



Smithtown Central School District

Reopening Schools FAQ 2021-2022

This FAQ document will be continuously updated as additional questions are asked and will reflect the most updated guidance.

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

What type of test is required to return to school or work? (Updated 12/7/2021)

A NAAT test is no longer required to permit individuals to return to school or work after developing COVID-like symptoms. Understanding that the turnaround time for some laboratory-based NAATs may result in multiple-day exclusions from school for people with mild symptoms, NYSDOH and consequently, SCDOH has amended its guidance to allow people to return to school following a negative antigen test result. Therefore, a rapid or PCR test is now acceptable to return to school or work.

What guidance and/or mandates were utilized to assist with the formation of the 2021-2022 reopening plan?

District decision making was guided by:

- *The New York State Department of Health mandate that 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.*

- [New York State Education Department \(NYSED\)](#)
- [Suffolk County Department of Health Services \(SCDHS\)](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#)

What kind of mask is recommended for use?

The CDC recommendations for masks can be located [HERE](#).

Will the district offer a remote learning option for students in 2021-22?

The district will be joining the regional remote learning program that is being organized by Western Suffolk BOCES. Students who are medically excused, or have a family/household health concern, may opt to participate in the Western Suffolk BOCES Regional Virtual School. The program will provide all required coursework, as well as specials in the lower grades, and select elective courses, where applicable, at the secondary level. The program will offer special education and ENL services, and will provide students with the opportunity to graduate with a Regents diploma on time, with their grade level peers. Registration for the virtual school comes with an expectation for a full year commitment (September, 2021 - June, 2022). If health and safety conditions significantly change, we will consider a petition to return to in-person learning.

Will the district offer a hybrid learning option for students in 2021-22?

The district is presently not planning to offer a hybrid learning model. It is expected that all students will be full time, in-person except for those who are enrolled in the Western Suffolk BOCES Regional Virtual School.

What medical research and scientific evidence was used in the development of the reopening plan?

The district's reopening plan was guided by the mandates and guidance provided by the New York State Department of Health, as required. It is also important to note that there was near universal consensus within the medical profession to adhere to the CDC guidance. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Physicians, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Public Health Association, and the American Medical Association represent hundreds of thousands of physicians and public health professionals and endorse the CDC guidelines.

When will the District reassess the reopening plan?

The reopening plan will be reviewed frequently and we will make adjustments as necessary.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Does my child need clearance to return to school after exposure to COVID-19? (updated 1-8-2022)

If your child is sent home from school with COVID-19 related symptoms they should be seen by a healthcare provider for further evaluation and tested. Health care providers must provide documentation following the evaluation of a child of either a non-COVID-19 diagnosis, a negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result, and symptom improvement. Parents should check [this document](#) and contact the school nurse with questions related to returning to school.

What is the required quarantine or isolation for someone who tests positive? (updated 1-8-2022)

The district will report positive results that include school related close contacts to the Suffolk County Department of Health and follow their guidance on these issues. According to the Suffolk County

Department of Health, a person testing positive must self-isolate for at least 5 days. The District will work with the county and the State on contact tracing if applicable. Identified school related close contacts will be advised to remain at home in self-quarantine for a minimum of 5 days. Additional information can be found [here](#).

What if my child is exposed to someone who tests positive? (Updated 1-8-2022)

This may necessitate a quarantine. According to the Suffolk County Department of Health, a close contact of a person testing positive would be quarantined for at least 5 days. Information on quarantine and isolation can be found [here](#).

What type of test is required to return to school or work? (Updated 1-8-2022)

Currently, a NAAT test is no longer required to permit individuals to return to school or work after developing COVID-like symptoms. Understanding that the turnaround time for some laboratory-based NAATs may result in multiple-day exclusions from school for people with mild symptoms, NYSDOH and consequently, SCDOH has amended its guidance to allow people to return to school following a negative antigen test result.

Are masks required in school?

