



NEW MILFORD

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*A collaborative partnership of students,
educators, family, and community*

SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN

UPDATED DECEMBER 2021

Introduction

Dear New Milford Community,

The Superintendent in conjunction with the Central Office Cabinet and Building Administration, created the first development of the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan required by the State of Connecticut in June 2021. The physical health and safety of students and staff remains the priority in the opening of schools this fall. This revision includes updates based on current guidance from the CDC, the Governor's Office, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), the CT Department of Health and the New Milford Health Department. We will continue to reassess and review updated guidance as it is received and as we are advised by our local Department of Public Health and our District Medical Advisor.

Districts are required to conduct a periodic review and, as necessary, revise their opening plan at least every six months through September of 2023. Each review must include seeking public comment on the plan and updating the plan thereafter. Below are the dates that districts must submit an updated plan to the CSDE.

- December 23, 2021
- June 23, 2022
- December 23, 2022

With the reopening of schools for 2021-22, we plan to provide continuity of learning with 100% full in-person instruction, 5 days per week.

Sincerely,

Alisha DiCorpo
Superintendent of Schools

Health and Safety Strategies

The district followed all Executive Orders and CDC guidance provided throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as worked in conjunction with the New Milford Department of Public Health and District Medical Advisor, who have reviewed and given guidance to our reopening plan.

Our schools will be prepared to reinforce healthy practices among our students and staff, take preventive actions to prevent the spread of illness, and prepare for any potential cases or increased transmission of COVID-19. The district will include in decision making guidance from the CDC, the Governor's Office, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), the CT Department of Public Health and the New Milford Health Department.

Our primary focus always is to make informed decisions in support of the health and safety of our staff, students and local community.

Mitigation strategy	LEA response
<p>100% In-person Learning</p>	<p>With the reopening of schools for 2021-22, we plan to provide continuity of learning with 100% full in-person instruction, 5 days per week.</p> <p>Remote learning is no longer a unilateral option for families. Schools will be fully open 5 days per week.</p> <p>Connecticut law does not permit remote learning to count toward the 180 school day requirement. Remote learning was temporarily permitted due to the state of emergency created by the COVID-19, but that has ended for the 2021-22 school year. Weather related closures will be counted as traditional snow days and made up at the end of the year.</p>
<p>Masks</p>	<p>The Governor's Executive Order 14 provides for mandatory mask wearing indoors in all schools is in effect through February 15, 2022. All students who are not medically or otherwise exempt are required to wear masks in school.</p> <p>Teachers and staff will model for students how to place masks on the face and around the ears appropriately and how to remove masks.</p> <p>Failure to comply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will be handed a mask and will be asked to put the mask on. 2. Failure to comply will result in a student being sent to the isolation room. Parents will be contacted to pick up their child, resulting in an unexcused absence.
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>Transportation will resume at full capacity. Masks are required on public transportation for riders and drivers, including school buses. Seating charts will be utilized and updated as needed.</p> <p>Students may not switch from their assigned bus. The only exception is for transportation to licensed daycare providers.</p>
<p>Social Distancing</p>	<p>Maximize spacing of seating (3 feet or to the greatest extent feasible). Classroom seating shall be assigned to students at all times during the day. Traffic patterns in hallways or stairwells will be designed to promote social distancing during passing times.</p> <p>Schools may restrict the sharing of educational materials between individuals. Shared materials in a given school day will be cleaned and disinfected.</p> <p>Student desk shields will no longer be utilized unless grouping occurs.</p>

Mitigation strategy	LEA response
<p>Handwashing and respiratory etiquette</p>	<p>Students, teachers, and staff must engage in frequent hand washing or sanitizing upon arrival, before and after meals, after bathroom use, and after coughing or sneezing.</p> <p>Building Administrators will ensure, in accordance with CDC guidance, that hand washing/sanitizing includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opportunities for students and staff to meet hand washing/sanitizing frequency guidance. ● Sufficient access to handwashing and sanitizer stations.
<p>Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation</p>	<p>Custodial staff will be provided equipment and PPE for cleaning and disinfecting.</p> <p>The Director of Facilities and Principals will ensure that schools meet high cleanliness standards prior to reopening and maintain a high level of cleanliness during the school year.</p> <p>The Director of Facilities and Principals will communicate cleaning and hygiene protocols as recommended by the State of Connecticut and the CDC to staff and families.</p> <p>Our Facilities department will also continue to follow the CT Guidance for School Systems for the Operation of Central and non-Central Ventilation Systems during the COVID-19 Pandemic guidelines to maintain our schools ventilated at a healthy level.</p> <p>The Director of Facilities will use products that are approved for the State of Connecticut that are labeled to be effective against emerging viral pathogens, following label directions for appropriate dilution rates and contact times.</p> <p>Cleaning logs will be used in each building to track cleaning frequency of areas including bathrooms.</p>
<p>Recess/Outdoor Activities</p>	<p>Masks will not be required for outdoor activities including recess and PE.</p>

