

NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent
50 East Street
New Milford, Connecticut 06776
(860) 355-8406 FAX (860) 210-4132



Dr. Paul Smotas
Interim Superintendent of Schools

August 21, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians, Staff Members, Students and New Milford Residents:

It is my honor to serve as Superintendent of Schools in New Milford for the coming 2020-2021 school year. As we approach the first day of school on Tuesday, September 8, I am more and more encouraged by the hard work I see from all of our staff members who are focused on one goal – to provide a safe and healthy school environment for all students and staff.

The Board of Education approved funding from the COVID-19 account to purchase over \$2 million of resources to accomplish that goal. We are hiring additional staff for school health offices; custodial and maintenance services; technology personnel; transition and special services staff, as well as police services for traffic control and school security. Following is a summary of mitigation measures. In addition, we will offer a series of Zoom Q and A sessions next week. See attached schedule.

The Facilities Department has purchased large quantities of hand sanitizers; personal protective equipment; polycarbonate shields and partitions and other health and safety supplies. We are in the process of moving furniture, cleaning all areas where staff and students will work; taking air quality tests; installing ceiling fans; monitoring and retrofitting air handlers and HVAC units per the Department of Health guidelines; identifying new spaces for social distancing; creating new outdoor spaces for learning/lunch/mask breaks; and installing directional floor markings to control foot traffic.

*It should be noted that all cleaning products purchased by New Milford Public Schools must comply with the Connecticut School Green Cleaning Law. Also, the current Hybrid model of instruction includes additional disinfectant/sanitizing on Wednesdays and Saturdays when students are not in school.

Mitigation Measures – Routines and Expectations

Transition Times

- All transition times and routines including arrival, change of class, lunch and dismissal will be established to maximize the protection of cohorts (PreK-8) and maintain all safety and mitigation measures (PreK-12).
- Training for staff will occur before the commencement of the school year and all students will be provided training the first week of the school year.
- Cohorts of students to limit mixing as appropriate (varies by level).
- PreK-8 will remain in an assigned cohort throughout the day with the exception of access to special education/related services, reading/math intervention, and special areas/survey classes.
- Lunch may be served in the classrooms, cafeteria or both to maximize social distancing for students and staff.
- Food allergies will be accommodated.

Handwashing

- Frequent hand washing/hand sanitizing
 - Entering/exiting a setting or classroom
 - Before/after breakfast, lunch and snack
 - Every classroom will have a hand sanitizer station.
 - Hand sanitizing upon leaving the bus or before entering school including return from recess.

Mask and Mask Breaks

- Students must always wear face masks or other cloth material that covers their mouths and noses while they are on school property or on school buses. Students who do not comply will be sent home. It is the responsibility of parents and/or guardians to ensure that their students have masks. If, however, a student arrives at school on a particular day and does not have one, the NMPS will provide a mask.
- EXEMPTIONS: Students who have trouble breathing or have a medical condition making it unsafe to wear, or students with disabilities that prevent them from wearing a mask safely, are not obligated to wear a mask. A student claiming such an exemption, however, must provide “written documentation that the person is qualified for the exemption from a licensed medical provider, the Department of Developmental Services, or other state agency that provides or supports services for people with emotional, intellectual or physical disabilities, or a person authorized by any such agency.” Further guidance on acceptable exemptions will be forthcoming.
- Students who do not qualify for an exemption and fail or refuse to wear a mask shall not be admitted into school buildings. They will instead be offered the same remote instruction program that is being offered to families who do not currently wish to send their children to school. Students who do not qualify for an exemption and fail or refuse to wear a mask shall also face potential disciplinary consequences, up to and possibly including expulsion.
- Any visitor allowed into the building at the discretion of the principal must wear a mask
- Masks are required for drivers on school buses.
- Masks should be a two ply cloth mask that covers the nose and the mouth. Single ply masks such as bandanas or neck cowl masks should not be used. Gaiter masks are not acceptable.
- Periodic mask breaks will be scheduled for all students by the building principals.
- Masks are to be worn in all common areas and in meetings.
- Staff to use entrance/exits and restrooms closest to their office/classroom/work space.

