



Reopening  
2020-21:  
A Blueprint  
for Success

July 31, 2020

VALLEY STREAM UFSD  
THIRTEEN  
REOPENING PLAN  
2020-2021

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Dear Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen Families,

We are a month away from the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year and have been working to prepare for the reopening of our schools. This plan includes operational and instructional information resultant from our planning process. While we realize that we may need to adjust as the health of our region changes, Valley Stream Union Free School District Thirteen, "The District" is dedicated to providing high quality instruction to our children this school year prioritizing the health and safety of everyone in our schools.

During the month of June, we developed and implemented a planning process (i.e., Reopening 2020-21: A Blueprint for Success) that outlined the steps we would implement to engage our public in building our final reopening plan. Through the Blueprint Planning process, critical stakeholder groups, student families, teachers and administrators, support staff and the Board of Education confirmed the high value that we place on in-person education and the need for additional, more flexible instructional delivery models.

In mid-July, after receiving guidance from the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) regarding the learning environments that were allowable in NYS Plans, we surveyed our families regarding their preference to keep their children home during this pandemic and the idea of a hybrid model of instructional delivery. Parent responses supported both in-person and hybrid models of instruction.

In response to all of the feedback we have received, what we know about the spread of COVID-19 based in science, and child development research, we have planned for maximum in-person learning for our youngest group of learners, special class and English language learners. Students in grades 2-6 will be engaged in a structured hybrid learning model that includes in-person and virtual learning. These decisions were made collectively and our overall plan is aligned with the safety and health protocols outlined by federal and state agencies.

Our staff will be well trained in the health and safety guidelines related to identifying and preventing the spread of COVID-19 as well as COVID response protocols in the instance that we experience a confirmed case in our schools. These detailed protocols are outlined in this plan.

Information and guidance from the Governor's Office, the New York State Department of Education, and health authorities continues to evolve and we will adjust our planning as needed.

Thank you for your continued support of the District's service to our school community.

Sincerely,  
*Constance D. Evelyn, Ed.D.*

Superintendent of Schools

July 31, 2020

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# TASK FORCE & GROUP ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The following groups, organizations, government agencies and others listed below provided guidance, resources and/or input in preparing the VSUFSD Thirteen Reopening Framework:

- Center for Disease Control (CDC)
- New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH)
- Nassau County Department of Health
- New York State Department of Education Guidance Document
- New York State Governor Cuomo's Guidance Document
- New York State School Boards Association
- Valley Stream District Thirteen Board of Education
- Nassau County Council of School Superintendents
- Valley Stream Teachers Association
- Valley Stream Parent Teacher Association
- Valley Stream District Thirteen Focus Groups; Support Staff, Parents, Teachers, Board of Education
- Dr. Richard Addes, District Physician
- Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen Council of Administrators and Supervisors
- New York State Center for School Health
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This Reopening Plan contains the following terms that families should know:

**Asynchronous Learning** - This term is most commonly applied to various forms of digital and online learning in which students learn from instruction such as prerecorded video lessons or game-based learning tasks that students complete on their own or that is not being delivered in person or in real time.

**Chromebook** - Chromebook is the device that will be distributed to each Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen student in grades 2-6 prior to or at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year for use during the school year as part of the hybrid model. The device will be used for online and/or remote learning. For kindergarten and first grade, devices will be provided should we transition to a full remote learning experience.

**Chronic Absenteeism** - Chronic absence includes all absences from instruction, both excused and unexcused.

**ClassLink** - ClassLink is the District's Single Sign-On (SSO) Dashboard that is used by students and staff to access digital curriculum/resource sites. This eliminates the need for a user to remember multiple usernames and passwords.

**Cleaning** - The removal of germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. Cleaning does not kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

**Cohort Model** - To the extent practicable, the District will "cohort" students to limit the potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus. This means that they are self-contained, preassigned groups of students with reasonable group size limits.

**Disinfection** - A process using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. By killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

**Hand hygiene** - Hand washing with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

**Hybrid** - A combination of in-person and remote learning.

**In-person Instruction** - Instruction that takes place with students in attendance at the school building.

**Learning Management System (LMS)** - Learning Management System is a software application that is designed specifically to create, distribute and manage the delivery of educational content.

Elementary students will use **Google Classroom** in third grade through sixth grade and **SeeSaw** in kindergarten through second grade.

**Online Learning or Online Program** - Online refers to the District's programs currently in place (e.g. Light Sail). Curriculum offered through this program are online only. Students do not attend class.

**Remote Learning** - Instruction that takes place outside of the school building while the students are not in attendance at the school.

**Remote Learning Ready** - Valley Stream Thirteen Teachers are *Remote Learning Ready* when they can independently:

- Utilize a Learning Management Platform (*SeeSaw* or *Google*) to post announcements, post assignments, grade assignments, and give individual feedback to students
- Create videos to deliver instructional content
- Create resource links for instructional support
- Create learning projects that use and integrate instructional technology tools
- Create performance-based assessments using technology tools such as PowerPoint and *Google Slides*
- Assess students virtually using online quizzes and tests
- Support students with remote learning using communication tools such as a class website
- Leverage technology components of the district's curriculum programs
- Research and identify best practices in teaching and learning with technology
- Source high-quality curriculum-specific information from online digital resources
- Use online tools to communicate with other teachers and parents

**Safe Room** - An isolated/supervised room for students and staff who develop respiratory illness/*COVID-19* symptoms during the school day.

