting the following minimum State guidance, as well as applicable federal requirements, including but not limited to such minimum standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), CDC, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and OSHA. The State standards apply to all school activities in operation during the COVID-19 public health emergency until rescinded or amended by the State.

The following guidance is provided to help schools develop their reopening plans and is organized around three distinct categories: people, places, and processes.

I. PEOPLE

A. Physical Distancing and Masks

Physical Distancing

- Responsible Parties must ensure that appropriate physical distancing is maintained between individuals while in school facilities and on school grounds, inclusive of students, faculty, and staff, unless safety or the core activity (e.g., instruction, moving equipment, using an elevator, traveling in common areas) requires a shorter distance or individuals are of the same household.

- Responsible Parties may reduce physical distancing requirements to a minimum of three feet between students in classroom settings, subject to adherence to certain mitigation measures herein.

Due to evidence that transmission risk ranges by the age of the student, the CDC recommends that physical distancing requirements differ by grade level and community transmission risk. Evidence indicates that there is lower susceptibility and incidence of COVID-19 among younger children than compared to teenagers; therefore, in-person instruction represents less risk of on-site transmission in elementary schools compared to middle and high schools. At some levels of community transmission, cohorting is recommended if a school is using less than six feet of physical distance in classrooms. The Department recognizes that certain scenarios may prevent physical distancing from occurring, such as providing essential classroom instruction, medical care, or student comfort/support. Responsible Parties must minimize this contact to the greatest extent possible and continue to ensure appropriate prevention
measures—such as cleaning/disinfection, masking, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette—are maintained during these temporary episodes. Please refer to the Interim Guidance for School-Based Health Centers Regarding COVID-19 for further information.

- CDC has developed four levels of indicators and threshold for community transmission of COVID-19. Please refer to Table 1 in the CDC guidance to see the measures. CDC also provides recommendations for physical distancing and cohorting for elementary, middle, and high schools at each level of transmission. These recommendations are summarized below and are required to be adhered to by any responsible parties when implementing physical distancing of less than six feet in classrooms. Please refer to Table 2 in the CDC guidance for more detail.

- In counties with low and moderate risk of transmission, elementary, middle, and high schools can maintain physical distancing of at least three feet between students in classrooms.

- In counties with substantial risk of transmission, elementary, middle, and high schools can maintain physical distancing of at least three feet between students in classrooms and cohorting is recommended when possible.

- In counties with high risk of transmission, elementary schools can maintain physical distancing of at least three feet between students in classrooms and cohorting is recommended when possible. However, in middle and high schools three feet between students in classrooms is recommended only when schools can use cohorting. When schools cannot maintain cohorting, middle and high schools must maintain physical distancing of at least six feet between students in classrooms.

- The CDC no longer recommends physical barriers for mitigation where physical distancing cannot be maintained. A preferred approach is enhanced ventilation and air filtration to dilute and remove any SARS-CoV-2 particles from the air as described below and in the CDC school guidance.

- Exceptions Where A Minimum of Six Feet of Distance Must be Maintained
  - Six feet is always the required distancing between adults (teachers, staff, visitors) and between students and adults.
  - Six feet of distance is required when eating meals or snacks, or drinking, or other times masks must be removed. This may mean that meals cannot be eaten in classrooms that have been converted to three feet of physical distance during instruction time.
  - Individuals participating in activities that require projecting the voice (e.g., singing) or playing a wind instrument must be six feet apart and there must be six feet of distance between the performers and the audience during performances and concerts.
  - Six feet of physical distance must be maintained in common areas and outside of classrooms (e.g. lobbies, auditoriums, gymnasiums, cafeterias, and hallways), where possible.
  - For guidance on sports, please refer to the Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (March 25, 2021)

Responsible Parties should ensure that a distance of six feet in all directions is maintained between individuals while participating in activities requires projecting the voice (e.g., singing), playing a wind instrument, or aerobic activity resulting in heavy breathing (e.g., participating in gym classes).

- When directed by the Local or State Health Department.
• Prior to making any change to reduce physical distancing to less than six feet between students during academic instruction, decisions must be made with community input. **Responsible Parties must include opportunities for feedback from parents, community members, teachers, staff and local departments of health. This meeting must be held before any change to the physical distancing in schools can be made.**

• Responsible parties must post the new plan online and must be sent to Local Health Departments and the State Education Department.

• Responsible Parties are required to work with the school community (parents, teachers, staff, LHDs, etc.) to propose and adopt changes. **Ultimately, the school/district's decision to move to shorter physical distances will come down to a local community's risk tolerance based on its unique circumstances.**

**Masks**

• Face masks are required at all times, except for meals.
  
  • Responsible Parties will need to consider and address developmental appropriateness, feasibility, and ability to implement such policy in a safe, consistent manner.

• Students who are unable to medically tolerate a mask, including students where such mask would impair their physical health or mental health are not subject to the required use of a mask.

• Responsible Parties should offer assistance to students who may have difficulty in adapting to wearing a mask.

