



Introduction

On Monday, July 13, 2020, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced that school districts in New York can follow plans to reopen for in-person schooling in September. Determinations about opening and closing schools as the COVID-19 pandemic continues will be made based on the state's micro-cluster strategy [<https://forward.ny.gov/cluster-action-initiative>] in consultation with public health partners.

While districts have been instructed to prioritize efforts to return all students to in-person instruction, the district is also planning for remote/distance learning as well as for a hybrid model that combines in-person instruction and remote learning. Parents will always have the choice to remain in the remote learning model.

The District is offering in-person, socially distant instruction for students in grades K-12. All students will attend in person instruction with modified schedules (as outlined below). **Families who wish to have their students attend school remotely must notify the District if they intend to engage in fully virtual learning by the date of August 14, 2020.** Any changes in regards to virtual instruction, or in-person instruction, may only be made at the end of each marking period to ensure continuity of instruction, with the exception of a period of medically recommended tutoring. It is important to note that the District plan can be superceded by Schoharie County or NYS Guidance to move to a virtual model based on the current pandemic.

The plan outlined here is for the reopening of schools in the Schoharie Central School District for the 2020-21 school year, following the building closure related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This plan includes procedures that will be followed in the following schools:

- [Schoharie Elementary School](#)
- [Schoharie Jr./Sr. High School](#)
- [Office of Pupil Personnel Services](#)

Plan Highlights

- ***Grades K-12 will be in person every day.***
- ***Where necessary to support current guidance on social distancing, class sizes have been reduced.***

- *Transportation will be provided by building (K-5 and 6-12) while maintaining social distancing.*
- *The 6-12 school day will be 7:50 a.m. to 1:38 p.m. and will have first pickup and drop off.*
- *The K-5 school day will be 9 a.m. to 2:55 p.m. and will have the second pickup and drop off.*
- *Masks will be required for all staff and students (mask breaks will be built into the day).*
- *Virtual instruction will be provided to any family who requests it (on a quarterly basis). Please notify the district by Friday, August 14, 2020.*
- *There will be no extracurricular activities, extra help (Period 10), or late buses. Athletics have been postponed through Sept. 21, 2020.*

[Reopening Plan Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Reopening Feedback Form](#)

*New York State is requesting that school districts highlight three sections of their reopening plans prominently on their websites. These sections are **Remote Instruction; Testing; and Contact Tracing**. [They can be found broken out from the plan here](#). They are also within the plan.*

Our [Schoharie Nursing Guidance page](#) includes information on health screenings; sending students to the health office; caring for symptomatic students and procedures for returning to school.

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 school campuses. 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 our decision making as we move to open our schools.

David M. Blanchard, Superintendent of Schools, along with district nurses Lori Warner and Suzan Weber will serve as the district's COVID-19 Coordinators. They will work closely with our local health department and will be responsible for ensuring our compliance with required reopening protocol. They will serve as central contacts 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. Coordinator contact information will

be included in this document, on the District website, social media, and sent out via the school messaging system.

David M. Blanchard, Superintendent dblanchard@schoharieschools.org, 518-295-6679

Lori Warner, Elementary School Nurse lwerner@schoharieschools.org, 518-295-6651

Suzan Weber, Jr./Sr. High School Nurse sweber@schoharieschools.org, 518-295-6601

Guidance from local, state, and federal governments, as well as coordination with other regional districts, had a direct influence on our plan. We also took into consideration the needs of SCS students and their families by conducting a survey and providing information on a District landing page dedicated to the reopening plan. Additional resources can be found here: <https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>.

If you have a question, comment or concern about the Reopening Plan, you may contact us by submitting [this form](#).

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Communication/Family and Community Engagement

To help inform our reopening plan, the district sought feedback and input from stakeholders, including administrators, faculty, staff, parents/guardians of students, local health department officials and health care providers, employee unions and local government officials. 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.schoharieschools.org/>, and will be updated throughout the school year, as necessary, to respond to local circumstances. The link to the plan appears on the website homepage and <https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>. Every effort has been made to ensure that the plan is accessible to all individuals in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A/AA. The plan can also be translated into other languages, via the G-Translate feature available on the district website.

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 channels – including SchoolMessenger, Facebook, the district webpage, direct mail, and district digital display board – 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.

The district is committed to establishing and maintaining regular channels of communication and has reviewed and determined which methods have proven to be the most effective in communications with our school community. The district will rely on local media along with the above referenced communication tools to communicate news, requirements and updates related to reopening and in-person instruction, including social distancing requirements, proper wearing of face coverings and proper hand and respiratory hygiene. The information that we will share will be based on state guidance and the reopening committee's input into the plans.

In support of remote learning, the district will make computer devices available to students and teachers who need them. The district conducted two separate surveys of parents and students to determine technology needs, and chromebooks and MiFi devices are provided to all individuals in need. The district will provide students and their families with multiple ways to contact schools and teachers during remote learning, including email, Google Classroom, Schoology, apps such as Remind and ClassDojo, and district phone directory.

The district will use existing internal and external communications channels to notify staff, students and families/caregivers about in-person, remote and hybrid school schedules with as much advance notice as possible. Student schedules will be disseminated by August 16, 2021. Schedules for students in grades K-5 will be disseminated through SchoolMessenger.

Schedules for students in grades 6-12 will be disseminated via SchoolTool. Families will be notified they may request a written copy of a schedule via each main office.

The district will follow its existing engagement and communication protocols with parents regarding the provision of special education services for their child. The Pupil Services Department is working directly with teacher teams and building administration to ensure that parents/guardians of all students, to include special education students, are receiving meaningful engagement in their preferred language and mode of communication. All communication is available to be disseminated in multiple formats to ensure equity of access for all stakeholders.

In addition, the district will make every effort to ensure that communication to parents/legal guardians is in their preferred language and mode of communication.

The district is committed to ensuring that all of its students and their families are taught and re-taught new expectations related to all public health policies and protocols. As part of this continuous training, the district will assess the best approach to communicating the information for each students' age group and will provide frequent opportunities for students to review these policies and protocols. This targeted education will help ensure that all students and their families know what is expected of them as they successfully return to the school setting. These trainings will cover:

For all new expectations related to all public health policies and protocols, Schoharie Central School District will instruct students to follow the CDC guidelines listed below, through various methods, including but not limited to signage, direct instruction, scheduled handwashing breaks before and after eating or using shared equipment, and daily public reminders.

