

**Chester School District Reopening Plan
For the 2021-22 School Year
June 2021**



**Version 1.0
June 9, 2021**

Contents

Introduction	3
Guiding Principles S.A.F.E	3
Committee Membership	3
Professional Development	4
School Calendar	4
Attestation Form	4
Telepresence Option for Students in Quarantine or Isolation	4
Temporary Closures	5
Extra-Curricular Activities	5
Integrated Arts Classes	5
Addressing Learning Loss	5
Return to School Models	5
Traditional In Person	5
In Person - Modified	6
Full Remote for All Students	7
Model Determination (3 levels) for the 21-22 School Year	7
Transition Between Models	7
Health and Safety Practices and Protocols	8
Creating a Positive Culture Supporting Health and Safety	8
Cleaning and Sanitizing	8
Student Medication	9
Vaccinations	9
Addressing High Risk Populations	9
Social Health and Wellness of Students and Staff	9
Parents, Visitors, Volunteers and Vendors/Contractors	10
Facilities Use	10
Public Communication	10
School Facilities	10
Facility Improvements	10
Classrooms	11
Air Handling and Filtration	11
Water Fountains and Bottle Fillers	11

Child Nutrition Program/Food Service	11
Transportation	12
Transportation to and from School	12
Parent Drop Off and Pick Up - “Commuters”	12
Morning Drop Off	12
Dismissal	12
Early Dismissals	13
End-of-Day Dismissals	13
Resources and References	13
Timeline/Action Steps	13

Introduction

Our goal remains to have our students and staff on campus for in person learning. Our direction at this time is to open and operate under the *Traditional In Person* instructional model to begin the 2021 – 2022 school year. This is the model we normally use and is defined below.

Please note that under the *Traditional In Person* instructional model it is assumed that:

- Masks are not required to be worn
- No enforced physical distancing
- Students will be in school 5 days a week full time
- Classroom activities take place as normal
- Rotated integrated arts classes will occur as normal
- Students will not be assigned to a cohort group (e.g., middle school students will mix during the course of their day)

As a school district we must acknowledge the continued uncertainty with regard to the necessary responses to the COVID pandemic for the start of the 2021-22 school year. There is limited expert guidance and/or health specialist recommendations, since no one really knows what the specific circumstances or conditions will be in late August. However, we do know that school will open and we must plan for it. We acknowledge that pandemic risks may still exist, and we must use what we have learned over the past school year and be prepared to coordinate intervention and mitigation strategies as needed to minimize these risks. At this time the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services has not indicated any intention regarding ascertaining vaccine status of students or staff. The school district has no plan to ask about or maintain records around vaccination status of students.

Guiding Principles S.A.F.E

The number one priority of the Chester School District is to provide the best educational opportunities for our families. In order to do this in the most appropriate manner, and in keeping with the SAU82 Mission Statement, the following guidelines underscore our commitment to educating the students of Chester.

Secure: The Chester School Board has prioritized the safety of the Academic Community in Chester (Students, Staff, Faculty, and Families).

Actionable: Resources are limited and must be used in the most cost effective way possible within the prudent guidelines of appropriately credentialed bodies (NHDOE, NHDHHS, AAP, CDC). For a list of resources used by the School Board, please see the [References and Resources](#) section of this document.

Flexible: In the present environment, information changes frequently as new research is received. The SAU has considered a multi-faceted approach which allows for quickly adapted plans based on criteria established by the appropriately credentialed entities.

Effective: Many courses of action will have positive impacts and some may have negative impacts on the Chester Learning community. A guiding principle that the School Board has adopted is that risk is not going to be eliminated but no unnecessary risk will be taken. This will allow for the widest dissemination of educational opportunity in accordance with State and Federal regulations.

