

# LEA Plan on the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

2021-2022 School Year

***Update #1 – December 31, 2021 (all updated text is bold and in italics)***

## I. General Information

LEA Name: Somersworth School District/SAU 56

Date of Publication: ~~The Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan for 2021-2022 school year has not been published. It will be published at the beginning of August 2021 as we get closer to the start of the 2021-2022 school year.~~

***The Somersworth School Board adopted a Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan (aka Re-opening Plan) for the 2021-2022 school year at its meeting on August 10, 2021.***

## II. Transparency and Accessibility

Public Availability: ~~As mentioned, the completed Plan for the 2021-2022 school year will be published at the beginning of August.~~

At a workshop session of the Somersworth School Board held on June 19, 2021, the elements of the Plan including proposed Health and Safety Measures and Continuity of Services were reviewed. With the recent recommendations from the Governor and NH DHHS essentially relaxing all health and safety requirements, the Plan at this time is to follow this guidance and return to traditional in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year.

~~However, as we have seen, the COVID-19 health pandemic has been very fluid and dynamic where the situation can change very rapidly. With that in mind, releasing a Return to In-Person Instruction Plan over two months prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year is premature.~~

The School Board will reconvene on August 4, 2021 and will take the matter of the Re-Opening Plan up at that time. The school district will make the Plan available on its website and will use the electronic messenger system to notify parents that it exists and that public input is welcome.

***The Re-opening Plan was discussed as an agenda item at the August 10, 2021 school board meeting, which was a public meeting of the school board. All regularly scheduled school board meetings offer two opportunities for public input should anyone from the public wish to offer comment on any agenda item.***

***The Re-opening Plan was made available to all families on August 11, 2021 through the school district's electronic message system. It was also posted on the SAU 56 website for any member of the public to view. As mentioned, all school board meetings are publicly noticed so that the public can come and offer comment on the business of the school board.***

***Related to this, the Somersworth School Board also revisited its Pandemic/Epidemic Emergencies Policy (EBCF) at the August 10, 2021 school board meeting. In this policy, the school board designates the superintendent to create and oversee the coordination efforts to institute the district's responses to a pandemic situation. In line with this policy, the superintendent created the Re-opening Plan with***

***the input of parents, staff, administration, members of the Strafford County Public Health Network, and representatives of the three bargaining units in the school district. The Re-opening Plan has been overseen by members of this initial group of stakeholders since the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. The COVID Response Management Team meets weekly to review various data points, discuss mitigation strategies, and create recommendations on any changes in the Re-opening Plan. The superintendent updates the school board at each board meeting on the district's response to COVID and if there are any changes to the plan that are required.***

Public Accessibility: As with all documents provided, translation services will be available as well as the opportunity document could be provided in different formats, if requested.

The District's English Language Learner (ELL) teachers and the special education staff are in regular contact with families to help eliminate any communication barriers.

### **III. Health and Safety**

Maintenance of health for students and staff: ~~Once finalized, copies of the District and each school's re-opening plans will be submitted to the DOE.~~

~~Pending any shift in CDC guidance and/or change in the direction of the pandemic, the School District plans to enter the 2021-2022 school year with all schools and programs fully open for in-person learning.~~

***The school district started the year with the goal "to safely continue in-person learning for all students for the duration of the 2021-2022 school year." We have been able to meet this goal every day as we have had minimal positive COVID cases in our students and staff since school started. As such, we have not had to utilize remote learning.***

The following Health and Safety protocols were recommended to the School Board for consideration on June 19, 2021:

- ~~● Wearing of an approved mask (Policy EBCF), both inside and outside will be optional.~~
- ~~● Physical/social distancing, contact tracing, diagnostic screening (i.e., symptoms checklist, temperature taking) will not be required practice in the schools.~~
- ~~● Staff will review handwashing and respiratory etiquette procedures with all students and provide time for students to engage in handwashing. Hand sanitizer will continue to be available for all students and staff.~~
- ~~● Normal cleaning protocols by custodial staff will take place. Use of additional measures (i.e., ultra-violet cleaning) will only be used should there be a confirmed COVID case.~~
- ~~● Planned building ventilation improvement projects will occur when approved by the NH DOE.~~
- ~~● The District will work with local and state public health officials to provide opportunities for vaccinations for students and staff and to disseminate the most current information on illness management.~~
- ~~● Parents will be encouraged to keep children home when they are ill. Staff will also be encouraged to stay home when they are sick.~~

- ~~Students with certain diagnosed medical conditions may require the implementation of additional safety measures. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.~~
- ~~There will not be additional safety protocols for extra-curricular activities (i.e., sports, clubs).~~
- ~~SAU admin and building admin will review pertinent pandemic-related data along with City officials and make recommendations for any needed changes to the Re-Opening Plan.~~