Mitigation strategy	LEA response
<p>Lunch/Cafeteria Food sharing and celebrations</p>	<p>School lunches will be served in the cafeteria and other spaces as needed for social distancing. Partitions will be placed on cafeteria tables.</p> <p>Lunch location and schedule will be determined on a school by school basis. Any tables used for lunch will have partitions and will be cleaned after use.</p> <p>School breakfast and lunch will continue to be provided to students AT NO COST TO FAMILIES for the 2021-22 school year.</p> <p>Food sharing is not permitted. At this time, food will not be part of classroom or school celebrations.</p>
<p>Music and Art</p> <p>Library Media Center</p>	<p>Music, including choral and instrumental groups, will be permitted to practice and perform following current guidance issued by CDC, CSDE, CTDPH, and the local Health Department. Shared use of materials and equipment in Art and Unified Arts will be allowed. Materials and equipment will be periodically cleaned and disinfected.</p> <p>We will return to regular distribution and sharing of books and materials.</p>
<p>Athletics</p>	<p>We anticipate a full athletics schedule this year. Fans will be permitted at games (outdoor and indoor) subject to current guidance issued by CDC, CSDE, CTDPH, and the local Health Department.</p>
<p>Visitors</p>	<p>We will continue to limit non-essential visitors to the schools. See Policy 1212 School Volunteers regarding COVID-19 vaccination or negative testing options.</p>
<p>Quarantine/Contact tracing/Diagnostic screening and testing</p>	<p>We will continue to follow the CDC, CT DPH and local Health Department guidance regarding quarantine and isolation. Vaccinated individuals will not be required to quarantine or isolate if asymptomatic. See Addendum 5. Additionally, the district will follow Screen and Stay guidelines as able. Screen and Stay is paused as of December 8, 2021.</p> <p>If a student, staff member, or visitor has been present in school and has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, the School Nurse and the building principal will contact the COVID Liaison. In addition, the Liaison will be notified by school personnel that a student is suspected of being sick, maintaining confidentiality in accordance with FERPA, privacy expectations, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Liaison notifies the New Milford Health Department. The New Milford Health Department will assess risk of further transmission in the school.</p> <p>The New Milford Public Schools do not plan to provide COVID testing at this time. If this is to change, we will inform parents.</p>

Mitigation strategy	LEA response
<p>Support for Quarantined Students who are Otherwise Healthy</p>	<p>Quarantine period is 10 days, with a test out option of a negative PCR test result taken anytime on or after day 5 post exposure. Day 8 is the earliest return date with this negative PCR test. The student and staff member must also be asymptomatic.</p> <p>Students who are required to quarantine will be provided assignments through Google Classroom, participating asynchronously. Support via email check-in and/or through Google Meet will be provided by a building substitute when available. The schedule will be determined by school and the children's developmental level.</p> <p>Students absent from school due to any illness will not be expected to access Google Classroom, nor be expected to participate in any school related activities.</p>
<p>Travel</p>	<p>For the most up to date travel guidelines, visit the cdc.gov travel page at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html</p>
<p>Vaccinations</p>	<p>CDC, CSDE, CTDPH, and local Health Departments advise that vaccination remains a critical prevention strategy against COVID-19. We will continue to support the vaccination of staff and eligible students which is now available for all children ages 5 and up.</p> <p>Parents, please share your child's vaccination status with the school nurse. Doing so will help with contact tracing and required quarantine protocols.</p>

Note: All information contained in this document is subject to change based on requirements and/or guidance from the CDC, Governor's Office, CSDE, CTDPH.

We will continue to reassess and review updated guidance as it is received and as we are advised by our local Department of Public Health and our District Medical Advisor.

Any changes will be communicated to all stakeholders in a timely manner.

Updates will also be posted on the New Milford Public Schools website under the COVID-19 page.

Questions/input may be directed to:

dicorpoa@newmilfordps.org



New Milford Public Schools Mission Statement

The mission of the New Milford Public Schools, a collaborative partnership of students, educators, family and community, is to prepare each and every student to compete and excel in an ever-changing world, embrace challenges with vigor, respect and appreciate the worth of every human being, and contribute to society by providing effective instruction and dynamic curriculum, offering a wide range of valuable experiences, and inspiring students to pursue their dreams and aspirations.