Meetings and Professional Development

- Leadership team meetings will occur remotely whenever feasible.
- Cabinet meetings will occur in person with social distancing measures in place.
- District curriculum meetings and larger professional development sessions will occur remotely or in a combination of in person and remotely to maximize social distancing.
- Board meetings/subcommittee meetings will occur in person with public access via video streaming.

Visitors

- Visitors, volunteers, and consultants will not be allowed access into the buildings.
- Parents or family members may be allowed into the school at the discretion of the building administrator (e.g. student emergency situation).
- Student drop off and pick up procedures will be modified and will take place outside of the school building.
- Meetings/PPTs with parents and families will occur virtually when feasible.
- Parents should expect early dismissal and late arrivals to be longer than usual due to new building protocols.

Extracurricular and Athletics

- The Superintendent/Designee will consider CIAC guidelines, recommendations from the SWC and the local public health authority pertaining to athletics, but maintain his authority to limit, suspend, or cancel athletic practices and events as needed to protect student safety.
- After school clubs will be limited and will follow CIAC/SWC guidelines.
- No late buses will be provided.
- Parents/families must provide transportation to and from after school activities.

Health Protocols and Practices

- Isolation Rooms
 - Isolation rooms for those experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
 - Fever and one additional COVID-19 symptom = Isolation Room
 - Will warrant immediate dismissal from school
 - Isolation room is separate from Nurse's Office
 - Refreshers/reminders regularly provided specific to symptoms of COVID-19
- Decision Tree (see Addendum 5 to *Adapt, Advance, Achieve* attached)
 - A Decision Tree will be utilized by school nurses, with specific steps to take for suspected COVID-19 cases/symptoms.
 - Daily tracking by the school nurse of students exhibiting symptoms and daily reports to nurse supervisor
 - Daily tracking of staff reporting symptoms and daily reports to nurse supervisor
 - District Level Response Team to receive and act upon daily reports
 - Nurse Supervisor
 - Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent
 - Director Pupil Personnel and Special Services
 - Facilities Director
- Regular consultation with school medical advisor Dr. Hack, and New Milford Public Health Department will occur specific to matters of required quarantine for positive test cases of either staff or students and subsequent notifications based upon the availability of contact tracing.
- Specific and repeated follow up with families and staff for compliance with mandated at home quarantine periods.

Special Education and the Hybrid Model

The NMPS is committed to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each student determined eligible for special education services. During the pandemic, the delivery of FAPE to all students may vary depending on the instructional delivery model.

- EXCEL Preschool Students: the EXCEL preschool program will continue to provide services to students with disabilities in a fully inclusive program. The Community Friends (typical peers) and students with IEP's will follow a full program model. This is best practice and promotes the early intervention model promoted by IDEA and the CSDE.
 - Students will attend the preschool with the following schedule:
 - 3 year olds: Monday, Tuesday, Friday mornings
 - 4 year olds: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons
- K-12 Students:
 - Establishing procedures and practices that promote access to the same opportunities afforded to general education students will ensure that students with disabilities receive an equitable educational experience. Starting the school year in the Hybrid Model, specialized instruction and related services should be delivered in accordance with the IEP for most students, although it may necessitate a change in schedules or staffing assignments to provide specific services on the days the students are attending school in-person. Students will receive their services through in-person or remote synchronous and asynchronous learning.