Committee Membership

Royal Richardson, School Board Chair

Jonathan Eckerman, School Board Vice Chair and Parent

Beth Swanson, Parent and PTA Member
Rebecca Kozura, Parent and PTA Member
Deena Haggart, Teacher and CEA President
Cindy McLaughlin, Para and CESPAP President
Lynda Cioli, School Nurse
Karen Lacroix, Principal
Dr. Ann Gaffney, Assistant Principal
Sheryl Rich, Business Administrator
Jana Ruiz, Special Services Director
Lauren Mercier, Director of Student Affairs
Ben Kilar, Technology Director
Martin McFarland, Facilities and Maintenance Director
Leanne Sullivan, Food Services Director
Jane Grimm, Special Services and Guidance Secretary
Dr. Darrell Lockwood, Superintendent

Professional Development

New staff members will begin work on Tuesday, August 24, 2021, teaching staff will return on Wednesday, August 25, 2021 and paraeducators return on Thursday, August 26, 2021. Staff will be involved in Professional Development activities from August 25th-27th. The administration will develop a schedule for these professional development activities.

School Calendar

The School Calendar for 2021-22 has been approved by the School Board. It is available [online](#). Similar to recent years, our students' first day of school will be Monday, August 30th, which is before the Labor Day.

Attestation Form

A general attestation form will be required as part of the registration process for school opening. Daily attestation will not be required unless required by the State of New Hampshire.

Telepresence Option for Students in Quarantine or Isolation

Students unable to attend classes in person because of COVID related quarantine or isolation may be permitted to join classes via telepresence with approval from the Principal. Telepresence is no longer available for other reasons. Once the quarantine or isolation has been resolved, the student will be expected to return to in person instruction. Each classroom will be equipped with a computer able to view and broadcast certain classroom happenings. Teachers will be equipped with a wireless microphone to ensure clear audio.

- Teachers with telepresent students will establish a schedule and will broadcast classroom content at specified times via Google Meet. Meets will not be recorded by the district or by parents due to privacy and legal^{1, 2} requirements.

¹ NH RSA 570-A:2 <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/lviii/570-a/570-a-mrg.htm>

² 18 U.S. Code Chapter 119 § 2511 <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/2511>

- Students will be able to interact with their teachers and classmates during the meet/broadcast.
- Students may be given independent work to do after a video session.
- Telepresent students are expected to be supervised by a parent or other appropriate caregiver.
- Students will complete and turn in work via Google Classroom or other online tools.
- Telepresence is limited to synchronous³ activities.

Temporary Closures

If there are multiple cases where students and/or staff need to quarantine or isolate, or if staff is not available to be in the building, it may be necessary to move a classroom, grade level, hallway, etc. into the *Full Remote* instructional model for a short period of time. Such a move would not necessarily lead to a change in model. A move under this situation would be in effect until the situation was either resolved or mitigated.

Extra-Curricular Activities

In the *In Person - Modified* instructional model, it is the intent of the School District to hold typical extra-curricular activities such as sports and clubs. If conditions require, we may need to adjust schedules and the offerings may need to be modified based on the circumstances at the time.

Integrated Arts Classes

In all instructional models, Integrated Arts (IA) classes will be held. It is the intent of the School District to have students rotate through IA classes as they have in years prior to COVID. If conditions require, we may need to adjust schedules and the offerings may need to be modified based on the circumstances at the time.

Addressing Learning Loss

Administration and staff will review NH SAS, iReady, and DIBELS data, as well as teacher input and qualitative data with regard to learning loss. In addition to the typical range of supports provided during the school day, the District will look to provide afterschool tutoring and summer school offerings as appropriate.

Return to School Models

Traditional In Person

This is the model we normally use. No extraordinary adaptations are made to account for COVID-19. Minor changes such as hand sanitizer dispensers will remain in place and use by all will be encouraged (especially surrounding snack times and lunch periods). Students and groups are allowed to mix and be in close proximity. Masks are not required to be worn but will not be prohibited should staff/parents/students choose to wear them. Students are expected to be present and those who are not present will be marked absent in accordance with the Student Handbook. No remote instruction will be generally available (see the section on [Telepresence](#)).

³ Synchronous - At the same time. Students would attend classes and receive instruction at the same time as their peers in the school

Significant deviations from this model are noted in the descriptions of other models below.