- Hand hygiene <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>.
- Proper face covering procedures (how to wear and remove)
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>,
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>
- Social distancing
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>
- Respiratory hygiene
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/resphygiene.htm>
- Identifying symptoms: Parents will be provided an online self-attestation form to be completed daily prior to entry into a school setting, including a school bus. If a student is unable to attend due to demonstrated symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever, cough, headache, sore throat, gastrointestinal tract symptoms, parents/guardians must call the respective school nurse at the contact numbers outlined above. Parents/legal guardians will be reminded about students' health screenings and temperature checks through SchoolMessenger and direct contact, as needed.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

The district will create and deploy signage throughout the district to address public health protections surrounding COVID-19. Signage will address protocols and recommendations in the following areas:

- Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Acceptable face coverings and requirements related to their wear
- Hand hygiene
- Respiratory hygiene
- Adherence to social distancing instructions
- Symptoms/prevention of COVID-19

In addition to signage, the district will encourage all students, faculty, staff and visitors through verbal and written communication to adhere to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE through additional means such as daily announcements, emails, SchoolMessenger notices, and one-on-one conversations.

The district is committed to creating a learning environment that protects student and staff health, safety and privacy. Our district will operate under a standard procedure for addressing situations in which an individual has tested positive for COVID-19 or appears symptomatic. These procedures are outlined on our reopening website.
<https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>

The district will share with all stakeholders its protocols and safety measures regarding containment through the school handbooks, SchoolMessenger, and the District website. In the event that a student or staff member is sick or symptomatic, notification to exposed individuals will occur pursuant to the state's contact tracing protocols as implemented by the local health department. The district will not notify the wider community unless specifically directed to do so by local health officials. <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/new-york-state-contact-tracing>

School Closures

The district is preparing for situations in which one or more school buildings need to close due to a significant number of students or staff testing positive for COVID-19 or a considerable regional increase in COVID-19 cases.

The Schoharie County Department of Health will continue to provide weekly updates to the district on COVID-19 infection rates and precautionary measures.

The district may choose to modify operations in one or more schools prior to closing to help mitigate a rise in cases. The district will consult its medical director and/or the local health department when making such decisions.

School building administrators will communicate with each other regularly and, if needed, will consider closing school if absentee rates impact the ability of the school to operate safely. District Administration will work with Schoharie County Department of Health to examine State

and Local guidance on the rate of infection within the district's catchment area. If guidance indicates the school will need to be closed, in person instruction and services will cease and the district will shift to virtual provision of instruction and services (to include special education services as appropriate).

The district will utilize existing evacuation/early dismissal procedures if the move to virtual instruction is determined to happen during a school day. The safety of staff and students, along with the ability to communicate with families will weigh heavily into the decision to close during a school day. If the decision is made to close while students and staff are not present in the buildings (after school hours, weekend, holiday), the district will work with district communications staff, local news agencies, and utilize the school messenger system to notify staff, students, and family of the move to virtual instruction.

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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 school campuses. 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 district schools, for the 2021-22 school year when in-person schooling resume. Anyone with questions or concerns should contact our COVID-19 safety coordinator at dblanchard@schoharieschools.org or 518-295-6679.

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 <https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>

Health Checks

The district has developed resources to educate parents/guardians and staff members regarding the careful observation of symptoms of COVID-19 and health screening measures that must be conducted each morning before coming to school. The resources include the requirement for any student or staff member with a fever of 100°F or greater and/or symptoms of possible COVID-19 virus infection to not come to school. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [list of Coronavirus symptoms](#) was used to develop these resources.

The Schoharie Central School District will implement the following practices to conduct mandated health screening.

The District will use the Capital Region BOCES COVID app for its health screening tool. The electronic version will be sent to families and a paper form will be available in each main office. Onsite health screenings will occur by the school nurse at a predetermined entry area if the electronic form is not completed. Parents/guardians will be instructed in health screening requirements by video/in person appointment prior to the start of the school year. Additionally, the training video will be posted on the website.

The District's health check procedure includes the following:

1. Daily temperature checks or completion of the screening questionnaire provided in the [New York Forward Pre-K to Grade 12 School Guidelines](#) for staff, contractors, vendors, and visitors **at least** 15 minutes prior to arrival at school.
2. Daily temperature check or completion of the screening questionnaire (mentioned above) for students 15 minutes prior to scheduled transportation pick up or arrival at school if self-transported.
 1. Families that request a thermometer will be provided one. If daily health checks are not completed electronically via the Capital Region BOCES COVID app, students will be screened by district staff prior to entry.
 2. The Capital Region BOCES COVID app, or paper copy by request, of screening completion are available. No students will be excluded from school due to incompleteness of the process. They will be screened by staff prior to entry.
 3. In the district, students who require screening to be completed at school will be dropped off at the main entrances, and taken directly to the nurse's office for the screening to be completed immediately upon arrival. Students who do not have a completed screening form on file upon arrival will be screened before attending classes in the building.
3. For anyone who cannot complete the Capital Region BOCES COVID-19 app, a paper form will be utilized. No health check data will be stored. All hard copy screening tools will be shredded within 24 hours of review. The online collection system of the Capital Region BOCES COVID app purges daily.
4. Students and staff will be directed to the nurse to be isolated from others and immediately dismissed from school if they have a temperature of 100°F or greater or have a positive response to a screening question.
5. Students and staff will notify the school nurse by telephone when they develop symptoms or if their answers to the questionnaire change during school hours. If an individual tests positive for COVID-19 at any point, they are to notify school administration by phone.
6. Karen Gannon and Michelle Griffin have been designated to review the incoming health check reports daily.
7. The school nurses, Suzan Weber and Lori Warner, are designated to be the contact for staff or students to inform if they later experience COVID-19 symptoms.
8. Initially, weekly reminders will be sent to staff and parents/guardians regarding health check procedures using the SchoolMessenger system. Follow up reminders will be sent to individuals as needed.

If an in-school temperature screening is required:

- Mental health staff will supervise students who are waiting their turn
- Student social distancing requirements will be followed
- If additional staff members beyond the school nurses are required to perform temperature screenings, they will be trained by the school nurses
- The District has purchased sufficient supplies for taking temperatures, and nursing staff will purchase additional supplies as needed
- Staff will use PPE or barriers for staff members conducting the screening to the greatest extent possible.

Social distancing, face coverings & PPE

The district has developed a plan with policies and procedures for maintaining social distancing of all students, faculty, and staff when on school facilities, grounds and transportation.