- High Need and Priority Access Students
 - The NMPS district must consider providing services to high-need students full time (4 days in-person and one remote day under the Hybrid Model). These students referred to may present and/or often present with intensive needs and:
 1. require constant or consistent supervision by adults, often with an adult to student ratio of 1:1 or 2:1;
 2. require physical assistance to learn and attend to their basic safety, health, and self-care needs (e.g., mealtime supports, toileting, medical interventions);
 3. often present with skill deficits with functional communication via both verbal and nonverbal means, thus limiting their ability to effectively express feelings and symptoms has experienced significant challenges accessing remote educational opportunities as a result of the impact of their learning challenges, behavior, and level of engagement of illness.
 4. exhibit significant behaviors that, at times, require an escort to safe areas or, in the case of emergency and only as a last resort physical restraint; and
 5. may not be able to wear personal protective equipment (PPE), practice social distancing (in accordance with), or abide by other Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and CSDE reopening guidance.

In summary, none of the measures, protocols, plans or mandates are foolproof. We have tried to anticipate as many problem areas as possible and to provide the resources to accommodate every scenario that could occur. We will review our successes or missteps on a daily and weekly basis and adjust our plan accordingly. We hope that at some point this year that we can return to full in person teaching and learning. We will follow the science; advice from the Connecticut Department of Education; the Commissioner of Public Health and we hope to learn from the successes of neighboring towns and school districts. The art and science of teaching is changing right in front of us and it will change for the better.

Rest assured that I/we will do everything in our power given the appropriate resources to make New Milford Public Schools a safe, healthy and successful learning experience for all stakeholders.

Very truly yours,



Dr. Paul Smotas
Interim Superintendent of Schools

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“Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world.”~ Nelson Mandela



**Join New Milford Public Schools Administrators
on Zoom for a series of Q and A sessions
regarding
Reopening of New Milford Public Schools 20-21**

Monday, August 24 from 6PM—8PM

DISTRICT WIDE DISCUSSION

**Delivery of Instruction
In Person and Remote**

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://zoom.us/j/93269875263?](https://zoom.us/j/93269875263?pwd=Q24vOTVTN0pHZmhIRWdpUE96Yyt2dz09)

[pwd=Q24vOTVTN0pHZmhIRWdpUE96Yyt2dz09](https://zoom.us/j/93269875263?pwd=Q24vOTVTN0pHZmhIRWdpUE96Yyt2dz09)

Meeting ID: 932 6987 5263

Passcode: 801198

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Wednesday, August 26 from 6PM—8PM

DISTRICT WIDE DISCUSSION

**Health, Food Services, Transportation,
and Facilities**

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://zoom.us/j/96172420731?](https://zoom.us/j/96172420731?pwd=SGFDd2xUSnVqNGN5NFA0bCtRM0Zpdz09)

[pwd=SGFDd2xUSnVqNGN5NFA0bCtRM0Zpdz09](https://zoom.us/j/96172420731?pwd=SGFDd2xUSnVqNGN5NFA0bCtRM0Zpdz09)

Meeting ID: 961 7242 0731

Passcode: 540889

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Monday, August 24 from 4PM—6PM

SCHOOL BASED DISCUSSION

New Milford High School

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://zoom.us/j/91068968830?](https://zoom.us/j/91068968830?pwd=dEhBRFMwQ1MyeSthK2VRdzZxbjdoQT09)

[pwd=dEhBRFMwQ1MyeSthK2VRdzZxbjdoQT09](https://zoom.us/j/91068968830?pwd=dEhBRFMwQ1MyeSthK2VRdzZxbjdoQT09)

Meeting ID: 910 6896 8830

Passcode: 845359

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Tuesday, August 25 from 4PM—6PM

SCHOOL BASED DISCUSSION

Schaghticoke Middle School

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://zoom.us/j/96111821481?](https://zoom.us/j/96111821481?pwd=aTBvczR5bkpXSIU0MVNhdK9pcEi4UT09)

[pwd=aTBvczR5bkpXSIU0MVNhdK9pcEi4UT09](https://zoom.us/j/96111821481?pwd=aTBvczR5bkpXSIU0MVNhdK9pcEi4UT09)

Meeting ID: 961 1182 1481

Passcode: 243784

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Thursday, August 27 from 4PM—6PM

