

Sanford School Department

Safe Return to School and Continuity of Instruction Plan 2021-2022



Date of Review: May 1, 2023

The Sanford School Department returned to school 5 days a week August 30th, 2022 as we are committed to in-person learning. The Sanford School Department is following the latest guidance from the CDC and the Maine DOE.

Approved by School Committee August 11, 2021
Sanford School Department
Safe Return to School and Continuity of Instruction Plan

The Sanford School Department's Safe Return to School and Continuity of Instruction Plan for the 2021-2022 school year is based upon the most up-to-date guidance from the Maine Centers for Disease Control, the Maine Department of Education and the CDC. Our plan focuses on a safe return to school while addressing students' academic, social, emotional, mental and physical health needs. This plan is fluid and subject to change and will evolve as information and the latest public health guidance becomes available and as conditions within our community and schools potentially change.

CDC / State of Maine Guidance July, 2021

- Students benefit from in-person learning; returning safely to in-person instruction in the fall 2021 is a priority.
- Vaccinations are currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccinations can help us return safely to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports.
- All people, regardless of vaccination status, wear face coverings in indoor, public settings in areas with "substantial" or "high" levels of community transmissions; and all teachers, staff, and students in K-12 schools wear face coverings, regardless of vaccination status or community transmission level.
- To reduce transmission risk, the CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing by people who are not fully vaccinated.
- Symptom screening, ventilation, handwashing/respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection are important layers of prevention to keep schools safe.
- Students, teachers, and staff should stay home when they have signs of any infectious illness and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.

- COVID-19 prevention strategies remain critical to protecting people who are not fully vaccinated, including students, teachers, and staff.
- Localities should monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies as outlined above.

Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Schools, CDC, July, 2021

Universal Safety Precautions

Students and staff members in the Sanford School Department will follow health and safety protocols outlined by the Maine Department of Education based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control. The measures outlined below will mitigate the spread of germs to create a safe and healthy return to school.

Health Screenings

Students (parents/caregivers) and staff members must complete the [COVID-19 Self-Screening Tool for School Attendance](#) daily to check for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to boarding a school bus or entering a school building. Students and staff will not be required to submit screening results each morning at this time.

Any person showing symptoms must report their symptoms to the school nurse and not attend school. Staff members and students who are identified as COVID-19 positive must use home isolation/quarantine until they meet criteria for returning to school. Students and staff must be 24-hour symptom free without the aid of fever reducing medication before returning to school.

Masks / Face Coverings

Universal masks / face coverings were a big part of our success last year keeping our schools safe and preventing the transmission of COVID-19. After consultation with our medical professionals and due to rising cases and the delta variant, the Sanford School Department:

- Will require universal indoor masking / face coverings (that cover the nose and mouth) for all students and masking for staff whenever they are present with students indoors.
- Masks / face coverings will not be required outdoors.

- Masks / face coverings will be optional for vaccinated staff in indoor, adult-only settings. Unvaccinated staff will be required to wear masks / face coverings at all times indoors.
- Masks / face coverings must be worn by all students on busses.
- Face shields may be an alternative for students and staff with documented medical or behavioral challenges who are unable to wear masks/face coverings.
 - Face shields worn in place of a face covering must extend below the chin and back to the ears.

Hand Hygiene

All staff and students will be trained in proper hand hygiene and directed to use soap and water to wash all surfaces of their hands for at least 20 seconds, wait for visible lather, rinse thoroughly, and dry with an individual disposable towel

Students and staff will be required to exercise hygienic hand washing or hand sanitizing throughout the day, including but not limited to: arrival at school, before and after eating, before and after donning or removing a face mask, after using the restroom, before and after use of playgrounds and shared equipment, and before entering and exiting a school bus or classroom.

Physical Distancing/Cohorting

Classrooms and other learning spaces will be configured to maximize the number of students while striving to maintain 3' physical distance between students and adults to reduce the transmission risk.

Efforts will be made to maintain stable cohorts of students. We will attempt to create schedules that minimize the crossing of students from one cohort to another, therefore reducing the number of staff and students impacted by a need to quarantine.

Staying Home When You Are Sick and Getting Tested

Students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as [influenza](#) (flu) or [COVID-19](#), should stay home and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care. Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keep COVID-19 infections out of schools and to prevent spread to others.