**Social Emotional Learning (SEL)** - The process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

**Special Class** - A class consisting of students with disabilities who have been grouped together because of similar individual needs for the purpose of being provided specially designed instruction.

**Synchronous Learning** - "Synchronous learning" is a general term used to describe forms of education, instruction, and learning that occur at the same time, but not in the same place.

**Three-Tiered Model of Mental Health Support** - Psychologists, Social Workers and Guidance Counselor will utilize this method of assessing and providing direct and indirect support to students, families and staff. This includes group and individual intervention, as well as referrals to community-based organizations and resources.

# **PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

## **Reopening 2020-21: A Blueprint for Success**

Our planning framework for developing this Reopening Plan consisted of a collective effort by a Task Force including stakeholders and organizations listed in the Group Acknowledgement.

### **Task Force Scope of Work**

The District's planning process for reopening included the creation of a Task Force to outline efforts that aligned with state and federal guidelines, along with consideration for nine areas determined by the New York State Education Department. These areas include, (a) health and safety, (b) teaching and learning, (c) social emotional needs, (d) special education, (e) bilingual education, (f) digital equity and access, (g) budget and fiscal, (h) transportation, facilities, and nutrition, and (i) staffing and human resources. The Task Force work encompassed five major components, (1) data collection, (2) committee work, (3) focus group work, (4) parent leadership input, (5) submission of a preliminary plan to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the New York State Department of Health (DOH), and (6) the creation and dissemination of a final Reopening 2020-21 Blueprint for Success document to the community that is posted to the district website.

The initial part of the process took place during the first two weeks in June and included collecting data to inform the work of the reopening Task Force. Teachers were provided with an end-of-year survey and a district-wide Thoughtexchange was executed for parents to share their feedback regarding the district's response to Continuity of Instruction, Childcare, and Meal Distribution during the emergency shutdown from March to June of the last school year. The survey results were shared with individual district committees, comprised of district staff members. Each individual committee focused on one of the nine categories listed above.

The committees reported their recommendations to the Task Force Steering Committee, comprised of district administrators. The Task Force Steering Committee summarized this work and presented the information to the four focus groups. Focus group members provided input along with the recommendations of the district committees. These focus groups included the Board of Education, parents and community, district support staff, and teachers and administrators. Focus groups were first provided with all of the committee recommendations and also submitted written input to the recommendations prior to, and during, the focus group meetings. During the focus group meetings, members reviewed the committee recommendations, and subsequently determined the most important priority items to be included in the reopening plan from their representative group(s).

The focus group input was combined with the committee work and reviewed by the Task Force Steering Committee to ensure that all of the recommendations were consistent with state and federal guidelines, and to ensure that the district's organizational capacity could support the recommendations for reopening.

The final Reopening 2020-21: Blueprint for Success plan document will be shared with our school community on July 31<sup>st</sup> and formally presented at the regular meeting of the Board of Education on August 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Summary of Task Force Reopening Planning:**

- **Phases:** data collection (early June), committee work (mid/late June), focus group work (week of July 13), work with PTA Leadership (June-August), reopening report to NYSED and DOH (end of July), final report for community (July-August)
- **Nine required areas/committees:** health and safety; teaching and learning; social-emotional needs; special education; bilingual education; digital equity and access; budget and fiscal; transportation, facilities, and nutrition; staffing and human resources
- **Four Focus groups:** Board of Education; parents and community; district support staff; teachers and administrators

**Task Force Steering Committee:** Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Directors

# HEALTH AND SAFETY

The health and safety of the children and adults in our schools is our priority. Health and safety considerations are primary in every decision and responsive actions taken by our schools and district. We want our students, families, and employees to feel comfortable and safe returning to our schools this September.

## Health Checks

The District's families and staff will be provided with educational resources on the symptoms and preventive measures against COVID-19 virus. A process to conduct health screenings will be implemented to ensure that temperature checks are completed daily before students and staff participate in any in-person school or school-related activities. Any persons with a fever of 100 or greater and/or symptoms of possible COVID-19 virus infection will not be permitted in school.

## Healthy Hygiene Practices

Healthy hygiene practices will be perpetually taught in all four schools for both students and staff.

There will be posters displayed throughout the school buildings with reminders about best practices to thwart the spread of the COVID-19 virus and requirements regarding healthy hand and respiratory hygiene.

There will be a central location with information on the COVID-19 virus on our website and in all four schools. The district will use video and in-person training to teach best practices on personal protection equipment (PPE), the importance of good air flow, preventive measures that can be taken and proper hygiene.

## Social Distancing

All employees and students will be expected to maintain appropriate social distancing of at least 6 feet/physical barrier while in school facilities and on school grounds. The District will maintain these standards for in-person instruction.

A cohort model will be used throughout all four of our buildings to limit the potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus. This means that these classroom settings are self-contained, preassigned groups of students with reasonable group size limits.

