

PORT WASHINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Re-Opening Plan 2021-2022



A Pathway to Success

Updated September 15, 2021

This plan will be posted on our school website and it will be modified as more information becomes available. This plan will be reviewed no later than November, 2021 in the absence of new information.

Re-Opening Committee

Chair: Dr. Christopher Shields

Administrators: Dr. Michael Hynes, Dr. Stephanie Allen, Beth Javeline, Dr. Bonni Cohen, Ryan Meloni, Dr. Ira Pernick, Jim Ristano, Meg Sheehan, Elaine Fenick

Teachers: Regina McLean, Eric Sutz, Dawn Bollerman (Nurse)

Paraprofessionals: Rita DiLucia

BOE: Emily Beys, Dr. Adam Block, Julie Epstein (alternate)

Community Members: Detective Tony Guzzello (PYPD), Dr. Naomi Jackman (Physician), Adrienne Kane (Parent), Nicoletta Gargas (Parent Council)

Goal of the Re-Opening Plan for 2021-2022

The COVID-19 pandemic challenged all school districts to adapt and adjust educational and operational strategies and activities over the past year and a half. The increasing infection rate and the spread of the Delta variant provides ongoing uncertainty when schools are scheduled to open in September. The district has taken a proactive approach in developing plans that will be flexible enough to adapt to changes as they may occur. The overall objective of the revised Re-Opening Plan is to provide a comprehensive direction to all district stakeholders on how to best re-open our schools that provides for the health, safety and wellness of students, staff, and all who visit or do business in our schools, and to ensure the on-going delivery of a quality education to students at all grade levels.

Framework for Re-Opening

We are planning to re-open our schools this September with a focus on returning to a pre-pandemic 2019-2020 school year learning environment to the greatest extent possible. We will begin the year with all students being educated in-person while monitoring the health of our town and county during the school year.

General Guidelines

- Schools will open fully for all students Pre-K-12 starting Thursday, September 2, 2021.
- Masks will be required indoors for all students and staff.
- Following CDC and AAP guidance that prioritizes in-person instruction, the district will not offer a fully remote/virtual learning program.
- Social distancing of three feet is a priority while students and staff are inside the schools.
- CDC guidance on quarantining will be followed.
- Daily health screeners will be required for all students, staff, and visitors.



- All transportation will return to normal schedules.
- Masks will be required for everyone riding a school bus.
- Continue to follow CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfection of schools.
- All athletics and school activities will resume in the fall.

Our Re-Opening plan will include the following protocols:

Masks

As recommended by the CDC and required by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), students, staff, and visitors will wear masks while indoors. Exceptions may be made when students and staff are able to be greater than six feet apart, during scheduled mask breaks, and while eating lunch. Masks can be provided by the district, but staff and students are encouraged to bring their own to school. Masks are not required outdoors.

Medical Exemptions

Students can be considered for either a mask exemption or an in-person learning exemption based on medical conditions. A medical note should be submitted to Pupil Personnel Services. This information will be reviewed by the school nurse and the medical coordinator. The school physician will be consulted on a case-by-case basis and may speak directly with the doctor requesting the exemption on behalf of the student. Once the school physician makes a final determination, that decision will be shared with the parents. Additional accommodations will be recommended in lieu of mask wearing. Should a student be deemed exempt from in-person learning due to a medical condition, arrangements will be made for home instruction.

Social Distancing

Social distancing of three feet is a priority while students and staff are inside the school. Three feet also applies during indoor physical education activity, and music classes involving singing or wind instruments as long as students are masked. Six feet is required while eating lunch.

Close Contacts and Quarantining

School districts must continue to report positive cases of COVID-19 to NCDOH. All individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must remain in isolation for 10 days from date of symptom onset or test date if asymptomatic.

A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. Exception: in the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the **close contact definition excludes students who were within three to six feet of an infected student (laboratory confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) if both students correctly and consistently wore well-fitting**



masks the entire time. This exception does **not** apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

Fully vaccinated close contacts should be tested 3-5 days after exposure. If asymptomatic, they do not need to quarantine after exposure. They should continue to correctly wear a mask in school for 14 days or until after they receive a negative test result.

Close contacts who are not fully vaccinated should quarantine for 10 days after the exposure and monitor themselves for symptoms until day 14.

Vaccination Status

The district is not requiring staff to be vaccinated. All students and staff who are vaccinated should provide a copy of their vaccination card to their school nurse.

Testing

The district will only accept PCR test results.

Livestreaming

Livestreaming will be made available to students when the school requires a student to quarantine. Once approved by administration, livestreaming will be made available within 24 business hours. For example, if a school is informed on Wednesday at 2 p.m., livestreaming will be available on Friday. If a school is informed on Saturday, it will be available on Tuesday. The district is not offering a fully virtual/remote option to students.

