



**Re-Opening Playbook for School Stakeholders
2020- 2021 School Year**

Instruction and Learning

Based upon the guidance provided by the Governor, we are prepared to execute any of the following three instructional models with our students:

1. **In- person learning** with new health and safety requirements. Students return to school buildings, but schedules, classrooms and protocols are modified to meet health and safety requirements
2. **Blended learning** or hybrid services where the students learn both in person and virtually
3. **Virtual learning** in which the students learning is entirely remote

In-person reopening scenario example:

- Students will be assigned cohorts to remain with for the duration of the school day- this will include other students as well as staff members.
- Movement between classrooms will be minimized and will only consist of staff movement, when needed.
- All staff and students in attendance every day

Blended learning reopening scenario example:

- Student population split into two cohorts
- Monday/ Tuesday cohort in person, alternative days in virtual instruction from home
- Thursday/ Friday cohort in person, alternative days in virtual instruction from home
- Staff: same as full in-person but virtual on Wednesdays
- Wednesday is deep cleaning day and virtual instruction for all

Virtual learning reopening scenario example:

- All students are engaged in virtual instruction Monday- Friday

We will focus on assessment for the first weeks upon the students return to school to determine gaps, regressions, and complete our 4-step plans for the student's instructional programming.

Additionally, a focus on social emotional learning will be encouraged to help the student's acclimation back into the environment and understanding the changes in policies and procedures for their health and safety.

Teachers will each plan for one elective and share lesson plans with all other classrooms so that the classrooms can stay self- contained with the staffing in their assigned cohort.

Teachers will prepare a work packet for each student for emergency circumstances in case quarantine needs arise so that learning can continue remotely with no interruption. These will be updated as needed.

Facilities and Classroom Modifications

Arrival and dismissal areas will have designated stickers to allow for physical distancing requirements but additionally, all bus procedures should consider how to limit interaction between students and provide necessary spacing (i.e.- a student gets off the bus one at a time, etc.)

There are no visitors permitted. If there is a need for a pick-up/drop-off of the student, the parent/ guardian must remain outside, call from car, and a designated staff member will go out to get them from the car. No buses or parents should just drop of a student without making verbal contact with a staff member.

Lunch deliveries, UPS, mail, FedEx cannot enter the building and should drop-off outside the doors, in a vestibule area or the staff can meet them outside.

All programs must have a designated isolation space. This space is to be located closest to entrances/exit, include a desk and chair and any other materials/objects that can be disinfected, and the space should be separate from the normal medical treatment office/space. This is the space where students exhibiting COVID symptoms will be assigned until their parent/guardian or emergency contact can pick them up.

Students should remain supervised in the isolation room. For the purposes of contact tracing, schools should log all persons who entered the room. The individual supervising the room must be equipped with proper PPE.

Cohorts: Schools should divide students into small groups that remain with each other throughout the day, with smaller cohort sizes preferred. Schools should look for ways to isolate cohorts of students and prevent inter-group contact to the extent feasible. When necessary, have staff, not students, rotate.

Maximize social distancing between student workstations (every other cubby), achieving 3 feet when feasible, when determining the classroom layout. Desks should face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or students should sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.

It is suggested to label student and staff chairs with names to assign for usage throughout the day and to limit use between other students. Avoid students sitting in staff's chairs for this same prevention need.

Alternative/communal spaces in the school (e.g., empty classrooms, gym spaces, etc.) should be repurposed to increase the amount of available space to accommodate the maximum distance possible. In these larger spaces, establishing consistent cohorts/classes with separation between the cohorts/classes provides another option to maximize these spaces safely.

Additional safety precautions are required for staff supporting students in close proximity, when distance is not possible: These precautions must include eye protection (e.g., face shield or goggles) and a mask/face covering. Precautions may also include gloves and disposable gowns or washable outer layer of clothing depending on duration of contact and especially if the individual may come into close contact with bodily fluids.

Classrooms will have a reduced number of students. Please reach out to administration to receive help with anything particular for your classroom planning.

Install floor markings within your classroom and hallways, when needed, to illustrate traffic patterns and social/physical distancing.

Ensure the classroom cohort will have access to washing stations, and if necessary, plan for temporary washing stations or hand sanitizer dispensers within their schedule.

Minimize the need to have students share materials to the extent possible. Plan in advance for any additional supplies that may be necessary (individual white boards, writing utensils, books, computers, calculators, headphones, etc.). Also, toys/recess or gym activities need to be items that can be disinfected or that each student has their own.

