

Welcome Back to School

2021-2022 While the Pandemic Continues

(Based on CDC Guidance of August 4, 2021, NYSED Guidance of August 2021 and a meeting with Herkimer DOH on August 13, 2021, DOH Regulation of August 27, 2021, NYS Interim Guidance for Classroom Instruction in P-12 Schools During the 2021-2022 Academic Year dated September 2, 2021)

Updated October 1, 2021

Goals:

- Keep students and staff healthy and safe
- Be responsive to student needs
- Maximize in-person learning and teaching
- Encourage all eligible individuals within the school community to get the vaccination

General Expectations:

- Keep everyone as safe as possible by not being present in the school building when signs/symptoms of any infectious illness are present
- The district will continue to collaborate with the Department of Health and our Medical Director while monitoring important data indicators as it looks to potentially modify school procedures/protocols to meet the health and educational needs of our students and staff
- Visitors will continue to be restricted to only the most essential and necessary visits; entry will only be through the main entrance during the school day and after essential clearance

Masking:

- Everyone over the age of 2, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, will wear masks in *most* settings (Universal Masking)
- Students can remove masks while eating or drinking and spaced six (6) feet apart
- Expect masking to be in place throughout the year to some extent (buses, passing time, large group settings, chorus/band, etc.) although **universal masking is in place until further notice**
- The Department of Health issued the following on August 27, 2021:
 - *Effective immediately, in accordance with the Commissioner's Determination issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.60, any person over the age of 2 (including all students, personnel, teachers, administrators, contractors, and visitors) must wear masks at all times indoors in P-12 school buildings, regardless of vaccination status. People with medical or developmental conditions that prevent them from wearing a mask may be exempted from mask requirements, as documented by a medical provider. People do not need to wear masks when eating, drinking, singing, or playing a wind instrument; when masks are removed for these purposes, individuals must be spaced six feet apart. All mask requirements must be applied consistently with any state and federal law (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act).*
- Further clarification on August 28, 2021

- *“Because of the importance of in-person learning, schools should implement physical distancing to the extent possible within their structures but should not exclude students from in-person learning to keep a minimum distance requirement.”*

Testing for COVID:

- NYS maintains that “rapid” testing can be used when asymptomatic (waiting 3-5 days after exposure)
- Symptomatic individuals who receives a negative rapid test must also receive a negative PCR test to confirm the negative result
- Symptomatic individuals will be treated the same as last year (Siblings sent home until symptomatic household members receive test results unless that sibling is vaccinated and asymptomatic (or the individual tests are negative)
- If positive for COVID - Return after: 10 days since start of symptoms, AND Fever Free for 48 hours, AND Symptoms have improved
- Home testing kits are not connected to the county data information system and are not performed by a trained medical professional so they will not be accepted

Disinfection, Handwashing, Improved Ventilation

- Routine cleaning with disinfection daily
- Windows kept open as often as possible (weather permitting) in classrooms and on the bus
- Maximize the exchange of outside air through the classroom univents and use the filters with the greatest particle capture efficiency that the univents can operate with
- Handwashing for at least 20 seconds encouraged, additional handwashing station near the cafeteria, and new faucets installed in multiple restrooms

Attestation:

- Staff and families are expected to remain hypervigilant with their monitoring of self and students for symptoms
- Students and staff with any symptoms of illness should remain home out of an abundance of caution
- Students/Staff can return when symptom free and monitored OR provide negative test results as stated above/alternate diagnosis from a medical professional
- Students/Staff with a fever must be 48 hours fever free without administration of fever reducing medicine before returning to the school building with a note from a physician or a negative test
- Families should notify the district if their child has been in contact with a positive case

Quarantines:

- Quarantines will be determined in consultation/collaboration with Herkimer County DOH; whether a radius or cohort model of exposure is used will be dependent on the situation and the guidance we receive from them
- Seating charts will need to be kept current for all student occupied spaces in the building

- Vaccinated (proof provided to the school) and asymptomatic individuals will be allowed to be present in the building (no quarantine) but will need to monitor for symptoms; will be expected to test 3-5 days after exposure and wear a mask **at all times** for 10 days while on school premises
- Expect that an entire bus will be quarantined for any exposure
 - Assigned seats will on busses will be charted for exposure identification purposes
 - Mitigation strategies include opening of windows when possible and distancing as possible; goal is to keep students/staff healthy but not to avoid the need to quarantine
- Bus drivers who are vaccinated would not be required to quarantine as stated above
- 15 minute rule of exposure in 24 hours will be determined on a case by case basis

PE/Music/Recess:

- Hand sanitizer on the way out to and in from using playground equipment to facilitate use of shared equipment
- Close contact should be avoided in all areas
- Masks won't be required outside if distancing appropriately; congregating must be avoided when masks are not in place
- When singing masks will be worn when students are less than six (6) feet apart
- Masks removed for instrument playing with layered mitigation including proper spacing of six (6) feet; if possible covers for instruments
 - Concerts will have families cohorting in spaced audience seating with students spaced on stage. (Only allowed when transmission rates are low or moderate)

Remote Learning:

- Full-time remote learning is not an option this year for students; the goal is to have all students present for in-person instruction as much as possible
- Individual students needing remote learning for documented medical needs through a medical professional should contact Principal Swick/Interim Principal Mooney to discuss
- 5 day work binder for elementary students in case the class needs to transition to temporary remote instruction
- Remote core instruction takes place when students are in quarantine

Athletics:

- Individuals who are fully vaccinated can refrain from quarantine following a known exposure if they are and remain asymptomatic (final determination in consultation with the County DOH)
- Student athletes and coaches will not participate when they have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or have not cleared the fever free timeline
- Students will follow the same procedures as in school
- Student athletes will be required to wear masks inside when social distancing of six (6) feet or more is not possible
- Individual skill practices will not require a mask when student athletes can socially distance more than 6 feet inside

- Masks do not have to be worn when student athletes are outside

Sickness Protocol

- Any student/staff member that exhibits symptoms associated with any infectious illness will be sent home along with any relatives (siblings/children residing in the same household) and will not be allowed to return until:
 - 48 hours fever free, without administration of medicine, prior to returning to school, **and**
 - 48 hour symptom free or with symptoms improving, **and**
 - Production of a negative PCR or FDA Approved Rapid test **or**
 - Ten (10) days out of school
- Please remember the symptoms that should keep a student home from school:
 - Temperature over 100 degrees; Fever or chills; Cough; Loss of Taste or Smell; Fatigue; Sore Throat; Shortness of Breath or Trouble Breathing; Nausea, Vomiting and Diarrhea, Muscle Pain or Body Aches; Headaches, Nasal Congestion or Runny Nose;
 - Please follow all gathering/socializing limits and communicate with Mrs. Payne and your primary care physician when the above symptoms are noted
- Vaccinated sibling/child living in the same household may remain in school if proof of vaccination has been provided to the District and the individual remains symptom free; associated, vaccinated child must wear a mask at all times other than eating
- Ultimately, quarantine decisions will be made in collaboration with the DOH (by the DOH)

Extracurriculars/Events:

- Every attempt will be made to have as many “normal” opportunities for students to participate in and showcase their work and talents as possible
- Decisions will be made on a case by case basis and in consultation with the DOH and current available illness/transmission metrics as are available
- The calendar was developed with placeholders for all regular events but you should pay close attention to ParentSquare communications for any and all updates regarding actual dates of events and other changes that may be encountered with how the event occurs