***The Re-opening Plan includes the following mitigation strategies:***

- ***Mask wearing is required by all students, staff, and visitors. This has been a requirement since August 16, 2021.***
- ***Physical and social distancing are not strongly adhered to strategies. However, large gatherings of students are now required to put social distance between students.***
- ***Staff will review handwashing and respiratory etiquette procedures with all students and provide time for students to engage in handwashing. Hand sanitizer is available for all students and staff.***
- ***Normal cleaning protocols by custodial staff will take place. Use of additional measures (i.e., ultra violet cleaning) are used when there is a confirmed COVID case in the building.***
- ***A planned building ventilation improvement project at Somersworth Middle School was completed in December 2021. The new ducted system with new roof top units, replaced an antiquated unit-ventilator system that had exceeded its useful life. As such, the new system has improved the indoor air quality in the school making for a safer learning environment for the students and staff.***
- ***The district has worked with local and state public health officials to provide opportunities for vaccinations for students and staff and to disseminate the most current information on illness management. The Strafford County Public Health Network has organized two vaccine clinics for students ages 5-17 and continues to offer the opportunity for in-school vaccines for all students whose parents wish to have them vaccinated.***
- ***Parents are asked to keep children home when they are displaying any COVID-19 symptoms. Staff are asked to stay home when they are displaying symptoms.***
- ***Students with certain diagnosed medical conditions may require the implementation of additional safety measures. These are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.***
- ***Additional safety protocols for extra-curricular activities (i.e., sports, clubs) have been implemented. Those additional measures include mask wearing during practices and while on the bench during indoor contests.***
- ***The district formed a COVID Management Response Team that has met weekly since September 2021. This team reviews school, county and state data, discusses mitigation strategies and makes recommendations to keep our schools open safely for in-person learning.***
- ***The school district joined the NH Safer in Schools (SASS) testing program in November 2021 which provides weekly testing for asymptomatic students and staff.***
- ***The school district applied for and received a CLIA license to allow the school nurses to give "rapid" antigen tests to any students or staff members who begin to display symptoms at school.***

#### **IV. Continuity of Services**

Continuity of Services for Students: Each school's re-opening plan will describe how they will provide continuity of services during the 2021-2022 school year. The School District will provide continuity of services in the following ways:

- All In-Person educational opportunities will be re-instituted, including academic supports for students, all identified special education services, and afterschool and extra-curricular activities.
- Schools will review data collected on student academic progress and revision support delivery models as is necessary.
- Provide additional opportunities for afterschool academic support (i.e., afterschool tutoring) and/or additional extra-curricular/intramurals activities.
- Professional development will be offered to staff as identified by building and district administration. Topics to include, but not limited to: mental health support/stress management, specific academic strategies implementation (i.e. training on reading skills development), data use (i.e., NWEA data use training), RTI and PBIS implementation and other identified professional development/training needed to refocus on In-Person learning.
- Continuation of free food service program – meals for all students because of the federal waiver for the 2021-2022 school year. Food will also be available during summer 2021 programs.
- Expand summer school opportunities K-12 for summer 2021.
- Implement restructured school counseling program. Middle school crisis counselor position has been expanded to include the elementary schools. Grade 9 transition support services have been added to the 8th grade counselor. The SAU Administration will oversee a comprehensive “wrap around” services team for the neediest students and families.
- Continue to work with Goodwin Community Health on the school-based health clinic concept.
- ~~Work with Goodwin to provide additional on-site student services next year.~~ (***Note – Goodwin Community Health did not have the clinicians available to provide additional services.***)
- Continue to move forward as a partner as the Somersworth Mental Health Alliance is formed in June 2021. The Alliance will build mental health support systems for students, families and for staff as employees of the district.
- Determination of additional student and staff needs once school resumes in fall 2021.
- Rebuild the District's existing relationship with the Somersworth Ready Together Coalition focused on early childhood education and school preparedness.
- Continue to explore the role of Remote Learning to create opportunities for identified students in order to create student voice, student engagement in learning, create individual student learning paths that may allow students to continue learning while working through various issues/challenges.
- Provide additional resources for each school's community days - a strategy used in our schools to engage students in the culture and climate of each school.
- Expand course offerings at Somersworth High School/Career Tech Center to include night courses.
- Provide additional opportunities to show appreciation to the staff.
- Continue to plan allowable facilities projects that will allow our district to sustain safe in-person learning.
- Expand career and technical education programming into the middle school.
- Launch new website in August 2021 with integrated social media and electronic messaging.