• Responsible Parties must train all students, faculty, and staff on how to adequately put on, take off, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE, including but not limited to, appropriate masks. This training should be extended to contractors and vendors, if the Responsible Parties will be supplying the contractors and vendors with PPE.

**Space Configurations**

• Responsible Parties are strongly encouraged to (1) modify or reconfigure spaces and areas, and/or (2) restrict the use of classrooms and other places where students, faculty, and staff gather (e.g., lockers, cubbies, entryways, hallways), so that individuals can be physically distanced, and are not sharing workstations, desks, tables, or other shared surfaces without cleaning and disinfection between use.

  • If Responsible Parties are using a cohort model, cleaning and disinfection may be performed in between each cohort's use instead of individual's use.

• Responsible parties should make best use of the space in the classroom by removing unnecessary furniture and objects to help maximize the distance between students and for better air flow. All desks should face the same direction and/or students should be seated on the same side of tables.

• Where feasible, Responsible Parties should put in place measures to reduce bi-directional foot traffic using tape or signs with arrows in hallways, or spaces throughout the school, and post signage and distance markers denoting spaces of six feet in all commonly used areas and any areas in which lines are commonly formed or people may congregate (e.g., outdoor spaces, libraries, cafeterias, health screening stations).

• Responsible Parties should determine which facilities, grounds, or portions thereof (e.g., libraries, recreational facilities) will be closed to the public (i.e., not students, faculty, or staff) or offer limited, specific hours to members of the general public. Any use of a school facility or grounds by the general public must be subject to the same guidelines required during all other school operations.
• Responsible parties should work to find additional or alternate space with community-based organizations and other operators of alternative spaces (e.g., local governments) to maximize capacity for in-person learning.

**Schedules**

• Responsible Parties should consider staggered arrival and pick-up times to facilitate proper physical distancing and assign lockers or other student storage areas by cohort or eliminate their use. However, students should not carry an unreasonable number of books or materials throughout the day.

**Signage**

• Responsible Parties must post signs throughout the school and should regularly share similar messages with the school community, consistent with DOH COVID-19 signage regarding public health protections against COVID-19. Responsible Parties can develop their own customized and age-appropriate signage specific to their school or educational setting, provided that such signage is consistent with the Department’s signage. Signage should be used to remind individuals to:
  
  o Stay home if they feel sick.
  o Cover their nose and mouth with an acceptable mask.
  o Properly store and, when necessary, discard PPE.
  o Adhere to physical distancing instructions.
  o Report symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19, and how they should do so.
  o Follow hand hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection guidelines.
  o Follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

**Vaccination**

- Responsible parties should discuss opportunities to maximize opportunities for vaccination of all eligible school personnel and students, as eligible, with their Local Health Department.

**B. Gatherings**

**Meals**

• Responsible Parties must ensure physical distancing between individuals while eating in school cafeteria. If not feasible, meals may be served in alternate areas (e.g., classrooms) or in staggered meal periods to ensure physical distancing and proper cleaning and disinfection between students.
  
  o Responsible Parties must prohibit sharing of food and beverages (e.g., buffet style meals, snacks), unless individuals are members of the same household. Adequate space should be reserved for students, faculty, and staff to observe physical distancing while eating meals.

**Faculty and Staff Meetings**

• Pursuant to their school reopening plan, Responsible Parties may consider choosing to use video or teleconferencing for faculty and staff meetings and conferences to reduce the density of congregations, per CDC guidance "Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)". When videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not preferable or possible, Responsible Parties may choose to hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces and ensure that individuals maintain appropriate physical distance (e.g., leave space between chairs, have individuals sit in alternating chairs).
Ventilation and Filtration

- Indoor air quality can be improved by increasing outdoor air delivery to the building (ventilation) and removing particulates/viral particles from the air (air filtration) to the greatest extent possible. Ventilation and filtration together can reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

- Portable air cleaners may supplement other preventive measures to decrease the risk of COVID-19 spread. These are designed to remove particles. However, they are limited in the amount of air they filter per hour and so they may reduce, but may not eliminate, particles, viruses, and/or microbes in the air. The selection, installation, and maintenance of portable filtration devices should be made in consultation with an indoor air quality professional. The use of portable filtration devices does not decrease the need for mask wearing, physical distancing, sanitation practices, or adequate ventilation.

- Portable air cleaners are particularly relevant for rooms without natural ventilation (openable windows) and for higher risk environments (e.g., nurses’ station, isolation rooms) but can be considered for any other areas where there is heightened concern.