SCHOOL BASED DISCUSSION

Sarah Noble Intermediate School

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://zoom.us/j/91200860904?](https://zoom.us/j/91200860904?pwd=MDRZemFxdHZiOWxHRnljT0x3M3NqUT09)

[pwd=MDRZemFxdHZiOWxHRnljT0x3M3NqUT09](https://zoom.us/j/91200860904?pwd=MDRZemFxdHZiOWxHRnljT0x3M3NqUT09)

Meeting ID: 912 0086 0904

Passcode: 567943

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Wednesday, August 26 from 4PM—6PM

SCHOOL BASED DISCUSSION

Hill and Plain Elementary School

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://zoom.us/j/94326997483?](https://zoom.us/j/94326997483?pwd=SktBY3lTRENRUHRtM2plcm5VeFYydz09)

[pwd=SktBY3lTRENRUHRtM2plcm5VeFYydz09](https://zoom.us/j/94326997483?pwd=SktBY3lTRENRUHRtM2plcm5VeFYydz09)

Meeting ID: 943 2699 7483

Passcode: 599339

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Wednesday, August 26 from 4PM—6PM

SCHOOL BASED DISCUSSION

Northville Elementary School

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://zoom.us/j/91025400543?](https://zoom.us/j/91025400543?pwd=N1d5Tmg4a2M1VWhwcm9FSHhWMMgyQT09)

[pwd=N1d5Tmg4a2M1VWhwcm9FSHhWMMgyQT09](https://zoom.us/j/91025400543?pwd=N1d5Tmg4a2M1VWhwcm9FSHhWMMgyQT09)

Meeting ID: 910 2540 0543

Passcode: 911335

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Addendum 5

Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together

Connecticut State Department of Education



Interim Guidance for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios in Connecticut School Districts

August 6, 2020



The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and State Department of Public Health (DPH) have collaborated to provide school districts with guidance and protocols for responding to specific COVID-19 scenarios that may occur with school reopening for the 2020–21 school year. This guidance complements the Containment Plan (p. 23) requirement of [Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together](#), which instructs school districts to develop written protocols for containment and immediate response related to symptoms of, diagnosis of, or exposure to the virus. Information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) informs the specific scenarios and actions that follow. CDC guidance and public health data are evolving and therefore, this guidance may be updated accordingly.

This document addresses issues when a student or staff person has or develops: possible signs and symptoms of COVID-19; a diagnosis of COVID-19; or exposure to a person diagnosed with COVID-19. It describes immediate actions for removing an individual from the school setting and when to safely return them to school. School district leaders are encouraged to use this as a guide, in consultation with public health experts, including school nurses, school medical advisors, local health directors and in consideration of all specific circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

| Event | Location of Event | Testing Result | Isolation/Quarantine Isolation = when you are experiencing symptoms or have a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 Quarantine = when you have been exposed but you are not experiencing symptoms |
|---|---|---|--|
| Individual has COVID-19 symptoms¹ but has NOT had close contact² to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 | If at home: stay home, notify the school immediately (do not wait until the beginning of the next school day), and get tested. | Individual tests ³ negative | Return to school once there are no symptoms for 24 hours. |
| | If at school: students should remain masked, adhere to strict physical distancing, be assessed by the school nurse or school medical advisor (if available), stay in the isolation room (with adult supervision), until picked up to go home, consult a healthcare provider, and get tested. If symptoms arise on the bus , students should remain masked and follow the remaining measures listed above upon arrival to school. They must not be sent home on the bus. | Individual tests positive | Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school immediately, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts ⁴ , and answer phone calls from public health officials/contact tracing staff. Stay in self-isolation ⁵ for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever ⁶ (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other COVID-19 symptoms. |
| | If at school: staff members should remain masked, adhere to strict physical distancing, immediately contact leadership (per district protocols), go home, consult a healthcare provider, and get tested. If a staff or student is ill enough to require transport to a healthcare facility, notify EMS that COVID-19 is a concern. | Individual is not tested | Stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other symptoms. Can return to school earlier if obtains note from healthcare provider with alternate diagnosis. |

