



The Westchester School

September 2020 Opening Plan

45 Park Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10703 · 914-376-4300

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Letter from Executive Director

July 31, 2020

Dear Westchester School Staff, Students and Families:

Amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) continues to monitor the public health situation to inform the State's response activities and opening approach. NYSDOH, in consultation with the New York State Education Department (NYSED), has regularly provided guidance and updates to local health departments, and schools on the latest policies, protocols, and precautions to reduce transmission of COVID-19 among New Yorkers, including students, faculty, and staff.

The Westchester School is responsible for meeting these minimum requirements, listed below, as well as applicable federal and state standards, including but not limited to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), United States Department of Labor's (DOL) Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), NYSDOH, and NYSED as **we open on September 8, 2020 for in-person education.**

Students receiving special education services and instruction from WSSC/WEC are entitled to the opportunity to receive in-person instruction.

At this point, like others, we have been implementing remote learning for the last four months. Remote learning is extremely difficult for our students and families. The School will protect and support staff and students who are at higher risk for severe illness by considering remote options for telework and virtual learning, if in-person is not feasible or at a given time (e.g. staff member is ill, facility is temporarily closed for cleaning and disinfection following a positive COVID-19 case, student's parent or guardian requests remote instruction due to COVID-19 susceptibility).

We will continue to consult the most recent federal guidance for school programs, including ongoing mitigation strategies, as well as prevention, support, and communication resources as well as ensuring that appropriate social distancing, personal protective equipment (PPE), hygiene, and cleaning/disinfection protocols are in place.

As many of you know, I care for the children of our School as if they were my own and I can promise you that I will, along with the Board of Directors, do everything possible to protect the staff and most importantly the students of the Westchester School for Special Children and Westchester Exceptional Children.

Sincerely,

Leonard Spano

Executive Director

Introduction

At The Westchester School for Special Children (WSSC) and Westchester Exceptional Children (WEC) our primary commitment is to the students and families we serve. Our priority must be keeping them safe. When the 2020-2021 school year begins, on-campus school will look different than previous years due to COVID-19 and the health and safety measures that continue to evolve. This School Opening Plan will define clear guidance for the reopening of our (3) schools and aligns with the regulations developed in collaboration with NYSDOH and the NYS Education Department.

The areas outlined in this plan represent the myriad considerations WSSC / WEC will address to open schools safely and to sustain their safe operation.

This plan includes procedures that will be followed in the following school locations:

33 Trinity Street, Yonkers NY

45 Park Ave, Yonkers Ave, Yonkers NY

520 Rte-22, North Salem, NY

WSSC/WEC recognizes that there may exist a need to alternate between in-person and remote learning throughout the year due to recommendations and guidance from our partnering agencies, and stay-at-home orders from the Governor. The level of infection, the spread of the virus and response to the disease in our community will be at the forefront of decision making as we move to open our schools. **This document is fluid and will change as necessary based on guidance from the state, CDC, and NYSED and in consideration of our families and our staff.**

Louise Bolduc will serve as the school's COVID-19 Coordinator. She will serve as a central contact for schools and stakeholders, families, staff and other school community members and will ensure the school is in compliance and following the best practices per state and federal guidelines.

Communication/Family and Community Engagement

To help inform the 2nd phase of our opening plan, the WSSC / WEC has sought feedback and input from stakeholders, including administrators, parents/guardians of students, local health department officials and health care providers, employee unions, and our Board of Directors.

The School remains committed to communicating all elements of this opening plan to students, parents and guardians, staff and visitors. The plan is available to all stakeholders via the school website at www.westchesterschool.org or www.wecschoool.org and will be updated throughout the school year, as necessary, to respond to local circumstances.

As part of its planning for the reopening of schools and the new academic year, the School has developed a plan for communicating all necessary information to staff, students, parents/guardians, visitors and education partners and vendors. The school will use its existing communication modes – including Paycom for our employees, The Westchester School app, email blast, and our One Call Now notification system (ROBO calls) – as well as appropriate signage and training opportunities to support the dissemination of consistent messaging regarding new protocols and procedures, expectations, requirements and options related to school operations throughout the pandemic.

Clear messaging will be prepared and consistently communicated before re-entry, on the first day, during the first week, throughout the first month, and continuously throughout the year, inclusive of but not limited to the following content:

- Who to contact with questions, concerns or suggestions. Empower people to make a positive difference and communicate the expectation for them to do so.
- The facts as we currently know them (NYSDOH, CDC).
- The importance of social distancing, monitoring symptoms of COVID-19 and when to stay home.
- Set protocols for entrance (screening) and the review process for staff calling in sick. Constant reminders for staff to stay home if they feel sick.
- Encourage and implement social distancing in bathrooms, break rooms, hallways, etc. Installing social distancing markers on the floors, etc.
- Practice proper hand hygiene. Staff is allowed to use hand sanitizer, but hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is still more effective. Hand sanitizer works best on clean hands.
- Encourage and practice proper respiratory etiquette (i.e., coughing or sneezing into your elbow if a tissue is not available).
- Encouraging personal responsibility for yourself and your work area.
- Educating the school community on school policies/procedures, including how to properly wear and dispose of a face mask/respirator.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of our students, our staff and their families is our top priority. We want students and employees to feel comfortable and safe returning to school campuses. Our reopening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), the [New York State Department of Health \(NYSDOH\)](#) and the [New York State Education Department \(NYSED\)](#).