- Recommendations for School Classrooms That Have Mechanical Ventilation
  - Evaluate systems to ensure the mechanical ventilation system is working properly, code compliant, and optimized according to these guidelines:
  - Be sure diffusers, exhausts, and unit vents are not blocked or obstructed by cabinets, books, or other materials.
  - Communicate to staff the importance of not obstructing diffusers and vents or attempting to modify the ventilation controls. For example, not adjusting the thermostat or fans in their respective rooms.
  - Have a routine maintenance and inspection schedule and strictly adhere to it.
  - Increase ventilation by increasing outdoor air and decreasing recirculated air as much as possible.
  - Run the HVAC system a minimum of one week prior to reopening.
  - Suspend the use of demand control ventilation, systems that shut down the percentage of fresh air under certain conditions automatically, unless doing so will degrade indoor air quality.
  - Keep systems running longer on school days, 24/7 if possible.
  - Keep bathroom exhaust systems running 24/7.
  - Flush building air at least two hours prior to and one hour after occupancy.
  - Where increased mechanical ventilation is not possible, consider opening windows and doors while also maintaining health and safety protocols (e.g., risk of falling, security risk, increase asthma triggers).
  - With increased cleaning activities, ensure that there is adequate ventilation when cleaners and disinfectants are used to prevent students or staff from inhaling irritating fumes.
  - Filtration of centralized HVAC systems:
    - Check and replace existing unit air filters as per manufacturers’ instructions.
    - Optimize filtration by upgrading to a filter with a minimal efficiency rating value (MERV) of MERV 13, or the highest rating compatible with existing equipment.

- Recommendations for Classrooms That Do Not Have Mechanical Ventilation
  - Open windows and doors to maximize fresh air flow through the classroom.
- Consider the use of window and box fans to cross ventilate rooms to exhaust stale room air. Keep in mind any health, safety, and security concerns with open windows and doors.
  - If a room has a window air conditioner, the outdoor air setting, rather than the recirculate setting, should be used (if the unit offers that option).
  - For air filtration in areas lacking central HVAC, use a portable air cleaner.
  - Portable air cleaners are a supplement and cannot replace outdoor air ventilation and filtration.
  - Only use one air cleaner per room.
  - Only use these devices for single rooms with closed door and windows, as the devices are not designed to filter larger volumes of air.
  - These devices are best considered where outdoor air ventilation is not adequate (e.g., open windows not possible, or in nurses/isolation areas).
  - Be sure the device is sized appropriately with the correct clean air delivery rate (CADR).
  - Use the CADR rating of the device for tobacco smoke when comparing air cleaners, as this rating corresponds most closely with airborne viral particle sizes of concern.
  - Air cleaners should contain a high-efficiency particulate air filter or MERV 13 or greater filter efficiencies.
  - Units that feature ionizers, precipitators, or ozone generators do not provide additional benefit and can generate harmful byproducts.
  - MERV13 or HEPA filters should be replaced on the timetable according to manufacturer recommendations.
  - Request documentation of particle/viral removal efficacy for any device being considered.
  - Confirm the unit can deliver at least two air turnovers per hour for typical school classroom sizes (approx. 400 sq. ft).
  - To maximize energy efficiency, consider choosing a unit with an Energy Star certificate.
  - Choose a unit with CARB and Underwriter’s Laboratories (UL) certificates.

- Specialized Ventilation Considerations for Nurses Stations and Isolation Rooms
  - Designate one room for short-term isolation of suspected infected persons.
  - Nurses stations and isolation rooms pose higher potential for COVID-19 exposure and so should not mix the air with the remainder of the building.
  - Examine options for maximizing outdoor air ventilation of these areas, including 100% fresh air, and increasing ventilation to 10 air changes per hour.
  - These rooms should be under direct exhaust to the outside to minimize air mixing with other parts of the school.
  - Portable air filtration units should be considered for these areas (see below).
  - For more detailed information please refer to ASHRAE 170 and ASHRAE 2019 handbook ([https://www.ashrae.org/technical-resources/ashrae-handbook-content](https://www.ashrae.org/technical-resources/ashrae-handbook-content)).
 Responsible Parties should increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (e.g., opening windows and doors) while maintaining health and safety protocols.

**Common Areas**

- Responsible Parties may choose to encourage physical distancing by modifying amenities or areas that do not allow for adequate physical distancing protocols to be followed. If open, Responsible Parties should make hand sanitizer or disinfecting wipes available near such amenities or areas (e.g., vending machines, communal coffee stations).
- However, Responsible Parties should not provide cleaning and disinfecting supplies to students, particularly younger students, nor should students be present when disinfectants are in use.
- Responsible Parties should put in place practices for adequate physical distancing in small areas, such as restrooms and breakrooms, and should develop signage and systems (e.g., flagging when occupied) to restrict occupancy when physical distancing cannot be maintained in such areas.
- To the extent practical, Responsible Parties may consider staggering schedules for faculty and staff to reduce density and promote physical distancing in enclosed areas (e.g., coffee breaks, meals, and shift starts/stops).

**C. Operational Activities**

**Cohorts**

- Responsible Parties are recommended to cohort students to the extent practicable to limit potential exposure. Refer to Section IA for cohorting recommendations if three feet of physical distance is permitted consistent with this guidance. "Cohorts," particularly for younger students, are self-contained, pre-assigned groups of students with reasonable group size limits set forth by the school in their plan. Responsible Parties should enact measures to prevent intermingling across cohorts, to the greatest extent possible (e.g., separation by appropriate physical distancing, particular if there are multiple cohorts in one area). Responsible Parties should make reasonable efforts to ensure that cohorts are fixed – meaning contain the same students – for the duration of the school year. Faculty may instruct more than one cohort so long as appropriate physical distancing is maintained.