Yes, the New York State Department of Health issued a mask mandate inside all schools. The mask mandate applies to all individuals over the age of 2 years old regardless of vaccination status. As was the case last year, mask breaks will be given when safety allows for such. When outside the school building, masks are not required. Masks will need to be worn at all times while riding in school buses.

Will mask use reduce the number of quarantines?

Yes. Following the Suffolk County Department of Health Services guidance, students that are more than 3 feet apart and wearing masks will not be required to quarantine. Please see the [infographic](#) for further explanation.

Are we expected to do a daily health screening prior to our child coming to school?

Parents will be asked to complete a one-time health screening notification to indicate their understanding of the need to check their child at home for COVID symptoms prior to sending them to school each day. A daily entry into the PowerSchool Parent Portal will no longer be used at this time.

Will the district be using desk shields again this year?

Desk shields will not be placed on student classroom desks this year. However, desk shields may be utilized in the cafeterias as a mitigation measure when appropriate social distancing is not possible. Shields will be available for any student or staff member that prefers the use of a desk shield.

How will parents be made aware of these positive cases?

Positive case information will continue to be reported on the district website and can be found [here](#).

Are faculty and staff members required to get COVID-19 tests before reporting to work for the 2021-2022 school year?

At this time, faculty and staff are not required to be tested for COVID-19 before starting the school year.

If a student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, how will the District proceed?

If the district is advised that a student or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19, the Department of Health will be contacted immediately and the District will assist with contact tracing. If this notification takes

place during the school day, the infected person will immediately be isolated and sent home with directions to contact their health care provider. Anyone displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or testing positive is required to follow all guidance of the Department of Health and other local agencies, related to quarantine and isolation orders. Individuals must provide proper documentation including a negative test prior to returning to school or work.

How do I go about getting a medical exemption?

Please supply the building administrator with specific information from a medical provider indicating how use of a mask impacts your child in the school environment. Specific information will allow the district to consider the request and render a decision.

What is being done to protect the kids when they have to take their masks off to eat?

Our approach to lunch will vary by building, but the consistent goal will be to allow our students an opportunity to eat with their peers while limiting the potential need for quarantines when a positive case of COVID-19 is identified. To achieve this goal we will employ several strategies such as distancing, limiting the time that students are maskless, utilizing time before/after eating for additional outdoor recess to limit students' time together at the lunch table, etc.

If the children are at recess outside without masks on and a positive case is identified, will the kids need to quarantine? If yes, how are you determining what kids need to quarantine?

Building personnel will identify the spacing between students during recess and add the contact time to other times of contact during the day to determine if the total time of potential exposure warrants a quarantine.

FACILITIES

What products will be used to deep clean the buildings?

Products identified by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as effective against COVID-19 will be utilized. "High touch/high risk" areas will be disinfected multiple times throughout the day and classrooms and other areas will be disinfected nightly. Additionally, sanitizing stations are available at entrances and multiple locations throughout each building.

How will classrooms be ventilated?

All ventilation systems are being serviced throughout the District. Dampers are adjusted to allow the maximum airflow practicable. Schools will increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (e.g., opening windows and doors) while maintaining health and safety protocols.

How will bathrooms be sanitized in between use?

Bathrooms and other "high touch" areas are being cleaned several times throughout the day.

Are all desks being cleaned from top to bottom daily?

Yes, desks are being disinfected nightly.

Will hand sanitizing stations be available in all classrooms?

Hand sanitizing stations will be available in classrooms that do not have hand washing stations.

Will hand sanitizing stations be installed in all school buildings at convenient locations?

Hand sanitizing stations have been installed throughout all District facilities.

What products will be used to deep clean the buildings?

Products identified by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as effective against COVID-19 will be utilized.

Will each classroom/office be given disinfectant to use on high-touch areas as students and staff enter and exit spaces in the building?

"High touch/high risk" areas are disinfected multiple times throughout the day and classrooms and other areas will be disinfected nightly. Additionally, sanitizing stations are available at entrances and multiple locations throughout each building.