The district has measured and divided all hallways that support appropriate social distancing with two way movement. Arrows will be placed on the floor to direct staff, students, and visitors which way they should be moving through the buildings. Areas that do not support socially distanced two way movement will be designated with arrows and signage as one way. Bus pickup and drop off will be spaced out across available entrances and exits to limit the number of individuals entering the building at each location. Signage is being placed across the district to reinforce social distancing and room capacity. Classrooms have been measured and desks placed in a socially distanced manner (in all rooms).

If social distancing of 6 feet cannot be maintained, proper face coverings must be worn in common areas such as hallways or school buses. For those medically unable to wear face coverings, the district will follow all recent guidance from Schoharie County Department of Health, NYSED, NYS Department of Health and the CDC regarding proper procedure if and when a staff, student, or visitor presents documentation of a condition that requires a mask exemption from their primary care provider.

Students, staff and visitors to our schools will be expected to wear face coverings indoors and outside, including on the school bus, when six-foot physical distancing is not possible. Students will be allowed to remove face coverings during meals and for short breaks so long as they maintain appropriate social distance. District staff will work with all students to help them adjust to wearing a mask and following safety procedures. For those students who are unable to tolerate wearing a mask, accommodations will be made to support that student during the school day.

The district has purchased (3) cloth facemask for every staff and student in the district. Additionally, the district has purchased a supply of disposable masks to ensure all staff, students, and visitors will have access to a mask if needed. Nurses and appropriate staff will be provided additional PPE (gowns, face shield, gloves, etc) in accordance with Department of Health and CDC guidance.

Because students and staff will need to be prepared to wear a face covering if another person unexpectedly cannot socially distance, they will be required to wear a face covering in all common areas (e.g., entrances and exits) and when traveling around the school.

Acceptable face coverings for COVID-19 include, but are not limited to, face shields, cloth-based coverings, and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose.

An employee is allowed to wear their own acceptable face covering if they choose. Employees with healthcare provider documentation stating they are not medically able to tolerate face covering will not be required to do so.

Face coverings may be challenging for students (especially younger students) to wear in all-day settings such as school, so there may be periods of time when masks are not worn.

Face coverings should not be placed on:

- Children younger than 2 years old
- Students where such covering would impair their health or mental health, or where such covering would present a challenge, distraction, or obstruction to education services and instruction
- Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
- Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance

The district will instruct students, parents/guardians and staff, contractors and vendors on:

- The proper way to wear face coverings
- Washing hands before putting on and after removing their face covering
- Proper way to discard disposable face coverings

Videos will be developed and used as a training method for the proper way to wear and handle face coverings. The district will consider sending videos out to families and staff prior to the start of school to help them prepare for the changes occurring this year. All protocols will be reviewed on the first day of school in classrooms, then periodically as refresher. This method can be used for hand and respiratory hygiene, as well as social distancing.

Infection control strategies

Hallways are either divided (if they accommodate social distancing) or one way throughout the district. Students' movement through the hallways and common areas will be staggered to accommodate social distancing to the greatest extent possible. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer is available throughout the building and in each classroom in the district. Students will be asked to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer throughout the day as movement or situations change.

All district instructional spaces have been measured and adjusted for social distancing in accordance with county, state, and CDC guidance. Some classrooms have been split to accommodate this change.

All spaces to be occupied by school students and staff meet the requirements of the 2021 New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code and the State Energy Conservation Code.

Facility Alterations and Acquisition

The infection control strategies, which include changes to space utilization and/or alterations are outlined below. Plan elements include:

- Existing classrooms or spaces will be utilized to accommodate 50% capacity. No temporary and/or movable partitions will be newly created in any spaces.
- No means of egress, fire alarm system, ventilation, and lighting will be affected.

The district will utilize all available existing space as classroom space if needed. There will be no minor alterations and the use of space dividers in existing classrooms or spaces.

Space Expansion

We are able to utilize existing square footage in order to provide social distancing. There will be no expansion to our space at this time.

If the district moved to utilize additional space we would follow the requirements that apply for all spaces to be occupied by school district staff and students:

- Code Review: Per statute, NYSED's Office of Facilities Planning must review and approve the above types of projects to ensure that the proposed spaces meet the fire code.
- Offsite Lease Requirements: For offsite facilities, the district or other applicable schools must contact their project manager at NYSED Office of Facilities Planning (OFP) and submit a Temporary Quarters (TQ) Project submission.

The district would ensure that these sites (if needed) meet all requirements, TQ submissions require submission of:

- OFP Form FP_AU-Request for Approval of Use of a Facility
- architectural quality floor plan
- site plan
- AHERA Plan
- Fire Safety Report
- Confirmation of Americans with Disabilities Act compliance
- Local Code Authority Certificate of Occupancy
- Approval of use of space

Tents for Additional Space

The District will not be utilizing tents for additional space under this plan.

Plumbing Facilities and Fixtures

- The District exceeds the minimum number of toilet fixtures that must be available for use in a building, as established in the building code
- Drinking fountains are a code required plumbing fixture. One fountain will be available for each one hundred occupants.
- The building has not been unoccupied, therefore the water system does not need to be flushed, all taps will be run prior to student entry.
- Best practices to implement in residential, shared (i.e., communal) bathrooms include, but are not limited to:
 - Installation of physical barriers between toilets and sinks when six feet of separation is not feasible.
 - Use of touch-free paper towel dispensers.
- Responsible Parties will ensure distancing rules are adhered to by using signage, occupied markers, or other methods to reduce restroom occupancy at any given time, where feasible.

Ventilation

The district will maintain ventilation in the following ways:

- The district will continue to maintain adequate, code required ventilation (natural or mechanical) as designed.
- Responsible Parties (i.e. Teachers, Paraprofessionals, Maintenance and Custodial staff) will increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (e.g., opening windows and doors) while maintaining health and safety protocols, particularly for younger students.
- The high school building air ventilation system was installed during the renovation project. Areas of the elementary ventilation system were also upgraded during the renovation project.

New Technology for Air Purification

No new air cleaning equipment is being proposed which requires submission to OFP for review and approval. The district will change to MERV air filters wherever possible.