**Arrival** at school will be planned to limit the number of students entering at the same time/location, whether it be by car, foot or bus. Buses and cars will be kept separate when possible. Cars will be valeted from a drop-off lane where feasible. All arrivals will be a "drop-and-go" model. Upon arrival, students will enter the school in single file (unless related) and proceed immediately to class. Walkers and students arriving on buses will also enter the school single file and proceed directly to their classrooms. Students will wear face coverings during arrival to ensure health and safety while traveling in hallways to classrooms.

Multiple entrances may be used as long as all safety requirements regarding the use of additional entry points are monitored relative to security and locking.

**Dismissal** procedures will utilize multiple entrances/exits for walkers and bus students. Students and their families must maintain social distancing guidelines outside and proceed immediately back to their cars or leave the school property immediately upon being dismissed. Playgrounds and fields are off limits for use during and immediately following dismissal. All students and visitors at dismissal are required to wear face coverings and maintain social distancing requirements. Students leaving school at any time other than the regularly scheduled dismissal time will be done through curbside pickup and will be required to follow the same protocols related to wearing appropriate facing coverings and maintaining social distancing.

**Classroom Setup and Materials:** Faculty and staff will socially distance the children while in the classroom and avoid group gatherings such as on the carpet area and by the closets. Materials will not be shared between students.

Desks will be arranged in ways that maximize social distancing and in all classrooms, student furniture will be spaced six (6) feet apart. In all classrooms, the use of reduced class size, increased spacing between desks, barriers, and face shields will be utilized.

The employment of alternate spaces for such activities including eating lunch and breakfast will be implemented. If alternate spaces are not utilized, the District will ensure classroom groups are together in lunchrooms while adhering to the social distancing rules.

**Student Movement** Visual aids (e.g., painter's tape, stickers, posters, cones, etc) will be utilized to show expected traffic flow and appropriate spacing to support social distancing.

The District will reduce the movement of cohorts by keeping students within the classroom and modifying class schedules as it relates specials such as music, art and physical education.

Bathrooms will be monitored by staff to ensure social distancing, cleanliness, and student practice of good hand hygiene.

## Medically Vulnerable/High Risk Groups

The District will be responsive to groups that are at increased risk for complications from COVID-19 that may need added or alternate provisions for social distancing. Students that have family members who are in high risk groups may also need accommodations. Our schools will work to meet the needs of these students in the school community. Persons in these groups should consult with their healthcare provider regarding prevention.

Students with special needs and/or medical conditions who require accommodations should contact the Office of Special Services at 880 Willow Road, Franklin Square, New York 11010, 516-568-6260 / [lsells@valleystream13.com](mailto:lsells@valleystream13.com) to request a referral to the Committee on Special Education or 504 Committee.

Alternate plans created in consultation with school health personnel on how to meet the needs of these children while keeping social distancing may include:

- Additional PPE for staff caring for such students;
- Decreased students in classroom utilizing alternating schedules
- Fully Virtual/Remote Learning Opportunity

If parents/guardians cannot send their child back to school due to medical vulnerability, the District will provide instruction remotely.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)/Face Covering

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided to all Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen employees including face shields and masks. The Valley Stream Teacher's Association has collaborated with the district to assist with this effort. All staff will be provided with training relative to the safe and healthful wearing and removal of face coverings. Persons that choose to wear cloth face coverings should follow the directives on the CDC website (**Andrea add link**) for proper use and cleaning. Additionally, staff and students should be mindful of the presentation of logos or designs on cloth masks as some markings may be distracting or inappropriate for an elementary learning environment.

All Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen employees and students will be required to wear a face covering (mask) while inside the building unless medically exempt. As guided by the state regulations, there will be allowances made for staff and students to remove their face covering during meals, instruction, and for short breaks so long as they maintain appropriate social distance.

## **Management of Ill Persons**

School staff will immediately report any illness of students or staff to the school nurse or other designated school staff (e.g., principals). When reporting student and staff illness, all communication protocols will be made in compliance with FERPA, and Education Law 2-d. Students and staff who demonstrate symptoms of illness will be immediately sent to the nurse's office maintaining all the social distancing and face covering requirements. The nurse will assess the individual and follow the District and CDC response protocols.

Our nurses are aware of symptoms associated with Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) associated with COVID-19 in children and youth. Parents will be immediately notified of any child showing signs of MIS-C illness. Any person showing signs of COVID-19 related illness will be sent home and/or isolated in a "safe room" until they can be picked or leave.

If the nurse determines that the illness in any classroom or school area is COVID-19 related, the area used by the sick person will be closed for 24 hours, cleaned and disinfected, and properly ventilated.

Once the area has been appropriately managed as described above, it can be reopened for use. We will have maintained all social distancing, PPE, and face covering requirements. Those 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 24 hours, cleaning and disinfection, and proper ventilations has been achieved as per the CDC and NYS DOH.

If more than seven days have passed since the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 visited or used the facilities, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary, but routine cleaning and disinfection will continue.

## **Return to School After Illness**

The District must follow CDC guidelines for allowing a student or staff member to return to school after exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.

The District will update our current health and wellness policies in consultation with the local health department(s) about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screen positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment. This returning to learning protocol will include at a minimum, documentation of evaluation by a healthcare provider (i.e., healthcare provider note clearing a person to return to school), negative COVID-19 testing, and symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation as required by DOH and NYSED guidance.