The WSSC/WEC will protect and support staff and students who are at higher risk for severe illness by considering remote options for telework and virtual learning, if in-person is not feasible at any given time.

The following protocols and procedures will be in place in all WSSC/WEC locations for the 2020-21 school year should in-person schooling resume. **Anyone with questions or concerns should contact our COVID-19 Safety Coordinator at [\[ibolduc@westchesterschool.org\]](mailto:ibolduc@westchesterschool.org) or [\[914-376-4300\]](tel:914-376-4300).**

To ensure employees and students comply with communication requirements, WSSC / WEC will:

- Post signage throughout the buildings to remind personnel to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning/disinfecting protocols.
- Establish a communication plan for employees, visitors, and parents/guardians with a consistent means to provide updated information.
- Maintain a continuous log of every person, including staff, workers, and visitors, who may have close contact with other individuals at the work site, school, or area; excluding deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means.
- If a worker or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the school must immediately notify state and local health departments and cooperate with contact tracing efforts, including notification of potential contacts, such as workers or visitors who had close contact with the individual, while maintaining confidentiality required by state and federal law and regulations

Facility Entry

- Where feasible, entry and egress in and out of all buildings will be limited to a single location. If applicable, a single point entry and single point egress will be identified to minimize cross traffic. All entry to the buildings will occur through the main entrance to a check-in point.
- A face covering, must be worn by all individuals, students, staff, and visitors on WSSC/WEC property when social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Proper face covering includes, but is not limited to, a surgical mask, cloth mask, or bandana and must completely cover the individual's mouth and nose.
- The NYS Health Department requires students to wear acceptable face coverings though Face coverings should not be used by children under the age of 2, or for anyone who is unable to medically tolerate such covering, including students where such covering would impair their health or mental health, or where such covering would present a challenge, distraction, or obstruction to education services and instruction.

- A plastic face shield alone is not an acceptable face covering.
- All individuals may choose to utilize their own face covering, however face coverings can and will be provided by WSSC/WEC.

Daily Health Screening

- Prior to entering all WSSC/WEC locations, individuals must complete a health screening questionnaire. Paper copies of the questionnaire for visitors will be available at the designated entry points.
- Staff will be required to monitor their own temperatures prior to arrival on campus and throughout the day. Anyone, whose symptoms response changes from a NO to YES during the day, must contact their supervisor immediately and await further instruction.
- **Staff, students and visitors will be screened for temperature at arrival.**
 - Parents are encouraged to monitor for temperatures and symptoms prior to sending their student on a bus, however students will be screened at arrival for temperatures.
 - Visitors will have their temperatures taken upon arrival.
- **Only after all individuals have been accounted for, cleared through the medical screening and wearing proper face coverings, will access to the building be granted.**
- Should a person fail the medical screening, specific procedures should be followed. Please reference the Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19 Case section for guidance.

Social Distancing

- All individuals on WSSC/WEC premises must maintain social distancing and face covering when social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Proper social distancing is defined as a six (6) foot separation between individuals. When social distancing is practiced, such as in an isolated office or large meeting space, the individuals may remove their face covering. However in common areas, such as breakrooms, hallways or bathrooms, the face covering must be worn.
- Ensure six (6) foot distance between personnel, unless safety or core function of the work activity requires a shorter distance. Any time personnel are less than six (6) feet apart from one another, personnel must wear acceptable face coverings.
- Social distance separation will be using tape or signs that denote six (6) feet of spacing in commonly used and other applicable areas on the site (e.g., clock in/out stations, health screening stations, reception areas).
- In-person gatherings will be limited as much as possible and we will use tele- or video-conferencing whenever possible. Essential in-person gatherings, such as meetings, will be held in open, well-ventilated spaces with appropriate social distancing among participants.

Personal Hygiene

Hand washing - Students and staff must practice good hand hygiene to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Schools should plan time in the school day schedule to allow for hand hygiene.

- Hand hygiene includes:
 - Signage encouraging hand washing and correct techniques;

- Traditional hand washing (with soap and warm water, lathering for a minimum of 20 seconds), which is the preferred method. This can be accomplished by singing or humming the happy birthday song twice;
- Adequate facilities and supplies for hand washing including soap and water;
- Use of paper towels or touch-free paper towel dispensers where feasible;
- Extra time in the schedule to encourage frequent hand washing.
- Students and staff should wash hands as follows
 - Upon entering the building and classrooms;
 - After sharing objects or surfaces;
 - Before and after snacks and lunch;
 - After using the bathroom;
 - After helping a student with toileting;
 - After sneezing, wiping, or blowing nose or coughing into hands;
 - Anytime hands are visibly soiled;
 - When handwashing is not available use a hand sanitizer;
- Hand Sanitizer - At times when hand washing is not available students and staff may use a hand sanitizer. Students must be monitored and supervised when using these. Using hand sanitizers should include:
 - Placement of sanitizer dispensers should be located near entrances and throughout common areas.

