



COVID-19 School Operations Plan

General Recommended Guidelines for School Year 2021 - 2022

**Exeter Elementary School Board
August 3, 2021**

Returning to School

As students and staff return to school for the 2021-2022 school year, we want to thank the entire community for working together to ensure that everyone in our school community remains safe and healthy. Families and community members have been enlisting mitigation strategies to ward off any type of spread of the novel coronavirus including masking, distancing, frequent handwashing, delaying unnecessary travel, and vaccinations. As a result of the success of employing these strategies, our six towns are experiencing a low number of active cases and are on the line of moderate to minimal community transmission.

Having a year of learning behind us, planning to open school for this year has been less tricky than a year ago, albeit it remains a flexible endeavor. We are just shy of 4 weeks away from the first day of school and conditions continue to change around us. In providing this guidance this evening, it is done with the intention of laying a roadmap to help families navigate through those changes. It is our hope that all of our families, staff, and community members remain vigilant in the protection of their health, their families', and their neighbors. This includes not sending a sick child to school, not visiting the school when ill, and seeking COVID-19 testing when an exposure has taken place. With all SAU 16 community members working together in this effort, we will be able to put this pandemic behind us once and for all.

Approach to Academics and Social Emotional Learning

The year and a half of learning remotely and/or on alternating days has absolutely impacted student achievement. Over the summer many schools offered extended learning programs such as summer learning academy, extended school year, summer tutoring, and other examples at the elementary levels. We recognize that these brief and direct activities do not make up for the lost opportunities for learning, nor do we believe that all students will begin school as they would after a typical school year. Schools continue to prepare to meet students where they are in their learning and address those lost opportunities as the school year begins. There is not an expectation that all students will simply dive right into the standard curriculum, and there are plans to ensure that students gain more ground in their learning in a reasonable period of time. Combined with an approach to ensure that students are socially and emotionally resilient after a traumatic experience, we are confident that all students will make significant progress in their learning this school year. All of our schools across the SAU will be sharing their approach to accomplishing this.

Operating Model

Exeter High School, Seacoast School of Technology, Cooperative Middle School, and Exeter Adult Education will be welcoming all students and staff to everyday in-person learning with each following a traditional schedule. There will not be a remote learning option sponsored by

the school district and students wishing to participate in remote learning will be referred to Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS). In the unexpected event of an outbreak and associated need to close a classroom, grade or school for a short period of time, instruction will temporarily proceed in a remote platform.

Barring an emergency order from the Governor's Office, all decisions to resort to a platform other than in-person instruction will be made in collaboration with the school board, school nursing professionals, school administration, and representatives of school personnel. These decisions will be further informed by the NH Division of Public Health, NH Department of Education, the Office of the Governor, and local public health officers.

Operating Schools Safely

Each of the four schools in the Exeter Region Cooperative School District share similar plans for maintaining the health and safety of students, staff, and families. Many of the layers that were present in schools for the past year will continue to exist, while other measures such as daily screening and temperature checks will no longer be required. We have outlined these measures below for easy reference.

Masks and facial coverings - masking guidelines are being implemented in accordance with the ERCSD Masking Guide for 2021, with the exception that they would require the use of masks in each building until all of the students in that building have the opportunity to become fully vaccinated. This was adopted during the August 2021 board meeting.

Physical distancing - whenever possible, three feet of physical distancing is the standard expectation in all SAU 16 buildings.

Field trips and school events - field trips and school events that involve large crowds will be reviewed on a case by case basis to ensure that they can occur in the safest manner possible.

School building use - groups and teams seeking to use school building spaces for meetings, sports, and other activities will be permitted to do so without any additional costs. Please refer to the building use forms supplied by the SAU 16 Facilities and Maintenance department.

Meetings- all meetings including but not limited to IEP and 504 Team meetings, parent-teacher meetings, activity or athletic meetings, and others can be conducted in person or using an online format such as Zoom or Google Meets. All public meetings such as school board and school board committee meetings will take place in person only.

Transportation - school bus transportation is continuing to prepare for the upcoming school year in order to support the traditional start and end times of each school. Students will not be limited in their seating as they were last year. Our transportation providers, Seacoast Learning Collaborative and First Student, will continue to clean and disinfect busses thoroughly between runs. [All students, riders, and drivers are required to wear a mask while riding a school bus](#) per

federal guidelines (U.S. Department of Transportation, 2021). Students may still opt to be driven to school by family members or as part of a student carpool.

Frequent hand-washing remains encouraged - all community members are still encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or use hand sanitizer.

Ventilation - all schools have addressed their ventilation systems throughout the pandemic and into this summer with improved air quality in the school to the best extent possible with MERV-13 filtration and indoor ionization filtering systems. Attention to HVAC systems will remain a top priority for facilities personnel, particularly in schools where additional HVAC improvements would be helpful.