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## **Seacoast Charter School Opening of School Plan 2021-22**

### **DRAFT**

#### **Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted multiple facets of everyday life. Public education has been no exception. Seacoast Charter School has worked to respond to the evolving circumstances surrounding the pandemic by constantly monitoring the state of public health in the district, region, state, and country while planning, revising, and implementing adaptive school programming.

In this document, you will find the details for SCS reopening for the fall of 2021.

We are enthusiastic about welcoming our students back to school for in-person instruction at the beginning of the school year. We have developed a model with specific safety precautions in place. While this document outlines plans for the coming school year, it is important to note that we may need to adjust the plan in accordance with federal, state, and local health guidelines.

Recommendations in this plan are based on the review of CDC and DHHS Guidance in conjunction with current local and state COVID data. Both organizations continuously update their guidance on a regular basis. This plan should be reviewed on a monthly basis moving forward.



<b>POLICY-like: directed or approved by School</b>	<b>PROCEDURE-like: responsibility of HOS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Any reduction in school occupancy (except an immediate, short term shift)</li> <li>▪ Process and considerations for changing these decisions</li> <li>▪ Budget and staffing changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School day hours and schedule within the school day</li> <li>▪ School meals – Lunch and snack</li> <li>▪ Recess/breaks</li> <li>▪ Cleaning and disinfection routines</li> <li>▪ Health screening</li> <li>▪ Extra precautions related to specific activities such as music or fitness</li> <li>▪ Student spacing and PPE required</li> </ul>

**For the purposes of this document, the following goals are considered:**

1. Create an environment where as many students as possible physically attend school.
2. Full in-person days, 5 days per week, with full academic and enrichment offerings.
3. Provide guidance for staff and the community when we would consider further relaxing or tightening precautions.
4. Consider the latest scientific and medical guidance.

This past year has been challenging with constant reevaluation and adjustments to address the ever changing environment . What we have learned is that clear communication to all parties minimizes frustration and fosters a cohesive community. We need to be clear as to our plans and expectations as we enter the 2021-22 school year.

**Core Recommendation**

*Given the considerations outlined above, the goal for the 2021-22 school year is to open school in the fall as close to normal as possible.*



## **In-person School Day**

We define opening school as “normal as possible” operating in-person 5 days per week per the SCS Board approved academic calendar. Most, if not all children are in attendance in their classrooms, and will follow a traditional 5-day per week schedule.

A remote learning option is limited to health-related issues. Students who have a documented medical condition and are not able to attend in-person learning will work with the school to establish an educational plan. This will be on an exceptional basis only.

## **Masks**

**Indoors-** Masks will be mandatory for everyone entering the school.

Mask breaks will continue to be coordinated for students as needed.

**Outdoors-** Based on recommendations from the Department of Health and Human Services, we will not require masks to be worn outside.

## **School Day**

SCS will return to our typical school day, 8:30-3:00 at the K-8 levels, and 8:30-2:30 for PreK students.

## **SCS Schedule**

The SCS schedules will be grade level based, including music, art and fitness each week for all students.

## **Classroom Social Distancing**

Our current recommendation is to continue classroom social distancing at 3 feet. This allows class sizes to return to the levels recommended, and to fully accommodate an all-in return model. Currently, we are using 3-foot social distancing as recommended by the CDC. Depending on CDC and other health guidelines the recommended social distance may change. Three-foot social distancing allows us to accommodate class sizes in line with our typical class sizes.

## **Snack and Lunch Under Current Guidelines**

Based on current guidelines, snack and lunch times should maintain 6-foot social distancing if eating indoors. To date, we have been eating snacks and lunches outside whenever the weather permits. We will continue this practice.



## **Managing Recess**

At the K-8 level, recess will be staggered as much as possible to allow for sufficient space for students to play unmasked and maintain 3 feet social distance.

## **Art, Music and Fitness**

K-4 music will take place in the K-4 Music room, physically distanced. Limitations on singing would remain in effect. Singing outside is an option. Fitness is dramatically impacted by the lunch schedule and access to the front field.