Visitor and Vendor Practices

No outside visitors or volunteers will be allowed on school campuses, except for the safety and well-being of students. Parents/guardians will report to the front office and not go beyond unless it is for the safety or well-being of their child. Essential visitors to facilities and parent/guardian visitors will be required to wear face coverings and will have restricted access to our school buildings.

Visitors, including vendors

- All visitors must be wearing proper face covering prior to entering any building and it must be worn at all times when a six (6) foot social distance cannot be maintained.
- All visitors check in at the main entrance for temperature screening and to fill out the COVID-19 health assessment.
- No visitor should enter a building unless necessary. All meetings will be held outside or via virtual meetings when possible.
- All visitors must sign in and out at the main entrance of each building stating their destination at that building for contact tracing. All visitors should be accompanied by a staff member.
- Should a visitor become ill while on campus, they must alert the staff member they are visiting to report the issue and then immediately seek medical attention.

Training

WSSC/WEC will train all personnel on new protocols and frequently communicate safety guidelines. Training on the precautions listed below will be conducted either remotely or in person. Social distancing and face coverings will be required for all participants if training is

conducted in person. Training material is designed to be easy to understand and available in the appropriate language and literacy level for all workers.

WSSC/WEC will ensure all students are taught or trained how to follow new COVID-19 protocols safely and correctly, including but not limited to hand hygiene, proper face covering wearing, social distancing, and respiratory hygiene. Additional training will be provided in:

- Prevention of disease spreads by staying home when they are sick.
- Proper respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
- Avoiding the use of communal objects. If communal objects must be used, provide information on proper disinfection procedures between use. Examples of communal objects include, but are not limited to, other workers' phones, desks, offices, computers or other devices, other work tools and equipment.
- Provide employees and students with up-to-date education and training on COVID-19.
- Risk factors and protective behaviors (i.e., cough etiquette and care of PPE).

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

Training for Screeners

WSSC / WEC will identify individuals familiar with CDC, OSHA protocols, and DOH guidelines in each building who will be a trained screener. Screeners will wear appropriate employer-provided PPE, including at a minimum, a face covering, temperature screenings and social distancing. If social distancing or barrier/partition controls cannot be implemented during screening, PPE should be used when within six (6) feet of a student.

Training topics for all staff and substitutes

- Proper hand washing: proper hand hygiene. Promote frequent and thorough hand washing by providing employees, the school community, and visitors with a place to wash their hands. If soap and running water are not immediately available, provide alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl alcohol. Provide training on proper handwashing and hand sanitizer use
<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>
 - [Hand washing video](#)
- Proper cough and sneeze etiquette
- Social Distancing
 - Provide training for faculty/staff on how to address close contact interactions with students as part of every day job tasks.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>
- Operating procedures (various by building)
 - Entrance into the building
 - Cleaning procedures
 - Sick child pick up
 - Staff who are sick or suspected to be sick
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>
- Proper cleaning techniques
 - Cleaning and disinfecting
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html>

- Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/Reopening_America_Guidance.pdf
- Hazard Communication – Right-To-Know
 - Proper use of chemicals and Safety Data sheets
 - <https://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/>
 - No chemicals from home
 - Transfer of hand sanitizer in smaller containers
 - List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)
 - <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>
- Exposure Control Plan – with a focus on Pandemic/COVID-19
- Personal Protective Equipment - PPE
 - Update Hazard Assessment and PPE Selection Worksheet for all identified employees
 - Proper type, use, and size
 - **Student mask will need to be removed during interventions because they interfere with monitoring of student health status**
 - Cleaning and sanitizing of the face covering (if applicable)
 - Provide training for staff and students on wearing, putting on, removing and discarding PPE, including in the context of their current and potential duties
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- Use of face coverings (donning/doffing) (cloth vs. surgical)
 - [Face coverings don/doff video](#)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQxOc13DxvQ>

Signs and Messages

Signs will be posted in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that [promote everyday protective measures pdf icon](#) and describe how to [stop the spread pdf icon](#) of germs (such as by [properly washing hands](#) and [properly wearing a cloth face cover image icon](#)).

Space Design and Capacities

General Office Area

- All offices will be limited to 50% the rated occupancy for the space. Offices must normally maintain a minimum of 150 sq. ft. per individual.
- Where applicable all offices and small spaces will be limited to one (1) individual at a time.
- In a multiple occupant office, occupancy will be reduced to 50% normal load in addition to maintaining at least 6ft of separation between individuals.
- Additional protective barriers such as polycarbonate screens or strip curtains will be utilized to create a physical separation without hindrance to egress or airflow.

- Workstations will be reconfigured so that employees do not face each other, or establish partitions if facing each other cannot be avoided
- Face coverings should be worn in these multiple use office settings.
- Additional breaks may be allotted to allow individuals time to leave the space to remove their masks. Specific determination of these conditions will be determined by the individual's program supervisor.