Management of ill persons, contact tracing and monitoring

The district requires students, faculty, or staff members who develop COVID-19 symptoms during the school day to call the nurse's office. If there are several students waiting to see the school nurse, students must wait at least 6 feet apart. The district has designated areas to separate individuals with symptoms of COVID- 19 from others until they can go home or to a

healthcare facility, depending on severity of illness. One area will be used to treat injuries, provide medications or nursing treatments, and the other area will be used for assessing and caring for ill students and staff. Both areas will be supervised by an adult and have easy access to a bathroom and sink with hand hygiene supplies.

The Elementary School's isolation area is located adjacent to the nurse's office, outside the main office. There is a bathroom adjacent to it that will be utilized as an isolation space if needed. The area used to treat injuries, provide medications or administer nursing treatments is located in the front portion of the nurse's office. There is a bathroom located in the front portion of the nurse's office. The area used for assessing and caring for ill students and staff will be located in the back portion of the nurse's office as well as the adjacent room, which provides entry into the back portion of the nurse's office. There will be a plastic barrier separating the well and sick areas.

The Jr./Sr High School's isolation area is located in the main office suite, small group instruction room. A bathroom and handwashing station is located across the hall in the nurse's office.

PPE requirements for school health office staff caring for sick individuals includes both standard and transmission-based precautions. In areas with moderate to substantial community transmission, eye protection (e.g., goggles or face shield) should be added. When caring for a suspect or confirmed individual with COVID-19, gloves, a gown, eye protection, and a fit-tested N-95 respirator will be used, if available. If an N-95 respirator is not available, a surgical face mask and face shield will be used.

School health office cleaning will occur after each use of cots, bathrooms, and health office equipment (e.g., blood pressure cuffs, otoscopes, stethoscopes). Health office equipment will be cleaned following manufacturer's directions.

Disposable items will be used as much as possible (e.g., disposable pillow protectors, disposable otoscope specula).

Aerosol Generating Procedures

Respiratory treatments administered by nurses generally result in aerosolization of respiratory secretions. These aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) potentially put healthcare personnel and others at an increased risk for pathogen exposure and infection. The district requires the following PPE to be worn during AGPs: gloves, N-95 or a surgical mask with face shield, eye protection and a gown. PPE will be used when: suctioning, administering nebulizer treatments, or using peak flow meters with students who have respiratory conditions.

Treatments such as nebulized medication treatments and oral or tracheostomy suctioning will be conducted in a room separate from others with nursing personnel wearing appropriate PPE. For nebulizer treatments, if developmentally appropriate, the nurse will leave the room and return when the nebulizer treatment is finished.

Cleaning of the room will occur between use and cleaning of the equipment should be done following manufacturer's instructions after each use.

If Students or Staff become Ill with Symptoms of COVID-19 at School

The district requires students or staff with a temperature, signs of illness, and/or a positive response to the questionnaire to be sent directly to a dedicated isolation area where students are supervised, prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home. Students will be supervised in the isolation area while awaiting transport home and will be separated by at least 6 feet. Students will be escorted from the isolation area to their parent/guardian. Students or staff will be referred to a healthcare provider and provided resources on COVID-19 testing.

Return to School after Illness

The district has established 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. 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"](#) 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 county Department of Health.

COVID-19 Testing

In the event that a large-scale testing will need to be conducted at the school, the district administration will work with the following providers:

Schoharie County Department of Health (518-295-8365)

District Medical Director- Dr. Joseph Luz (518-295-8521)

Contact Tracing

The district will 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 of the district.

To assist the local health department with tracing the transmission of COVID-19, the district has developed and maintained a plan to trace all contacts of exposed individuals in accordance with protocols, training, and tools provided through the New York State Contact Tracing Program.

Districts may assist with contact tracing by:

1. Keeping accurate attendance records of students and staff members
2. Ensuring student schedules are up to date
3. Keeping a log of any visitor which includes date and time, and where in the school they visited
4. Assisting the local health departments in tracing all contacts of the individual in accordance with the protocol, training, and tools provided through the NYS Contact Tracing Program

If/when COVID-19 cases are discovered in the school, in consultation with the local health department, the District will do the following:

- Follow all County, State, and CDC guidance regarding the closing of classroom(s)
- Utilize maintenance staff and our Clorox 360 machine to ensure impacted rooms are sanitized
- Follow all County, State, and CDC guidance regarding contact tracing, and impacted individuals

Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state laws and regulations. School staff should not try to determine who is to be excluded from school based on contact without guidance and direction from the local health department.

For more information about how COVID-19 containment efforts will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit the District's reopening plan website.

<https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>

School Closures

A closure refers to contingency plans, protocols, and procedures for decreasing the scale or scope of in-person education and/or closing the school. The district will collaborate with the local health department to determine the parameters, conditions or metrics (e.g., increased absenteeism or increased illness in the school community) that will serve as early warning signs that positive COVID-19 cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level.

At a minimum, the plan will incorporate the following:

- Determination about opening and closing schools will be based on the state's micro-cluster strategy [<https://forward.ny.gov/cluster-action-initiative>] in consultation with public health partners.
- School administrators will monitor staff and student attendance. The district will consider closing school if absentee rates impact the ability of the school to operate safely.
- The District will monitor changes and modify operations prior to closing to help mitigate a rise in cases. If infection rates are rising above 5%, the district may modify school operations for medically vulnerable students and staff if they are participating in in-person activities.
- The District will continue to consult their medical director and/or the County Health Department when making such decisions.
- District leadership, in consultation with stakeholders and the Schoharie County Department of Health, will work to determine which operations will be decreased, or ceased, and which operations will be conducted remotely. In each case, the district will communicate through known and approved channels to conduct orderly closures which may include phasing, milestones, and involvement of key personnel.

For more information about how school closure information will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit the District's reopening plan website.

<https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>

Health Hygiene

The district will emphasize healthy hygiene practices for students and staff by providing initial and refresher education in hand and respiratory hygiene, along with providing adequate supplies and time for frequent hand hygiene. Signs will be posted throughout the school (e.g., entrances, restrooms, cafeteria, classrooms, administrative offices, auditorium, custodial staff areas) and regular messaging will be shared with the school community. Signage will be used to remind individuals to:

1. Stay home if they feel sick.
2. Cover their nose and mouth with an acceptable face covering when unable to maintain social distance from others or in accordance with any stricter policy implemented by the school.
3. Properly store and, when necessary, discard PPE.
4. Adhere to social distancing instructions.
5. Report symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19.
6. Follow hand hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection guidelines.
7. Follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

Hand Hygiene

Students and staff must carry out the following hand hygiene practices:

- Wash hands routinely with soap (any kind) and water for at least 20 seconds.