- Work with the local bus company and the local community action program to provide free remote meals for students throughout the summer.
- When appropriate, continue to provide virtual access for parents to meetings via google meet to hold parent conferences and individual student meetings.
- ***An additional preschool program was added because of the high number of referrals for our youngest students.***

#### Continuity of Services for Staff

~~The SAU Administration and members of the School Board will meet with representatives of the three bargaining units to determine if there is a need to continue with all or some elements of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that was in place during the 2020-2021 school year.~~

***The superintendent met with members of the bargaining units during the summer 2021. It was determined that an MOA was not necessary for this school year.***

#### **V. Plan Review**

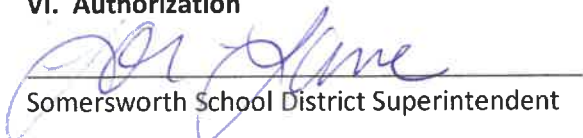
The Somersworth School District will review and revise its Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan every six months through September 30, 2023 and/or as needed.

This process will include:

- Create final Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan for the 2021-2022 school year. The Plan will include:
  - Adoption of health and safety protocols as required by the CDC and NH DHHS.
  - Provide information on how the district will provide a continuity of services for students and for staff.
  - Any and all adjustments to school operations protocols and procedures.
- Gathering stakeholder input regarding the 2021-2022 School Year Plan in the following ways:
  - Make the proposed 2021-2022 School Year Plan available on the SAU 56 website for stakeholder review and consider all feedback.
  - Make the proposed 2021-2022 School Year Plan an agenda item for the Somersworth School Board to approve in August 2021 and make sure that the school board reviews the plan every six months and when necessary through September 2023.
- Align any identified needs in the 2021-2022 School Year plan with the "Use of Funds" Plan that is required for submission by August 23, 2021. Provide Plan alignment in subsequent years if required.

***All of the above occurred as outlined. As previously mentioned, the superintendent has provided regular updates to the school board at each school board meeting since August. As the pandemic continues, the district will continue to manage the situation to the best of its ability in order to keep our schools safely open for in-person learning.***

#### **VI. Authorization**

  
Somersworth School District Superintendent

12/31/2021  
Date

# SAU 56 COVID-19 School Re-Opening Response and Mitigation Plan for the 2021-2022 School Year

It is the goal of the Somersworth School District **to safely continue in-person learning for all students for the duration of the 2021-2022 school year.**

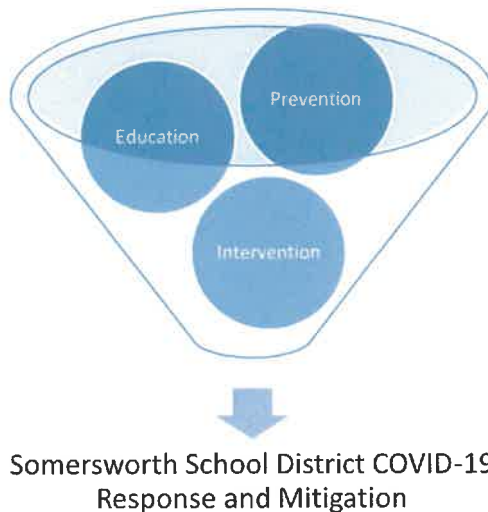
## INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 health pandemic continues to be a dynamic situation that will impact the City of Somersworth as a whole, including the public school system. As such, the school district would like to work with all students, parents, community members, and local agencies to create a comprehensive response to end COVID-19.

The School District has partnered with Stewarts Ambulance Service and the Strafford Public Health Network (SPHN) to identify the most appropriate mitigation strategies to reach our goal.

The School District believes that to meet this goal, we need to respond to the Pandemic in the following ways:

- Provide education for students, parents, staff and community about COVID-19.
- Implement prevention strategies within the schools and community to prevent further spread of COVID-19 to all populations, especially our most vulnerable – our unvaccinated children.
- Implement intervention strategies within the schools to best allow our schools to keep all students learning in our schools every day.
- Implement a COVID Response Management Team to regularly review the most current data available on community transition as well as federal and state recommendations to provide preventative responses to maximize the health and safety of our students and staff and keep all in school.



## **1. EDUCATION:**

### **Educational Opportunities for students:**

- Educate students on the reasons why mask wearing is important to limit disease spread.
- Educate students on the reasons why handwashing/sanitizing is important to limit spread of the disease.
- Educate students that feelings of anxiety, frustration, and isolation are normal feelings to have during the pandemic. It is ok to feel this way, but it is also ok to ask for help to deal with these feelings.

### **Educational Opportunities for families:**

- Educate parents on the importance of the vaccine in mitigating the spread of COVID-19.
- Educate parents on the importance of symptom management – keeping children home when sick, wearing a mask, and handwashing/sanitizing.
- Educate parents on the mental health challenges for families regarding COVID-19 and how to relieve that stress.

### **Educational Opportunities for staff:**

In addition to all of the above, we will also educate staff on awareness of their own mental health challenges and how to relieve their own stress during the pandemic.