**In-Person Instruction**

- While the goal is to return all students to in-person instruction, due to the dynamic nature and risk of community transmission of COVID-19, Responsible Parties should prepare for a combination of in-person instruction and remote learning to facilitate a phased-in approach or hybrid model, which may be necessary at various times throughout the 2020-2021 school year. In such approaches and models, Responsible Parties may use video or teleconferencing in lieu of in-person gatherings (e.g., classes, office hours), per CDC guidance.
  - In cases where in-person instruction is not feasible even with cohorting, phased-in and hybrid models of education will need to consider if certain students will be prioritized for in-person instruction first or more frequently based on educational or other needs (e.g., early grades, students with disabilities, English language learners), and must balance this with equity, capacity, physical distancing, PPE, feasibility, and learning considerations.
  - If COVID-19 cases develop, Responsible Parties may consider restricting access within school facilities and across school grounds, particularly in affected areas to avoid full school closures. In such instances, Responsible Parties may choose to temporarily move classes where an individual has tested positive for COVID-19 to remote/virtual format until all contacts can be identified, notified, tested, and cleared.
• To maximize in-person instruction, Responsible Parties should consider measures that can be implemented to decrease density and congregation in school facilities and on school grounds, when possible, such as:
  o Finding alternative spaces in the community to allow for more in-person instruction;
  o adjusting class or work hours, where appropriate and possible;
  o limiting in-person presence to only those staff who are necessary to be at the school during normal school hours;
  o maintaining or increasing remote workforce (e.g., administrative staff) to accommodate physical distancing guidelines;
  o staggering schedules and allowing more time between classes to reduce congestion in hallways, walkways, and buildings; and/or
  o shifting design of class schedules to accommodate physical distancing guidelines, including cohorts (e.g., alternative classroom schedules, full-time in-person learning for younger students, and part-time distance learning for older students).

D. Movement and Commerce

Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up

• Responsible Parties should establish designated areas for student drop-off and pick-up, limiting contact and entry of parents/legal guardians into the building, to the greatest extent possible.

Deliveries

• Responsible Parties should establish designated areas for pickups and deliveries, limiting contact to the extent possible.

Faculty/Staff Entrances and Exits

• To the extent feasible, Responsible Parties should limit on-site interactions (e.g., designating separate ingress or egress for faculty and staff, eliminating bidirectional flow of individuals to the extent practicable).

Shared Objects

• Responsible Parties should put in place plans or measures to limit the sharing of objects, such as lockers, cubbies, laptops, notebooks, touchscreens, writing utensils, chalk and dry erase boards, musical instruments, tools, and toys, as well as the touching of shared surfaces, such as conference tables and desks; or require students, faculty, and staff to perform hand hygiene before and after contact.

II. PLACES

A. Personal Protective Equipment

• Masks should have at least two layers of material (e.g., 2-ply). Acceptable masks for COVID-19 include but are not limited to cloth-based masks (e.g., homemade sewn, quick cut, and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose. Face shields worn without other masks are not considered adequate protection or source control against COVID-19 and should not be used. Please refer to the updated Face Masks and Coverings for COVID-19 for recommendations on how to wear masks, how to improve mask protection, a list of which masks are NOT recommended, as well as how individuals can protect themselves while putting on and taking off a mask.
- Responsible Parties and faculty may use alternate PPE (i.e., masks that are transparent at or around the mouth) for instruction or interventions that require visualization of the movement of the lips and/or mouths (e.g., speech therapy). These alternate masks may also be used for certain students (e.g., hearing impaired) who benefit from being able to see more of the face of the faculty or staff member.

- However, cloth-based masks or disposable masks shall not be considered acceptable masks for workplace activities that require a higher degree of protection for PPE due to the nature of the work. For those types of activities, N-95 respirators or other PPE used under existing industry standards should continue to be used, in accordance with OSHA guidelines.

- In addition to the necessary PPE as required for certain workplace activities, Responsible Parties must procure, fashion, or otherwise obtain acceptable masks and provide such masks to their faculty and staff who directly interact with students or members of the public while at work at no cost to the faculty or staff member, pursuant to Executive Order 202.16, as amended and extended.

- Responsible Parties should have an adequate supply of masks and other required PPE on hand should faculty or staff need a replacement, or a student be in need.

- Responsible Parties must advise students, faculty, staff, and visitors that they are required to wear masks at all times in school buildings, except when eating.

- Responsible Parties must allow students, faculty, and staff to use their own acceptable masks, but cannot require faculty and staff to supply their own masks. Further, this guidance shall not prevent employees from wearing their personally owned protective masks (e.g., surgical masks, N-95 respirators), as long as they adhere to the minimum standards of protection for the specific activity. Responsible Parties may otherwise require employees to wear more protective PPE due to the nature of their work. If applicable, employers should comply with all applicable OSHA standards.