- Dry hands completely after washing. Use paper towels to dry hands.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizer should be rubbed on the hands until it is completely absorbed. DO NOT dry hands if sanitizer is used.

Hand washing should occur:

- Before and after eating (e.g. snacks and lunch).
- After going to the restroom or after assisting a student with toileting.
- After using a tissue.
- Before and after using shared materials.
- Before and after putting on or taking off face masks.
- After coming in from the outdoors.
- Anytime hands are visibly soiled.

Respiratory Hygiene

The COVID-19 virus spreads from person to person in droplets produced by coughs and sneezes. Therefore, the district will emphasize the importance of respiratory hygiene.

Students and staff must carry out the following respiratory hygiene practices:

- Cover a cough or sneeze using a tissue. If a tissue is used, it should be thrown away immediately.
- If you don't have a tissue when sneezing or coughing, sneeze into your elbow.
- Wash your hands after sneezing or coughing.
- Face coverings are protective. Wearing a face covering will keep the respiratory droplets and aerosols from being widely dispersed into the air.

For more information about how hygiene information will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit the District's reopening plan website.

<https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>

Cleaning and Disinfecting

The district will ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH. Cleaning and disinfection logs will be maintained that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection.

Examples of facility types where cleaning and disinfection frequency will be distinguished include:

- Bathrooms
- Athletic training rooms, locker rooms
- Health offices, isolation rooms
- Administrative offices (main office, reception area)

- Frequently touched surfaces in common areas (door handles, elevator buttons, copy machine keypads, etc.)
- Breakrooms
- Cafeterias/Kitchens
- Computer labs
- Science labs
- Classrooms
- Maintenance offices and work areas
- Bus Garage
- Buses, school vehicles
- Libraries
- Large meeting areas (auditoriums, gymnasiums, music rooms)
- Playgrounds (cleaning only)
- Outdoor seating areas (plastic or metal)

Students, faculty, and staff will be trained on proper hand and respiratory hygiene, and such information will be provided to parents and/or legal guardians on ways to reinforce this at home.

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.

For more information about how cleaning and disinfection information will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit our reopening plan webpage <https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>.

Vulnerable populations/accommodations

We recognize that some students and staff members are at an increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness, live with a person who is at an increased risk, or simply do not feel comfortable returning to an in-person educational environment. It is our goal that these individuals are able to safely participate in educational activities. Families will be allowed to opt

out of in-person instruction if they feel that their child is at an increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness.

Visitors on campus

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 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 be restricted in their access to our school buildings. To the extent possible, meetings will be conducted virtually either online or via telephone. If a meeting is unable to be held virtually, social distancing and PPE protocols will be followed by all participants.

Visitors must follow all safety protocols as listed above.

School safety drills

The district will conduct fire (evacuation) drills and lockdown drills as required and in accordance with the fire code without exceptions. Schools must continue to conduct mandatory fire and lockdown drills according to the existing statutory schedule. Drills will be conducted in a manner that maintains social distancing at exits and gathering points outside the building, while still preparing students to respond in emergencies.

Considerations for district safety plans include:

- Fire Code Section 404 requires that schools maintain Fire Safety, Evacuation, and Lockdown Plans and these plans include how lockdown and evacuation drills are conducted. Methods to promote and provide for social distancing during the evacuation drills will be communicated and taught prior to the first drill. Predetermined locations for social distancing during evacuation drills are established. Those changes are included in the district's Fire Safety plans.
- Education Law § 807 requires that schools conduct eight (8) evacuation and four (4) lockdown drills each school year. When planning drills, consideration will be given to how our schools will modify their drill procedures to minimize risk of spreading infection. Conducting drills is an important part of keeping students and staff safe in an emergency; however, steps will be taken to minimize the risk of spreading infection while conducting drills. As such, it may be necessary for schools to conduct drills in the school year using protocols that are different than they are used to.
- Regardless of the modification used when conducting a drill, students will be instructed that if it was an actual emergency that required evacuation or lockdown, the most imminent concern is to get to safety; maintaining social distancing in an actual emergency that requires evacuation or lockdown may not be possible and should not be the first priority.

The school district modifications to evacuation drill protocols may include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting drills on a “staggered” schedule, where classrooms evacuate separately rather than all at once, and appropriate distance is kept between students to the evacuation site. Staggering students by classroom minimizes contact in hallways, stairwells, and at the evacuation site. If conducting drills using a modified procedure, it is required that the drill be conducted with all students in the school building on that school day, it may be necessary to do so during a class period that is extended for this purpose.
- Evacuation drills will be conducted in a manner that may require full evacuation of our students in the youngest grade levels in order to instruct them appropriately.
- If schools reopen with a “hybrid” in-person model, such as one where students attend school on alternate school days to reduce the occupancy of the school building, schools must be certain that all students are receiving instruction in emergency procedures, and participating in drills while they are in attendance in-person.

Modifications to Lockdown Drills may include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting lockdown drills in the 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, however schools must be certain that all students are receiving instruction in emergency procedures and participating in drills while they are in attendance in-person.
- Conducting lockdown drills in the classroom without “hiding”/“sheltering,” but provide an overview of how to shelter or hide in the classroom.

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Facilities

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection in the district, facilities operations will be geared toward meeting social distancing requirements and cleaning frequently touched spaces regularly. In carrying out projects or tasks supporting infection control, requirements will be met for changes associated with building spaces. Plans for changes or additions to facilities that require review by the Office of Facilities Planning (OFP), will be submitted to comply with the requirements of the 2020 New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (BC) and the State Energy Conservation Code.

The function, position and operation of stairs and corridor doors, which have closers with automatic hold opens (and are automatically released by the fire alarm system), will remain unchanged.

The district plans to meet the deadline for submission of Building Condition Survey or Visual Inspections on time. In addition, lead in water sampling will be carried out upon the reopening of school under conditions consistent with when the building is “normally occupied.”

Upon reopening, the district plans to increase ventilation, to the greatest extent possible. Water systems will be flushed in buildings that have been unoccupied.