## **2. PREVENTION:** One of the key components to our strategy to keeping our schools open safely is to institute the following prevention measures:

- **Mask wearing will be required indoors for all students, staff, substitute teachers, and visitors starting on Monday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, regardless of vaccination status.** Universal masks are part of a layered approach to help our schools stay open and safe, and to ensure all students can safely return to our buildings, especially when physical distancing is not possible at all times and not all our students are eligible yet for vaccinations. Mask wearing will be instituted in all school buildings and the SAU office.
- **Regular mask breaks for students will be provided, and will be made available as needed throughout the school day.**
- **Masks will be worn on school buses** as dictated by federal guidelines.
- **All families will be asked to keep any children home if they are displaying any symptoms.** Parents will be contacted to come and get their children home if they start showing symptoms at school. Staff will be asked to stay home when they are sick.
- **Physical/social distancing and contact tracing will not be required practice** in the schools at this time.
- **Staff will review handwashing and respiratory etiquette procedures with all students** and provide time for students to engage in handwashing. Hand sanitizer will continue to be available for all students and staff.
- **Normal cleaning protocols by custodial staff will take place.**

- **Safety protocols for extra-curricular activities (i.e., sports, clubs) will continue to be monitored.** At this time, all extra-curricular activities that occur outdoors will not be required to implement additional safety protocols. All extra-curricular activities that occur indoors will follow the established prevention strategies (i.e., mask wearing during volleyball games).
- **Work with the Strafford Public Health Network to provide access to vaccine clinics** as they become available.

### **3. INTERVENTION:**

- Use of additional measures (i.e., ultra violet cleaning) will be used should there be a confirmed COVID case in the school.
- Students with certain diagnosed medical conditions may require the implementation of additional safety measures. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

**4. COVID-19 Response and Mitigation Management Team:** The District will work with local and state public health officials to manage the Education, Prevention and Intervention strategies outlined in this Plan. The Team will meet regularly to continuously review Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance and/or changes in other identified data points (see below) that signal a change in the direction of the pandemic.

**The Team will include:**

- A representative from the Strafford Public Health Network
- A representative from Stewarts Ambulance Service
- At least one building administrator
- At least one school nurse
- At least one of the SAU administrators

**This Plan is designed to be fluid in order to meet and maintain our goal of safe in-person learning for all students.** The Team will make regular recommendations to the superintendent on adding to or lessening the restrictions identified in this Plan.

The superintendent will provide updates on the status of the Team's work and the pandemic's effect on our schools at school board meetings throughout the school year.

**Data points that the Team will be reviewing are:**

- Centers for Disease Control guidance on safe re-opening of schools
- Strafford County transmission rates and percentage of positivity rates for COVID-19 from the NH Department of Health and Human Services.
- Local data from our school population (i.e., potential outbreak in one of our school buildings).
- Data provided by the City of Somersworth's Emergency Management Director.
- Recommendations from the American Pediatric Association.



## SOMERSWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT – COVID-19 ILLNESS MANAGEMENT PROTOCOLS (REVISED 9-24-2021)

Our goal is to safely offer in-person learning for the duration of the 2021-2022 school year. Please adhere to the following illness management protocols:

### Exposure Protocols

1. If you are exposed to someone in your home who has been diagnosed with COVID-19:

IS YOUR CHILD FULLY VACCINATED?

NO

YES

WEAR A MASK!

If you are NOT fully vaccinated:

- You are **required to isolate for 10 calendar days from the last known exposure** to the COVID positive person in your household.
- You can return to school after 10 days **IF** you are not showing any COVID-19 symptoms.
- It is recommended that you get tested for COVID-19.
- It is recommended that you consult your health care provider or school nurse to discuss any concerns.

If you ARE fully vaccinated:

- Please provide the school nurse with a copy of your vaccination card.
- You can return to school *immediately* if you are **NOT** showing any symptoms.
- You should wear a mask when interacting with others.
- You should self-monitor for symptoms.
- It is recommended that you get tested for COVID-19.
- It is recommended that you consult your health care provider or school nurse to discuss any concerns.

2. If you are exposed to someone in the community or at school who has COVID-19, **REGARDLESS of YOUR vaccination status**,

- You can stay in school, unless you start showing symptoms. You do NOT need to isolate or quarantine.
- You should self-monitor for symptoms.
- You should consult with your health care provider to discuss any concerns.

### Symptom Management

**If your child develops symptoms at school:**

- The child should notify their teacher or the school nurse immediately.
- The school nurse will call the parents to pick up their child from school.
- The child CANNOT return to school for 10 calendar days and must be symptom free for 24 hours without the help of medication, **UNLESS**, the child gets tested for COVID-19.
- The child **CAN** return to school before the 10 day period ends **IF they get tested and have a negative result**. Proof of a negative test must be shown to the school nurse. **Home test results WILL BE ACCEPTED. TEST RESULTS MUST BE SHOWN TO THE SCHOOL NURSE.**