

DRAFT District Reopening Plans - Fall 2020



“Ten Schools, Three Districts, One Community of Learners”

The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough

Friday, July 31, 2020

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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Parent(s) and Guardian(s):

Over the past six weeks, The Public School of Northborough and Southborough educators, school-based leaders, and the Central Office Leadership Team have been planning for the 2020-2021 school year and the reopening of our schools. The planning has been guided by seven priorities, which are listed below, with the first being the most essential: The physical, social, and emotional well-being of students, faculty, and staff.

- Prioritize the physical, social, and emotional well-being of the school community, students, and staff.
- Foster engaging learning opportunities for all students.
- Address the needs of students who are English Learners and students with disabilities.
- Provide additional support to our most vulnerable student populations.
- Provide for adaptability and coherence in how the District delivers instruction to respond to changing health metrics.
- Address the professional learning of our faculty and staff.
- Attend to the experiences and needs of all stakeholders by providing opportunities for feedback and reflection.

The District Reopening Plan provides a framework and guidelines for health, safety, and well-being, teaching and learning, student support services, English language development, technology, and school facilities operations. The building leaders will also provide detailed plans about learning and teaching and operations for each school.

The teaching and learning planning has centered around identifying four potential reopening models: In-person, Hybrid, Full Remote and Stand Alone Remote Program. Due to the unpredictability of the trajectory of the virus in our community, the models allow for smooth transitions among them. If the District needs to transition from a hybrid model to a remote model or from a hybrid model to a fully in-person model, we will be able to do so efficiently and effectively. At this time, a recommendation to the school committees regarding a reopening model has not been made.

The return to school in September will begin with significant attention to orienting students to the coming school year, regardless of the reopening model. In order to prepare students and their families for the types of learning that this school year may include, educators will collaborate with each other, with students and with families to provide a solid social-emotional foundation. The year will begin with a strong focus on building community, developing relationships, establishing routines, and assessing student needs. This will help students to reconnect and build their stamina for school.

Thank you for your patience as we continue to navigate the uncertainty of the pandemic.

Respectfully,

Gregory L. Martineau
Superintendent of Schools

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many stakeholders have invested heavily in supporting the efforts to plan for a safe school reopening. We are deeply grateful for the time and energy devoted to this collaborative process.

Reopening Advisory Panel

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Christina Smith, Algonquin Regional Teachers Association

PLANNING PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

1. Prioritize the physical, social, and emotional well-being of the school community, students and staff.
2. Foster engaging learning opportunities for all students.
3. Address the needs of students who are English Learners and students with disabilities.
4. Provide additional support to our most vulnerable student populations.
5. Provide for adaptability and coherence in how the District delivers instruction to respond to changing health metrics.
6. Address the professional learning of our faculty and staff.
7. Attend to the experiences and needs of all stakeholders by providing opportunities for feedback and reflection.

Disclaimer: Procedures, policies and protocols for fall reopening of schools are subject to change if the District receives updated guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH).

SCHOOL REOPENING OVERVIEW

The COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving situation at both a local and national level. For that reason, the District regularly consults a range of resources to monitor the health metrics

locally and beyond. These resources include the [Massachusetts COVID-19 Daily Dashboard](#) and [Massachusetts COVID-19 Weekly Health Report](#). These plans, like DESE's guidance document for fall reopening, is predicated on the Commonwealth continuing to progress through the phases of reopening with low COVID-19 public health metrics. It will be crucial to monitor the community context of COVID-19 prevalence in the fall and winter. If the community prevalence of COVID-19 is of concern, increased health and safety measures will be taken and plans will be adapted accordingly.

Guidance on the Reopening of School

Throughout the summer, the District has received guidance from DESE to inform our planning process. We have worked hard to ensure that all District and individual school plans meet or exceed the requirements put forth by the Commonwealth.

Documents from DESE:

- [Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance](#) (Released June 25, 2020)
- Guidance on Fall 2020 [Special Education Services](#) (Released July 9, 2020)
- Fall Reopening - - [FAQs](#) (Released July 10, 2020)
- [Two-Step Process for District Fall Reopening Plans](#) (Released July 15, 2020)
- [Fall Reopening Facilities and Operations Guidance](#) (Released July 22, 2020)
- [Fall Reopening Transportation Guidance](#) (Released July 22, 2020)
- [Fall Remote Learning Guidance](#) (Released July 24, 2020)
- [Guidance for Courses with Additional Safety Requirements](#) (Released July 24, 2020)
- [Guidance on Additional Staff Training Days this Fall](#) (Released July 27, 2020)
- [CVTE Reopening Guidelines](#) (Released July 30, 2020)

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING

The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough greatest priority is the physical, social, and emotional well-being of the school community, students and employees. Because COVID-19 is a novel disease, the medical literature is growing rapidly, and new information is emerging daily. DESE's guidance and our response will continue to be based on the most up to date medical advice. Based on the current evidence and plans to implement a suite of health and safety protocols, we are committed to working toward a safe in-person return to school for as many students as possible. Prior to our return, faculty, staff, students and families will be provided opportunities to learn the new safety requirements and protocols.