## **Contact Tracing**

Contact tracing is a public health function performed by local public health departments to trace all persons who had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. This allows public health officials to put in place isolation or other measures to limit the spread of the virus.

The District will cooperate with state and local health department contact tracing. All nurses and principals, and other members of our staff have been trained in contact tracing protocols and tools through the New York State Contact Tracing Program.

Schools will maintain accurate attendance records of students and staff members, ensure student schedules are up to date, and keep an accurate log of any visitors including date, time, and where they visit in our schools.

## **School Closures**

The District will collaborate with the Nassau County Department of Health to determine the parameters, conditions, or metrics (e.g., increased absenteeism or increased illness in the community) that will serve as early warning signs that positive COVID-19 cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level.

The District will also consider closing school if absentee rates impact the ability our schools to operate safely. District Administration will consult with Dr. Addes, school physician and/or the Nassau County Health Department when making such decisions.

## **Cleaning and Disinfection**

The District will follow all guidance provided by the CDC, particularly guidance for schools to aid in determining what levels of cleaning or disinfection is necessary under varied circumstances.

All cleaning and disinfecting of our schools will be conducted on a regular schedule aligned with a recorded log and comply with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and NYS Department of Health guidelines. All persons responsible for cleaning will have the necessary PPE to protect themselves while carry out the cleaning and disinfecting.

Staff will clean and disinfect areas using disinfectants approved for use against COVID-19 on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 following the product instructions.

Routine cleaning and disinfecting is key to maintaining a safe environment for faculty, students, and staff. All buildings will be cleaned every night, frequently touched surfaces and objects such as: door knobs, light switches, stair rails, lunch room tables, countertops, and water fountains, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets and restrooms will be cleaned at least daily (or more, depending on use patterns).

When a student or staff member develops any symptoms of illness consistent with COVID-19 the areas used by that person will be closed and not used before cleaning and disinfection. To reduce risk of exposure, the custodial staff will wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, they will wait as long as possible. Staff will clean and disinfect areas using disinfectants approved for use against COVID-19.

School Health Office cleaning will occur after each use of cots, bathroom, and health office equipment (e.g., stethoscopes). Disposable items will be used as much as possible. More information on cleaning health office equipment is on the [New York State Center for School Health's website](#) under COVID-19.

It is not necessary to routinely apply disinfectants to surfaces that are not high-touch or high-risk (e.g., floors, bookcases, tops of filing cabinets). Soft surfaces such as carpets, and rugs can be cleaned using soap and water or a cleaner appropriate for the material.

The District will closely monitor and limit the use of shared play areas including playground equipment. Playgrounds will be cleaned per CDC guidance. The District will utilize outdoor space as much as possible and limit play to small groups. Outdoor space will be divided using cones or paint to designate select areas for play. Each school will evaluate indoor and outdoor potential spaces for recess use. If inside spaces are used, windows will be kept open to maximize air flow and circulation. Access routes to and from the recess spaces will be planned as well as the staggering or arrival and departure times.

During recess, adequate adult supervision will be present who are trained in strategies to assist students in maintaining social distancing and proper hygiene. Students and staff will wash hands before and after recess. Games and activities with little to no equipment will be a primary option and choices of inclusive games that don't need any equipment will be readily available. Students will be given leadership opportunities to help support one another. All play equipment touched or handled by students will be cleaned with soap and water and disinfected following CDC guidelines. Outdoor areas, like playgrounds in schools and parks generally require normal routine cleaning, but do not require disinfection.

The District has supplied each school with a Clorox 360 System Electrostatic Sprayer. This is a surface treatment system that combines electrostatic technology with a disinfectant product to quickly and easily provide coverage up to 18,000 square feet per hour with one gallon of

disinfectant. We have ensured an adequate supply of relative materials to engage in regular use of this level of cleaning in our schools.

The District has stocked up on all daily cleaning supplies and personal protection equipment so in the event that suppliers have shortages we have adequate supplies.

## **Safety Drills**

Education Law requires that schools conduct eight (8) evacuation and four (4) lockdown drills each school year. When planning drills, the District will modify our drill procedures to minimize the risk of spreading infection. Modifications to drills will include:

- Staggering schedule where classrooms evacuate separately, rather than all at once;
- Conducting lockdown drills in a classroom setting while maintaining social distancing and using masks;
- Conducting lockdown drills on a staggered schedule with smaller numbers of students present to maintain social distancing;
- Conducting lockdown drills in classrooms without "hiding"/"sheltering" and providing students with an overview of how to shelter or hide in the classroom.

# FACILITIES

The District will ensure that the physical spaces occupied by students and adults that return to our school buildings are configured and maintained in ways that provide the maximum possible protection from the spread of the coronavirus. The District will ensure the safe operations of our schools and align our actions to social distance with the possibility of having to convert spaces such as gymnasiums and cafeterias with current building code requirements (e.g., fire and building code compliance).

The District will eliminate the use of our facilities by outside groups with the exception of Right at School's after school program. We will also eliminate/limit any nonessential visitors, parents, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as possible. The District will recursively determine whether and to what extent external community organizations can safely utilize our facilities and relative resources. If there is any use of our facilities by external organizations (e.g., voting) we will create systems that ensure we know that all of the CDC guidelines and our school's health and safety plans will be followed.