Overview

- No enforced physical distancing
- Classroom activities as normal
- Lunch as planned in cafeteria

Broadly, this is the typical school year with minor accommodations respectful of COVID-19 best practices.

In this model we will continue increased disinfection procedures as necessary, increased hand washing/ sanitizing, and optional mask wearing.

Unanswered Questions for Further Review

The following questions still need to be answered, based on guidance from the NH DOE and NH DHHS.

- Will a negative COVID test or quarantine be required for a student to return to school after exhibiting a single COVID symptom?
- How will spacing work with music classes in order to maintain special safety protocols for music in particular?

In Person - Modified

This model meets the goal of providing an opportunity for all students and staff to attend school while implementing a number of safety procedures. To accomplish this, some modifications are necessary to account for an outbreak of COVID-19 or other viral infections that have impacted the normal operation of the school. In this model, all students are able to attend school five days per week. After all students and staff in the building have the opportunity to be vaccinated this model will only be implemented pursuant to a subsequent outbreak of a COVID or other viral infection in the community.

Overview

- Mask wearing would be required
- Enforced physical distancing will be required
- Elimination of Classroom group activities
- Lunch delivered to classroom or designated areas

There are several key differences in the *In Person - Modified* school day as compared to a traditional school day:

- Students at all grade levels will maintain a physical distance of 3-6 feet with effort made to maximize this distance to the extent possible.
- Mask wearing will be required in all grades and classes with designated mask breaks in compliance with CDC guidelines in place at that time.
- School lunch will be served in each classroom with overflow spaces available where necessary to keep appropriate physical distancing.

There are also key differences the *In Person - Modified* model from the *Adapted In Person* model as implemented in the 2020-21 school year:

- Students will not be limited to cohort groups. Students will still mix groups, although with increased spacing.

- Students will attend school five days per week for a full school day as per the established school calendar.

Unanswered Questions for Further Review

The following questions still need to be answered.

- How will teachers and other staff deal with furniture such that quick transitions can be made, if needed, to *In Person - Modified* from *Traditional In Person* and vice versa?

Full Remote for All Students

The *Full Remote* instructional model would only be implemented in conjunction with a significant outbreak of COVID or other viral infections in the community, county or state as determined by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. The decision to revert to the *Full Remote* instructional model requires the review and approval of the New Hampshire Commissioner of Education.

Overview

- Access to the Chester Academy Campus will be restricted to authorized personnel only
- Enforced physical distancing will be required for staff required to be on campus
- Meals will be available for pickup as per state and federal guidelines

In *Full Remote*, students do not attend the school in person and are expected to be supervised by a parent or other appropriate caregiver. Students will complete and turn in work via Google Classroom or other online tools. Students will join video classes remotely. Some of these classes will be synchronous and attendance will be required for school attendance. IEP team meetings will be scheduled to determine the most appropriate way to deliver IEP services and supports.

Model Determination (3 levels) for the 21-22 School Year

Viral infections spread easily wherever people gather — in child care centers, schools, office buildings, auditoriums and public transportation. By avoiding crowds during an outbreak, you reduce your chances of infection. When determining levels of risk impacting the determination of the Chester Academy Instruction Model, it is important to consider that an infectious disease does not follow municipal and county borders. We know many of our educators and educational support staff do not live and work in the same county, and many parents and community members work and/or regularly travel outside of our region as well. Hence, looking solely at the number of cases in Chester would not necessarily provide an accurate measure of risk.

Transition Between Models

We would always prefer to be open in the traditional school model without COVID mitigations. Based on the information available at this time and, if conditions permit, Chester Academy will open in the traditional school model for the 2021 – 2022 school year. However, if necessary, we must be prepared to open and/or move to the other models.

The mechanism and process will be developed over the summer to determine the transition between models based on guidelines from the CDC and NHDHHS.

Unanswered Questions for Further Review

The following questions still need to be researched and answered.

- What factors will be considered as a requirement for a transition to *In Person - Modified* from *Traditional In Person* and vice versa?
- What data sources and reporting will be available regarding infectious diseases?