Suite of Health and Safety Requirements for In-person Learning

The health and safety of students and employees are our top priority for reopening schools in the fall. The District protocols and guidelines were developed adhering to health and safety recommendations put forth from the CDC and the MDPH, as well as DESE's health and safety requirements, which have been developed in collaboration with infectious disease physicians, pediatricians and health experts from the Massachusetts General Brigham Health System, the Massachusetts Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics and MA COVID-19 Command Center Medical Advisory Board. DESE engaged in a thorough review of guidelines from the

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) and current medical literature. In addition, the District sought counsel from its District physician, local boards of health and other medical experts as we developed District specific plans.

The District is implementing the following health and safety measures that will enable the safe reopening of schools for learning this fall (In-person or Hybrid). For more detailed protocols and procedures see [Appendix A](#).

Masks/Face Coverings:

As the primary route of transmission for COVID-19 is respiratory, masks or face coverings are among the most critical components of risk reduction. Our requirements regarding masks/face coverings exceed DESE's guidelines as the District is requiring all students to wear facemasks (PreK-12). The protocols can be accessed by visiting the following links: [Mask protocol for students](#), [Mask protocol for employees](#). Additionally, the list below is an overview of a few of the mask guidelines:

- All students, PreK-12 and adults are required to wear a mask/face covering that covers their nose and mouth.
- Exceptions to mask/face covering requirements will be made for those for whom it is not possible due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors.
- Mask breaks will occur throughout the day. Breaks will occur when students can be at least six feet apart and ideally outside or with the windows open.
- Students and employees will receive guidance on how to properly remove and put on a mask.
- Masks/face coverings will be provided by the student/family. Students are asked to bring 2 masks to school each day. Extra disposable face masks will be made available by the school as needed.
- Reusable masks/face coverings provided by families should be washed by families daily.
- Masks/face coverings are required to be worn by everyone on school buses.

Physical Distancing:

Physical distancing is another important practice that helps mitigate the transmission of the virus. In our schools we are providing for:

- Six feet of distance between individuals.
- Desks/tables facing in the same direction in classrooms.
- Removing non-essential furniture from learning spaces to maximize the space for students and faculty/staff.
- When distancing is not possible for nurses and faculty/staff supporting students with disabilities, additional safety precautions will be taken and appropriate PPE provided.
- Where possible and needed, hallways will be restricted to one-way traffic or monitored to maintain distance among students.

Screening:

On a daily basis, employees and families will be required to complete a screening checklist to determine if they are able to attend school or not.

[Family Screening Protocol: N/S Daily Screening Fall 2020](#) and [agreement](#)

[Employee Screening Protocol: guidelines](#) and [daily screening checklist](#)

- Education, in the forms of webinars, email, handouts, flyers, and one-call reminders, will be provided to the parents/guardians and employees prior to the start of the school year and as needed throughout. This education will support parents/guardians and employees with recognizing and self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19.
- Students and employees must stay home if they do not feel well. This is very important in preventing the spread of COVID-19.
- Students and employees should not return to school until they have met the criteria established by the CDC and MDPH to return to school.
- Students and employees with symptoms of COVID-19 should notify the school nurse, consult with a health care provider and follow the return to school guidelines.
- The criteria for returning to school is linked here: [Return to School Guidelines - Student](#) and [Return to School Guidelines - Employees](#)
- If a student or employee is COVID-19 positive, they will be required to check with their school nurse prior to returning. A safe return to school is based on symptoms, duration of symptoms, and clearance by the Northborough or Southborough Board of Health.

Hand Hygiene

Students and employees will be expected to clean and sanitize hands frequently throughout the day, including, but not limited to:

- upon entry into school/classroom
- before and after meals
- after bathroom use
- after coughing or sneezing
- before removing and after replacing face covering
- before dismissal

If handwashing is not available, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol content can be used with adult supervision. Each classroom and most common areas will have hand sanitizer stations available. Proper hand washing with soap and water is preferred over the use of hand sanitizer.

Student Groups

To minimize the number of students who would potentially be affected if there were a COVID-19 exposure in school our schools will keep students in the same groups throughout the day, to the extent feasible.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The District recently placed a substantial order for supplies to support the health and safety of students and employees. Supplies purchased to date include the following:

Nitrile and vinyl gloves	Disposable gowns for designated personnel
N95 masks	Pulse Oximeters
Masks (adult and child-size)	Infrared Thermometers
Reusable face masks	Hand sanitizer dispensers
Face Shields	Hand Sanitizer refills
Eye Goggles	Sanitizing Wipes
Plexiglass barriers	Electrostatic Sprayers
Lab coats for nursing staff	Cleaning Supplies

School Attendance Guidelines

Any student or employee exhibiting any COVID -19 symptoms must stay home. Employees and students who test positive for COVID-19, or have been a close contact of someone with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 must remain home, notify the school nurse and follow the return to school guidelines .