Last summer all of the unit ventilators in our classrooms district-wide were replaced and tied into a building management system. The unit ventilators are designed to increase the air quality in the classrooms. The unit ventilators air dampers are typically designed for 40% - 50% outdoor air at peak design conditions. We are able to work with our controls contractor to be able to adjust the air dampers up to 100% (full economizer mode) during appropriate weather conditions to increase the fresh air in the buildings. We are changing the schedule on our buildings exhaust system to run all exhaust fans 24/7 in order to keep the building under negative pressure, promoting additional ventilation air brought into the school building. All of the air filters in the unit ventilators and roof top HVAC systems are on a schedule to be replaced every three months. We will be opening windows throughout the building to improve ventilation when it does not pose a health or safety risk.

Polycarbonate barriers will be installed at the point of sale/point of pickup locations for food service, and other locations where 6-foot social distancing cannot be achieved. We will have clear desk barriers that will be placed on the student's desktop to block airborne viral droplets.

As we work towards completion of Phase 4 of our bond project, we continue to partner with contracted workers. Contractors will be signing in with security with a log of the locations in the building that they will be working in. All contractors have been notified that they must wear proper PPE while in our school buildings. No contractors will be in the building during school hours unless there is an emergency.

The District will reduce the number of accessible toilet fixtures in each building in order to facilitate frequent cleaning whilst maintaining the number of toilet fixtures that must be

available for use established by building code. Sinks and soap will be available to building occupants at all times.

The District will reduce the number of drinking fountains available in order to facilitate frequent cleaning. The District will also support the safe and healthy use of our water fountains by installing "dixie cup" dispensers for use by our students.

All modifications to our facilities that require students to change the way they interact with utilizing these spaces will be discussed/taught by our teachers at the beginning of school.

# CHILD NUTRITION/FOOD SERVICE

A nutrition program is a key component to a successful educational environment. As the District's food service operations transition from serving meals during unanticipated school closures to again serving meals in school, we will regard national, state, and local health and safety guidelines.

Common areas for breakfast and lunches will be eliminated if possible. Students will eat breakfast and lunch in the classrooms when possible. If students must use the cafeteria, students will be seated six (6) feet apart in assigned seats. Students will enter the cafeteria in shifts to control social distancing. Students will not be allowed to share food and use disposable utensils, plates, and trays.

The District will include school food service directors in district and system-wide discussions regarding plans for reopening schools to ensure that students participating in all learning models have access to healthy meals.

The District will:

- Address all applicable health and safety guidelines;
- Include measures to protect students with food allergies when providing meals in spaces outside the cafeteria;
- Follow all District practices and policies in communicating information;
- Communicate to our families that all meals may not be available free of charge as the availability status of summer meals to all families will change when school reopens;
- A specific contact person will be identified to receive and respond to communications from families;
- Provide links to enable access to documents and frequently asked questions about our meal program;
- Prior to opening, inform district families that they are able to submit a new application for free or reduced-price meals now or at any time during the school year;
- Evaluate staffing and make any needed adjustments;
- Ensure food service vendors/staff are trained on district policies and protocols on health and safety;

- Have supplies on hand for in-person and grab-and-go meal delivery;
- Revise district food safety plans to include standard operating procedures for meal service in classroom, additional meal service procedures in the cafeteria, social distancing and PPE during meal prep and delivery and receiving and storage;
- Ensure meals meet meal pattern requirements;
- Consider how to handle transactions that normally would occur in a cafeteria line - how payments will be collected, receipts issued and money secured;
- Document and accommodate requests for children with special dietary needs (e.g., food allergies);
- Strongly encourage the use of the online school payment system;
- Consider cash or check as payment, collected and sent to the cafeteria by classroom teachers, rather than each child paying on the cafeteria line;
- Discourage food sharing between students;
- Coordinate with Director of Facilities to establish sanitation procedures;
- Clean and disinfect tables, chairs and other frequently touched hard surfaces between groups of students;
- Coordinate with school personnel in order to meet the feeding safety needs of students with disabilities;
- 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 for;
  - ✓ Obtain or develop posters or other aids to assist non-food service staff to implement meal service.

## Additional Food Service Resources

- The HYSED Child Nutrition Office Website
- USDA Food and Nutrition Service
- Institute of Child Nutrition
- New York State Department of Health Food Safety Guidance
- CDC Guidance for Schools

# TRANSPORTATION

Transportation, particularly the school bus is an extension of the classroom. Therefore, many of the standards relative to reopening that apply to our school buildings will be utilized for pupil transportation on our buses.

The District will safely provide transportation aligned with CDC guidelines while still adhering to our district's transportation policies, particularly as it relates to students who are homeless (McKinney-Vento), in foster care, students with disabilities and those students that attend non-public schools.

The children will arrive at school and unload the buses individually allowing them to enter the school following the protocols. Only one bus will be offloaded at time. In the afternoon, the children will be brought to individual rooms by bus so that they can socially distance from other buses and will, again be brought out one bus at a time, reminding the children to socially distance and sit in their assigned seat.