As part of the building reopening plan, the following will occur:

- The District will change to MERV air filters wherever possible.
- The District is able to utilize existing square footage in order to provide social distancing. There will be no expansion to our space at this time.
- If the District moves to utilize additional space, it will follow the requirements that apply for all spaces to be occupied by school district staff and students, including review by OFP.
- No offsite leases are required at this time.
- The District will utilize the minimum number of toilet fixtures that must be available for use in a building as established in the building code.
- The District has reduced the number of drinking fountains available, in order to facilitate frequent cleaning. However, drinking fountains are a code required plumbing fixture. One fountain is required for each one hundred occupants.
- The District will maintain adequate, Code required ventilation (natural or mechanical) as designed.
- If other air cleaning equipment (e.g. new technology) is proposed, the District will submit plans to OFP for review and approval.

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Child Nutrition

School meals will continue to be available to all students, including those attending school in-person and those learning remotely.

For information about how meal information will be communicated, visit the Food Services section <https://www.schoharieschools.org/departments/food-services/> of our district website and the District's re-opening website. <https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>

Meals onsite

For students onsite, meals will be provided while maintaining appropriate social distancing between students. Students do not need to wear face coverings when seated and eating so long as they are appropriately socially distanced.

The district will ensure social distancing between individuals while eating in the school cafeteria. If not feasible, meals may be served in alternate areas (e.g., classrooms) or in staggered meal periods to ensure social distancing and proper cleaning and disinfection between students.

The sharing of food and beverages (e.g., buffet style meals, snacks) is prohibited, unless individuals are members of the same household. Adequate space will be reserved for students, faculty, and staff to observe social distancing while eating meals.

At the Elementary School, desks will be cleaned and sanitized while students are not in the room, upon their return they will wash hands at the sink in the classroom and eat in a socially distant manner. Students will again wash hands after eating. Supervising staff will instruct in hand hygiene, following the CDC recommended guidelines, along with posted signage. Meals will be ordered in advance and delivered to classrooms. Sharing of food and beverages will not be allowed. Students with food allergies will be provided a space within the room to eat, or, if the allergy is airborne/severe enough, be provided an alternate, supervised location to eat it.

At the Jr./Sr. High School meals will be delivered to eating areas by school staff. Students will be verbally reminded and encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating. Sharing of food and beverages will not be allowed. Any space utilized for eating will be adequately spaced for appropriate social distancing.

If an area will be utilized by more than one group of students, custodial staff will clean and disinfect that area between groups.

All food service plans for the Schoharie Central School District will continue to be in compliance with current Child Nutrition Program requirements.

Meals offsite/remote

The district will use transportation services to deliver meals to students receiving free lunch while they are learning remotely. Meals will be delivered upon request.

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Transportation

The district will conduct transportation activities that are consistent with state-issued public transit guidance and NYSED School Reopening guidelines. Students and school staff must wear acceptable face coverings at all times on school buses (e.g., entering, exiting, and seated) and should maintain appropriate social distancing to the extent practicable.

Students who are able will be required to wear masks and social distance on the bus to the extent practicable. Members of the same household may be seated within 6 feet of each other. Parents and legal guardians are encouraged to drop off or walk students to school to reduce density on buses.

All buses that are used every day by districts and contract carriers will be cleaned/ disinfected at least once a day. High contact locations will be wiped down after each morning (AM) and each afternoon (PM) run depending upon the disinfection schedule.

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

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

Whether school is in session remotely or otherwise, pupil transportation will be provided to nonpublic, parochial, private, charter schools or students whose Individualized Education Plans have placed them out-of-district 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 are required to perform a self-health assessment for symptoms of COVID-19 before arriving at work. If personnel are experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19, they will notify their employer as per the reporting policies and seek medical attention.

School bus drivers, monitors, attendants and mechanics must wear a face covering along with an optional face shield.

Transportation staff (drivers, monitors, attendants, mechanics and cleaners) will be trained and provided periodic refreshers on the proper use of personal protective equipment and the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

Transportation departments/carriers will need to provide Personal Protective Equipment such as masks and gloves for drivers, monitors and attendants in buses as well as hand sanitizer for all staff in their transportation locations such as dispatch offices, employee lunch/break rooms and/or bus garages.

Drivers, monitors and attendants who must have direct physical contact with a child must wear gloves.

The district will utilize multiple bus runs to accommodate transportation needs. Masks will be available and required for all riders. Students will sit by themselves in assigned seats unless they are members of the same household. Families must attest to their child's health before

boarding the bus. Transportation will be limited to students who reside further than one mile from campus. Parents are encouraged to transport their child to school if at all possible.

Buses will be cleaned and disinfected following each run in the morning and the afternoon.

When temperatures are above 45 degrees Fahrenheit, school buses should transport passengers with roof hatches or windows slightly opened to provide air flow.

Protocols for bus drivers, monitors and attendants include:

- The driver, monitor, and attendant may wear gloves if they choose to do so but are not required unless they must be in physical contact with students.
- Transportation staff should be encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water before and after their runs to keep healthy and prevent the spread of respiratory and diarrheal infections from one person to the next. Germs can spread from other people or surfaces when you:
 - touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
 - touch a contaminated surface or objects
 - blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into hands and then touch other people's hands or common objects

Protocols of how students will disembark from transportation vehicles:

- When students embark and disembark the bus, they should follow social distancing protocols. This will increase the time required to load and unload buses at schools in the morning and afternoon.
- The District will reconfigure the loading and unloading locations for students who are transported by bus, car or are pedestrians.
- Since hand sanitizer is not permitted on school buses, schools will have a policy to dispense hand sanitizer when students enter the building or in their classroom where sinks are not available.

The district will utilize the following routing procedures:

- The district will utilize multiple bus runs to accommodate transportation needs. Masks will be available and required for all riders. Students will sit by themselves in assigned seats unless they are members of the same household. Families must attest to their child's health before boarding the bus. Transportation will be limited to students who reside further than one mile from campus. Parents are encouraged to transport their child to school if at all possible.
- Buses will be cleaned and disinfected following each run in the morning and the afternoon.
- When temperatures are above 45 degrees Fahrenheit, school buses should transport passengers with roof hatches or windows slightly opened to provide air flow.

For more information about training protocol for students and staff and how transportation information will be communicated, visit the district's reopening plan website:

<https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>.

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Social Emotional Well-Being

We recognize that the social emotional well-being of our students and staff during these challenging times is critically important. The district has made available resources and referrals to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional needs of students, faculty, and staff when school reopens for in-person instructions. This has been done by:

The district will send a notice out through all major communication channels requesting parents to inform the school of any student having difficulty with transitioning back into the school setting, especially given the changes in the school environment. Counselors and mental health support will have established contact with these families prior to re-entry to assist with the transition. All staff will be made aware of how stress and other mental health concerns may manifest in children and adolescents, and a system will be in place to communicate with the mental health staff and families.