Health and Safety Practices and Protocols

While our intention and goal is to reopen Chester Academy under the *Traditional In Person* instructional model, the health and safety of students and staff are our top priority when making the decision of how to reopen school for the 2021-22 school year. Our process will continue to include a thorough review of guidelines from the NH Division of Public Health Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the NH School Nurse Association as well as available medical literature on COVID-19 and other infectious diseases related to children and school settings.

Creating a Positive Culture Supporting Health and Safety

In order to ensure that all members of the Chester Academy community are developing and encouraging a positive culture around health and safety, the following practices will be put into place.

- Staff and students will practice enhanced hygiene at school (e.g., increased hand washing).
- Staff will monitor for signs and symptoms of viral infectious diseases and report any concerns to the school nurse and administration.
- Staff will talk frequently with students about the importance of cleanliness/hygiene as it relates to being around others.
- If mask use is required, staff will monitor mask use and provide for appropriate mask breaks with enhanced physical distancing.
- Students and/or staff may choose to wear a mask under the *Traditional In Person* instructional model. This decision will be supported without admonishment or criticism.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

Our custodial team will clean our facility on a daily basis using industry-standard COVID-19 cleaning procedures appropriate to the current concerns regarding exposure.

The District has identified touchpoints (listed below) that will be disinfected on a regular basis. The special disinfecting process will take place throughout the school year as necessary.

Touchpoints:

- Door handles, push bars & push plates
- Light Switches
- Classroom Door Windows
- Classroom sinks, faucet handles and counters
- Classroom tables and chairs
- Elevator push buttons
- Water bottle filling stations
- Restroom doors, handles and push plates
- ADA bars
- Toilet and urinal handles
- Sanitary napkin dispensers

- Sink and faucet handles
- Toilet paper, soap, and paper towel dispensers and handles

All custodial and maintenance staff have been trained on the use of the electro-static sprayers, which will be used as necessary.

Student Medication

The District will continue to encourage that all student medication that can be given to children at home prior to arriving at school be given by parents.

Vaccinations

At this time the school district has no plans to ask about or maintain records with regard to COVID vaccination status of students.

Addressing High Risk Populations

According to the CDC, individuals who are considered at high risk for severe illness due to COVID-19 include:

- People 65 years and older;
- Those who live in long-term care facilities;
- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma;
- Those with serious heart disease; and/or
- Individuals who are immunocompromised, severely obese, have diabetes or some other underlying medical conditions, particularly if they are not well controlled.

Students/families who self-identify as high risk should contact the school principal with the specifics and be prepared to provide documentation from their medical provider. The School District will then work with the family as appropriate. Considerations of a reasonable accommodation will be made for staff members who provide documentation from their medical provider. NH DHHS guidance on medical documentation will be followed.

Social Health and Wellness of Students and Staff

Chester Academy recognizes that some students will require additional support for dealing with emotions related to COVID-19 and the return to routine classroom activities after the prior year's reliance on Remote Instruction. In addition to our Choose Love and Responsive Classroom curricula, our school counselors will be available to support students individually and/or in small groups with cohorts of students using all safety procedures previously listed as necessary. Students may self refer, or be referred by parents or teachers as appropriate. For any students who may require mental health support or therapy, referrals will be made to the parent by providing a list of providers. In addition, the Director of Student Affairs and School Counselors will continue to be engaged in providing necessary support to students as we transition back to the *Traditional In Person* instructional model.

Staff who require emotional support will be referred to their health care provider or the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offered through the District's health insurance provider. Participation in the insurance program is not required to receive assistance through the EAP.

Parents, Visitors, Volunteers and Vendors/Contractors

School and office access will return to pre-pandemic status for parents and others attending student-focused meetings. Mask wearing and other safety protocols may be required depending on the current CDC and NHDHHS guidance. Access for other visitors, including volunteers, classroom guests, contracted service providers, and vendors is expected to resume and will follow current District guidance relating to risk mitigation protocols. Vendors/contractors (e.g., electrician, plumber, food deliveries) will follow all safety protocols (e.g., distancing, masks) that are in place at the time. School Board meetings will be open to the public with safety protocols in place as necessary.