- Responsible Parties may request that students bring their own mask, but may not require it and must procure, fashion, or otherwise obtain acceptable masks and provide such masks to any student who does not have their own, at no cost to the student.

- Masks should be cleaned or replaced after use and must not be shared. Students and parents/legal guardians should take responsibility for maintaining their masks. Please consult CDC guidance for additional information on cloth masks and other types of PPE, as well as instructions on use and cleaning.

B. Hygiene, Cleaning and Disinfection

Hygiene

- Responsible Parties must ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH, including “Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19,” and the “STOP THE SPREAD” poster, as applicable. Responsible Parties must maintain logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection. Responsible Parties must identify cleaning and disinfection frequency for each facility type and assign responsibility. Responsible Parties must oversee the regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (e.g., toys, door handles, sink handles, toilets, drinking fountains) within the school and on school buses at least daily or between use as much as possible.

- Responsible Parties must train all students, faculty, and staff on proper hand and respiratory hygiene, and should provide information to parents and/or legal guardians on ways to reinforce this at home.

- Responsible parties must teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
Responsible parties must encourage teachers, staff, and students to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, dispose of used tissues immediately, and wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

- Responsible Parties must 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.
    - School medical or health directors should approve and permit the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers in school facilities without individual's physician orders as alcohol-based hand sanitizers are considered over-the-counter drugs. Student use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers should always be supervised by adults to minimize accidental ingestion and promote safe usage; supervision is required for elementary school students. Parents/guardians can inform the school that they do not want their child to use alcohol-based hand sanitizers by sending a written notice to the school. Schools must provide accommodations for students who cannot use hand sanitizer, to allow for their use of handwashing stations.
  - Make hand sanitizer available throughout common areas. It should be placed in convenient locations, such as at building, classroom, and cafeteria entrances and exits. Touch-free hand sanitizer dispensers should be installed where possible.
    - Responsible Parties should place signage near hand sanitizer stations indicating that visibly soiled hands should be washed with soap and water; hand sanitizer is not effective on visibly soiled hands.
    - Responsible Parties should remind individuals that alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be flammable and may not be suitable for certain areas in school facilities and on school grounds.

- Responsible Parties should place receptacles around the school for disposal of soiled items, including paper towels and PPE.

- Responsible Parties should make hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes available near shared amenities. Sanitizer should be an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical.

- Hand sanitizer should be placed in convenient locations, such as at building, classroom, and cafeteria entrances and exits. Touch-free hand sanitizer dispensers should be installed where possible. For additional information and for materials to display in school, please refer to the updated Stop the Spread of Germs.

**Cleaning and Disinfection**

- Responsible Parties should ensure that cleaning and disinfection are the primary responsibility of the school's custodial staff. However, Responsible Parties may also choose to provide appropriate cleaning and disinfection supplies to faculty and staff for shared and frequently touched surfaces:
  - Consider providing disposable wipes to faculty and staff so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, remote controls) can be wiped down before and/or after use, followed by hand hygiene.
  - To reduce high-touch surfaces, Responsible Parties should install touch-free amenities, such as water-bottle refilling stations, trash receptacles and paper towel dispensers, where feasible.
• If installing touch-free amenities is not feasible, Responsible Parties should, at a minimum, make hand sanitizer available near high-touch surfaces (e.g., trash receptacles, paper towel dispensers).

• Responsible Parties should consider closing water drinking fountains (unless they are configured as a bottle refilling station) and encourage students, faculty, and staff to bring their own water bottles or use disposable cups.

• Responsible Parties must adhere to and promote hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection guidance set forth by the Department and CDC.

• There are two scenarios that require cleaning and disinfecting multiple times per day:
  o High risk areas including health offices, classrooms, lunchrooms/dining rooms, athletic rooms, bathrooms, and high traffic areas. Responsible parties must establish procedures for surfaces that must be sanitized after use, such as gym mats, health office cots, and lunch/dining tables.
  o High touch surfaces including lunch tables, desks and chairs, light switches, handrails, door handles/push plates, faucets, equipment handles and buttons, shared equipment and electronics, bus seats, and handrails.

• Responsible Parties must conduct regular cleaning and disinfection of the facilities and more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk areas used by many individuals and for frequently touched surfaces, including desks and cafeteria tables which should be cleaned and disinfected between each individual’s use, if shared. If cohorts are used, cleaning and disinfection may take place between each cohort’s use rather than each individual. Cleaning and disinfection must be rigorous and ongoing and should occur at least daily, or more frequently as needed. Please refer to DOH’s “Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility” and “Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Hand Hygiene: A Toolkit for School Administrators” for detailed instructions on how to clean and disinfect facilities.
  o Please refer to the updated Coronavirus (COVID-19) Custodial Checklist for Schools for additional detail on COVID-19 cleaning guidelines and routine cleaning procedures.
  o Responsible Parties must ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms. Restrooms should be cleaned and disinfected more often depending on frequency of use.
  o Responsible Parties should ensure that materials and tools used by employees are regularly cleaned and disinfected using registered disinfectants. Refer to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) list of products registered in New York State and identified by the EPA as effective against COVID-19.
    • If cleaning or disinfection products or the act of cleaning and disinfection causes safety hazards or degrades the material or machinery, Responsible Parties must put in place hand hygiene stations between use and/or supply disposable gloves and/or limitations on the number of employees using such machinery.