The children will, when possible, be assigned seats based upon members of their household or from their class. Young children, and those that may be considered "high risks" will be given preferential seating and, when possible, a preferential route (i.e. last to be picked up and first to be dropped off). The District will review the actual bus loads after the first few weeks and possibly reorganize the routes in order to better balance the actual bus loads to allow for greater social distancing.

Unfortunately, due to our adherence to social distancing guidelines, the Walk-Back Pass Program will be suspended this year.

## **School Bus Mandatory Requirements**

Assurances of the following will be required of all while utilizing or providing District Transportation:

- Students who are able will be required to wear masks and social distance on the bus. The children will also be assigned seats on the bus and will be requested to use these seats while riding to and from school.
- All buses will be cleaned and disinfected each day. The District will work with contracted bus companies to achieve this expectation.

- School buses will not be equipped with hand sanitizer due to its combustible composition nor will school bus drivers or monitors carry personal bottle of hand sanitizer with them on school buses.
- Wheelchair school buses will configure wheelchair placement to ensure social distancing of six (6) feet.
- Students who do not have a mask must be provided one by the district and **cannot** be denied transportation.
- Siblings will be encouraged to sit together.
- Students will be reminded of the bus rules like no drinking or eating on the bus as this would require them to remove their face coverings.
- Students with a disability that would prevent them from wearing a mask will not be forced to do so or denied transportation.
- When students embark and disembark the bus, they will be required to follow social distancing guidelines.
- School bus drivers and monitors shall perform a self-health assessment for symptoms of COVID-19 before arriving to work and notify their employer if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- School bus drivers and monitors must wear a face mask covering along with an optional face shield. Transportation staff will be trained and receive refresher training regarding the proper use of PPE and the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Drivers and monitors who must have direct physical contact with a child must wear gloves.
- Pupil transportation will continue to be provided to eligible students attending nonpublic, parochial and private schools whose schools are meeting utilizing in-personal sessions when/if the district is not.

The aforementioned protocols may change as restrictions and guidance from state and local authorities are updated.

# DIGITAL EQUITY AND ACCESS

Technology skills are vital for full participation in 21<sup>st</sup> Century life, work, and citizenship. Equitable access to technology and internet connectivity for students and families is essential to the District's Reopening Plan including:

- District knowledge of the level of access to devices and high-speed broadband all students and teachers have at home;
- To the extent practicable, addressing the need to provide devices and internet access to students and teachers who currently do not have sufficient access; and
- Providing multiple ways for students to participate in learning and demonstrate mastery of Learning Standards in remote or blended models, especially if all students do not yet have sufficient access to devices and/or high-speed internet.

If the District is unable to physically open in September, we will offer devices to families as we did during the emergency shutdown between mid -March and June of this past school year. A District process will be shared with our school community to request technology services from the district such as a loaner device, internet access or technical support. In addition, social workers and classroom teachers with personal knowledge of students' home situations will provide the technology department with information that supports matching students' individual technology needs with wifi-enabled devices or hotspots.

If students return in September and our District is later forced to close, we will send students home with their devices regularly. This will necessitate a change to our policies around device usage, as we currently do not send devices home. Travel to and from school causes additional wear and tear on mobile learning devices, therefore it will become necessary to offer insurance or add language to our policy regarding how repairs will be financially covered.

# TEACHING AND LEARNING

Students in the District and across the state are entitled to a free and appropriate education. The District will create learning environments where children feel safe, engaged and promote a love for learning. Additionally, the District will continue to be focused on strengthening the relationships that students have with their peers and teachers as members of our school community. Our efforts will focus on setting positive routines and establishing welcoming learning environments for all of our students whilst integrating flexibility to ensure that the District can easily pivot between in-person, remote learning, or a hybrid instructional delivery model. This will mandatorily include:

- Assurance of a continuity of learning plan aligned with the New York State Learning Standards that prepares for in-person, remote, and hybrids models of instruction for the 2020-2021 school year.
- High quality instruction will be accessible to all students that encompass routine scheduled times for students to interact and seek feedback and support from their teachers.
- Individual schools will create clear communication plans (i.e., in multiple languages) for how students and their families/caregivers can contact the school and teachers about their instruction/and or technology.

Additionally, consistent with research and best practices, the District will continue to engage our educators including teachers and principals in an annual evaluation process to help support educator growth and development. This process has been prescribed by the New York State Education Department and will require the District to fully implement our current Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan.

There are no specific time requirements in grades K-6 for any subject with the exception of physical education (PE). The District will continue to employ the curricular programs that have been adopted and implemented in the four core academic areas as well as the technology platforms used before and during the emergency closure beginning March of the 2019-2020 school year.

The District recognizes the importance of PE for our students' physical and mental health and well-being. For these reasons, our reopening plan whether in-person, remote, or hybrid models are utilized, will ensure that students are participating in physical activity under the direction and supervision of a certified physical education teacher to the extent practicable.

## **Continuity of Instruction (In-person, Hybrid, Remote)**

The district will operate in accordance with the Governor's plans for determining when in-person instruction can take place by meeting the data targets outlined for our region (Long Island).

*"Schools will reopen if the region they're located in is in phase 4 of the state's reopening plan and that region's daily infection rate remains at 5 percent or lower over a 14-day average. Schools will close if the regional infection rate is above 9 percent on a 7-day average after August 1."*

The health emergency caused by the pandemic requires the District to plan for resuming in-person instruction informed by health and safety standards put forth by the CDC and the most up to date guidance from the NYS Departments of Health and Education.