The District is aware that the most effective strategy to provide a smooth transition is communication. The District is making all aspects of the reopening plan available to the public, and holding virtual meetings and one-on-one conversations with all stakeholder groups regarding the plan. The district will continue to communicate throughout the process in order to prevent social/emotional concerns when possible.

Staff will utilize available communication tools (Remind, Class Dojo, Google Classroom, Schoology, email, phone calls, and one-on-one conversations) to keep families informed of their childrens' transitional needs.

Elementary teachers will conduct Responsive Classroom "morning meetings" and "closing circles" in order to gauge students' school readiness and identify any needs daily. Existing protocols in place to provide support beyond that of the classroom teacher will be utilized when a relevant concern is identified.

The Elementary School counselor will provide weekly SEL instruction virtually, on topics including, but not limited to self-control, positive attitude, communication and coping skills. High school counselors will conduct similar, age appropriate lessons.

The district has established an advisory council that involves shared decision-making and is composed of families, students, members of the board of education, school building and/or district leaders, community-based service providers, teachers, certified school counselors, and other pupil personnel service providers. The advisory council will inform the comprehensive

developmental school counseling program plan. This program plan has been reviewed and updated to meet current needs.

The District will address professional development opportunities 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 provide support for developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, and staff. This is addressed in the following ways.

The District will utilize its mental health team (social worker, school counselors, school psychologist) to develop and deliver virtual/socially distant professional development to faculty and staff on how to engage students and each other in conversations around the pandemic and how to cope in times of crisis. Resources will include existing research on coping strategies and resilience, the responsive classroom program, positive behavior interventions and support training, and up to date research from the National Institutes of Mental Health, Office of Mental Health, and CDC.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/for-parents.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/stress-coping/young-adults.html>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/education-awareness/shareable-resources-on-coping-with-covid-19.shtml>

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School Schedules

The district is prepared to implement a fully in-person, fully-virtual, or hybrid model of instruction in the 2020-2021 school year.

The district will use existing internal and external communications channels to notify staff, students and families/caregivers about in-person, remote and hybrid school schedules with as much advance notice as possible. Student schedules will be disseminated by August 27, 2020. Schedules for students in grades K-5 will be disseminated through SchoolMessenger. Schedules for students in grades 6-12 will be disseminated via SchoolTool. Families will be notified that they may request a written copy of a schedule via each main office.

For information about how school schedule information will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit our reopening plan website:

<https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>

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School Activities

Extracurriculars

Interscholastic sports have been postponed through Sept. 21, 2020 (at the time of publication of this document). Additional information on athletic activities is forthcoming.

Extracurricular activities will be suspended if the district is utilizing a fully virtual or hybrid model of instruction for the 2020-21 school year.

Any extracurricular activity that is in operation must adhere to the district's mask policy and social distancing guidelines.

Additional guidance on activities, third party/community access with regard to the use of district facilities will be communicated out to district residents through email, social media, and school messenger if and when guidance from Schoharie County and/or NYS requires it.

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Childcare

Policies regarding before and aftercare programs include social distancing, PPE usage, cleaning and disinfection requirements, as well as risk of COVID-19 transmission. Protocols in how to maintain cohorts, if applicable, or group members of the same household will be considered.

There will be one after school program on campus this year. It will be administered by the Cornell Cooperative Extension 4H program.

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Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

Teachers will take attendance every day at the elementary level when in-person instruction occurs. If the elementary school is required to move to fully virtual instruction, teachers will be required to take attendance every period, every day. Attendance will be taken every period, every day at the junior high/high school level regardless of instructional model. These data will be recorded in SchoolTool, the district's Student Information System (SIS).

Chronic Absenteeism will be determined based on New York State Education Department Guidelines: 10% or more absences based on the number of days in session.

Severe Chronic Absenteeism will be determined based on New York State Education Department Guidelines: 20% or more absences based on the number of days in session.

Chronic and Severe Chronic Absenteeism will be addressed by each school building in the manner consistent with interventions in previous years.

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Technology and Connectivity

All families and staff were provided with separate surveys in order to gauge the level of access to devices and high speed internet access in their places of residence. An additional survey will be conducted in the fall.

The district has been able to address the majority of the needs to provide devices and internet access to students and teachers who did not have access during remote learning in the spring, and has additional resources should the need increase in the future.

WiFi has been enhanced to include the external perimeter of the district's parking lots and grounds.

The district's instructional models attempt to maximize teacher-student interactions in a safe and socially distant manner. Should this model no longer be available, the district will transition to a virtual model and utilize the following platforms for instruction: Google Classroom and Schoology. When all efforts to provide technology to a household have been exhausted, students will be provided with delivery of instructional materials to their home, or the opportunity to pick it up.

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Teaching and Learning

The school calendar typically includes one or more staff-only days before students arrive at school. Acknowledging the challenges that our teachers and staff have faced this spring delivering remote instruction under stressful circumstances, the district will focus in-service days on providing support to staff and training in the areas of COVID-19, 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.

When a remote or hybrid learning model is necessary, certain groups of students will be prioritized for in-person learning to the greatest extent possible. This includes, but is not limited

to, special education students, English language learners, students who did not engage in remote learning during the spring of 2020, and students with technology or connectivity needs.

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.

The district's PreK program will follow the same measures with regards to health and safety guidelines outlined in the NYSED guidance and required by the NYSDOH. The district ensures the CBO's (Community Based Organizations) have a continuity of learning plan that addresses in-person, remote and hybrid models of instruction.

For information relating to teaching and learning in BOCES special education and Career and Technical Education programs, please see the BOCES website:

<https://www.capitalregionboces.org/career-technical-education/about-cte/>

Parents will always have the choice to remain in the remote learning model. The District is offering in-person, socially distant instruction for students in grades K-12. All students will attend in person instruction with modified schedules (as outlined below). K-8 will be attending every school day. Families who wish to have their students attend school remotely must notify the District if they intend to engage in fully virtual learning by August 14, 2020. Any changes with regard to virtual instruction, or in-person instruction, may only be made at the end of each marking period to ensure continuity of instruction, with the exception of a period of medically recommended tutoring. It is important to note that the District plan can be superseded by the Schoharie County Department of Health or New York State Guidance to move to a virtual model based on the current pandemic.