Responding to Student or Employee Illness

- Employees and children with COVID-19 symptoms at school will be separated from well students/employees. Any individual who becomes sick at school will be triaged by the school nurse and referred for further medical evaluation and testing based on their symptoms. They will be asked to follow CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others who are sick.
- Each school will have a designated health “medical waiting room,” where employees/or students with COVID-19 symptoms will be triaged and assessed for an appropriate disposition.
- Families will need to provide the school nurse with three to four emergency contacts, indicating individuals who will be able to come to the school and pick up their child if they become sick during the school day. Dismissing sick individuals in a timely fashion, within 30 minutes, is imperative for the safety of all.
- Areas used by a sick person will be cleaned and disinfected

Notification of Health Officials and Close Contacts

- In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, school nurses/administrators will notify the Northborough or Southborough Board of Public Health, employees, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- The District’s Nursing Team will work collaboratively with the local Public Health Agents to identify individuals who have tested positive and/or who are considered a close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19. Individuals and families will be instructed to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms, following CDC guidance if symptoms develop.

- The District Wellness Coordinator will work closely with the local Board of Health Agent, and the Administrative Team to identify any COVID-19 cases and necessary actions.

No Visitors

No visitors will be permitted in the school buildings, until it is deemed safe. Each school will have a procedure for drop off and dismissal that ensures that only students and employees enter the building. In addition, if a family member needs to drop off an item for a student during the school day, they will be asked to follow that school’s procedure (which will be shared prior to the start of school) for drop off without entering the building.

LEARNING AND TEACHING MODELS FOR REOPENING

The District has developed detailed plans for four models for learning--*in-person*, *hybrid* (students alternate between in-person and remote learning), *full remote*, and *stand alone remote*.

Transitioning Back to School

The return to school in September will begin with significant attention to orienting students to the coming school year, regardless of the reopening model. In order to prepare students and their families for the types of learning that this school year may include, educators will collaborate with each other, with students and with families to provide a solid social-emotional foundation. The year will begin with a strong focus on building community, developing relationships, establishing routines, and assessing student needs. This will help students to reconnect and build their stamina for school.

	Overview of Four Models for Learning
1. In-Person Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students return in person to school with appropriate modifications for health and safety requirements.
2. Hybrid Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students alternate between in-person and remote learning. Hybrid learning allows for class sizes that align with our physical distancing goals and other health and safety protocols. ● Limited number of students, based on individual needs, attend school more frequently.
3. Full Remote Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learning and teaching provided remotely. ● Every effort will be made to provide as much in-person instruction as possible for students who receive special education services.

4. Stand Alone Remote Program
(K-12 Opt in by Families)

- For students who are unable to return to school due to underlying medical conditions or other factors.
- Students will engage in remote learning.

Adaptability of Models

Due to the unpredictability of the trajectory of the virus in our community, we have developed models that allow for smooth transitions among them. If the District needs to transition from a hybrid model to a remote model or from a hybrid model to a fully in-person model, we will be able to do so efficiently and effectively.

For students who start the year in the Stand Alone Remote Program, families will be able to request a change to models 1-3. However, due to the curriculum and structure of developing a Stand Alone Remote Program, the complexity of staffing, and in order to provide students with a coherent educational experience, transitioning a student to a different model will require consultation and the development of a transition plan. The District will accommodate these requests on an individual basis, however, there will be a waiting period in order for schools to meet the required health and safety standards while bringing additional students into school.

Explanation of Models for Learning

1. ***In-Person Learning:*** In this model, *ALL* students return in person and are organized in classes with a minimum of 3 feet of physical distancing and will adhere to all health and safety requirements. The District’s stance is that a minimum of 6 feet distancing is the standard it will follow. Therefore, having all students return is not feasible. In order to maintain health and safety standards, students would be seated in rows, facing the same direction with no possibility for small group instruction. Students would have limited movement throughout the day. The reality is that learning and teaching practices would be significantly altered by these constraints.
2. ***Hybrid Learning:*** In this model, students will follow a structured full day schedule on all school days, which alternates between in-person and remote learning. The hybrid learning model allows for class sizes that align with our physical distancing standard of 6 feet and all other health and safety protocols.
 - **Cohort Assignment:** Students will be assigned to one of two cohorts (A, B). Cohorts A and B will attend school in-person every other day (Tuesday - Thursday). All students from a family will be assigned to the same cohort. Adjustments will be made, as needed, for siblings with different last names. A limited number of students, based on individual needs, will attend school every day and will complete remote learning assignments at school.
 - **Calendar:** Each cohort will be provided a calendar indicating which days they attend school in-person and which are remote learning days.
 - **Schedule:**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Cohort A	Teacher-Facilitated	Remote Structured Learning	In-Person Learning	Remote Structured Learning	In-Person Learning

Cohort B	Remote Learning	In-Person Learning	Remote Structured Learning	In-person Learning	Remote Structured Learning
	A limited number of students, based on individual need, will attend school in-person more frequently.				

