

# Westfield Public Schools

## WELCOME BACK!

### 2021-2022



#### DISTRICT CORE VALUES

- ✓ Inclusive school communities
- ✓ Student-centered relationships
- ✓ Relevant and rigorous learning



# BACK TO SCHOOL

## August 24, 2021

August 24, 2021

Dear Westfield Families,

This document includes our back-to-school plan and provides important information including food service procedures and transportation protocols. I encourage all families to review this information before the start of the school year.

Unfortunately, because of the ongoing pandemic, school districts across the nation are reopening under challenging conditions again this school year. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's School Year Guidance was released on August 13, 2021, and since that time, our district worked with members of the City of Westfield Health Department to create a specific back to school plan for the 2021-2022 school year. The WPS Back to School Plan provides specific actions the district and schools have implemented in the areas of health and safety strategies, social-emotional learning, daily operations within schools, teaching and learning models, and school services. As you look over our plan, please keep in mind that much can change in a short period of time. Flexibility is needed throughout the school year as we adjust to the continued impact of COVID-19 on our region and community.

WPS students in grades 1-12 will start school on Monday, August 30, 2021. Preschool, Kindergarten and Transition Services students will start school on Monday, September 7, 2021. All students will begin the school year in person, unless enrolled in our K-8 Virtual School.

This school year, our priorities remain the same; we will focus on the health and safety of our students and staff and our commitment to our district core values. This year's WPS Back to School Plan will be posted on our district website. We thank you in advance for your continued partnership and understanding as we continue to navigate the upcoming school year. We are very much looking forward to the return of our students!

Sincerely,

Stefan Czaprowski  
Superintendent of Schools  
Westfield Public Schools

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# Underlying Assumptions

Westfield Public Schools will reopen schools based on the best current understanding of COVID 19 and what is required for continued containment and mitigation. At the same time, this continued public health situation requires adaptive preparation that can evolve as the science and circumstances do.

We have the following assumptions in mind as we develop our model for opening:

1. As we open, we will likely continue to make modifications to this plan based on guidance from state, and local health officials, which includes physical distancing and frequent disinfecting of the facilities, buses, and other areas.
2. We will reopen under the state's safety recommendations.
3. Governor Baker has the authority to close and open schools. Individual schools and districts can be closed by Superintendents with guidance from the City of Westfield Health Department.

# Guiding Principles

The safety and health of our students, staff and their families are a priority in all decisions.

1. Offering high quality, engaging lessons to all our students is a priority.
2. We are responsible for meeting the needs of all students, including the distinctive needs of students from low-income backgrounds, students with disabilities, and English language learners.
3. Westfield Public Schools will continue to make every effort to provide technology and Internet connection to serve all students if remote learning becomes necessary.

# Information Families Need to Know

## Westfield Public Schools (PreK-12)

Based on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) requirements, all students (PreK-12) will return to school in person every day for the entire school year.

We will follow Westfield School Committee policy on wearing masks / face coverings in school. **All students, staff, and visitors are required to wear face coverings in the school buildings and on school buses. Frequent mask breaks will be provided. Students will not be required to wear masks outside the school or in the cafeteria while eating.**

## Westfield Virtual School (K-8)

Westfield Virtual School will be located at 18 Broad Street, and school staff will work from that building. This will allow for optimal school and district level collaboration and provide a space for any in person meetings as well as a meeting place for any in person field trips or social experiences.

Parents/Guardians that are interested in enrolling their students in the Westfield Virtual School should click [here](#) to complete an application.

## When does school start?

The first day of school for students in Grades 1-12 is Monday, August 30, 2021, as noted in our WPS 2021-2022 School Calendar. Kindergarten, Preschool, and Transition Services students are scheduled to begin on Tuesday, September 7, 2021.

## A Disclaimer

Our District reserves the right to change this version of the Westfield Public Schools Return to School Plan at any time. It is our understanding that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) expects to continue to issue additional guidance throughout the year. Please continue to follow our district's updates via email and on the district website at [www.schoolsofwestfield.org](http://www.schoolsofwestfield.org) or on our district Facebook page by following Westfield, MA Public Schools.

## State Guidance on the Reopening of School

It is important to keep in mind that the health metrics may dictate a return to remote learning, and we should all be prepared to make a rapid transition if needed.