Implement best practices to implement in residential, shared (i.e., communal) bathrooms include (e.g. use of touch-free paper towel dispensers in lieu of air dryers).

• Responsible Parties must ensure physical distancing rules are adhered to by using signage, occupied markers, or other methods to reduce restroom occupancy at any given time, where feasible.

**Cleaning and Disinfection Following Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Case**

• Responsible Parties must provide for the cleaning and disinfection of exposed areas in the event an individual is confirmed to have COVID-19, with such cleaning and disinfection to include, at a minimum, all heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces.
Responsible Parties are expected to follow CDC guidelines on “Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility,” if someone is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19:

- Close off areas used by the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.
  - Responsible Parties do not necessarily need to close operations, if they can close off the affected areas (e.g., classroom, restroom, hallway), but they should consult with local health departments in development of their protocols.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Wait 24 hours before you clean and disinfect, unless waiting 24 hours is not feasible, in which case, 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.
- Restrict access to any area where someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 was present until the area is cleaned and disinfected.
- Once the area has been appropriately cleaned and disinfected, it can be reopened for use.
  - 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.
- If more than seven days have passed since the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary, but routine cleaning and disinfection should continue.

C. Coordination and Phased Reopening

- Responsible Parties must designate a COVID-19 safety coordinator whose responsibilities include continuous compliance with all aspects of the school’s reopening plan, as well as any phased-in reopening activities necessary to allow for operational issues to be resolved before activities return to normal or “new normal” levels.

D. Communications Plan

- Responsible Parties must engage with school stakeholders and community members (e.g., administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/legal guardians of students, local health departments, local health care providers, and affiliated organizations, such as unions, alumni, and/or community-based groups) when developing or updating reopening plans. Plans for reopening should identify the groups of people involved and keep them engaged throughout the planning process.
- Responsible Parties must develop a communications plan for students, parents or legal guardians of students, staff, and visitors that includes applicable instructions, training, signage, and a consistent means to provide individuals with information. Responsible Parties may consider developing webpages, text and email groups, and/or social media groups or posts.
- Responsible Parties must ensure all students are taught or trained how to follow COVID-19 protocols safely and correctly, including but not limited to hand hygiene, proper mask wearing, physical distancing, and respiratory hygiene.
- Responsible Parties must encourage all students, faculty, staff, and visitors through verbal and written communication (e.g., signage) to adhere to CDC and DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE, specifically acceptable masks.
• Responsible Parties should designate a coordinator or other point(s)-of-contact to be the main contact upon the identification of positive COVID-19 cases and to be responsible for subsequent communication. Coordinators should be responsible for answering questions from students, faculty, staff, and parents or legal guardians of students regarding the COVID-19 public health emergency and plans implemented by the school.
  o Coordinators should also work closely with local health departments and other schools to monitor public health conditions and jointly develop monitoring strategies.

E. Residential Living Considerations

• For K-12 schools with students who reside on campus, Responsible Parties must consider the following as they develop their plans:
  o Residence halls: Plans should include protocols for capacity limits, enhanced cleaning and disinfection, appropriate physical distancing as defined in this document, use of acceptable masks in common areas, restrictions on non-essential gatherings and activities, limited access by students to other residential facilities (e.g., dormitories), restrictions of visitors, special housing considerations for students who are immunocompromised or who have an underlying health condition, separate living spaces for persons undergoing isolation or quarantine, and a modified set of rules for students to follow;
  o Residential testing: Plan for screening all students and faculty upon return, and to ensure diagnostic testing for any students or faculty members who screen positive for potential COVID-19 infection upon return, especially including any individuals with recent international travel, as identified in the New York State Travel Advisory;
  o Residential isolation and quarantine: Isolation or quarantine of individuals residing on school grounds may become necessary and schools should develop plans, in consultation with the local health department, that specify where individuals will be residing (e.g., dedicated residence hall, hotel, home) and the support system that will be implemented to meet daily needs (e.g., food, medication, psychosocial, academic and/or other support) throughout the duration of their isolation or quarantine. Plans should include measures to monitor and provide medical care and other health services to students who test positive and are in isolation, need more advanced medical care, or who are awaiting test results; and
  o Residence move-out: Plans need to be put in place for how students should safely depart residence halls in the event of a closure. Schools should consider policies for students who may not be able to depart campus quickly (e.g. international students).