Contact Tracing/Isolation/Quarantine

The Sanford School Department will continue to collaborate with the Maine Department of Education and local healthcare providers, to the extent allowable by privacy laws and other applicable laws, to confidentially provide information about people diagnosed with

or exposed to COVID-19. This allows identification of students, teachers, and staff with positive COVID-19 test results who should [isolate](#), and which [close contacts](#) should [quarantine](#). Fully vaccinated people who were in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but do NOT have COVID-19 symptoms do not need to quarantine but are recommended to be tested within 3 - 5 days.

Universal Testing

The use of testing options such as pooled testing and diagnostic testing will continue to be explored. At this time, we have no plan to participate in the pooled testing program offered by the Maine DOE.

Facilities and Support Services

Cleaning

Custodial staff will clean and disinfect building spaces regularly per CDC guidelines. Educational staff will be provided with supplies to support spot cleaning throughout the day. In general, cleaning once a day is usually enough to sufficiently remove potential viruses on surfaces. Disinfecting removes any remaining germs on surfaces, which further reduces any risk of spreading infection.

Ventilation

The Sanford School Department will continue with preventive maintenance required for our ventilation systems as well as regular replacement of air filters in the mechanical systems of all schools. In addition, schools will utilize other means to increase air exchange in classrooms, including open windows when weather allows.

Transportation

The Sanford School Department encourages families to drop off and pick up their child(ren) at school if possible. This will assist the department in decreasing the number of students on each bus. To address the safety procedures for transportation, we will:

- Assign students to consistent seats;
- Assign two student per seat;
- Leave the seat directly behind the driver open when the driver is unvaccinated;
- Require face coverings on drivers and monitors;
- Require face coverings on students while riding the bus;
- Require students to sanitize their hands upon entering the bus;
- Open windows and hatches when the weather allows for increased ventilation.

School Nutrition

- Food Nutrition staff will follow all best practices for hygiene and safety.
- Unvaccinated students will maintain 6 ft distancing while eating.
- Meals will be available for pickup if students need to switch to remote learning for a period of time at a location TBD.

Volunteers and Visitors

- Parents will not be able to enter the building for drop-off or pick-up. Duty teachers will be outside to assist students.
- All visitors to our school offices must call ahead and/or have a scheduled appointment or be attending a scheduled event.
- All visitors to our school offices must wear a mask and use the hand sanitizer provided when they enter a school.

Learning Plan

Response to Educational Recovery

As students return to school, teachers will be using assessment data to identify where each student is performing and adjust instruction through a variety of instructional strategies including small group work, intervention and after-school tutoring support. Transportation will be provided for after school activities.

Remote Learning Requests

The Sanford School Department believes strongly that the best instructional environment for students to learn is in our classrooms. However, there may be students unable to access in-person learning due to compromising health conditions. We will be offering a fully remote learning program for those students who have requested and provided medical documentation that identifies the medical necessity for remote learning due to COVID-19. Please refer to the letter for more information. [Remote Learning Request Letter](#)

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Supporting the social and emotional well-being of students and staff is essential work that we are prioritizing as students return to school. The Sanford School Department's approach to social emotional learning will emphasize skills around self and social awareness, empathy, and perspective-taking abilities. To address students' needs, all teachers will implement a social and emotional curriculum. In addition, our school counseling and social work staff has been increased through the use of ESSER funds.

School Schedule

Students will return to in-person learning five days a week for the 2021-22 school year following the schedule below; Early Release Wednesdays will return as well. There may, at times, be a need for a temporary move to remote learning in response to quarantine requirements or insufficient staffing. In these situations, students would be expected to participate in instruction remotely following their normal schedule.

School Schedule 2021-2022

	Student Drop-Off Time	School Start Time	Normal Dismissal Time	Wednesday Dismissal Time
Elementary Schools (CJL, MCS, Pride)	7:45	8:25	3:00	2:00
Sanford Middle School	7:00	7:40	2:20	1:20
Sanford High School & Regional Technical Center	7:00	7:50	2:20 1:15 (SRTC)	1:20

Athletics & Extra Curricular Activities

The Sanford School Department will resume all activities and continue to follow all required protocols for safe operation of extracurricular activities and athletics for all students.