Remove unnecessary furniture including any cloth, mesh or soft materials (focus on things that cannot be easily disinfected between students). This includes beanbag chairs or anything not wipeable in VTO spaces.

Snack and lunch will be brought to the students in their assigned cohort spaces.

Staff should allocate time to clean a space before moving to another rotation, including TO/VTO and include students when able.

A designated high interest space will be identified for use for mask breaks for students. This area should be one where 6 feet of social distancing can be maintained between students during these breaks.

Temporarily shut off water systems that require physical contact, such as water fountains that require physical contact. Identify alternate methods for supplying drinking water.

Designate a bathroom break schedule.

Turn off use of hand driers in bathrooms and instead use disposable towels and clean bathrooms between student cohorts.

Encourage no-touch usage, when able. Enable no-touch usage items (trash cans, bathroom fixtures, etc.) where possible. Prop doors open when possible in accordance with fire and safety codes. Remove trash can lids.

Schools should plan to inspect building ventilation systems regularly to ensure they are operating properly. This includes but is not limited to developing a schedule to perform preventive maintenance and remediation.

When shared spaces (hallways, bathrooms, etc) used by multiple groups, disinfecting must occur between groups.

Plan for hallways to minimize hallway congestion, including staggering bathroom breaks. The goal is minimal passing time in the hallways.

Students should not bring any unnecessary personal materials (i.e.- backpacks) into the school since all required items are provided.

Health and Safety

School COVID Liaison: The school director/ operations manager will serve as a COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison. This designated person will be responsible for engaging with students, parents, and staff to answer questions or concerns about health and safety requirements regarding COVID-19 concerns. All school staff and families should know and have the contact information for the school liaison. Any additional concerns should be directed toward the schools' regional administrators.

There will be a daily symptom screening of all staff and all students before they enter the building each day. The staff will have a daily attestation and temperature check, while students will be expected to be screened at home prior to transportation as well as a temperature check upon arrival to school. Checking for symptoms each morning by families and caregivers is critical and will serve as an important screening mechanism for students for COVID-19 symptoms.

Students: Any students experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 before the school day begins should stay home. If a student develops COVID-19 symptoms while at school, the child should be taken to the school nurse and the isolation room immediately. Parents/guardians should be notified to pick up the student within the hour. Parents/guardians should seek medical advice for the student within 48 hours and schedule a COVID-19 test as needed. Symptomatic students will not be permitted to return to school until documentation from a medical provider indicates testing was negative and there are no other restrictions, there is no evidence of illness restricting attendance, or it is documented that the individual is no longer contagious. If the test result is positive, individuals must complete a period of isolation as directed by the health department (14 days) and negative test achieved. Documentation would need to be provided in advance of the student's day returning to school.

Staff: Anyone who feels ill before the school day begins should stay home. If a staff member develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, they should go home immediately. Within 48 hours, they should seek medical advice by consulting with a healthcare provider. The staff member should get a COVID-19 test as needed and notify their employer as soon as the result of the test is known. Symptomatic staff will not be permitted to return to work until documentation from a medical provider indicates testing was negative and there are no other restrictions or there is no evidence of illness restricting attendance, or it is documented that the individual is no longer contagious. If the test result is positive, individuals must complete a period of isolation as directed by the health department (14 days) and negative test achieved.

Aside from the screening procedures at the point of entry to the school, school staff (as well as bus drivers) should observe students throughout the day and refer students who may be symptomatic to the school healthcare point of contact.

If any person who has been present in school has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, the local health department must be notified immediately, along with all school stakeholders through a communication plan. The school will then need to close for a deep-cleaning and we would follow recommendations put forth by the health department.

If the school is providing transportation for the student, it will be required that there is a temperature check prior to the student being permitted to stay on the bus. Any fever would prohibit them from being transported and would require doctor consultation.

Physical distancing is applicable on the bus, with the suggestion being that every other seat be occupied and disinfecting of the seats between transportation runs.

Face coverings must be worn by students at all times, on transportation and throughout the school day. It will be important to provide additional provisions for everyone's safety, including social emotional learning and intervention to support compliance with this safety measure.

Protective face coverings are not required for certain individuals, per CDC guidance, or for anyone for whom use of such face covering would be damaging to his or her health; who is developmentally unable to use such face covering, including young children who may not be able to effectively wear a face mask; when a face covering would inhibit an activity of daily living (e.g. eating); or when a face covering would itself negatively impact the safety of an individual or lead to an increased risk of harm to others (e.g. near open flames). Any limitations to the use of wearing masks should be documented and communicated to school administration immediately.