Conference Rooms

- Will limit in-person meetings (refer to NYS guidance), if virtual meetings are not feasible
- If meetings are to occur in person, they will be conducted in a quick manner
- Social distancing among participants will be required
- Lingering and socializing before and after meetings should be discouraged

Break Rooms and Lunch Rooms

- Breakroom use is discontinued if a minimum of 6 ft. separation cannot be maintained when consuming food or drink.
- Staff are advised to take their lunch and breaks in their private offices or classrooms; in their vehicles or outside at the picnic table throughout the campus.
- Staggered break schedules may be utilized to assist with separation concerns.
- If staff wishes to take breaks together they must do such in a large space or outside, where at minimum 6ft. of separation can occur.
- Amenities that are handled with high contact frequency, such as water coolers, coffee makers, and bulk snacks will be replaced with alternatives where possible.
- Communal meals will not be provided to employees, and food will not be available in common areas where employees may congregate.

Copier Rooms/Areas

- Congregating in copier rooms/areas is discouraged.
- Cleaning supplies will be provided at copier stations.
- Staff are encouraged to wipe down touch surfaces post and prior use.

Elevators

- One person (two if one is a student) in an elevator at a time.
- Personnel must wear acceptable face coverings when in common use areas.
- Elevators will be frequently disinfected.

Restrooms

- All bathrooms regardless of size will be limited to one person at a time.
- Individuals must knock before entering a bathroom to ensure there is no other occupant present.
- In special circumstances where a student must be assisted in the use of the lavatory, the adult present must be wearing all applicable personal protective equipment including a face covering and when medically applicable, the student will be wearing a proper face covering as well.
- Signage will be posted on entry indicating one person at a time.

Hallways/Stairwells

- Where feasible hallway traffic may be limited to single flow direction.
- Where single flow is not applicable, bi-direction traffic will be permitted.
- Directional flow will be identified by indications on the floor/stairs
- Adequate distancing will be obtained between all individuals by taped off lanes on the corridor floors/ stair treads.
- All individuals must also allow for adequate space between when traveling in the same direction.

Before and Aftercare Programs

The WSSC/WEC does not operate school run before and aftercare programs.

Classrooms

- Overall class sizes will be reduced to accommodate all safety parameters.
- Students, teachers and support staff will be required to wear a proper face covering.
- Where possible PPS staff will travel to the classroom to provide instruction.
- Restrict items in the classroom to that of obvious use.
 - Remove any unnecessary furniture.
 - Remove any soft surfaces that are difficult to disinfect such as:
 - Area Rugs
 - Soft fabric chairs

Nurse Stations

- Where applicable, nurse stations have been reconfigured to:
 - Maintain social distancing of no less than 6ft.
 - Create “sick” and “well” zones.
 - Students that receive daily medication should be treated separately from students presenting with symptoms of illness.
 - Nebulizer treatments should be conducted in a separate isolated space with adequate fresh air circulation.
 - Physical separation will be achieved by utilizing:
 - Individual exam rooms
 - Polycarbonate barriers
 - Retractable dividing curtain walls.
- Isolation Room/s
 - Individuals presenting with symptoms representative of COVID-19 should be immediately isolated to reduce risk of transmission.
 - A separate room will be utilized where applicable.
 - *Reference the Isolation Room/s section for additional information.*

Isolation Rooms

- Where applicable, separate, independent room/s with a door in close proximity to the exterior will be utilized for quarantining individuals who present with symptoms representative of COVID-19.
- Where excess space is not available. Nurse stations will be equipped with dividing curtains allowing for both a physical divide and at minimum 6ft of separation.
- These rooms have been identified in each building

- (45 Park Avenue, Yonkers location) – Funtronics Room, middle floor
- (33 Trinity Street, Yonkers location) - Gymnasium
- (North Salem location) – Model Apartment

Vestibule/Reception areas

Reception areas will remain at all entrances of each building.

- They will serve as the primary location for accounting for all individuals entering and exiting the building.
- Polycarbonate barriers have been installed to protect all individuals.
- Floor demarcations have been installed to indicate where visitors shall stand to maintain social distance.
- Reception areas have had seating removed or adequately spaced to provide at minimum of 6ft of separation.
- Frequently touched materials such as magazines have been removed.

Computer Labs

- The use of shared space and equipment use will be limited where feasible.
- Cleaning and disinfection of computer labs and keyboard will be frequent
 - Keyboards should be wiped and disinfected before and after each use.
 - Keyboard covers may be utilized to aid in the cleaning and disinfection process.
- Students should be instructed to wash hands prior to and after touching the keyboards along with other frequently touched surfaces.