On Friday, August 13, DESE sent school and district leaders with protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios. Additional guidance from DESE on face covering requirements was received on Friday, August 20. The document was developed in consultation with the Department of Public Health (DPH) and is intended for use by school health professionals, COVID-19 site leaders, and others who will be involved in the day-to-day management of testing and quarantine at the district and school levels. DESE and MA DPH will monitor the public health situation and may issue additional guidance as needed.

Highlights of the guidance include:

- For the 2021-22 school year, we are offering an extra layer of protection to prevent the spread of COVID-19, our COVID-19 testing program at school. This program has two components: **symptomatic testing** for students who show symptoms of COVID-19 at school and **test and stay** for students who may have been exposed while in school but are not showing symptoms. Both are a quick, non-invasive nasal swab OR saliva sample that is collected under the supervision of a school nurse or trained health provider. Unlike COVID-19 tests of the past, these are not uncomfortable and easy for students to do themselves. Students only participate with permission from a parent or guardian. Additional information regarding the COVID-19 testing program will be distributed from our Health Office next week.
- The list of close contacts who are exempt from testing and quarantine protocols has been updated to include individuals on school buses, when students are masked with windows open, regardless of distance.
- The COVID-19 symptoms list has been updated (with more symptoms being identified as COVID-19 symptoms only when "in combination with other symptoms"), along with some points of differentiation in COVID-19 symptoms necessitating a PCR test for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.
- Everyday preventive actions will help to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including wearing a mask/cloth face covering, avoiding touching your face with unwashed hands, and frequently washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Three feet of physical distance between students has been recommended again this year, except on school buses and vans. Westfield Public Schools will adhere to this guidance to the extent possible.

# School Health and Safety

The health, safety, and well-being of our students and staff remains our top priority. The State's most recently issued guidelines include the use of a combination of all the following mitigation strategies. Our whole plan is designed with multiple overlapping layers of safety protocols and procedures designed to maximize the safety of our students and staff.

## Visitors

Visitors will be required to wear masks when in the school buildings regardless of vaccination status.

## Westfield Public Schools Mask Policy

1. Per the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, masks are required by all staff and students in school buildings until October 1, 2021.
2. After October 1, school districts that demonstrate that 80% student and staff vaccination rates may relax the face covering requirement for vaccinated staff and students in middle and high school only.
3. Masks are always required on school buses.
4. Mask/face covering breaks will be scheduled for staff and students.
5. Mask/face coverings for students should be provided by the student/family. Reusable or cloth face coverings are acceptable. We encourage families to pack an extra reusable facemask for each student daily. The district will provide disposable face masks as needed.

## Daily Screening and Symptom Check

Daily screening and symptom checks at home before coming to school are necessary. Families will need to check students each morning for symptoms before coming to school or getting on the bus.

### COVID-19 symptoms list:

- Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Sore throat, when in combination with other symptoms

- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea when in combination with other symptoms
- Headache when in combination with other symptoms
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms

If a student has symptoms of COVID-19, they should not attend school. The family should notify their school nurse that the child will be absent and the reason for the absence. The school nurse will follow-up with the family regarding the child's symptoms. It is important to know that the symptoms of COVID-19 mimic the symptoms of many other illnesses. To protect all students and staff, any symptoms of COVID-19 will be treated as a suspected case until determined otherwise.

All Westfield Public School staff members are expected to follow the same self-screening daily routine before arriving at work. If any staff member has any symptoms, they should notify the building nurse or the building Principal and stay home from school.

## **Cleaning and Sanitation of Facilities**

Procedures and protocols for disinfecting buildings and building contents by custodians have been updated for both daytime cleaning and after school disinfecting. Priority is given to touch surfaces such as door handles, light switches, faucets, and stair railings. All procedures and protocols are and will continue to be based on guidance from the state. Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected daily. Instructions for proper hand washing are posted in restrooms.

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Westfield Public Schools has purchased key safety supplies. The following supplies are available for schools:

- Disposable masks for staff
- Disposable masks for students
- Nitrile and vinyl gloves
- kN95 and N95 masks for health and custodial staff
- Disposable gowns (or substitute), eye protection, and face shields for student programs requiring additional protection
- Hand sanitizer for wall units and classrooms
- Disinfection solution and cleaning wipes

## Health Office Protocols

1. Procedures for the health office include hand hygiene protocol entering and leaving the office, mandated mask or face coverings, maintaining physical distancing, visits kept to a brief period of time, no visitors or parent pick-up in the health office, and visits will be limited to medically indicated reasons only.
2. Immunization requirements and updated physical exam requirements for admission to school remain unchanged for the 2021-2022 school year. This includes updated immunization injections and records for prekindergarten, kindergarten, grade 7, and grade 11. Updated physical exams are required for prekindergarten, kindergarten, grade 4, grade 7, and grade 10.