Masks/face coverings will be made available by the school for students and staff who need them. Reusable masks/face coverings provided by families should be washed by families daily. Personal face

masks can only be a solid color and must be a surgical-type style mask and not a sleeve or bandana style mask.

Students and staff are required to exercise hand hygiene (handwashing or sanitizing) upon arrival to school, before eating, before putting on and taking off masks, and before dismissal. Handwashing: When handwashing, individuals should use soap and water to wash all surfaces of their hands for at least 20 seconds, wait for visible lather, rinse thoroughly, and dry with an individual disposable towel. Hand sanitizing: If handwashing is not feasible, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent ethanol or at least 70 percent isopropanol content can be used. Hand sanitizer should be applied to all surfaces of the hands and in sufficient quantity that it takes 20 seconds of rubbing hands together for the sanitizer to dry. Hand sanitizer is not to be used when hands are visibly soiled and should be placed at key locations (e.g., building entrances, cafeteria, classrooms).

We will prepare for frequent cleaning and sanitization of facilities and surfaces, especially high-touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, handrails). Checklists are recommended for use to ensure cleaning schedules. Assign support staff/ floating TA/ admin assistant to clean areas with the creation of a schedule and documentation.

Schools should work with parents to ensure that students are current on all standard vaccinations before they return to in-person school. In addition, health providers strongly recommend all students and staff get their regular flu vaccine.

Disinfectants are strong chemicals, and accidental exposure to these toxins can cause harm to anyone's health. When using disinfectants, staff should follow manufacturer's directions and should keep the products out of the reach of students. Bottles of cleaning solutions should always be properly labeled.

Initiate recommended CDC cleaning procedures following a confirmed COVID-19 case. As soon as possible, all items touched by the staff member or student who is ill at school must be removed, cleaned, and disinfected. Any common surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected as well. If possible, items should be moved, windows should be opened, or other measures should be instituted to increase ventilation.

Training

We will prioritize mandatory trainings for staff and plan for professional development needs as changes occur in recommendations from public health offices and the CDC.

PDHub, our online training platform, will be a recommended training resource for training on properly wearing a mask, wiping down surfaces, handwashing, social distancing, etc.

Other recommended trainings include: Mandated reporter training, Education on COVID-19 (symptoms, prevention, etc.), measures to prevent exposure to chemicals, respiratory and cough etiquette, and any school procedural changes/ adaptations to account for COVID precautions, first aid and medication administration.

The re-opening playbook should be reviewed with all employees.

It is recommended to establish a first responding crisis team in the event of a student crisis to order to try to help maintain employees in their respective classroom cohorts. In the event of a crisis within the school, the crisis team will communicate to others if additional support is needed and/ or they are not available. In that case, all available staff will then respond. The initial crisis team would consist of the

school director, school social worker, transition coordinator and the floating teaching assistant (depending on program staffing).

All staff will participate in verbal de-escalation and crisis intervention training in order to understand any unique considerations that need to be made for everyone's safety in the event of an emergency situation with a student.

Online training will be made available to families as well on social distancing, cleaning protocols, hygiene, etc. and be offered monthly.

Operational Impacts

We will look to have communication with the districts in order to inform them that we want to have temperatures taken before students enter the bus as part of our re-opening plan prior to directly contacting the bus companies directly. Each school can offer to buy no-touch thermometers for the busses, if needed.

Student temperatures must be taken before they enter the building so that the proper precautions are adhered to depending on results. It is recommended that the staff taking attendance, also record temperatures on the daily attendance sheet.

We will be limiting what the students can bring in. Students should only be bringing what they need into the building Ex. a homework folder, homework assignment, food items. We want to avoid contact with items that can't be wiped down (i.e.- backpacks). It is highly recommended to purchase large ziplock bags to put student belongings so there is no possible cross contamination between items.

All related services will be provided either virtually or in-person, depending on circumstances and staffing patterns.

Remove anything in the classroom that is unnecessary.

All lunches will need to be pre-packaged. We will provide breakfast, lunch and snack to students in attendance at the school. Designate classroom staff to hand out lunch to cohort and avoid having students involved in this process to reduce risk. This process will still be overseen by ServSafe certified staff member.

All time out, seclusion and voluntary time out (VTO) rooms need to be cleaned after every use by staff and students with proper cleaning supplies.