Are any regular size rooms without any windows being used as classrooms? (Note: this doesn't include larger spaces like auditoriums and cafeterias)

Yes, there are regular sized rooms being utilized as classrooms with proper ventilation.

Will students have access to playground equipment for recess?

Yes. There will also be playground hygiene stations available.

Will students be able to utilize hallway lockers at the secondary level?

Yes. Students will have access to their lockers but should not congregate during that time.

TRANSPORTATION

Will there be busing to school in September 2021?

Yes. Transportation will be provided according to the specific school's schedule.

Will all students be required to wear a mask?

Yes. Students must wear acceptable face coverings at all times while on the school bus.

What if my child forgets their mask?

Drivers will provide a mask for those students who need one.

Will there be only one child per seat on the bus?

Students will be seated as far apart as practicable, however members of the same household are encouraged to sit together in the same seat.

Will carpooling with non-family members be allowed if families decide not to ride the bus?

Yes.

Will athletic buses and 4:10/ 5:10 Late Buses be provided?

Yes.

Are there any cleaning/sanitizing protocols in place on the school buses?

Yes. Bus contractors have a cleaning procedure which was put in place last year and will continue for the 21/22 school year. All high touch areas will be wiped down after each run, for both AM and PM. Drivers will

deep clean their assigned bus at the end of each day. All buses will undergo intense cleaning on a weekly schedule.

What if there is a COVID case reported on a school bus?

The bus will be put out of service and cleaning/sanitizing protocols will be implemented, according to CDC guidelines.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

What will the District be doing to assist our children's social and emotional needs that they may be experiencing as a result of the current school climate?

School district employees, consisting of social workers, school psychologists, teachers, administrators and other pupil personnel staff will continue to provide support for the students, staff and families. The District will continue to offer social and emotional opportunities for students. This will be a continued focus throughout the year in order to further support students. The district will continue to utilize and enhance our Smithtown School District Multi-Tiered System of Support that will assist the students with a host of mental health issues that may have arisen or may arise in the future. Parents are encouraged to reach out to school based mental health professionals if their child may need assistance and is experiencing any emotional difficulties surrounding school related issues, health protocols, friendships, school work or other areas of concern.

Will students be able to play with children in other classes during recess this year?

Yes. Children will be able to play with others until further notice.

SCHOOL SCHEDULES

Will school be following their regular school schedules for the reopening of school?

Yes. Schools will open for full time in-person instruction for all students following the regular school schedules at each level.

Is the Town of Smithtown still offering their School Age Child Care Program at the elementary schools for before and after care?

Yes, the Town of Smithtown School Age Child Care Program will run as it previously has at each of our elementary schools.

BUDGET AND FISCAL

ATTENDANCE AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Will student attendance be taken daily?

Yes. The District is required to collect and report daily student attendance. Contact with the families of

students who are chronically absent will be made to determine reasons for absence and needs or barriers the student may have in attending school regularly to develop a plan to re-engage the child.

NUTRITION

How are student's allergies being taken into consideration when students are eating in their classrooms?

Parents/guardians of a student with an allergy should continue to contact the school's health office so appropriate classroom and other accommodations can be implemented.

Will the School Lunch Program "no cash mandate" continue for the 2021-22 school year?

Yes, the no cash mandate will continue for the new school year.

For other inquiries, please contact the Child Nutrition Department at 631-382-5000.

TECHNOLOGY AND CONNECTIVITY

Will the District provide internet access to those families who do not currently have it?

Yes. Parents/Guardians who are in need of internet access should contact their child's school social worker.

Will students maintain access to a personal computing device (Chromebook) for the 2021-2022 school year ?

Yes. For many years, the district provided dedicated Chromebook and iPad carts in all of our schools to support technology integration and enhance the delivery of instruction in the classroom. Each year the district increased the availability of those carts in order to provide greater access for both teachers and students. In the 2020-2021 school year, for the first time, the District provided all students with a dedicated personal computing device. The district will continue to provide personal computing devices for all students in grades K-12. Students should bring their Chromebooks to school each day fully charged, unless directed otherwise by their teacher(s). Access to a personal computing device is just one tool in delivering classroom instruction. Teachers will use this tool, when appropriate, to provide opportunities for engaging learning experiences with their students. The list of software applications that are part of our K-12 educational program can be found [HERE](#).