## Social Emotional Learning

The Westfield Public Schools are committed to Social Emotional Learning and to meeting the Mental Health needs of students. Over the past five years the district has committed Title IIA and LEA funds to the support and development of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports ([PBIS](#)), Responsive Classroom, Trauma Informed and Mindfulness Practices. Westfield Public Schools will enhance our Multi-Tiered Systems and Supports to address students and family's needs through a tiered system of support. We have added counselors at all levels for support students and families in Social Emotional Learning.



## Enrollment, Registration, and Screenings

All registrations for new students entering Westfield Public Schools should be completed online at [www.schoolsofwestfield.org](http://www.schoolsofwestfield.org). The pre-registration process can be completed on any mobile device or computer. If you do not have access to this technology, need assistance in registering your child, or need translation services to assist in the registration process, please contact us by emailing [preregistration@schoolsofwestfield.org](mailto:preregistration@schoolsofwestfield.org) or by calling 572-6439 for assistance. Documents for completing your child's registration into WPS can be sent via USPS addressed to Central Registration, 94 North Elm Street, Suite 101, Westfield, MA 01085. Documents can also be scanned and emailed to [preregistration@schoolsofwestfield.org](mailto:preregistration@schoolsofwestfield.org).

## Required Enrollment Documents

- Birth Certificate/I-94 Refugee Card
- Complete Immunization Record and Physical Examination Documentation
- All prior school records (if applicable)
- Proof of Residency

## Kindergarten Age Requirement

Children must be five years of age on or before September 1, 2021, to be eligible to attend Kindergarten. There are no exceptions to this School Committee policy.

## Fort Meadow Early Childhood Center

Children must be three years of age to be considered for a placement. For an application and the registration process, please contact the school at 572-6422. After the Pre-registration Process is complete, please mail all documents to Fort Meadow Early Childhood Center at 35 White Street, Westfield, MA 01085.

## Westfield Technical Academy

The admission application and policy are available by contacting the school at 572-6533 or visiting the school website.

## Westfield Virtual School

The admission application and policy are available online. Please call 572-6439 with any questions.



# Technology

Westfield Public Schools has purchased devices to ensure access to technology for all students. The district uses the Securly application to monitor student accounts for safety. Securly monitors your child's online interactions for issues like cyberbullying, depression, suicidal ideation, and self-harm. When something potentially problematic occurs in platforms such as your child's district email account, a notification is sent to the school principal or designee.

# Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

Fall sports are being allowed by the MIAA and Westfield Public Schools. Extracurricular activities will also resume for the 2021-2022 school year. WPS will follow School Committee policy as well as guidelines provided by the MIAA, DESE, MA DPH, MMEA, and our local Board of Health.

## Operations Transportation

The WPS Transportation Department has been in communication with our bus companies and will continue to maintain regular communication with them. All WPS buses and vans have schedules and protocols for routine cleaning and disinfecting of the vehicles.

WPS, in collaboration with our bus companies, has implemented the following DESE Core health and safety practices to support safe school bus operations including:

- **Masks** - all staff and students on the bus, regardless of age, are always required to wear masks on public transportation.
- **Ventilation** - Windows will always be open during operation, unless not possible due to extreme weather conditions.
- **Seat assignments** - Students will be assigned to a single bus and a seat.

A sick student riding the bus puts all other riders at risk. Daily symptom screenings must be conducted before children, drivers, and vehicle staff board the bus. Drivers will be appropriately trained to observe students upon entry to the bus. Students who become sick while at school will be picked-up by an adult and will not ride the bus home.



## Food Services

All students will receive free lunch and breakfast for the 2021-2022 school year per the USDA. This should not be confused with free/reduced eligibility as this is a separate offering.