| Event | Location of Event | Testing Result | Isolation/Quarantine Isolation = when you are experiencing symptoms or have a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 Quarantine = when you have been exposed but you are not experiencing symptoms |
|---|---|----------------------------------|--|
| Individual has COVID-19 symptoms¹ AND had close contact² to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 | <p>If at home: stay home, notify the school immediately (do not wait until the beginning of the next school day), and get tested.</p> | Individual tests negative | Stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other symptoms. |
| | <p>If at school: students should remain masked, adhere to strict physical distancing, be assessed by the school nurse or school medical advisor (if available), stay in the isolation room (with adult supervision), until picked up to go home, consult a healthcare provider, and get tested. If symptoms arise on the bus, students should remain masked and follow the remaining measures listed above upon arrival to school. They must not be sent home on the bus.</p> | Individual tests positive | Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist public health and the school in contact tracing efforts. Stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other symptoms. |
| | <p>If at school: staff members should remain masked, adhere to strict physical distancing, immediately contact leadership (per district protocols), go home, consult a healthcare provider, and get tested.</p> <p>If a staff or student is ill enough to require transport to a healthcare facility, notify EMS that COVID-19 is a concern.</p> | Individual is not tested | Stay in self-isolation for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms and until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other symptoms. |

| Event | Location of Event | Testing Result | Isolation/Quarantine Isolation = when you are experiencing symptoms or have a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 Quarantine = when you have been exposed but you are not experiencing symptoms |
|--|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Individual does not have COVID-19 symptoms BUT had close contact² to someone diagnosed with COVID-19 | If at home: stay home, notify the school immediately (do not wait until the beginning of the next school day), and get tested. If at school: students should remain masked, adhere to strict physical distancing, be assessed by the school nurse or school medical advisor (if available), be picked up to go home, consult a health care provider, and get tested. Students who do not have symptoms may remain in the health room until they are picked up, they do not have to be sent to the isolation room. They must not be sent home on the bus. | Individual tests negative | Remain home in self-quarantine ⁷ for 14 days from last exposure to the person diagnosed with COVID-19. |
| | | Individual tests positive | Remain home (except to get medical care), monitor symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist public health and the school in contact tracing efforts. Stay home until 10 days have passed since date of the positive COVID-19 test. |
| | If at school: staff members should remain masked, adhere to strict physical distancing, immediately contact leadership (per district protocols), go home, consult a healthcare provider, and get tested. | Individual is not tested | Remain home in self-quarantine for 14 days from last exposure to the person diagnosed with COVID-19. |

End-notes

- 1 **Key COVID-19 signs and symptoms are:** feeling feverish, measured temp 100.4 F or more, chills, uncontrolled new cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell. There are other more nonspecific signs and symptoms. For a full list, see CDC Web page at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- 2 **Close contact:** Spending at least 15 minutes within 6 feet of a person with confirmed COVID-19, or a direct exposure to possibly infected droplets of saliva or nasal mucus (e.g., begin sneezed or coughed on in the face). See CDC web page at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>
- 3 **COVID-19 test for school/work attendance:** This is a viral test, NOT an antibody test. (see CDC information on COVID-19 tests at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html>).
- 4 **Contact tracing:** A public health intervention in which the contacts of a person with a communicable disease are identified, and possibly tested, quarantined or isolated to interrupt the transmission of the virus in a population. <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/ContaCT>
- 5 **Self- Isolation:** Individual with signs or symptoms of COVID-19, or a positive test, stays home until no longer infectious for at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms **and** until at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without fever-reducing medications) and with improvement in other COVID-19 symptoms. See CDC web page at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html>
- 6 **Fever:** Measured temperature of 100.4 F or higher
- 7 **Self-Quarantine:** Individual without symptoms stays home for 14 days since last exposure to someone who was diagnosed with COVID-19 (the incubation period of the virus). See CDC web page <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html> or https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fif-you-are-sick%2Fquarantine-isolation.html