III. PROCESSES

A. Screening and Testing

Health Screening and Temperature Checks

• Responsible Parties must implement mandatory health screenings, including temperature checks, of students, faculty, staff, and, where applicable, contractors, vendors, and visitors to identify any individuals who may have COVID-19 or who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus.
  o Temperature checks should be conducted per U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or DOH guidelines. Specifically, all individuals must have their temperature checked each day—ideally, at home, prior to departing to school—before entering any school facility. If an individual presents a temperature of greater than 100.0°F, the individual must be denied entry into the facility, or sent directly to a dedicated area prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home.
Responsible Parties must also use a daily screening questionnaire for faculty and staff reporting to school; and periodically use a questionnaire for students, particularly younger students, who may require the assistance of their parent/legal guardian to answer.

- Responsible Parties are prohibited from keeping records of student, faculty, staff, and visitor health data (e.g., the specific temperature data of an individual), but are permitted to maintain records that confirm individuals were screened and the result of such screening (e.g., pass/fail, cleared/not cleared).

Screening is strongly recommended to be conducted remotely (e.g. by electronic survey, digital application, or telephone, which may involve the parent/legal guardian), before the individual reports to school, to the extent possible; or may be performed on site at the school.

- Remote screening should be coordinated to identify individuals who should not go to school and should be referred to their health care provider for further evaluation and COVID-19 testing.
- On-site screening should be coordinated in a manner that prevents individuals from intermingling in close or proximate contact with each other prior to completion of the screening.

Screening for all students, faculty, staff, and, where practicable, visitors, contractors, and vendors, must be completed using a questionnaire that determines whether the individual has:

(a) knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 10 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;

(b) tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 10 days;

(c) has experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.0°F, in the past 10 days; and/or

(d) has traveled internationally per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 10 days.

- As able, Responsible Parties should consider implementing health screening practices for unscheduled visitors (e.g., members of the public allowed to use school grounds).
- Refer to CDC guidance on "Symptoms of Coronavirus" for the most up to date information on symptoms associated with COVID-19.

Please note that the manifestation of COVID-19 in children, although similar, is not always the same as that for adults. Children may be less likely to present with fever as an initial symptom, and may only have gastrointestinal tract symptoms, which should be taken into consideration during the screening process. Schools should also consider reminding parents/guardians that students may not attend school if they have had a temperature of greater than 100.0°F at any time in the past 10 days, even if a fever-reducing medication was administered and the student no longer has a fever.

- Responsible Parties should remain aware that quarantine of students, faculty, or staff may be necessary based on current guidance and/or executive orders.

**Diagnostic and Screening Testing**

- Any member of the school community who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, is a direct contact of a person identified as having COVID-19 or has been otherwise exposed to COVID-19 should immediately seek diagnostic testing. Schools should make sure families without regular access to healthcare know where in the community to find testing if needed. All schools are reminded that the requirement to submit daily to the NYS COVID-19 Report Card remains.
CDC recommends screening testing based on feasibility and community transmission levels. Schools should follow CDC guidelines when implementing testing plans. Please refer to Table 4 in the CDC guidance for more detail. Responsible Parties moving to physical distancing of less than six feet should strongly consider implementing screening testing protocols to ensure monitoring. Additional guidance regarding testing supply support will be forthcoming.

**Positive Screen Protocols**

- Any individual who screens positive for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms, if screened at the school, must be immediately sent home with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing.
  - Students who are being sent home because of a positive screen (e.g., onset of COVID-19 symptoms) must be immediately separated from other students and supervised until their parent/legal guardian or emergency contact can retrieve them from school.
  - Responsible Parties should provide such individuals with information on health care and testing resources, if applicable.
  - Responsible Parties must immediately notify the state and local health department about the case if diagnostic test results are positive for COVID-19.
  - Asymptomatic individuals who are fully vaccinated or have recovered from laboratory confirmed COVID-19 in the previous 3 months who screen positive for COVID-19 exposure may remain at school.
  - Anyone with symptoms must be immediately sent home with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing irrespective of vaccination status or previous COVID-19 infection.

- Responsible Parties must require individuals to immediately disclose if and when their responses to any of the aforementioned questions changes, such as if they begin to experience symptoms, including during or outside of school hours.

- Responsible Parties must establish policies, in consultation with the local health department(s), about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment. This returning to learning protocol must include at minimum documentation from a health care provider evaluation, negative COVID-19 testing, and symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation.

- Responsible Parties must designate a central point of contact(s), which may vary by activity, location, shift or day, responsible for receiving and attesting to having reviewed all screening activities, with such contact(s) also identified as the party for individuals to inform if they later experience COVID-19-related symptoms or COVID-19 exposure, as noted on the questionnaire.

**In-Person Screening**

- Responsible Parties must ensure that any personnel performing in-person screening activities, including temperature checks, are appropriately protected from exposure to potentially infectious individuals entering the facilities. Personnel performing screening activities should be trained by employer-identified individuals who are familiar with CDC, DOH, and OSHA protocols.

- Screeners should be provided and use PPE, which includes at a minimum, an acceptable mask, and may also include gloves, a gown, and/or a face shield.

**B. School Health Offices**
• Responsible Parties may consider developing testing systems in school facilities or self-testing systems in collaboration with local health departments or local health care providers, as able.