**All families are still encouraged to fill out the free and reduced application you receive on the first day of school so we may utilize all programs offered with these statuses as well as holding these statuses for the first 30 days of school the following school year.**

- 3 ft distance will be maintained in the cafeteria to the extent possible
- no masks are required while eating
- tables and chairs will be sanitized after every use

# Appendix A: Return to School

## Frequently Asked Questions FAQs

**Question:** Do individuals need to maintain physical distance in school this year?

**Answer:** There are no physical distancing requirements in place this year, even during meals. However, we recommend that districts and schools encourage individuals to distance as feasible when masks are removed indoors during mealtimes. Schools are also encouraged to continue utilizing outdoor space for meals, as feasible.

**Question:** What if there is a student or staff member that tests positive for COVID-19?

**Answer:** We will follow the recommendation of local and state DPH guidelines. These recommendations could change per the Massachusetts Department of Public Health or City of Westfield Board of Health.

**Question:** What if a child in school has a fever?

**Answer:** Our school nursing staff are prepared to address students with fevers and differentiate between COVID-19 or other possible reasons why a student may have a fever. Our medical professionals will work with families to determine a return to school timeline for students as needed.

**Question:** Will we be provided the names of any children or staff that are sick?

**Answer:** No. The right to privacy of any individual cannot be compromised.

**Question:** What about parents who still send students to school even if told to self-isolate or quarantine?

**Answer:** The District's Health and Safety Supervisor along with school nurses will be working with the City of Westfield Board of Health to ensure requirements are being followed.

**Question:** How will families know if there is a situation that requires my student to isolate or quarantine?

**Answer:** The State of Massachusetts has a rigorous contact tracing system in place. The COVID-19 Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC) program helps support boards of health from every community in their contact tracing work. The program focuses on reaching out to people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and the contacts they have been close to, making sure they have the support they need to isolate or quarantine. In addition to the CTC and the local board of health, the school nurses will also be assisting in the process. If there is a situation that requires your student to be tested or to isolate, you can expect contact by any of these professional groups.

**Question:** Can students who are quarantining due to a COVID-19 related issue participate in remote learning?

**Answer:** During the 2021-22 school year, full-time remote learning programs will not count toward structured learning time hours unless specifically previously authorized by DESE. Schools should adopt a policy consistent with other absences and provide work for students that can be completed while at home. To minimize the amount of time required to quarantine outside of school districts should adopt the Test and Stay program. More information about this program can be found here: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/testing/>.

**Question:** If my child is required to quarantine, how will schoolwork be assigned?

**Answer:** Quarantined students will be able to access their schoolwork in Google Classroom.

**Question:** Will students have access to hand sanitizer?

**Answer:** The District is committed to having an adequate supply of hand sanitizer for the coming year.

**Question:** What is the focus for custodial cleaning to ensure my student's classroom is sanitized?

**Answer:** Disinfection of any possible viral particles is the priority for custodial staff. Keeping touch surfaces such as doors, desks, stair rails, light switches, etc. as clean as possible is the priority. Custodial staff will be using electrostatic disinfection devices to assist in keeping classroom spaces free from germs. Families should be aware that a hospital-grade disinfectant will also be used by custodians.

**Question:** What about the building HVAC systems and clean air flow in the classrooms?

**Answer:** Each building's fresh air return systems are inspected by HVAC certified professionals and routine maintenance such as cleaning and replacing filters have been completed for all units and buildings. Keeping outside windows open to increase fresh air flow is highly recommended and will be encouraged.

**Question:** If a student starts to feel unwell on the bus on the way to school, what will happen?

**Answer:** The bus company will notify the school nurse if a student is ill on the bus in the morning. The student will be met by the school nurse (or a designee) when exiting the bus and escorted directly to the health office for assessment.

**Question:** What about sports?

**Answer:** Sports will continue to follow guidance provided by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA).

**Question:** What if I want to visit my child's class?

**Answer:** We will follow our regular procedures for visitors to schools and classrooms. Visitors will be required to wear masks regardless of vaccination status.