- **Learning and Teaching:**

- When students are *in-person*, smaller numbers of students in each learning environment will allow educators to work with small groups and individuals, with physical distancing. These in-person classes will allow educators to introduce new concepts and skills, assess student progress, lead activities, provide individualized feedback, and support students based on their individual needs. In-person experiences will also allow educators to prepare students and provide materials needed for structured learning on remote days.
- During *remote structured learning*, students will engage in activities that progress their learning including working on assignments/projects, reinforcing skills, and previewing materials for the next day in-person.
- During *teacher-facilitated remote learning*, students will engage in a range of synchronous and asynchronous learning activities.

A limited number of students who will attend school more frequently will engage in their structured learning assignments *at school* on their remote day with educator support including educational services for students who receive English language development or are on Individual Education Program (IEPs). The District may make adjustments to which students are asked to attend school more frequently based on student learning needs and safety requirements. These families will be provided more information and may opt out at their discretion.

3. **Full Remote Learning:** In this model, students will follow a structured full day schedule on all school days with daily teacher instruction and connections.

	PK-K	1-5	6-8	9- 12
School Hours for Students*	8:30 - 2:30	8:30-2:30	8:30 - 2:30	8:30 - 2:30
Total Structured Learning Time	Each school will provide students with a structured schedule that is based on the in-person schedule. Students will participate in structured learning activities that meet the time requirements provided by DESE, which are equivalent to the in-person requirements. All classes and subjects will meet according to that schedule and address the full set of state learning standards. Structured learning time will include whole group instruction, small group meetings, project work, accessing videos, and independent activities based on resources provided by educators.			

Teacher-directed (whole group and smaller break out groups)	Multiple times daily	Multiple times daily	Daily per class	Daily per class
Support Services	Students will receive all of the services documented in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) through in-person instruction, remote instruction or a combination of the two. The District will make every effort to provide as much in-person instruction as is safely possible.			
Accountability	Attendance will be taken on a daily basis. Students' work will be assessed and graded throughout the period of remote learning in ways that are consistent with in-person learning. Educators will use standard grading and reporting procedures and protocols at all levels.			
PreK-12 daily schedules will include lunch and breaks. <i>* The exact times for the school day may change as schools develop specific schedules.</i>				

4. **Stand Alone Remote Program:**

The District will offer a full remote option for families who select this model. The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough educators will serve as facilitators of a curriculum designed by a third-party provider. If extra-curricular activities are offered in a remote format, students from the Stand Alone Remote Program will be able to participate. Students that participate in the Stand Alone Remote Program who have special education needs will receive special education services under this model. In addition, the District will develop a plan for delivering English Learner Education for students in the Stand Alone Remote Program for English learners. The specifics of how we will structure and implement this program is highly dependent on the number of students enrolled and their learning needs as well as staffing availability. The model is subject to further development and change based on these factors.

The Stand Alone Remote Program will require a period of commitment from families, as students move through the curriculum. The District recognizes that there may be circumstances in which, after deciding that their children should start the school year learning remotely, parents decide they would like their children to attend school in person. Due to the curriculum and structure of developing a Stand Alone Remote Program, the complexity of staffing, and in order to provide students with a coherent educational experience, transitioning a student to a different model will require consultation and the development of a transition plan. The District will accommodate these requests on an individual basis, however, there will be a waiting period in order for schools to meet the required health and safety standards while bringing additional students into school.

Identifying Learning Gaps

As we reopen schools in the fall, educators will be assessing students' academic and social/ emotional needs. Educators will use informal and formal assessment methods to determine students' academic progress and plan appropriate learning experiences.

Feedback, Grading, and Assessments

Feedback and accountability for learning are essential. We know that meaningful educator feedback is critical to learning. As we begin the school year, educators will return to standard grading and reporting procedures and protocols at all levels. Parent-teacher conferences will be held remotely.

Courses with Additional Safety Requirements

Some courses involve higher risk activities that compel the District to have specific guidelines which align with the DESE guidance in this area. When possible, many of these activities may be conducted through remote learning. Additional information is available on these courses in [Appendix A](#).

For chorus, singing, musical theater, and using brass or woodwind instruments:

- At this time, these activities are not permitted indoors. When possible, these activities should be taught remotely or If outdoors, with masks encouraged if possible, these activities can occur with at least 10 feet of distance between individuals.

For non-musical theater:

- If outdoors, with masks encouraged if possible, these activities can occur with 6 feet of distance between individuals.
- If indoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with 6 feet of distance between individuals. These activities cannot occur indoors without a mask.

For physical education activities and dance:

- If outdoors, without masks, these activities can occur with 10 feet of distance between individuals.
- If outdoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with 6 feet of distance between individuals.
- If indoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with 6 feet of distance between individuals. These activities cannot occur indoors without a mask.

Many courses and activities use equipment and materials that are regularly shared between students. We will minimize the sharing of materials by modifying instructional plans or providing students with materials for individual use, where possible. In the situation where students will be sharing equipment and/ or materials it will require the following modifications.

- Students will wash or sanitize hands before and after use.
- Equipment and materials will be wiped down or cleaned between usage.
-

Extracurricular Activities

It is our goal to offer the full range of extra-curricular activities to the extent possible based on health and safety guidelines. For athletics, the District is following all guidance provided by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association.