Engineering Controls

- Alcohol based hand sanitizer will be available in each main entry, corridors, and each classroom.
- Bathrooms
 - Limited to one occupant at a time.
 - Touchless soap dispensers are in place at each sink
 - Touchless paper towels dispensers have been installed
 - Entry doors to gang bathrooms will be left open where applicable to reduce the need to handle
- Vestibules/Reception Areas
 - Polycarbonate barriers will be installed to provide protection for WSSC / WEC staff and individuals presenting
- Water Fountains
 - As required by New York State Code a potable water supply will be provided per 150 occupants, but not less than one source per floor.
 - To reduce cross contamination the bubbler/drink spout has been removed or disabled.
 - Automatic/touchless bottle filling equipment is installed in place of the drink spout.
 - Additional bottle filler stations will be installed where necessary.
 - These appliances will be routinely cleaned and disinfected as described in the Cleaning and Disinfection Section.
- Floor Demarcations

- All entrances or areas of static wait have floor signage installed allotting for a minimum of six(6) feet of separation between all individuals
- All Corridor floors and Stairway treading have been fitted with stripping to indicate social distancing.
- Corridor doors will all be affixed open using electromagnetic hold-open devices to minimize the need to touch doors.

Ventilation

WSSC/WEC will ensure sufficient ventilation and fresh air to all spaces of occupancy by means of:

- Spaces where fresh air is limited due to original building systems, fresh air will be introduced through open windows and doors.
 - Options for replacement and modification to existing systems will be explored.
 - Engineers will design new systems capable of increased fresh air and filtration.
- Fan motors speeds will be increased where applicable to ensure volume and flow of 15cfm minimum.
- More frequent maintenance and inspection of the systems will occur to mitigate extra strain on systems.
- Filter replacement schedules will be more frequent.

Cleaning and Disinfection

WSSC/WEC will ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH, including “Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19,” and the “STOP THE SPREAD” poster, as applicable.

The maintenance staff will disinfect the entire building at least once a day using a mist spray from VSE Bioshield Company. This additional maintenance practice will continue daily. The mist is EPA approved, safe and dries within 90 seconds. It is a hydrogen peroxide based disinfectant that combats the Coronavirus as well as other germs. Cleaning and disinfection logs will be maintained that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection.

Examples of facility types where cleaning and disinfection frequency will be distinguished include

- Bathrooms
- Health offices, isolation rooms
- Administrative offices (main office, reception area)
- Frequently touched surfaces in common areas (door handles, elevator buttons, copy machine keypads, etc.)
- Classrooms
- Maintenance offices and work areas
- Playgrounds (cleaning only)

Students, faculty, and staff will be trained on proper hand and respiratory hygiene, and such information will be provided to parents and/or legal guardians on ways to reinforce this at home.

WSSC/WEC will provide and maintain hand hygiene stations around the school, as follows:

- For handwashing: soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels.

- For hand sanitizing: an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical.

Regular cleaning and disinfection of the facilities will occur, including more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk and frequently touched surfaces. This will include desks and cafeteria tables, which should be cleaned and disinfected between each individual's use. Cleaning and disinfection will be rigorous and ongoing and will occur at least daily, or more frequently as needed.

WSSC/WEC will ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms. Restrooms should be cleaned and disinfected more often depending on frequency of use.

Suspect or Confirmed COVID Cases

- *Emergency Response* - Students and staff with symptoms of illness must be sent to the nursing office. A school nurse (Registered Professional Nurse, RN) is available to assess individuals as chronic conditions such as asthma and allergies or chronic gastrointestinal conditions may present the same symptoms as COVID-19 but are neither contagious nor pose a public health threat. Proper PPE will be required anytime a nurse may be in contact with a potential COVID-19 patient. If a school nurse is not available, the ill student / staff will be sent home for follow-up with a healthcare provider.
- *Isolation* - Students suspected of having COVID-19 awaiting transport home by the parent/guardian will be isolated in a room or area separate from others, with a supervising adult present utilizing appropriate PPE. Multiple students suspected of COVID-19 may also be in this isolation room if they can be separated by at least 6 feet. If they cannot be isolated in a separate room from others, facemasks (e.g., cloth or surgical mask) will be provided to the student if the ill person can tolerate wearing it and does not have difficulty breathing, to prevent the possible transmission of the virus to others while waiting for transportation home. Students should be escorted from the isolation area to the parent/guardian. The parent or guardian will be instructed to call their health care provider, or if they do not have a health care provider, to follow up with a local clinic or urgent care center; Other considerations include:
 - Closing off areas used by a sick person and not using these areas until after cleaning and disinfection has occurred;
 - Opening outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area
 - Waiting at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfection. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible;
 - Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, such as offices, classrooms, bathrooms, lockers, and common areas.
 - Once the area has been appropriately cleaned and disinfected it can be reopened for use.

- Individuals without close or proximate contact with the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 can return to the area and resume school activities immediately after cleaning and disinfection.
- *Notification* - the NYS and local health departments will be notified immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result by an individual in school facilities or on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff and visitors.

Contact Tracing

WSSC/WEC have three certified contact tracers on staff who will immediately coordinate with Public Health Officials to begin the task of contact tracing, once notified.