Throughout the development of this reopening plan, consideration was given to the feedback received from the Blueprint Planning Process, the available space and student enrollment in each building, and the use of flexible scheduling models that takes advantage of in-person, remote, or hybrid models providing both synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities for our students. The District's plan also includes the flexibility to phase in any one of these approaches in the case of emergency shutdowns.

The need of students in the early grades (i.e., K-1), students with disabilities in special class settings, and English language learners (ELLs) have also been prioritized in this reopening plan as per the guidance of the New York State Education Department. The design of the class schedules will accommodate the social distancing guidelines (i.e., six (6)-foot distance/barriers) including the use of the cohort model, full-time in person learning for younger students, and part-time remote/in-person learning for students in grades 2-6.

During all in-person instruction, the District will employ the use of staggering schedules if/when students/staff need to access hallways, walkways or other areas that can be prone to crowding.

When in-person instruction can take place, the following combination of in-person and hybrid instructional models will be used:

- Kindergarten, 1st grade, and special classes will be held in person daily (i.e., 5 days per week).
- Grades 2 through 6 will attend in a hybrid model. The whole class will meet virtually on Monday's with their regular classroom teacher. The class will be split into two groups. Group A will attend school in-person on Tuesday and Thursday and Group B will attend school in-person on Wednesday and Friday. On days when students are not in-person, they will have a modified remote learning schedule that may include independent work and sessions of small group instruction with a classroom support teacher, a special area

teacher, an enrichment teacher, and/or a service provider teacher. Additionally, students will have opportunities to ask questions and get feedback in a session with a district teaching assistant or aide. Students may also have the opportunity to interact with the teacher and their in-person classmates through the use of digital tools.

- English Language Learner (ELL) bilingual students in grades 2 through 6 will follow their class schedule, and participate in both Group A and Group B, and so will attend school in-person four days a week.
- Special education students in Integrated Co-Teach will attend school in-person on Monday in addition to their Group A or B assignment, and so will attend school in-person three days a week.

At any time that an individual class, school, or the entire district is required to suspend in-person instruction, a fully remote instructional model will be implemented. This model will include the following:

- Daily live instruction with the classroom teacher on a regular schedule that includes a check-in/homeroom, live instruction, and small group instruction. During the week there may also be sessions of small group instruction with a classroom support teacher, a special area teacher, an enrichment teacher, and/or a service provider teacher.
- Daily attendance, assignments, and feedback.

Additionally, under all models of instruction, clear communication plans will be provided to parents so that students and families can contact the teacher and school with questions about their instruction and/or technology. Students and families will receive detailed schedules so that they are aware of the learning model in effect at the time.

Additional considerations for teaching and learning:

- Students will be provided with instruction aligned with the New York State Learning Standards with regular and substantive instruction from an appropriately certified teacher regardless of the delivery method (in-person, hybrid, remote).
- Instructional experiences will be inclusive, culturally responsive, consider the needs of all students and adhere to all established state regulations and guidelines.
- Students will be supported with their social, emotional, and academic needs.

- Students and teachers will spend time in the beginning of the year adjusting to the school setting and spend time socializing and building relationships to create a sense of belonging and to establish a climate of safety, comfort, and routine.
- Student's individual academic and social-emotional needs will be evaluated and addressed.
- Staff will be provided with professional development to prepare for best practices in all models of instruction (in-person, hybrid, remote).
- Families will be provided with training and support to assist them with understanding instructional programs and technology platforms and devices that will be used for instruction.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

The District will provide students with disabilities equitable access to their specialized programs and services in ways that allow them to participate and progress in the general education curriculum. The District's reopening plan:

- Ensures 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.
- Provides access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and service, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of students.
- Documents how programs and services will be offered and provided to students with disabilities as well as communications with parents in their preferred language or mode of communication.

## **MULTILINGUAL/BILINGUAL LEARNERS**

As the District prepares to reopen our schools, we are mindful of the specific legal requirements to educate our English Language Learners (ELLs) and we will proactively address inequities that may be created by inherent language barriers. The District will:

- Complete the ELL identification process within 30 school days of the start of the school year for all students who enrolled during the COVID-19 school closures in 2019-2020, as well as students who enroll during summer of 2020, and during the first 20 days of the 202-2021 school.
- Provide required instructional Units of Study to all ELL students based on their most recently measured English language proficiency level during in-person or hybrid instruction.
- Maintain regular communication with our parents/guardians and other family members of ELLs in their preferred language to ensure high levels of engagement in their children's education.

# SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL NEEDS

The three-tiered model illustrated below is the District's plan that outlines the measures and steps that will be taken to address the social emotional and mental health needs of students, families, and staff members as school personnel adapts to environments that may result in substantially reduced time spent interacting in-person.

Our School Psychologists, Social Workers, and Guidance Counselor will utilize this method of assessing and providing direct and indirect support to students, families, and staff. This includes group and individual intervention, as well as referrals to community-based organizations and resources. Additionally, the District will use established shared decision-making teams to inform the comprehensive developmental school counseling programs.