Field Trips

Until further notice, there will be no field trips as per DESE guidelines.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The District will continue to adhere to the tenets of the special education law in providing each child with a disability a “free appropriate public education” (FAPE) while also protecting the health and safety of all students and employees. Students will receive all of the services documented in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) through in-person instruction, remote instruction or a combination of the two. The District will make every effort to provide as much in-person instruction as is safely possible and notification will be provided if the delivery of instruction changes. According to the most recent DESE guidance, students with significant and complex needs, as well as preschool children, will be prioritized for in-person instruction.

Most IEP meetings will be held remotely to limit the number of people in a building. The District will continue to work with families to meet timelines or agree to extensions for Initial Evaluations, Re-evaluations, and IEP Team Meetings as needed.

Districtwide Special Education Programs

The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough have several focused Special Education programs for students with specific learning profiles. For students enrolled in these programs, the District will aim to maximize in-person schooling if the District is using a hybrid or remote learning model while abiding by current necessary health and safety requirements.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Students who are English Learners will continue to receive English Language Development instruction as well as Sheltered Content Instruction (SCI) as a part of the Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) program regardless of the learning model. For English Learners, levels 1-4, the District will aim to maximize in-person schooling if the District is using a hybrid learning model.

TECHNOLOGY

Our District is committed to maintaining a core set of digital tools to support in-person and remote learning. Among these tools are learning management platforms. All educators will use Google Classroom in grades Pre-K-5, and CANVAS in grades 6-12. District leaders, school leaders and teacher leaders have collaborated to establish consistent approaches on how we use these platforms across grade levels, courses, and schools.

In addition, the District has purchased a system-based Zoom license, which will allow the District to enforce the use of security settings for all meetings (waiting rooms, encryptions, passwords). All staff have received guidance and training on how to securely use Zoom and control access to meeting rooms in order to minimize known challenges.

The District will offer families opportunities to learn more about how to use these digital tools at the beginning of the school year and will continue to offer support throughout the year.

Deploying 1:1 Devices for Students

All students, K-12, will have access to a device in order to reduce the sharing of materials in school. In addition, having a 1 to 1 device program allows the District to be prepared for remote learning should it be necessary. At Algonquin Regional High School, the program will continue like last year with some students

bringing their own device while others are issued a device by the school for the school year. In Grades K-8, students will be issued Chromebooks or Ipads. Families will be asked to complete a contract and will be provided a low-cost option for insurance on the device, if they choose.

Student Online Safety

The District will continue to attend to student data privacy laws which help keep our students safe during their online experiences. We understand that students need tools that promote engagement and learning while at the same time, ensure a level of safety while working online.

SCHOOL FACILITIES OPERATIONS

The District is following DESE Guidance for health and safety protocols to set expectations for students and employees for a safe return to school.

Preparing Learning Spaces

Each school-based leadership team, in collaboration with the Director of Operations and facility managers assessed all spaces to make determinations related to:

- **Design to maximize space:** Principals assessed and mapped out each space to optimize student learning using a 6 feet social distancing standard. To accomplish this goal, non-essential furniture was removed.
- **Outdoor spaces:** Schools are planning for the use of outdoor spaces for classes, breaks, meals, and other activities. This included courtyards, play areas and parking lots.
- **Fire code and safety:** While developing our reopening plans, each school considered their fire code and building safety guidelines as they work to maximize space within buildings.
- **Plexiglass barriers:** The District has installed plexiglass barriers for all main office reception areas.

Spaces for Mask Breaks

Students will have at least two mask breaks per day (e.g. mealtime and recess). Additional mask breaks will be scheduled; each school will identify spaces (ideally outdoors) that will be used.

- **Spaces:** Spaces for mask breaks will ensure that students are at least 6 feet apart.
- **Hand Washing:** Hand washing facilities or hand sanitizer will be available upon entering and leaving this space.
- **Mask Storage:** Once removed, masks will be placed on a napkin or paper towel, with the inside of the mask facing up or placed in a labeled bag or container by holding the outer edges of the mask folded in half with the inside of the mask touching.
- **Signage:** Each school will post signage on how to properly put on and take off masks/face coverings.

Health Offices

- **Cleaning and Disinfecting:** Health Offices will be a top priority for frequent cleaning and disinfecting using electrostatic disinfectant sprayers in addition to the regular disinfectant practices.
- **Air Quality Evaluation:** Each Health Office has undergone an evaluation for air quality, ventilation, and filtration. The District will meet or exceed the standard for air quality, ventilation, and filtration in these spaces.

Medical Waiting Room

This is a separate space from the nurse's office for providing medical care. The medical waiting room will be used when a student presenting COVID-19 symptoms needs to be separated.

- **Supervision:** The medical waiting room will always be monitored by appropriate staff.
- **Masks/face coverings:** Masks/face coverings are always strictly required in this space.
- **Hand Washing:** Hand washing facilities or hand sanitizer needs to be used when entering and leaving the space.
- **Proper Ventilation and Filtration:** Our HVAC consultant reviewed each space and has recommended that each Medical Waiting Room is under negative pressure (where air from space is not recirculated but exhausted to outdoors) and the air inside space is under HEPA filtration.