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Will students attend school full time in-person?

Yes. School will reopen for full time in-person instruction for all students, with the exception of those who may qualify and enroll in the Western Suffolk BOCES Regional Virtual School (see the Fully Remote Parent Option section for more information).

Will the district provide live-streamed instruction for students who have COVID-19 or who are quarantined by the Department of Health?

Yes. Students who have COVID-19 or are quarantined by the Department of Health will have access to live-streamed instruction. When teachers are notified by 2:00 pm at the high school, 2:30 pm at the middle school, and 3:30 pm at the elementary school that a student is quarantined, live-streamed instruction will be

available for students the next school day. Notifications that take place after those times will require one additional day before live-streamed instruction begins.

Students in grades K-2 will receive 30 minutes per day in both ELA and mathematics. Students in grades 3-5 will receive 60 minutes per day in both ELA and mathematics. Students at the secondary level will receive live-streamed instruction following their regular bell schedule. Students will also have access to AIS, ENL and special education services. Students should use their district-issued Chromebook to access the live-streamed instruction.

In-class assessments and classroom activities that are unable to be completed remotely while a student is quarantined will be made up upon their return to school.

Additional details and guidelines related to live-streamed instruction will be provided directly to students and families when necessary.

Will live-streamed instruction be available for students who are absent for reasons not associated with COVID-19?

Live-streamed instruction will only be available for students who are positive for COVID-19 or quarantined. Students who are absent for reasons not related to COVID-19 should rest and recover while home, and will receive assignments from the teachers. Teachers will be able to support students with missed work upon their return to school. Students who have long-term health needs that require sustained absences will be considered for home instruction following regular district practices.

Will children still have recess?

Yes. Students will be provided the opportunity to engage in recess on a regular basis.

ATHLETICS AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Will the district participate in Section XI athletics?

Yes. The district's student-athletes will have the opportunity to participate in athletics to the extent allowable by Section XI. The district is excited to offer our student-athletes a more typical athletic experience this year with varying sports being played during their regular athletic season.

Will the district offer in-person extra-curricular clubs?

Yes. The district is pleased to offer in-person club activities and recognizes how important the clubs are to students, especially as we continue our work to provide a more "typical" school experience. Further, we consider the clubs an important component of our support for student learning on a social/emotional level.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

How will special education services be delivered through the Western Suffolk BOCES Regional School?

Student IEP needs will be delivered alongside the WS BOCES model. Students who have an IEP will have access to a special education teacher when taught remotely. The time provided will be based upon the students IEP, specialized needs, and the delivery of instruction built into the model. This model's configuration of meeting IEP needs may be delivered differently than a traditional model of in-person instruction. At this time, the virtual model is still being developed to meet the IEP needs of the students as we continue to look towards maximizing instruction for our students.

What special accommodations will be made for children who have an IEP and are learning through the remote model such as extra academic time, small group instruction, etc.

Students in remote programs will have access to their accommodations and modifications. These will be provided to the greatest extent possible, and as appropriate.

Will remote students be provided with their related special education services?

Students in remote programs will have access to their related services.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND WORLD LANGUAGES

Will students continue to receive their ENL support services?

Yes. ENL students will continue to receive their ENL support services.

STAFFING AND HUMAN RESOURCES

DRIVER EDUCATION

Will the district offer Driver Education?

Yes, the district will offer Driver Education.

Are there any changes planned for how instruction is delivered in the Driver Education program?

Yes. Given that the in-car instruction portion normally has four student-drivers and the instructor in one vehicle, the district has decided to extend the program model to continue to have in-person, class instruction, with parents undertaking the responsibility to perform the in-car instruction. The program will be offered at a reduced rate. More information can be found on the district's website under each high school's page.