To ensure the school and its employees comply with contact tracing and disinfection requirements, the WSSC/WEC will do the following:

- Will clean, disinfect, and notify Public Health, in the event of a positive case. In the case of an employee testing positive for COVID-19, CDC guidelines will be followed regarding cleaning and disinfecting your building or facility if someone is sick.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and copier machines.
- Vacuum the space if needed. Use vacuum equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, if available.
- Consider temporarily turning off room fans and the central HVAC system that services the room or space, so that particles that escape from vacuuming will not circulate throughout the facility.
- Workers without close contact with the person who is sick can return to work immediately after disinfection.

Return to School after Illness

The WSSC/WEC has established protocols and procedures, in consultation with the local health department(s), about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment at school. This protocol includes:

1. Documentation from a health care provider following evaluation
2. Negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result
3. Symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation

The school will refer to DOH's ["Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure"](#) regarding protocols and policies for faculty

and staff seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after the faculty or staff member had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19.

The school requires that individuals who were exposed to the COVID-19 virus complete quarantine and have not developed symptoms before returning to in-person learning. The discharge of an individual from quarantine and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the local health department.

Closure Considerations

When a person has been identified (confirmed) or suspected to be COVID-19 positive; the process in WSSC/WEC could include:

- Having school administrators collaborate and coordinate with local health officials to make school closure and large event cancellation decisions.
- Establish a plan to close schools again for physical attendance of students, if necessary, based on public health guidance and in coordination with the local DOH. Establishing a decision-making tree at the school level.
- Implement a plan for continuity of education.
- Implement as needed short-term closure procedures regardless of community spread if an infected person has been in a school building. If this happens, CDC recommends the following procedures:
 - Closing off areas used by ill person(s) and locking off area(s), signage can also be used to ensure no one enters the area. If possible, wait 24 hours before you clean and disinfect. If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as possible. Do not use the area(s) until cleaning and disinfection has taken place.
 - Opening outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
 - Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill person(s), focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.
 - Communicating as soon as possible with staff, parents, and students.
- Using DOH guidance/procedures for when someone tests positive.
 - In consultation with the local DOH, a school official may consider whether school closure is warranted and period of time (prior to re-opening) based on the risk level within the specific community as determined by the local DOH.
 - In accordance with guidance for quarantine at home after close contact, the classroom or office where the COVID-19-positive individual was based will typically need to close temporarily as students or staff quarantine.
 - Additional close contacts at school outside of a classroom should also quarantine at home.
- Closing of schools could be a regional decision.
 - 7 metrics - NYS Dashboard
 - Schools will reopen if a region is in Phase IV and the daily infection rate remains below 5% using a 14-day average
 - Schools will close if the regional infection rate is greater than 9% using a 7-day average after August 1, 2020

- Thresholds will be determined on a case-by-case basis dependent on the numbers (school closures may be a response).
- Buildings may consider closing if required cleaning products (bleach and water can be used as a cleaning product) and PPE are not available

Facilities

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection in the school, facilities operations will be geared toward meeting social distancing requirements and cleaning frequently touched spaces regularly. In carrying out projects or tasks supporting infection control, requirements will be met for changes associated with building spaces.

The function, position and operation of stairs and corridor doors, which have closers with automatic hold opens (and are automatically released by the fire alarm system), will remain unchanged.

Upon reopening, the school plans to increase ventilation, to the greatest extent possible. Water systems will be flushed in buildings that have been unoccupied.

Emergency Response Protocols & Drills

The 2020-2021 school year may include hybrid models of the traditional school day. Emergency response drills, including evacuation and lockdown drills may be spread across the different student populations dependent on the day each population is present.

Evacuate

Evacuation protocols will be routinely the same with some minor adjustments:

- Identify areas outside of the building in advance that will allow 6 feet of separation of students and staff. Verify that students and staff will not impede emergency responders
- In effort to get all staff and students out of the building as quickly and efficiently as possible, face coverings should be worn at all times
- Plan to have extra face coverings on hand in the event that a person does not have one
- Identify, in advance, who will be holding the door to get out of the building, therefore reducing the amount of people touching the door hardware when leaving the building. Personnel that will be conducting this task may be assigned to holding the door for one or more classrooms or until confirmation that everyone has vacated the building
- If no extra face coverings are available, instruct anyone that does not have a face covering to use their shirt to cover their nose and mouth during the event

Lockdown

During a Lockdown, there will be a violation of the six (6) foot recommendation between people. In order to protect life safety, lockdown protocols will be mostly the same process as they have been conducted in the past.

- Evaluate, in advance, if there is room to social distance without being in the line of sight
- Face coverings should be worn during the event at all times
- Plan to have extra face coverings on hand in the event that a person does not have one

- Instruct anyone that does not have a face covering to use their shirt to cover their nose and mouth during the event

Child Nutrition

The WSSC/WEC does not participate with SFA. Students are assigned to self-contained cohorts and eat in their classrooms. Parents provide lunch but if lunch is ordered, the culinary staff will prepare and serve individually plated meals in classrooms. The sharing of food and beverages will be discouraged. Students will perform, with assistance as needed, before and after eating. All required health and safety guidelines will be followed.