Ventilation and HVAC Systems

- **Air Quality Assessment:** Each school completed an air quality assessment in relation to its ventilation and filtration systems. Special attention was given to the Health Offices and Medical Waiting Rooms.
- **Doors and Windows:** Each room will have interior doors and exterior windows open to promote air flow, to the extent feasible. The exterior doors will continue to be locked for security purposes.
- **Outdoor Air:** Each school will increase outdoor air ventilation or filtering air that is recirculating within a room or building.
- **Ventilation Capabilities:** Each school has differences in ventilation capabilities, but whenever possible the system is being calibrated to maximize ventilation and filtration abilities.

Preparing Ventilation Systems

- **Cleaning:** Each school's ventilation system was properly cleaned.
- **Air Dampers Open:** Each school's HVAC systems with outside air dampers open will be operated for a minimum of one week prior to reopening schools.
- **Filtration:** In consultation with our HVAC contractors, the District will consider upgrading filters to increased efficiency ratings. In most cases, keeping windows open or cracked will sufficiently ventilate learning spaces.
- **Minimize Recirculated Air:** Facilities staff evaluated how to eliminate or minimize air recirculation and have adjusted the HVAC systems accordingly.
- **Extended Hours for Ventilation:** Facilities staff will maintain ventilation for longer hours and in many cases the systems will be running continuously or with extended hours.
- **Interior Spaces:** Interior spaces (without windows) will be evaluated for proper ventilation and will not be used if deemed insufficient.

Hallways

- **Congestion:** Each school will include in their plans ways to minimize congestion.
- **One-Directional:** When possible, each school may make hallways one-directional to prevent students from directly passing each other.
- **Stairwells:** Stairwells will be properly marked and one-directional when feasible.
- **Emergency Evacuation Routes:** Each school will evaluate emergency evacuation protocols and communicate any relevant changes.
- **Stagger Class Transitions:** Each school will stagger class transitions to minimize congestion including arrival and dismissal times.

Clean and Sanitized Restrooms

The District will follow guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), which includes the ongoing maintenance of restrooms, ensuring they have functional toilets, adequate water supply, clean and disinfected surfaces, and handwashing supplies.

- The facilities staff will clean and disinfect all restrooms at least twice daily using EPA-registered disinfectants that are effective against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
- The facilities staff will closely monitor high-touch surfaces such as faucets, toilets, doorknobs, and light switches, and will clean and disinfect daily.
- The District will post instructions for proper hand washing in restrooms.
- The facilities staff will maintain inventories of supplies for handwashing, including soap and paper towels for drying hands and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- **Handwashing:** Every bathroom in the District has paper towels and hand soap for handwashing.
- **Exhaust System:** Every bathroom's exhaust system is being checked for proper functioning and adequate ventilation.
- **Transition Times:** Each school will not be allowing students to use the bathroom during transition times.
- **Procedures:** Each school will have different systems to minimize traffic in bathrooms by implementing bathroom schedules and sign-in and out procedures.

Lockers

- **Reduced Access:** At the middle and high school, the school administration will reduce access to student lockers including designating times and reasons for accessing the locker.
- **Backpacks:** Students will be encouraged to use personal backpacks to carry their belongings. Special consideration will be made to limit the amount of material needed to be carried.

Signage

Each school will ensure clear and age-appropriate signage is posted in highly visible locations throughout school. Signage will include reminding students and employees to follow proper health and safety protocols. Signage will be translated into a language understood by each student. Signage will be posted in the following key areas: handwashing and hand sanitizing stations, bathrooms, entry/exits, eating areas, mask break areas, classrooms, playgrounds, hallways, and areas where queueing may occur.

Shared items

Each school will implement protocols to reduce the amount of shared items, including to the extent possible, sharing of electronic devices, toys, games, learning aids, art material and other items that are difficult to clean or disinfect.

- **Library Books:** Library books will be checked out when students clean their hands before and after use.
- **Paper-based Materials:** Books and other paper-based materials are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning procedures.
- **Additional Supplies:** Each school will purchase supplies that need to be available on an individual basis.
- **Personal Belongings:** Each school will develop systems to keep each student's belongings separated from others.

School Cleaning and Disinfecting

The District enhanced cleaning protocols to comply with Center for Disease Control (CDC), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), and local Boards of Health guidelines for reopening of schools.

School administration will ensure the schools are properly cleaned and disinfected each day following the guidelines below:

- **Frequency:** Cleaning and disinfecting should occur at least daily for shared spaces and furniture. For high-touch surfaces (e.g., door handles, light switches, toilet seats), cleaning and disinfecting should occur three to four times per day and/or between uses.
- **Desks:** Desks should be cleaned at least daily. For situations when cohorts of students move between classrooms, cleaning of desks must take place between classes and before and after meals. Cleaning of desks can be done by students, teachers or custodial staff.
- **Electronics:** Each school will use alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 60 percent ethanol or 70 percent isopropanol. If shared, electronics must be cleaned between use by students or custodial staff.
- **Outdoor play areas:** Until further notice, outdoor playground equipment will be off-limits.
- **High traffic areas:** including entrances, main offices, health offices, bathrooms, will be cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily.
- **Electrostatic sprayers:** Custodial staff will utilize electrostatic sprayers to disinfect classrooms and common areas daily.
- **Trash Removal:** All trash receptacles are now touchless which requires many schools to use trash receptacles without lids. Due to the guidelines, trash will be monitored and removed as needed.
- **EPA Approved Disinfectant:** Custodial staff will use EPA approved disinfectant to conduct the daily disinfecting tasks. These products are available for review at each school by contacting the Facilities Manager.
- **Storage of Chemicals:** Each school will ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children.

TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONS

The safe transportation of students to and from school is a critical part of our school district's operation. The health and safety of students and transportation staff remain our top priorities. The District reviewed DESE guidance to develop a transportation strategy that provides safe conditions for all students and employees traveling by bus, while maximizing in-person learning:

- Follow the medically-advised health and safety requirements for school bus transportation.
- Comply with bus capacity requirements that allow for physical distancing.
- Promote safe alternative transportation options for students, including family-provided transportation, walking, and biking, as appropriate.

Masks/face coverings

All employees and students on the bus, regardless of age, are required to wear masks/face coverings at all times. Exemptions will be made for students with medical and/or behavioral reasons.

Boarding the Bus

- **Distancing at Bus Stops:** While at bus stops, students should adhere to physical distancing of at least 6 feet.
- **Hand sanitizer:** Hand sanitizer dispensers will be available on buses for students and drivers to clean hands as they board and exit.

Seat Assignments

Students will be assigned to a single bus and a seat. The seat assignments will be dictated by the route. Proper training will be provided at each school to implement this adjustment to practice.

- **One student per bench:** Students will be seated *no more than* one student per bench, alternating sides for each row, which allows students to maintain approximately 3 feet of physical distance.
- **Same Household:** Children from the same household may sit together and in closer proximity (e.g., two students per bench). Diagrams are provided in DESE's guidance.

Ventilation

All windows will be opened at all times during operation, unless not possible due to extreme weather conditions. If that is the case, the windows will remain cracked to promote proper ventilation.

Transportation Protocols

The District is working with its transportation contractor, North Reading Transportation (NRT), to ensure transportation protocols are in place as outlined in DESE's guidance. These protocols include:

- **Training:** Drivers and other transportation staff will be trained on the transportation plan prior to school reopening.
- **Distancing:** Each school will modify boarding, pick-up, and drop-off protocols to support assigned seats and other efforts to support social distancing during arrival and departure times.
- **Cleaning and Disinfecting:** The District in conjunction with NRT will implement schedules and protocols for routine cleaning/disinfecting of vehicles and seats.
- **Communication:** Each school will communicate expectations and conduct training for parents/caregivers, students, and staff about the new procedures and protocols.

Considerations for Students with Disabilities

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, the District will continue to work collaboratively with parents of students who are eligible for specialized transportation to determine their ability to transport their child(ren) to and from school.

- **Eligible for Reimbursement:** Parents of students for whom special transportation is provided for in their IEPs and who transport their student are eligible for reimbursement, according to 603 CMR 28.07(6). In these cases, the student maintains the right to access transportation for a disability-related need at a future date. The IEP will not be amended to reflect the temporary change in transportation arrangements, but the family will be notified in writing of this temporary change if they agree to transport their student.
- **Alternative Methods of Transportation:** In cases where special transportation is provided for in the student's IEP and the family is unable to transport their student, school districts must coordinate and provide transportation for those students, including students in out-of-district placements.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Buses

The District will coordinate with the district transportation department and contracted transportation providers to ensure vehicles are properly cleaned and disinfected.

- **Frequency:** High-touch surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected thoroughly after each morning route and after each afternoon route using EPA-approved disinfectants.
- **High-Touch Areas:** Clean high-touch surfaces first and most frequently, including buttons, handholds, window latches, rails, steering wheels, door handles, shift knobs, dashboard, wiping heat and air conditioner vents, spot cleaning walls and seats, dusting horizontal surfaces, cleaning spills, etc.
- **Interior of Bus:** The interior of each vehicle will be cleaned and disinfected thoroughly at least once each day.
- **Training:** Staff will be trained to use disinfectants in a safe and effective manner.

Bus Registration

The District will require all families to “opt-in” for transportation services for the Fall Reopening. We will resend a Transportation Registration Form that will include a deadline for bus registration. The responses to the form will enable us to plan for implementation.

SCHOOL ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Pick-up and Drop-off Protocols

Each school will modify arrival and departure protocols to limit crowding upon student drop-off and pick-up:

- **Locations:** Designate appropriate pick-up area(s) for parents/caregivers.
- **Distancing:** Parents/caregivers should maintain physical distancing standards and wear masks/face coverings if they exit their vehicle.
- **Entry and Dismissal:** School administration will establish policies for student entry and dismissal including a plan for traffic, drop-off, and pick-up that complies with physical distancing guidelines. Each school will include a section of their reopening plan that will include specific policy.
- **Consultation:** The District will consult with Northborough and Southborough Police Departments to ensure safe arrival and dismissal procedures as it relates to traffic partners and congestion.