Facilities Use

Facility use restrictions will likely be lifted for outside organizations (e.g. Recreation Basketball). Projected opening plans will be updated in early August based upon data from the CDC and the NH Department of Health and Human Services.

Public Communication

A webpage has been created for School Reopening information. It may be found [here](#). This page will serve as the single source for up to date information regarding District, CDC, and NHDHHS NHHS guidance. Archival information will be accessible through the website for presentations and for suggested resources.

The District will continue to utilize the School Messenger notification system to apprise parents and guardians of Schoolwide updates. The system allows for both telephone and email messages to be sent. If you are having trouble accessing or receiving these communications, please contact the Principal.

School Board meeting agendas and minutes may be found online [here](#). School Board meetings continue to be broadcast live on CETV, Channel 22.

The Chester School Board produces monthly updates for Chester residents on items of interest related to the activities of the Board and legislative issues that impact our community. These documents can be found [here](#).

School Facilities

Facility Improvements

We will continue to utilize upgrades and modifications to the facility in the interest of improved safety prior to school opening. Updates include the maintenance of the iWave building air purification system and individual HEPA room air purifiers installed in some areas last school year; increased frequency of HVAC filter replacement; changes to the cleaning protocols observed throughout the building. Additionally, hand sanitizer units throughout the building will be maintained and available for regular use throughout the school day.

Classrooms

Furniture and supply storage within classrooms will be maintained such that short notice changes to our instructional model will allow for appropriate physical distancing as required by the circumstances.

A touchless hand sanitizer dispenser has been added in each classroom for use by students and staff.

Air Handling and Filtration

We have adjusted the fresh air intake and filtration level of our HVAC system to its maximum level per CDC guidance. We have installed an iWave⁴ ionic air purification system into our existing HVAC system. This system kills airborne mold, viruses, and other pathogens and drastically improves the effectiveness of filtration by causing pollutants to clump together. This system covers all classrooms and common areas.

Water Fountains and Bottle Fillers

Water fountains will not be utilized during any model. The bottle filling stations will be available. Parents are encouraged to send students to school with a refillable water bottle.

Child Nutrition Program/Food Service

School meals will continue to meet federal guidelines.

If required by the designated model, in order to accommodate classroom service of lunch and breakfast, we will continue to use an “offer” rather than a “serve” approach. This allows meals to be prepackaged. Where possible food will be pre-packaged or individually wrapped. All containers and utensils will be disposable. All condiments provided will be pre-packaged. Snacks and lunches served by Chester Academy will be consumed either in the classrooms or outdoors.

Both breakfast and lunch will be available for pick-up for students who are learning remotely. In order to provide these offsite meals the District will need approvals by both the federal and state government. An ordering process and pick up plans will be developed and shared with parents/guardians.

If the designated model requires students to eat in classrooms, they will be asked to remain seated at their desks while eating lunch and face forward away from other students. Students and staff will remove their masks to eat and will put masks back on immediately after eating. All persons will wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after eating and removing/redonning their masks.

⁴ Per the manufacturer, when the ions come in contact with viruses, bacteria or mold, they remove the hydrogen molecules – without them, the pathogens have no source of energy and will die. The ions also attach to allergens like pollen and other particles, causing them to band together until they are large enough to be caught by your ventilation system’s air filter. <https://www.iwaveair.com/> and <http://gsphinc.com/> for more information.

Transportation

The Chester School District will provide busing to school for any Chester Academy or Pinkerton Academy student who needs it. Parents are welcome to provide their own transportation in order to allow for more physical distancing on the bus as required by current guidelines. Physical distancing will not be guaranteed on busses, but the District will communicate with our transportation partners to employ mitigation strategies as recommended by the CDC and NHDHHS.

Transportation to and from School

The district will maintain an online transportation and dismissal system (currently PickUp Patrol) where parents will be asked to enter and maintain the school dismissal plans for their students. PickUp Patrol will no longer be used for morning arrival, and no morning attestation will be required. PickUp Patrol will be used for dismissal only. Parents will be required to designate when they will be transporting their child themselves or when they will be sending their child on the bus. Details will be available on the school website and in communications from the school at the start of the school year.