Communication

Parents have the option for opting out of sending their child to school when and if any in-person services are available. These remote learning opportunities will be a combination of synchronous activities where your child will engage in live instruction and asynchronous activities that are assigned through various remote learning platforms for completion. The amount of required screen time will vary based on the child's grade and developmental level.

We conducted a parent survey to collect data on their intent to return, access to technology, and overall concerns. Parents also have the right to change their mind on their child's access to in-person instruction, if available. Should a parent change a decision to access in-person services, two-weeks-notice will be

required to ensure proper staffing, transportation and safety measures are in place and the student would remain in virtual instruction in the interim.

Our medical advisor will be available for consultation with an administrator or nurse for questions as situations may arise. Please coordinate this with your regional administrator.

Establish connections and a process to work with local boards of health so that all parties are up to date on various statewide and local guidance as well as your school plans.

All Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings or parent meetings will be held via Zoom or another designated online platform.

We will post signs in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, staff areas, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures, and provide instruction related to properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering.

Instructions will be given to students and staff to inform the school if they are sick with COVID-19 related symptoms, particularly if they had a known contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and have also had contact with the school population. They must stay home when they are sick, especially if they have COVID-19 symptoms such as fever and cough. Maintain all information about employee or student illness as a confidential medical record.

We will educate staff and families about when to stay home. Schools should properly communicate the content of this or any updated guidance. – Instruct staff and students (or their parents and guardians) to perform a self-assessment prior to leaving for school to identify fever and other possible COVID-19 symptoms. Communication about this expectation will be outlined in an attestation document for signature as well for families of our students.

We will include transportation providers in planning a return to service so that we can coordinate joint efforts in protocols.

All schools must have access to “one call” system for emergency closure notification to staff, students and families. Communication to districts and transportation companies about a school closure will occur by phone and email. News stations will also be contacted.

Surveys will be provided regularly to our parents and districts in an attempt to make sure that our decisions are informed and data driven.

Continuity of Learning Plans will be sent to districts and parents at end of each quarter if instructing in a blended or virtual format to inform progress on instructional programming.

Communication will be provided to parents about the importance of emergency contact numbers and keeping us informed of changes with that information- multiple emergency contact and who is the best to get a hold of during the day for early dismissals, closures, etc. will be critical.

We will ensure that all signs and messages related to stopping the spread are accessible for students with disabilities and in languages appropriate for the school population. Entry and exit doors will be marked in all languages necessary.

Social Emotional Supports

Our school social workers and directors are trained utilizing trauma information practices to ensure student wellbeing. During the re-opening of our programs, students will be supported during a two-week reintegration period through engaging and informative lessons facilitated by the social worker and other support professionals. These lessons will address feelings surrounding returning to school, readapting to schedules, and new policies and procedures that are in place. During this reintegration period, students will be provided with increased breaks to assist in rebuilding tolerance for academic demands. We know that this is a difficult time for students and will be there to offer support throughout the school year. The following topics will be covered in social skills lessons throughout the 20-21 academic year. Students will also have access to the school social worker in order to process situations and emotions that may arise.

1. Flexibility
2. Navigating uncomfortable situations
3. Change (controlled and uncontrolled)
4. Fear/Uncertainty (self and global)
5. Adjusting to un- preferred situations and rules
6. Dealing with isolation/feeling lonely

Within our schools, we offer a list of resources (both local and country-wide) to families and students. These resources consist of mental and physical health provider lists, behavior support guides, educator developed resources from Specialized Education Services, and information on where to obtain resources for food support in the community. We understand that not all families may require these resources, but strive to provide comprehensive, accurate information to all families and students within our schools.

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Libraries/covid-19/resources_helping_kids_parents_cope.aspx (there are all types of guides on this site)

<https://www.families-first.org/covid-19-response/resources/>

<https://sesischools.com/family-recommendations-resources/>

<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Pages/Public-Health-Resources/Mental-Health-Resources>

<https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/COVID-19/Mental-Health>

These times are filled with uncertainty for all, so it is important to recognize changes that occur in student affect and behavior and regularly check in with them. Maintain a heightened sensitivity to changes in these areas and be aware of your mandated reporting duties in order to keep them safe at all times. Be sure to communication any concerns regarding changes in student behavior and affect to the director and/or social worker as soon as possible, as we have mandated reporting requirements, if necessitated.

*This playbook is meant to be a fluid document and undergo changes and adaptations as information and guidance changes from the state and CDC.