FOOD SERVICES OPERATIONS

The districts’ food services departments are preparing for the reopening of school. The departments have reviewed supply chains, alternative menu items, and preparation and distribution methods. A few of the aspects related to our preparation are detailed below:

Eating Areas for Students

As students will be unmasked to eat, there is a strict requirement of 6 feet of physical distance between each student. Each school is developing schedules and spaces to abide by this guidance.

- **Eating in the cafeteria/alternative eating spaces:** Each school may utilize different locations for students to have lunch. Students must maintain 6 feet of distance when unmasked.
- **Cleaning between lunch waves:** The tables and other surfaces that students are using for meals will be cleaned between groups regardless of location.
- **Here are some additional details about food consumption- [Safe eating protocols \(snack and lunch\)](#)**

Free and Reduced Lunch

The District will support families that qualify for the USDA's Free and Reduced Lunch Program. Applications for the program will be made available on the District's website.

MySchoolBucks

The District will continue to use MySchoolBucks to support the financial side of the program. MySchoolBucks accounts will be activated on August 15th – Questions about MySchoolBucks should be directed to: Food Services Managers – Kyle Parson for K-8 Northborough and Southborough (kparson@nsboro.k12.ma.us) and Dianne Cofer for Algonquin Regional High School (dcofer@nsboro.k12.ma.us).

Requirements for Bringing Food to School

- **Preview:** Parents should review with their child that they can not share food while in school.
- **Containers:** Students should bring food in a closed container, ie. ziplock bag or plastic container with lid.
- **Water Bottles:** All water fountains have been disabled until further notice. However, in many schools there are refilling stations that are available for filling water bottles. Disposable water bottles or refillable water bottles are permitted. All water bottles are to be labeled.

Food Preparation and Serving Space

- **Modified Work Stations:** The District has evaluated kitchen workstations and modified stations for physical distancing.
- **Stagger service staff:** At Algonquin Regional High School the kitchen staff shifts will be staggered to reduce opportunities for transmission.

Food Preparation and Distribution

The District will implement adjusted practices to comply with health and safety requirements.

- **Individually packaged meals**
- **Non-contact payment**
- **Schedule and distribution:** Establish a meal serving schedule and distribution process that limits mixing of cohorts and touch-points.
- **Vending Machines will be suspended.**

Meal Consumption

- **Masks/face coverings:** Each school will train students for the proper removal and placement of masks/face coverings before eating.
- **Distancing:** Individuals must be at least 6 feet apart at all times when masks/face coverings are removed.
- **Hand hygiene:** Individuals must properly wash or sanitize hands before and after eating.
- **Water fountains cannot be used for direct consumption.**
- **Food allergies:** Schools will continue to follow safety procedures related to food allergies.

Meals for Remote Learners

The District will offer meals to eligible students who are learning remotely from home. Detailed plans for how to access the meals will be forthcoming.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS AND RECREATION

The District is working with Southborough and Northborough Extended Day Programs as well as Southborough and Northborough Recreation to provide before- and after-school offerings. The District has been in frequent contact with the directors. Adjustments will be made to the programs to accommodate health and safety guidelines. They will be implementing enhanced protocols for all aspects of their programs. The Directors will be communicating with families once the decision is made about the fall reopening.

APPENDIX A: DRAFT COVID - 19 HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

[DRAFT Guidelines- Student/Family for Home-Monitoring Illness](#)

[DRAFT Guidelines -Staff/Employee for Self-Monitoring Illness](#)

[School Entry Guidelines for Staff](#)

[Daily Screening Checklist for Staff](#)

[DRAFT Guidelines for Symptomatic/Close Contact Students](#)

[Symptoms of COVID-19](#)

[DRAFT Guidelines for Symptomatic/Close Contact Staff/Employees](#)

[DRAFT Guidelines - Mask/Face Covering Protocol for Students](#)

[DRAFT Guidelines - Mask/Face Covering/Face Shield for Staff/Employees](#)

[DRAFT Guidelines for Social/Physical Distancing](#)

[DRAFT Guidelines for Alternative Safe Eating Space](#)

[DRAFT Guidelines for Meetings](#)

[DRAFT Guidelines for Sending Students/Staff to the Nurse](#) - under construction

[DRAFT Letter to Health Care Provider](#)

[DRAFT Guidelines for Medical Waiting/Isolation Room](#)

[DRAFT Guidelines for Visitors](#) - under construction

[DRAFT Guidelines for Staff, Family and Student Education](#) - under construction

[DRAFT Guidelines for Recess](#) - under construction

[DRAFT Guidelines for Band](#) - under construction

[DRAFT Guidelines for Chorus/Singing](#) - under construction

[DRAFT Guidelines for Theater](#) - under construction

[DRAFT Guidelines for PE/Dance](#) - under construction

[DRAFT Guidelines for Music](#) - under construction

[DRAFT Guidelines for Visual Arts](#) - under construction

APPENDIX B: DIAGRAMS OF SAMPLE CLASSROOM SET-UPS AND BUS SEATING

(diagrams to be added)