Transportation

Transportation is provided by the individual school districts. Parents should contact their school district for the established protocols. The WSSC/WEC will encourage all students who receive transportation from the public school district to adhere to CDC and DOH guidance.

Social Emotional Well Being

In recognizing that learning cannot be effective until the basic human need for physical and emotional safety are met, the following considerations are intended to assist in creating a welcoming and caring school community that ensures its members are met with compassion and the support that they need to achieve and thrive.

- The WSSC/WEC will post on the website resources on mental health, behavioral and emotional support services and programs.
- Our Child Study team, in consultation with other members of the interdisciplinary team, will regularly connect with families and students to provide resources and referrals to address mental health, behavioral and emotional support services and programs.
- Professional development opportunities will be made available to staff, on how to talk with students and support them during the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency, as well as provide supports for developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty and staff.

Attendance, Attendance Reporting and Chronic Absenteeism

Attendance and Attendance Reporting

All schools in the WSSC/WEC will take daily attendance whether school opens in September in-person, hybrid, or remote. Attendance policies and procedures will be communicated with families and students prior to the start of the school year or if the instructional model changes during the year. Communication will take the form of parent letters/newsletter, robocalls, emails, text messaging, and social media. Teachers will record daily attendance in (AP Web) our student management system based on the required daily scheduled student contact and engagement. Daily reports will be generated to identify students who are absent and/or chronically absent. Contact with the families will be made daily to determine reasons for absence and needs or barriers the student may have to participate in daily lessons.

Chronic Absenteeism

While there is no one-size-fits all approach to addressing chronic absenteeism, WSSC/WEC is committed to providing interventions to prevent and address health-related and mental health chronic absenteeism. We recognize that many factors will influence student attendance, and may be greatly impacted by the instructional models provided.

Technology and Connectivity

As the WSSC/WEC plans its second reopening phase, it recognizes that technology and connectivity must be essential areas of focus. Regardless of whether in-person, remote or hybrid models are utilized, the WSSC/WEC will seek to provide students (through collaboration with the home school districts) and teachers, for use in their places of residence, with access, to the extent practicable, to:

- A computing device for their exclusive use, and
- Consistent, reliable access to high speed internet at a sufficient level to fully participate in remote / online learning (e.g., a hotspot)

To this end, the WSSC/WEC will:

- survey the level of access to devices and high-speed broadband all students and teachers have in their places of residence,
- To the extent practicable, address the need to provide devices and internet access to students and teachers who currently do not have sufficient access, and
- Provide multiple ways for students to participate in learning and demonstrate mastery of learning standards in remote or blended models, especially if students do not yet have sufficient access to devices and/or high-speed internet.

Teaching and Learning

In an effort to assure high-quality teaching and learning a continuity of learning plan has been developed for the 2020-21 school year.

This plan considers and plans for teaching and learning in-person.

Our plan assures that Instruction is aligned with the New York State Learning Standards and assures equity as well as quality for all learners.

Equity is at the heart of all school instructional decisions. All instruction in our school will be designed so that whether it is delivered in-person, remotely, or through a hybrid model due to a local or state school closure, there are clear, comprehensive, and accessible learning opportunities for all students. Such opportunities will be aligned with state standards. Our teaching and instructional plan outlines routine, scheduled times for students to interact and seek feedback and support from their teachers. Our plan is centered on Instruction and academic programming that includes regular and substantive interaction with an appropriately certified teacher regardless of the delivery method (e.g., in person, remote or hybrid). Our teaching and learning plan includes a clear communication plan for how students and their families/caregivers can contact the school and teachers with questions about their instruction and/or technology. This information will be accessible to all, available in multiple languages, widely disseminated, and include clear and multiple ways for students and families to contact schools and teachers (e.g., email, online platform, and/or by phone) in an effort to assure learning for all.

The school calendar typically includes one or more staff-only days before students arrive at school. Acknowledging the challenges that our teachers and staff have faced this spring delivering remote instruction under stressful circumstances, the school will focus these in-service days on providing support to staff in the areas of social-emotional health and technology integration.

As we enter the new school year, teachers will be encouraged to spend time building relationships, supporting students with the transition back to school, and teaching social distancing etiquette at developmentally appropriate levels.

Assessing student learning gaps or areas of need will be critical. Formative assessment before a unit of instruction to assess student understanding of pre-requisite skills will be common practice.

Acknowledging that the typical content in a given grade level or course may need to be adjusted, content will be prioritized to ensure that students receive instruction for the prioritized learning standards, key understandings, and skills necessary for students' success in future study.

Grading practices will follow a standards-based framework designed to provide direct feedback regarding students' mastery of course content.

In-person Instruction

Upon reopening, the number of students in each of our classrooms will be reduced to adhere to CDC guidance regarding proper social distancing. Class size will reflect the need to ensure that students' desks/seats are positioned no less than six feet apart.

Accommodating a six-foot radius around students will necessitate the identification of additional rooms and common-area spaces that can be converted into elementary classrooms.