## **Large Group Gatherings**

Large group school-sponsored gatherings outside of the school day (concerts, events) will be allowed. All attendees of indoor events must wear masks due to the likely variety of ages in attendance. Performers will follow the same practices as in their classes/practices related to the event.

## **Visitors**

All visitors entering the building will need to wear a mask.

## **Transportation**

For students who utilize the Dover Buses, transportation will return to traditional bus routes based on geography with students assigned to seats. The bus schedule and stops will be sent to participating families. Questions regarding transportation should be directed to [Kylee@seacoastcharterschool.org](mailto:Kylee@seacoastcharterschool.org). Students riding school transportation must wear a mask.

## **Budget**

The pandemic has offered a level of flexibility with the current budget. We have also received federal funds in the form of grants that we do not normally receive; these will be short term. As we enter the 2021-22 school year, we will need to apply the fiscal discipline we had prior to the pandemic.



## **Mitigation Strategies**

The School has a duty to provide for the health and sanitation of its schools (see NH RSA 194:3, VIII). This duty includes “the daily administration and provision of educational services to students at the school facility including . . . staff, student and parent safety. . .” (see RSA 194-C:4, II(j)).

To this end, the school will continue to implement a variety of mitigation strategies aimed at keeping people safe. While the following routines address mainly students and staff members, these requirements apply equally to anyone needing to enter a school building.

## **Air Quality Enhancements Made for the 2020-2021 School Year**

During the Fall of 2020 Seacoast Charter School installed new MERV 13 filters that capture less than 75% of air particles that are 0.3-1.0 micron in size (the coronavirus is 0.1 microns)

Additionally, SCS installed ionization units in the ductwork of all HVAC units in the building. These units emit positive and negative ions that kill mold, bacteria and viruses, greatly improving air quality.

We will continue to maximize outside air introduction into the HVAC systems throughout the day for all classrooms. This programming which provides air exchange between outdoors and indoors will start up and shut down three hours before school starts and three hours after school ends for the day, respectively.

## **Continuation of High-Quality Air Handling**

The School will continue to:

- Monitor air quality
  - Inspect and upgrade (if appropriate) filters to ensure proper installation and fit
  - Airflow maintenance
  - Maximize fresh air
- Clean, disinfect, and sanitize as recommended by the CDC and NH DHHS. See Seacoast Charter School's Ventilation and Cleaning Guidelines document for details.

## **Learning Recovery and Special Education**

Fully understanding that there was some learning loss as a result of the pandemic, we have taken several measures to make sure students' needs will be met for the coming school year. Students in classrooms 1/2 through 7/8 will have two full time assistants. One assistant will be designated as an intervention assistant and will receive monthly training and support. PreK and Kindergarten will have one full time assistant in each classroom. We have hired an additional



Special Education and Intervention Teacher. Our Intervention Coordinator will be working with teams to implement additional learning support for all students.

### **Special Education and Students with Disabilities**

While we will need to operate within newly established safety guidelines for students, staff and families, we will continue to put forth our best efforts to support all children, including those with disabilities, during reopening.

We will continue to follow our approach to adapt, plan, innovate, and partner along with families to meet the unique needs of their children. Through ongoing planning and implementation, our staff will work to support individualized educational needs as well as ensure access to an appropriate education for all of our SCS students.

### **Social and Emotional Support**

Predicting that the needs for social and emotional support will be higher than usual in the fall, we have put in place Professional Development for our staff. Dr. Dawn Huebner (<https://www.dawnhuebnerphd.com/>) will be coming to work with our staff on supporting students with anxiety in August. We will also be conducting a Suicide Prevention training in October. Our school counselor will continue to work with grade level teams to identify needs and support our students.

### **Support for Families**

Families will have access to social emotional support.

- SCS recognizes that students come to school with a variety of mental health needs, and our school counselor, Head of School, teachers and assistants will continue to respond to the needs as they arise.
- The school will provide updates to families about efforts to promote social emotional learning for students at SCS.
- The Head of School will hold a monthly virtual meeting to address concerns and give updates on safety protocols and address issues that arise.