• Responsible Parties must develop protocols for caring for a student, faculty, or staff member who develops COVID-19 symptoms during the school day. These protocols must include:
  o Identification of a dedicated area to separate students, faculty, or staff with symptoms of COVID-19 from others until they can go home or to a health care facility, depending on severity of illness;
  o Plans to ensure that symptomatic students who are waiting to be picked up remain under the visual supervision of a staff member who is physically distanced;
  o PPE requirements for school health office staff caring for sick individuals, which must include both standard and transmission-based precautions. In areas with moderate to substantial community transmission, eye protection (i.e., goggles or face shield) should be added. When caring for a suspect or confirmed individual with COVID-19, gloves, a gown, and a fit-tested N-95 respirator should be used, if available (or surgical face mask and face shield, if not available), as well as eye protection. Please consult CDC guidance for additional information; and
  o Required guidelines for cleaning and disinfection.

• Responsible Parties must develop protocols for asthma-related acute respiratory treatment care using up to date standard of care:
  o Nebulizer treatments and suctioning are identified by the CDC as aerosol-generating procedures requiring a N-95 mask fitted to the healthcare worker;
  o Consult with students’ healthcare providers for alternate asthma medication delivery systems; and
  o Consult with school maintenance and facilities department for environmental controls.

C. Tracing and Tracking

Metrics

• Responsible Parties may identify clearly defined measures that will serve as warning signs that the level of COVID-19 transmission may be increasing in the school setting beyond an acceptable level, as defined by state and local health departments.
  o Responsible Parties must include a process in their plan if/when COVID-19 cases are discovered at school, including closing areas or classes where individuals were infected or more broadly the entire school in consultation with the local health department.
  o Responsible Parties may choose to modify operations prior to instituting school-wide closures to help mitigate a rise in cases.

Indicators of Community Transmission

• CDC recommends that public health officials and school administrators consider the total new cases per 100,000 persons in the community within the preceding 7 days and the percentage of molecular tests that are positive within the preceding 7 days when making decisions about physical distancing. Levels of community transmission defined as total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days (low, 0-9; moderate, 10-49; substantial, 50-99; high, ≥100) and percentage of positive tests in the past 7 days (low, <5%; moderate, 5-9.9%; substantial, 8-9.9%; high, ≥10%).

• Localities can refer to the CDC’s COVID-19 Integrated County View for county indicators. In addition, NYS publishes near real-time COVID-19 data on the NYSDOH COVID-19 Tracker.
Notification

- Responsible Parties must notify the state and local health department 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.

Tracing Support

- In the case of an individual testing positive, Responsible Parties must develop plans to support local health departments in tracing all contacts of the individual, in accordance with the protocols, training, and tools provided through the New York State Contact Tracing Program. Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state law and regulations. Responsible Parties must cooperate with state and local health department contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine efforts.
  - If feasible, Responsible Parties may offer optional tracing and tracking technology (e.g., mobile applications) to streamline contact tracing and communication process among their students, faculty, staff, parents/legal guardians of students, and community.
  - Responsible Parties should partner with local health departments to train faculty and staff to undertake contact tracing efforts for populations in school facilities and on school grounds, where feasible.

Quarantine, Isolation, and Return to School

- State and local health departments will implement monitoring and movement restrictions of COVID-19 infected or exposed persons, including isolation or quarantine.

- Responsible Parties must ensure that reporting plans are in place for individuals who are alerted that they have come into close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19, and have been alerted to such exposure via tracing, tracking or other mechanism.

- Responsible Parties are subject to DOH guidance 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.

IV. SCHOOL COVID-19 Report Card

All public and private (both secular and non-secular) elementary (including pre-kindergarten), middle, and high schools as well as boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES), charter schools, and private schools are required to report to the COVID-19 Report Card each operational day. COVID-19 positive data reported on this site includes students, teachers and staff enrolled in the school district on-site and off-site. This information is either shared by the parent/guardian of the student, notified by teachers and other staff, or communicated by the local health department.

V. SCHOOL PLANS

All plans should continue to reflect engagement with school stakeholders and community members (e.g., administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/legal guardians of students, local health care providers, and affiliated organizations, such as unions, alumni, and/or community-based groups), particularly local health department(s), and, in accordance with the minimum requirements referenced herein, cover: (1) reopening of school facilities for in-person instruction, (2) monitoring of health conditions, (3) containment of potential transmission of the 2019 novel coronavirus, and (4) closure of school facilities and in-person instruction, if necessitated by widespread virus transmission.

Responsible Parties must conspicuously post completed reopening plans at the school and on their website for faculty, staff, students, and parents and legal guardians of students to access. The NYS Department of Health does not review or approve revisions to school reopening plans, however plans must at all times be consistent with NYS DOH guidance. Modified plans must
be posted online as well as submitted to the New York State Education Department and the Local Health Department. Local Health Departments are the entity charged with enforcement of these minimum guidelines.

Additional safety information, guidelines, and resources are available at:

New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website
https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/

New York State Education Department Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website
http://www.nysed.gov/coronavirus

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website

Occupational Safety and Health Administration COVID-19 Website
https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/