



COOPERSTOWN CENTRAL SCHOOL

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Dear Parent(s) & Guardian(s):

September 3, 2021

Only a few more days until the students return to school. The purpose of this letter is to update families as to the schools opening protocols for in-person learning, athletics and extracurricular activities. Cooperstown Central School District (CCSD) will open on September 7, 2021, for in-person learning, 5-days a week.

Since my August 13, 2021, letter Districts have received guidance from the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) and the Local Health Department (DOH) pertaining to COVID-19 protocols for the start of our school year. This information is aligned with the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations pertaining to schools and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) policy considerations for schools. CCSD has used both documents to guide our decisions related to in-person learning.

During regularly scheduled Board of Education meetings on August 4th and 18th, opening plans were discussed. PowerPoints for these presentations can be found on the District website under the August 4 and 18, 2021, meetings of the Board of Education.

You will see that many of the CDC and APP recommendations were implemented last year. Below you will find a list of protocols based on our experience of success from last year and is reflective of the guidance found in the aforementioned documents. These are CCSD's current expectations and are subject to change if the Governor's Office, NYSED, or our State or local DOH provides new guidance.

Transportation protocols

- Masks are required to be worn on the bus.
- Siblings are encouraged to sit together.
- Students are required to ride the bus he/she is assigned. Students will not be allowed to switch buses and deviate from their assigned bus route.

School protocols

- Universal indoor masking for all students, staff, and visitors.
- Classrooms and cafeterias will maintain 3-feet physical distancing when possible. Please note that tables will also be used in classrooms and the cafeteria.
- No masks required for outdoor recess, sports, and extracurriculars.
- No daily health forms or temperature screening.
- Testing and quarantine as directed by the local DOH.

Sports and Extracurricular Activities

- All persons will wear a face covering on transportation; this is a transportation requirement.
- The school has provided enough seating as per the rosters to distance by three feet. If student athletes are not able to distance than everyone must wear the covering.
- Coaches are expected to wear a covering while providing direct instruction in proximal distance.

Parents and Guardians

- Please do not send your children to school if they experience cold, flu, or viral symptoms. We have programmed ourselves to push through the small ailments, however during this period we need to be extra vigilant to protect the health and well-being of our students and staff. If you are unsure whether your child is symptomatic, please err on the side of caution and keep them home if they are experiencing the symptoms below:
 - Congested or runny nose
 - Sore throat
 - Cough
 - Fever greater than 100 degrees
 - Vomiting or Diarrhea
 - Chills
 - Fatigue
 - Shortness of Breath
 - New Loss of taste or smell
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - Stomachache
- Promptly pick up your child if you are contacted by the school, because your child has become ill or has begun to show symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day.
- Work with your child's health care provider to determine if your child has contracted COVID.
- Communicate positive COVID-19 diagnosis with the school nurse.

We continue to exercise our cleaning routines on our buses and classrooms. We ask that children still wash their hands often, sneeze into their elbow, and not to come to school if they are sick. The District will follow the CDC guidance as to how to handle the situation when a student becomes sick at school.

While I had hoped to end my correspondence here, late yesterday afternoon, New York State School Districts received a new directive, Commissioner's Determination on COVID-19 Testing Pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.62 from the New York State Department of Health. This regulation and Order of the Commissioner of Health implemented a requirement for all school employees relative to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, if a school is in a geographic area identified by the CDC as having low, moderate, substantial, or high transmission rates, employees must be vaccinated, or be subject to weekly COVID-19 testing. There is no medical or religious exemption referenced in the regulation or order. The regulations were adopted on an emergency basis, and the order was issued September 2, 2021, effective immediately. Be assured that CCSD is currently working with the local health department, area superintendents throughout the ONC BOCES region, and our attorneys to assure compliance with this new requirement.

Information as we understand it at this time:

Who does this Apply

This directive applies to faculty and staff, including all teachers, substitute teachers, student teachers, school administrators, paraprofessional staff, including bus drivers. It also applies to contractors working in a P-12 school or in a school setting, such as contracted bus drivers.

Testing Requirement

The intent appears to be for schools to ensure teachers and staff have COVID-19 testing performed weekly. Testing must be performed by an FDA or DOH-authorized laboratory.

If a school is in one of the geographic areas identified above, testing of unvaccinated staff must be performed at least once per week. Teachers and staff may opt-out by provision of documentation of full vaccination.

Proof of Vaccination

- Record prepared and signed by the licensed health practitioner who administered the vaccine, which may include a CDC COVID-19 vaccine card;
- An official record, which may be accepted without a health practitioner's signature, from a foreign nation, NYS Countermeasure Data Management System (CDMS), the NYS Immunization Information

System (NYSIIS), City Immunization Registry (CIR), a Department-recognized immunization registry of another state, or an electronic health record system;

- Excelsior Pass; or
- Any other document determined acceptable by the New York State Department of Health.

Documentation

Schools are required to document testing or vaccination in accordance with applicable privacy laws and provide the data to the Department of Health.

Students

There is no mandatory testing or vaccination of students. However, schools must have the capacity, either directly on-site or via referral, to provide diagnostic testing for any students, teachers, or staff who, regardless of vaccination status and community level of transmission per the CDC, are symptomatic, or are asymptomatic following exposure to someone with COVID-19. The Order contains specific information relative to the type of COVID-19 diagnostic test used for purposes of return-to-school testing and requires schools to offer COVID-19 screening testing to unvaccinated students on a weekly basis in geographic area identified by the CDC as having moderate, substantial or high transmission rates.

I know many of you will have questions about the implementation of this new requirement. Please be patient, CCSD will provide updates and further clarification as it becomes available.

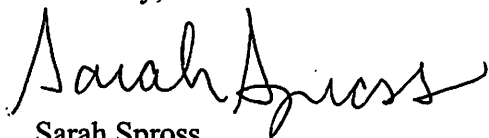
Know that CCSD will keep the safety of your children, our faculty, and staff, as well as our community our priority. We remain committed to providing your children with in-person instruction. We understand that families rely on schools to provide a safe, stimulating, and enriching space for children to learn; opportunities for socialization; and access to school-based mental, physical, and nutritional health services.

As always, we welcome you to call the school nurse if you have any questions regarding health-related questions. Policy questions should be directed to my attention. Our school nurses can be reached at:

- Junior/Senior High School Nurse Lucas Spencer 607-547-2808
- Elementary School Nurse Kim Stahl 607-547-9322

Thank you again for all your diligence and hard work to keep our students and staff healthy.

Sincerely,



Sarah Spross
Superintendent

cc: Cooperstown Staff