



## Merrimack Valley School District (MVSD) | Stay Open Framework (**Updated**)

School Board Approved - **08.23.2021**

**The Merrimack Valley School District intends on hosting a 5-days / week in-person learning model throughout the 2021-2022 school year.** The MVSD will not offer concurrent remote or hybrid options for families to choose from. Should the District have to *pivot* to these models of instruction, similar to 2019 - 2020 and 2020 - 2021, administration and personnel will be ready.

This Stay Open Framework attempts to provide a macro-level perspective on how the MVSD will operate in the 2021 - 2022 school year with respect to health and safety protocols and with the primary goal of 5-days / week, in-person learning in mind. The MVSD is extraordinarily grateful for the efforts of students, families, teachers, administrators, and staff as they have navigated hybrid learning, remote learning, in-person learning, and the layers of health and safety measures in place during the end of the 2019 - 2020 and the entirety of the 2020 - 2021 school year. **The MVSD believes that the majority of students flourish in an engaging in-person learning environment.**

COVID-19 and its variants are still impacting our communities. The MVSD will abide by the recommendations of the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (NH DHHS), the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and other appropriate health and governmental agencies. Should any change to the in-person education model be necessary, the MVSD will follow the "transitioning between instructional models" matrix as articulated by the NH DHHS.

This Stay Open Framework focuses on:

- **Health and Safety** (for all)
- **Equitable Access**
- **Educational Engagement and Quality**

Discrete details regarding each school's schedule and plans will be finalized over the summer and communicated prior to the opening of the 2021 - 2022 school year.

### **Health and Safety**

#### **Daily Health Screening / Questionnaire (PickUp Patrol - PUP) -**

The District is asking parents to continue to screen and monitor their child's health on a daily basis. As part of our effort to maintain a safe and healthy environment, please keep your child home if they are exhibiting / experiencing new or unexplained symptoms, such as cough, chills, sore throat, nasal congestion, headache, fatigue, nausea / vomiting, diarrhea, or a fever greater than or equal to 100.4. Each school requires parents to



complete the PUP questionnaire **ONLY** when their child is experiencing any of the aforementioned symptoms. If there are any doubts, parents should complete the daily health questionnaire so that a school nurse can provide guidance as necessary.

#### **Masks / Face Coverings -**

1. **It is our sincere hope that masks will not be required in the 2021 - 2022 school year.**
2. The MVSD will follow New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (NH DHHS) recommendations in regard to the use of masks on school property. Per the NH DHHS "School & Childcare Toolkit," when masks are universally recommended, masks are required (voted on by the MVSD Board in their 08.23.2021 emergency meeting).
3. When masks are a public health recommendation, exceptions to this requirement will be made for students/staff with a documented medical note.
4. What type of masks can be worn?
  - Disposable Medical Mask
  - Adjustable and fitted masks that include 2 or more layers of cotton / cloth
  - Neck Gaiters that include 2 or more layers of cotton / cloth.
  - Scarfs, handkerchiefs, fleece balaclavas, and bandanas are **not** permitted
5. Masks must:
  - fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face (a mask that is too loose results in breathing more unfiltered air around the mask)
  - be secured with ties or ear loops, masks with adjustable ear loops may be best for students
  - allow for breathing without restriction
  - be made of a fabric or material that can be laundered without damage or change to shape (using a small mesh laundry bag to wash can help)
  - cover the nose and mouth
  - masks with exhalation valves are NOT allowed, as they do not filter exhaled air
  - porous masks are not useful or allowed
  - abide by the school dress code
  - the school will have appropriate masks for use if there is a challenge to these guidelines
6. Other PPE including but not limited to face shields, can be worn, but not in place of wearing a mask / face covering

#### **Physical Distance Guidelines -**

Physical classroom layouts will be distanced to the greatest extent possible.



### ***Classroom Sanitizer & Wipes -***

Hand sanitizer stations have been installed throughout the school, including in classrooms. In addition, each classroom will have a stock of disinfectant wipes for wiping down hard surface areas.

### ***Cleaning / Sanitizing -***

Throughout the day, in all MVSD school buildings, the custodial staff will sanitize / disinfect high-traffic common areas. Additionally, restrooms and other high-priority areas will be cleaned and disinfected regularly each day. Please refer to the following document for additional information: [MVSD - Daily Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocol](#)

### ***Buses -***

- Per federal mandate, masks are **REQUIRED** on all District buses.
- Moving around on the bus will be prohibited.
- All buses will have accurate seating charts.
- Hand sanitizer will be available on each bus.
- Each bus will be cleaned and sanitized on a daily basis.
- Weather permitting, all windows will remain open throughout the bus ride to provide air flow.