**Question:** Will certified teachers be teaching the Westfield Virtual School classes?

**Answer:** All WVS remote learning will be taught by certified WPS teachers.

## **Appendix B: Responsibilities/Preventions**

### **Parent Responsibilities**

1. Prepare for potential transitions between face to face and remote instruction
2. Practice hygiene and sanitization in preparation for attending school
3. Prepare and properly instruct your child on how to effectively wear a mask and practice mask sanitation
4. Monitor and screen health concerns including temperature and/or screening checks
5. Keep your child at home and communicate with the school and your medical provider if COVID-19 symptoms are present or if the student has been exposed to someone with COVID-19
6. Always keep your child at home when they are sick

### **Student Responsibilities**

1. Prepare for potential transitions between face to face and remote instruction
2. Practice hygiene and sanitation protocols
3. Wear face masks as required
4. Routine cleaning of high touch surfaces including laptops and digital devices
5. Monitor health symptoms and maintain health screening practices
6. Stay home when sick

# Appendix C: 2021-2022 School Calendar

## WESTFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2021-2022 CALENDAR

[www.schoolsofwestfield.org](http://www.schoolsofwestfield.org)

AUGUST 2021				
MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

FEBRUARY 2022				
MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28				

SEPTEMBER 2021				
MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

MARCH 2022				
MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

OCTOBER 2021				
MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

APRIL 2022				
MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

NOVEMBER 2021				
MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

MAY 2022				
MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

DECEMBER 2021				
MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

JUNE 2022				
MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

JANUARY 2022				
MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

**August**  
 August 25 - New Teacher Orientation  
 August 26 & 27 - Staff Development Days  
 August 30 – Schools Open for Grades 1-12

**September**  
 September 6 - Labor Day  
 September 7 – 1<sup>st</sup> day Kindergarten & Preschool

**October**  
 October 11 - Columbus Day Holiday/No School  
 October 26 -Early Release Day for Elementary Students  
 Full Day for Secondary Students  
 ELEMNTARY Parent Teacher Conferences

**November**  
 November 2 - Staff Development Day/No School for students  
 November 11 - Veterans Day /No School  
 November 24, 25, 26 - Thanksgiving Recess/No School

**December**  
 December 24-31 -Holiday Recess/No School  
 (schools reopen January 3, 2022)

**January**  
 January 17 - Martin Luther King Day/No School

**February**  
 February 9 -Early Release Day Elementary Students  
 Full Day for Secondary Students  
 ELEMNTARY Parent Teacher Conference  
 February 21-25 - Winter Vacation

**March**  
 March 11 - Staff Development Day/No School

**April**  
 April 15 - Good Friday/No School  
 April 18-22 - Spring Vacation/No School

**May**  
 May 30 - Memorial Day Holiday/No School

**June**  
 June 2 - WTA Graduation  
 June 3 - WHS Graduation  
 June 21 - Last day of school –early release students  
 \*includes 5 emergency closing days  
 Last day will be June 14 if no emergency closing days are used. For every day not used, a day will be deducted from calendar

Dismissal times for Early Release	
High Schools	11:00
Intermediate School	11:30
Middle School	11:30
Elementary Schools	12:15

Approved by School Committee: 2-11-2021 mtg

# Resources

## COVID-19 resources

- [AlertsMA](#): create a profile and sign-up for COVID-19 alerts by text, email, or phone call in your preferred language.
- [MassNotify](#): use your smartphone to sign up for notifications of possible exposures to COVID-19.
- [Call 2-1-1](#) or use [live chat](#) for non-emergency questions and help
- Call [Crisis Counseling Assistance Program](#) | (888) 215-4920
- [Email](#) the Governor's Office or call (617) 725-4005

## Report abuse & assault

- Domestic violence and sexual assault:
  - Massachusetts | [Call SafeLink](#) at (877) 785-2020 or access [SafeLink live chat](#). For deaf and hard-of-hearing call (877) 785-2020, or by TTY at (877) 521-2601
  - National | Call Domestic Violence 24/7 Crisis Hotline at (800) 799-7233
  - National | Call Sexual Assault 24/7 Crisis Hotline at (800) 656-4673
- Child abuse or endangerment:
  - Mon - Fri, 8:45 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. | [Find and call your local DCF office](#)
  - Sun - Sat, 5:00 p.m. - 8:45 a.m. | Call Child-At-Risk hotline at (800) 792-5200

## General Information

Centers for Disease Control.

[Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools | CDC](#)

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, COVID-19 Updates

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-updates-and-information>

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>

The latest back to school information from Westfield Public Schools

[http://www.schoolsofwestfield.org/back to school information](http://www.schoolsofwestfield.org/back_to_school_information)

[City of Westfield COVID-19 Information and Bulletins](#)

[COVID-19 Information & Bulletins | Westfield, MA - Official Website \(cityofwestfield.org\)](#)