Lunch

Six feet of social distancing is required while students are eating lunch. Schools will use the cafeteria and any additional spaces available (i.e., classrooms, all-purpose rooms, gyms) to accomplish this requirement.

Protocols for Visitors, Contractors, and Vendors

Visitors will be allowed in our schools, and they will complete the same health screening required of our employees. Visitors will be required to wear a mask while indoors.

Open House & Large Gatherings

We will make all attempts to avoid large gatherings indoors where social distancing is not possible. Open house, concerts, and performances will be conducted virtually.



Field Trips

Field trips can take place and they will be approved on a case-by-case basis by administration.

Sports

We will have sports at both Weber and Schreiber this year. Spectators may attend outside sporting events with no restrictions. Spectators may attend indoor sporting events as long as social distancing of three feet is possible and masks are worn. Adjustments will be made to these protocols if guidance is provided by the NYSPHSAA.

Clubs and Activities

Clubs and activities will meet in person in all schools with social distancing and masks.

Transportation

Students and staff on district transportation are required to wear masks. Students with a disability that might prevent them from wearing a mask will not be required to wear one, provided they have been granted a medical exemption. When the temperature is 45 degrees or higher bus windows/hatches will be ajar to allow for fresh air circulation. It is a parent's responsibility to ensure their child(ren) is (are) not experiencing any signs of COVID-19 prior to boarding a school bus. The NYS Education Department has allowed flexibility with social distancing on school buses. We expect no more than two students per seat.

Monitoring the Health of Students and Staff

In order for our community to limit the spread of illness, it will take a collaborative approach to monitoring students and staff. Parents, students, and staff will need to continuously monitor themselves and family members for symptoms of illness that warrant staying home. Prior to arriving to school, staff and students will complete an online affirmation that they are symptom-free, have not had a positive COVID-19 test in the past ten days, have not had close contact with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case within ten days, or traveled internationally to a CDC level 2, 3, or 4 COVID-19 related travel health notice country within the last ten days. We will have the ability to check temperatures in school if needed.

Protocol for Identifying Sick Students and Staff

The most commonly known symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headaches, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. A student or staff member who presents with any of these symptoms is immediately sent (or escorted) to a designated isolation room where a school nurse will assess them. A building administrator will be notified of an isolated student/staff member. A



parent/guardian will be called to pick up the student and follow up with their Health Care Provider. Staff members should be directed to see their Health Care Provider as well. The Health Care Provider will determine if presenting symptoms warrant COVID-19 testing/isolation. A separate log will be kept for all individuals entering or supervising the isolation room to help with contact tracing if necessary. Nurses will be provided with a fitted N-95 mask and other appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves, gowns, face shields and goggles.

Hand Washing with Soap and Water

Frequent hand washing with soap and ideally warm water for a minimum of 20 seconds has been proven to be a critical step for prevention of the virus. Medical experts have emphasized that this is a more effective practice than using hand sanitizer, so this is preferable when possible. Occupants of all the buildings must be given ample opportunity to frequently wash their hands with soap and water. Hand sanitizer should be used if soap and water are not readily available.

Cleaning and Disinfecting of the Schools

The CDC provides reopening guidance for cleaning and disinfecting schools. School-wide cleaning will include classrooms, restrooms, cafeterias, libraries, and hallways. Classrooms where quarantining is required will receive additional cleaning. Frequently touched surfaces and areas must be constantly cleaned and disinfected with a school appropriate disinfectant.

Ventilation

The CDC recommends that school ventilation is an important COVID-19 prevention strategy that can reduce the number of virus particles in the air. The district will continue to open doors and windows, and use fans to increase effective natural airflow. HEPA filters and HVAC systems will continue to be maintained for optimum air quality. The district is also supporting learning outdoors by providing tents at each school.

Facility Use by Outside Organizations

The district expects outside organizations to follow the same protocols as the school district.

Response to a Positive COVID-19 Case

If a student/staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19 and was in a school building:

- A. The student/staff member is immediately excluded from attending school (see below for Return to School procedure)
- B. The COVID-19 Coordinator immediately contacts the local DOH to report positive results.



- C. DOH will provide direction regarding closure of school/schools in the district if needed.
- D. Administration will notify families and staff of any positive case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality. All those who have had **close contact** with a positive COVID-19 student/staff member must be directed to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms.
- E. Please refer to the section on Close Contacts and Quarantining for additional information.

Return to school/work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 with symptoms:

- 24 hours with no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication) **and** symptoms have improved **and** 10 days since symptoms first appeared.
- Student/staff member must present clearance prior to returning to school. This can be a “letter of release” from the NCDOH (if a confirmed case) or a negative result on a PCR test (if a suspected case).