## Home Screening Procedure<sup>1</sup>

Before leaving home, students and staff will complete the following steps:

- Temperatures need to be taken. If the temperature is 100.0°F or higher, students and staff need to stay home.
- The following questions need to be answered:
  - Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms?<sup>2</sup>
    - Fever and chills
    - Cough
    - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
    - Fatigue
    - Muscle or body aches
    - Headaches
    - New loss of taste or smell
    - Sore throat, congestion, or runny nose
    - Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
  - Have you had close contact with someone who is suspected or confirmed to have had COVID-19 in the past 10 days?
  - Have you, during the previous 10 days, traveled internationally or by cruise ship?
- Before leaving home, every student and staff member should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

If the answer is YES to any of the above questions, students and staff need to stay home and contact the school to self-report their symptoms, close contact, or travel.

We will communicate the screening procedures to parents/guardians and will communicate to all families any updates or changes necessary per CDC and NH DHHS guidance.

## Reporting and Communicating Exposure and Positive Cases of COVID-19

If a student or staff member is exposed to COVID-19 (unless fully vaccinated or have previously tested positive for active COVID-19 infection by PCR or antigen testing in the last 90 days), or who report one of the travel-related risk factors, will be asked to self-quarantine for 10 days from their last exposure or return from travel.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

<sup>2</sup> Based on <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID19-symptoms-24x36-en.pdf>



If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the individual will need to stay out of school.

- Contact tracing will be done in cooperation with the NH DHHS and will follow their most updated protocols and procedures.
- Siblings who are not vaccinated will also need to either quarantine or provide a negative PCR Covid test before returning to school.

As per the present Bureau of Infectious Disease Control protocol, the Head of School will notify in writing, via email, the staff members and families of students that have been identified as close contacts. The sharing of this information, as it pertains to students, is deemed an appropriate exception under the health and safety provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The information that is shared is limited to being a close contact names of students and staff are not shared.

- Symptom-based criteria are met for coming out of isolation:
  - At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset **and**
  - At least 72 hours have passed since recovery, with recovery being defined as the resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, **and**
  - Other COVID-19 related symptoms have abated.<sup>3</sup>

Documentation from a primary care physician (PCP) clears the individual to return to work/school.

**Conditions where the SCS Board would consider reducing restrictions and precautions:**

- If the opportunity for vaccination is extended to younger people, precautions described above should be reviewed and further relaxed accordingly.
- If public health agencies declare an end to the COVID 19 pandemic.
- If the number of circulating cases is extremely low, as evidenced by zero new cases in Dover, Barrington, Rochester and Somersworth for at least 2 weeks and fewer than 95 new cases statewide in the last 7 days (corresponds to <1 per 100,000 per day, “Low Risk” per covidactnow.org).
- If schools obtain the authority from the State to maintain record as to which student and staff are vaccinated and can use that information to manage potential exposure risk.

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<sup>3</sup> Based on <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>



### **Conditions where the SCS Board would consider increasing restrictions and precautions:**

- Unable to maintain staffing due to COVID-19 cases.
- Changes in FDA or CDC guidance regarding vaccination limitations (i.e. need for a booster injection or emergence of a variant that renders vaccines ineffective).
- Local active COVID-19 cases rise significantly, in particular if new cases in surrounding towns increase corresponding to 25 per 100,000 per day, the “Critical” threshold from covidactnow.org).

### **COVID Related Challenges to Monitor**

Assuming that COVID is still part of our lives in the fall, we can predict that some of the same challenges that we faced this school year will reoccur.

- Students in quarantine
- Program closures
- Classroom closures
- School closures
- Individual quarantines
- Staffing capacity issues
- Contact tracing challenges
- Vaccine availability and changes in quarantine rules
- No close contact quarantine for vaccinated staff and students
- Because we have no way to verify vaccinations, truthfulness of reporting will be a challenge

### **Final Thoughts**

Again, the recommendations in this plan are based on the review of current CDC and DHHS Guidance in conjunction with current local and state COVID data as of August 1, 2021. Both organizations continuously update their guidance on a regular basis. This plan will be reviewed monthly.