### ***HVAC and Air Flow -***

All MVSD HVAC units have been professionally cleaned. All units are functional and where possible, filters have been upgraded to MERV 13. In any classrooms or schools without acceptable airflow, portable air purifying and filtration units have been deployed. Weather permitting, windows will be open and fans will be used to increase air flow.

During the 2021 - 2022 school year, pneumatic HVAC controls throughout the District will begin to be digitized, HVAC systems will be maintained and updated, and building envelope measures (windows and roofs) will be inspected and updated as necessary.

**Outdoor learning spaces will be utilized often and at all buildings.** Students should come prepared with clothing and supplies suitable for outdoor activities.

### ***Social Emotional Learning (SEL) -***

Social Emotional Learning is a priority for the MVSD. In a typical year, this is a focus; however, on the heels of a pandemic, the focus is even more elevated. Throughout the District, many counseling departments now include or have access to Social Workers. Additionally, Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors (LADCs) and Student Assistance Programs (SAP) are available at MVMS and MVHS. School counselors at all levels will be proactively meeting with and supporting students.



In the second half of the 2020 - 2021 school year, the District was awarded a 4-year grant from the NHDOE. This grant supports a System of Care (SoC) Coordinator position. The primary responsibilities of this new position are to help coordinate the District's K - 12 SEL approach and to connect the District's schools to related community resources.

### **Equitable Access**

If for any documented medical or special education reason, a student is unable to access the MVSD in-person learning model, the District will work with families to ensure individualized educational needs are met and that all appropriate accommodations are provided.

Should the entire District or a cohort of students be compelled to move to a remote learning model (or if any student's ability to attend school is temporarily impacted by COVID-19), appropriate educational supports and access to learning will be available.

At the onset of the 2021 - 2022 school year, all students will be expected to access / bring their District-issued technology device (likely a Chromebook) at / to school on a daily basis. Some students (based on grade level and age of their previously issued device) will be receiving a new 1:1 technology device. Depending on the grade level and circumstances, students may be taking these devices home on a daily basis. Through the Student Information System (SIS), Alma, and use of platforms like Google Classroom, access to instructional resources is available to all with internet access. Additionally, access issues can be proactively mitigated by making resources available offline, by printing materials, or through the use of mobile hotspots (if available and appropriate). Synchronous learning applications like Google Meets and / or Zoom may also be used to deliver instruction. All of this will be clearly communicated.

### **Engagement and Quality**

The MVSD strives to help students find and cultivate their passions. Whether in-person or online, MVSD instructors and support staff are dedicated to crafting high quality educational experiences for their students. Throughout this past school year, and this summer leading up to the 2021 - 2022 school year, teachers / staff at all levels have been and will continue to strategically develop lesson plans and assignments that engage learners. MVSD administration is focused on supporting highly effective teaching and learning. Continued Professional Development (PD) will be planned and implemented.

The partnership between the schools and homes is integral in this pursuit. The MVSD values our relationships with parents as we work together to educate our students.



## **Athletics, Clubs, and Activities (Extracurriculars)**

The MVSD recognizes and believes in the importance of providing students with extracurricular activities throughout their K - 12 experience.

### ***Clubs and Activities -***

MVSD clubs and activities will meet during the 2021 - 2022 school year at all buildings.

Schedules will be established and communicated as each season draws closer. These include, but are not limited to:

- Band and Chorus
- Marching Band
- Plays, Performances, and Concerts (spectators will be welcomed)
- Honor Societies
- Robotics
- School-Based Clubs
- Intramural Teams (if applicable)

### ***Athletics -***

MVSD athletic tryouts, practices, and events will take place in 2021 - 2022 and will follow New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletics Association (NHIAA) recommendations and guidance. Additionally, following NHIAA, MVSD Board, and public health requirements, spectators will be welcomed at all MVSD sporting events.

## **Individual Building Plans and Information**

Please access the MVSD school websites via the following link -

<https://www.mvsdp pride.org/schools>

## **Moving Forward**

This document can be revisited and amended (if necessary) by the MVSD School Board at any duly posted Board Meeting.

***Constituent Feedback Opportunities:*** The "Stay Open Framework" has been on the District's website since it was approved by the Board prior to the opening of the school year. Additionally, before that vote, stakeholder feedback (on the plan) was solicited via an established webpage and associated email address (on the District's site with a draft of the plan). Moreover, the District held an emergency Board meeting to gain further feedback on the stay open plan before any adoption took place. The Board continues to accept public feedback via email correspondences and public comment at regular Board meetings.