Current staffing levels may be insufficient to accommodate the expanded number of classrooms needed to ensure social distancing.

All instruction will continue to be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards.

Our schools will minimize the movement of students. This means having students eat lunch in their classroom instead of the cafeteria and eliminating assemblies, field trips and other large-group activities. Special-area subjects (e.g., art, music, physical education) will be pushed into the classroom. Whenever possible, students will utilize outside space for physical education instruction.

To the extent possible, students will remain in small cohorts if/when leaving the classroom, such as for recess or any necessary transition, so as to reduce their exposure to additional students.

Remote/Hybrid Instruction

Given the possibility that communities may experience spikes in COVID-19 cases at any point during the school year, which may prompt short or long-term school closures, our school has developed a hybrid/blended learning model and schedule that can continue as is in a fully remote environment.

Instruction will not only focus on "core" subject areas to the exclusion of elective courses. All instruction will continue to be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards.

As noted previously, student schedules will remain when possible, the same whether instruction is in person or remote so that students do not encounter conflicts wherein synchronous lessons for different subjects are offered simultaneously.

Remote learning opportunities for secondary students will include a greater emphasis on synchronous instruction, with teachers finding ways to provide live instruction and lessons to students. While recording of live lessons is still essential for students unable to attend at a scheduled time, teachers will ensure that their students are directly engaged with them and their class peers in experiential learning on a regular basis.

To ensure high-quality remote learning experiences, we will standardize the use of a single online learning platform, to the extent possible, and develop a common, coordinated set of guidelines for teachers to follow when using the platform with students.

The NYS Health Department encourages, but does not require students to wear acceptable face coverings.

Face coverings should not be used by children under the age of 2, or for anyone who is unable to medically tolerate such covering, including students where such covering would impair their health or mental health, or where such covering would present a challenge, distraction, or obstruction to education services and instruction.

Special Education

WSSC/WEC reopening plan provides a framework to ensure that all students with disabilities continue to have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living in the least restrictive environment (LRE). In consideration of the health, safety, and well-being of students, families, and staff, our plan is designed to enable transitioning between in-person, remote, and hybrid learning environments to ensure the provision of FAPE consistent with the changing health and safety conditions that exist.

Special education programs and services of WSSC/WEC provide equity and access for students with disabilities to be involved in and to participate and progress in the general education curriculum with access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of students. While not all formats allow for maximum benefit to students, these programs and services can be provided in all formats (live-person, hybrid, or remote). WSSC / WEC will document the programs and services offered and provided to students with disabilities as well as to the communications with parents in their preferred language and mode of communication (eg. Related Services Log). The school will ensure access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of students.

WSSC / WEC is committed to providing meaningful parent engagement in the parent's preferred language or mode of communication regarding the provision of services to his/her child to meet the requirements of the IDEA. Further, we will maintain regular communication with the parents/guardians and other family members of to ensure that they are engaged in their children's education during the reopening process

The WSSC / WEC will plan and support collaboration between the committees on preschool special education (CPSE) and committees on special education (CSE) and program providers representing the variety of settings where students are served to ensure there is an understanding of the provision of services consistent with the recommendations on individualized education programs (IEPs), plans for monitoring and communicating student progress, and commitment to sharing resources.

The WSSC / WEC will maintain records to document the implementation of each IEP. The documentation will include, but will not be limited to: narrative records of how the student is

adjusting to live, hybrid, and remote instruction during 2020-21, a record of what instruction and services were provided, a record of formative, summative, and standardized assessments and their results as well as progress monitoring documentation, a record of school-family collaboration, and the provision of compensatory services records.

Certification, Incidental Teaching and Substitute Teaching

Certification, Incidental Teaching and Substitute Teaching

All teachers will hold valid and appropriate certificates for teaching assignment, except where otherwise allowable under the Commissioner's regulations (e.g., incidental teaching, substitute teaching) or education law.

Student Teachers

Student teachers from NYSED registered college or university programs can serve under the supervision of fully certified teachers in WSSC / WEC. Student teachers will follow all of the social distancing, mask wearing, health status reporting, and other COVID-19 procedures that the teachers follow. Student teachers will serve under the supervision of our full time certified teachers only. At no time will a student teacher be used as a teacher of record.

Staff members who are requesting an accommodation from reporting for in-person work due to concerns about their own health must notify the Human Resources department and then comply with submitting requested information before the School can determine if a reasonable accommodation can be made based on applicable law, regulation and the Schools needs and resources.

Key References

- [State Education Department Issues Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools \(July 16, 2020\)](#)
- [State Education Department Presents Framework of Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools \(July 13, 2020\)](#)
- [Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, NYS Department of Health \(July 13, 2020\)](#)

Additional References

- [Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)
- (June 26, 2020)
- [Interim Guidance for Food Services during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.](#)

- *(June 26, 2020)*
- [Interim Guidance for Office-Based Work during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.](#)
- *(June 26, 2020)*
- [Interim Guidance for Public Transportation Activities during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. \(June 26, 2020\)](#)
- [New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [New York State Education Department Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration COVID-19 Website](#)