Bus Safety:

In addition to the typical safety measures in place when riding buses, the following additional safety precautions will be in place due to COVID-19.

- The bus company will follow a regular schedule to disinfect the school bus. In addition, high-touch surfaces will be disinfected by the bus company before each bus run.
- Windows on the bus will be opened to the first detent to facilitate air exchange (in both warm and cold weather, but not in driving rain) as necessary.
- The bus drivers will assign seats to students and maintain seating charts to assist with contact tracing, if needed.

Parent Drop Off and Pick Up - “Commuters”

Any student who is not riding the bus to or from school is called a commuter. During the drop-off and pickup process we ask that all family members who are not Chester Academy students remain in their vehicle at all times. To keep people from congregating or interrupting the flow of students, we ask that all student drop-offs and pick-ups happen from a vehicle.

Morning Drop Off

Morning drop off begins at 8:20 AM and lasts until students are in the building. The school day officially begins at 8:35 AM at which time students should be in their classrooms.

The parking lot will be closed to families during drop off and pick up time. Students cannot be dropped off in the parking lot or any location other than the drop-off area. Families should enter the Chester Academy roadway and form two lines of traffic up to the main crosswalk area. At 8:20 AM families will be invited to drive forward to the drop off area in front of the school building and playground.

Family members should remain in the vehicle. Students should remain in the vehicle until invited to exit the vehicle by a staff member.

Dismissal

All commuter pickups will take place curbside. Parents are requested to stay in their vehicles.

Early Dismissals

If parents wish to dismiss their child(ren) early, they must do so before 2:30 PM or wait until the dismissal process begins at 3:00 PM and pick their child up as a commuter. Parents should update Pickup Patrol prior to 1:30 with dismissal information. When they arrive at school they pull up to the curb near the flagpole and call the office by dialing (603) 887-3621. The office will retrieve the child and dismiss them to the vehicle, watching them through the office windows.

End-of-Day Dismissals

All families picking up students must go through the dismissal line. When entering the property to pick up a child at the end of the day, families should form two lines of traffic up to the main crosswalk area. While lined up, parents should display their children's names so that we can call students down in small groups as their ride arrives.

Children will be called down for dismissal as their vehicle arrives and should go directly to their vehicle once outside. For their safety, children must enter the vehicle on the passenger side.

When exiting the pickup area, parents are asked to **drive slowly** and be aware of others exiting around them. Parents whose children have not arrived from their classroom may be asked to pull up while waiting for their child so that others may gather their children.

Resources and References

The Chester School Board along with the leadership team referred to many documents when developing this plan. The following documents were particularly helpful due to the specific guidance they provided.

- New Hampshire Grades K-12 Back-to-School Guidance, March 2021 <https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/inline-documents/sonh/k-12-back-to-school.pdf>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>
- DHHS COVID 19 Dashboard <https://www.nh.gov/covid19/dashboard/schools.htm#dash>
- NH Division of Public Health Services <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/>

Timeline/Action Steps

- Draft Reopening Plan Drafted Based Upon Federal and NHDOE Request – May
- Posting of Draft Reopening Plan for Parent and Staff Review and Input – June 1st
- Initial Draft Reopening Presentation to Chester Academy Staff – June 2nd
- Reopening Committee Meeting to Review Parent and Staff Input – June 8th
- Chester School Board Review and Approval of Draft Reopening Plan – June 9th Bd Meeting
- Chester Reopening Plan Meeting - June 29th - Additional Meetings to be scheduled
- Revisions to Reopening Plan as Needed – July 7th Board Meeting and August 11th Board Meeting
- Update Status Report Letter on School Reopening Prepared and Sent to Parents – by the end of July

- Final Update Letter on School Reopening Prepared and Sent to Parents – Friday August 13th
- Finalize Changes to Reopening Plan If Necessary – August 25th Board Meeting
- School Opens Monday, August 30th
- Update to School Board on School Opening – September 8th Board Meeting