In-Person Instruction

Upon reopening, the number of students in each of our classrooms will be reduced to adhere to CDC guidance regarding proper social distancing. Class size will reflect the need to ensure that students' desks/seats are positioned no less than six feet apart.

Accommodating a six-foot radius around students will necessitate the identification of additional rooms and common-area spaces that can be converted into classrooms.

Current staffing levels may be insufficient to accommodate the expanded number of classrooms needed to ensure social distancing. The district is working with instructional staff to maximize live and in-person instruction while maintaining social distancing. District technology (SmartBoards, document cameras, 1:1 Chromebooks, shared Chromebooks and/or laptops,

web cameras) will be utilized to ensure students are able to participate in either in-person or live-streamed instruction to the maximum extent possible each day. When in-person or live-streamed instruction is not possible, students will be provided video and independent study options with appropriate supports.

All instruction will continue to be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards.

Our schools will minimize the movement of students. This potentially means having students eat lunch in their classroom instead of the cafeteria and eliminating assemblies, field trips and other large-group activities. Special-area subjects (e.g., art, music, physical education) may be pushed into the classroom or provided virtually. 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 reopening section of our district website <https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>

K-5 model of in-person instruction:

- Each class is divided into two cohorts. The classroom teacher is assigned an additional staff member (interventionists, teaching assistants, aides, and some humanities staff) to supervise the cohort of students when the classroom teacher is with the other cohort.
- Classroom teachers will provide direct instruction in the following content areas: ELA (90 minutes) and math (60 minutes).
- Additional staff will receive direction from the classroom teacher to supervise students' use of online learning platforms the district already utilizes such as iReady, along with science and social studies instruction as provided by the teacher.
- Cohorts will receive PE weekly, either outside in low risk, socially distant sports or in their classroom with virtual instruction from the PE teacher (as weather permits).
- Cohorts will engage in social emotional learning activities weekly virtually with the counselor.
- Staff will transition from cohort-to-cohort. The students will remain in their assigned room.

Grades 6-12 models of instruction:

- All students will follow the daily master schedule whether in-person or virtual.
- Grades 6-12 will be in-person every day.
- In-person classes will meet for 36 minute periods with three minutes of passing time between periods.
- Virtual classes will meet for 36 minute periods at their regularly scheduled time.

- Due to space limitations and social distancing requirements, some classes (i.e. band and choir) will need to be virtual for all students in grades 6-12. These courses will also follow the master schedule and “meet” for 36 minutes on their scheduled day.
- Students will be required to complete 30 minutes of independent reading each day

Teachers who are working from home will have the ability to deliver instruction virtually and will be required to follow their schedule in a manner consistent with the current instructional delivery model being utilized in the District at that time provided the district has students who require virtual instruction.

For information about how in-person instruction information will be communicated to students and families, visit the District’s re-opening website.

<https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>

Remote/Hybrid Instruction

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, the District has developed a hybrid/blended learning model and schedule that can continue as is in a fully remote environment.

Instruction will not only focus on “core” subject areas to the exclusion of elective courses. Consideration has been given to prioritizing hands-on and lab-based activities while students are onsite in school buildings. All instruction will continue to be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards.

As noted previously, student schedules will remain the same whether instruction is in person or remote so that students do not encounter conflicts wherein synchronous lessons for different subjects are offered simultaneously.

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, the District 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.

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

For information on school schedules, visit the District’s re-opening website.

<https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>

- Students and teachers will follow the in-person learning schedule during remote/hybrid instruction using the previously mentioned learning platforms.
- Teachers will conduct virtual class meetings, utilize recorded video lessons, and engage in a blended model of learning in order to ensure high-quality instruction.
- In addition to the instruction aligned with state standards, teachers will hold routinely scheduled “office hours”, along with individual and small group conferences for remediation.

For information about how remote/hybrid instruction information will be communicated to students and families, visit the District’s re-opening website.

<https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>

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Special Education

- District students who are supported through special education will be following the plan for in-person, hybrid, and/or remote instruction as outlined in our re-entry plan. Regardless of the model implemented, students’ individualized educational plans and 504s will be followed with particular emphasis on accommodations and modifications to ensure equity of access with regards to instruction, instructional modalities, and demonstration of learning.
- Special education teachers and related service providers will establish a consistent and agreed upon model of parent/student communication to ensure clear communication and effective service delivery regardless of the instructional modality or service delivery mechanism (in person, hybrid, remote)
- To the extent possible (while following current social distancing and safety protocols) services will be provided in person and in accordance with the recommendations on the students individualized educational plan or 504. Progress monitoring and data collection will continue in a manner consistent with past practice for all special education teachers and related service providers. If services are moved to either a hybrid or remote model, providers will work with families and students to ensure daily and weekly tasks are clearly defined for providers, students and families and tracked for progress monitoring purposes. Any areas that are unable to be addressed due to the nature of hybrid or remote instruction will be documented as such and the Committee on Special Education will work to examine if there is substantial regression that requires either access to extended school year or compensatory services.
- Collaboration between committees on preschool special education/committees on special education and program providers across various settings where students are served will continue in a manner consistent with past practice. The district will ensure there is an understanding of the provision of services consistent with the recommendations on/individualized education programs, develop plans for monitoring and communicating student progress and sharing resources.

- All providers will continue to have access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability-related needs of students.

For information about meaningful parent engagement regarding the provision of services to a child to meet the requirements of the IDEA, visit the District's re-opening website.

<https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>

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Bilingual Education and World Languages

- Any students who are supported through world languages and/or bilingual education will be following the plan for in-person, hybrid, and/or remote instruction as outlined in the District's re-entry plan. Regardless of the model implemented, students' plans will be followed with particular emphasis on any needed accommodations and modifications to ensure equity of access with regards to instruction, instructional modalities, and demonstration of learning.
- For in-person or hybrid instruction, 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 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 required 10 school days of initial enrollment.
- Required instructional units of study to all ELLs will be provided based on their most recently measured English language proficiency level during in-person or hybrid instruction using services provided by BOCES.

For information about regular communication and engagement with parents/guardians of English-language learners, visit the reopening page of our website

<https://www.schoharieschools.org/school-reopening/>.

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Staff

Teacher and Principal Evaluation System

All teachers and principals will continue to be evaluated pursuant to the district's approved APPR plan.

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.

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Key References

- [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](#)

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