Mental Health and Social Emotional Learning Supports for the 2020-2021 School Year *A plan for returning to school*		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classroom based supports (RULER and Responsive Classroom)</li> <li>- Teachers work in conjunction with mental health staff</li> <li>- Video supports with discussion questions</li> <li>- Trauma informed education and discussion</li> <li>- Family Support Informational Groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mental health staff support</li> <li>- Individualized based on student need</li> <li>- Supports for staff</li> <li>- Supports for family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community resources</li> <li>- Contact with outside providers: community/school Connection</li> <li>-Referral to Employee Assistance Program (EAP support)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Classroom video supports will be designed with whole class discussion stems in the following areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Anxiety</li> <li>• General Anxiety/Fear</li> <li>• Structural changes</li> <li>• Classroom and Special services proximity</li> <li>• Needs related to economy/food security</li> <li>• Bereavement</li> <li>• Fostering community</li> <li>• General health and safety concerns</li> <li>• Coping Strategies</li> </ul>		

The District will provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff on how to talk with and support students during and after the ongoing public health emergency as well support for our staff to develop coping and resilience skills.

# ATTENDANCE AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Due to the unique nature of remote learning and ensuring that students are able to access online learning opportunities, it is critical for our schools to use a variety of strategies to reach out to students and families to promote engagement in remote learning. Our policies will focus on the academic consequences of lost instructional time and address absences before students fall behind in their learning.

The District will:

- Develop mechanisms to collect and report daily teacher/student engagement or attendance regardless of the instructional setting;
- Monitor and report attendance of any school-age student of compulsory age who resides in the district or is placed by a parent/guardian in another public-school district, or is placed by a district administrator in educational programs outside the district (such as BOCES).
- Report enrollment, attendance and school calendar information consistent with all other attendance reporting and requirements.

# SCHOOL REOPENING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ's)

Source: [New York State Education Department FAQ July 22, 2020](#)

## School Reopening FAQs – July 22, 2020

**Based upon further discussion with the Governor's Office on July 21, 2020 regarding the NYSDOH Guidance released July 13, 2020 (DOH Guidance), we are providing the following clarified response questions 1 and 2 as indicated in red.**

1. Q. Do students and staff have to maintain a 6-foot distance from others at all times?

A. Pursuant to NYSDOH Guidance, schools must ensure that appropriate social distancing (i.e. 6 feet/barriers) is maintained between individuals while in school facilities and on school grounds (inclusive of students, faculty, and staff), unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance. Schools must maintain protocols and procedures for students, faculty, and staff to ensure appropriate social distancing to protect against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus when on school grounds and in school facilities, including the responsibility to configure spaces so individuals can maintain social distancing. As a baseline, face coverings are required to be worn any time or place that individuals cannot maintain appropriate social distancing. Further, face coverings are "strongly recommended" by the New York Department of Health at all times, except for meals and instruction with appropriate social distancing. However, schools can require face coverings at all times, even during instruction; and it is strongly recommended in areas with higher rates of COVID-19 community infection.

## Student Cohorts

2. Q. Do student cohorts have to maintain a 6-foot distance from each other at all times (NYSED Guidance p. 29)?

A. Please see response to Q. 1 regarding social distancing.

## People at Increased Risk of Severe Illness

3. Q. Will the list of persons at increased risk of severe illness if contracting COVID-19 change (NYSED Guidance p.30)?

A. Since this is a new virus, the information is still evolving. Therefore, schools should check the CDC's People Who Are at Increased Risk for Severe Illness site frequently.

## Face Masks/Coverings

4. Q. Are cloth face masks acceptable face coverings (NYSED Guidance p.36)?

A. Per the NYSDOH Guidance, p. 2, Acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings (e.g. homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana) and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose.

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

A. Q. What is required in order for students and staff who had symptoms of COVID-19 to return to school (NYSESED Guidance p. 40)?

A. Schools must establish policies in consultation with the local health department(s) about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screen positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment. This returning to learning protocol must include at a minimum, documentation of evaluation by a healthcare provider (healthcare provider note clearing a person to return to school), negative COVID-19 testing, and symptom resolution, or if COVID -19 positive, release from isolation as required by DOH and NYSED Guidance p. 40.

### **Meals Consumed Onsite**

B. Q. Are students required to be socially distant while consuming meals in the cafeteria or classroom (NYSESED Guidance p. 58)?

A. Students must be 6 feet apart or be separated by a barrier while consuming meals.

### **Social Distancing and Mask Requirements on Bus**

C. Q. Are students required to wear masks and social distance on a school bus?

A. All students are required to wear a mask and should maintain appropriate social distancing. The only exception to the mask requirement is that students whose physical or mental health would be impaired by wearing a mask are not required to do so, but must maintain social distancing of 6 feet from other individuals on the bus. (See page 62 of NYSED Reopening Guidance).

### **Health Screening**

D. Q. Are parents required to ensure that their child or children do not show symptoms of COVID-19 or a fever before boarding a bus each day?

A. School districts are required to have a protocol in place to perform temperature and health screenings for COVID symptoms. Screenings by the parent/guardian prior to school are preferred. (See page 22 and 62 of NYSED Reopening Guidance).

[NYSESED Reopening Guidance](#)