



# ROCKLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ROCKLAND, MASSACHUSETTS 02370

## REENTRY PLAN - FALL 2020

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## **SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE**

August 14, 2020

Dear Rockland School Community:

We are pleased to present you with our comprehensive back-to-school plan for the 2020-2021 school year. This plan is a culmination of several months of work and is informed by input and feedback from a wide variety of community stakeholders. While there is no “perfect plan”, we have endeavored to create one that is based on our District Core Values of student achievement, developing character, encouraging collaboration, and fostering perseverance. Because we are dealing with the first global pandemic of modern times, with no blueprint or roadmap for the best way to educate our students, we are committed to engaging in continual self-reflection.

On June 25, 2020, the State released its [“Initial Fall Reopening Guidance”](#), and has subsequently released guidance on [special education services](#), [facilities](#), [protocols for responding to Covid-19 scenarios](#) and [transportation](#). This plan for returning to school in the fall meets or exceeds all guidelines and mandates contained therein.

We have all done our part these past few months to reduce the spread of the virus. We followed stay-at-home orders, wore face-masks in public, and honored the social distancing guidelines of six feet recommended by the [Center for Disease Control](#). These safety measures appear to make a difference, and it would be unfortunate to forego the sacrifices already made by implementing less restrictive safety measures now. In consultation with Rockland’s local public health officials, the Rockland Public Schools will impose stricter guidelines than those required by the State. Whenever possible, we will maintain social distances of six feet (not three feet) and require face-masks for all staff and students in grades PreK-12.

For the safety of all and to meet the social distancing guidelines of the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Rockland Public Schools have selected a Hybrid model for our return to school in the fall - a week on, week off model which has half the student body learning in-person one week while the other half learns remotely.

This document is meant to provide a framework for what a safe return-to-school will look like in the fall. Given the dynamic nature of this crisis however, aspects of this plan may change as new information becomes available. We will continue to work out the details of the plan with a number of key stakeholders including the Rockland Teachers Association and the Rockland Health Department.

Sincerely,



Alan Cron, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

## **GETTING STARTED—HERE’S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

### **When does school start?**

To provide as smooth and safe a reentry to school as possible, we are recommending a phased in approach for the return to school:

#### **PHASE 1: August 31- September 3, 2020**

**Faculty/Staff Orientation/Preparation:** (1) Orient staff to new, hybrid procedures and protocols; and (2) Provide professional development to staff re. Remote Learning, Social Emotional Learning, safety protocols and the proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

#### **PHASE 2: Orientation - September 8-11, 2020**

**Student/Family Orientation:** (1) Teachers and staff welcome back students in groups divided by cohort (Group “A” and Group “B”) and thoroughly explain new procedures and policies related to Covid safety, social distancing, and PPE requirements; (2) Distribute Chromebooks to all students PreK-12

#### **PHASE 3: September 14 - September 25, 2020**

**Full Remote Hybrid Group A and B -** Both Hybrid Groups “A” and “B” will engage in Remote Learning for the first two weeks of school (10 school days). During this two week period, teachers will teach remotely from their classrooms in-school and students will learn from home. This 10 day period will afford us the time to (1) implement and support the roll-out of Remote Learning 2.0; and (2) work out remaining connectivity or software issues with households; and (3) refine and support teachers as they adapt to remote teaching strategies and procedures and make curriculum adjustments

#### **PHASE 4: September 28 - October 23**

**In-Person Instruction Begins -** Hybrid Remote Group “A” In-School, Group B Remote, flip the next week

## Initial State Guidance on the Reopening of School

On Thursday, June 25, 2020, Governor Baker shared State guidelines for Massachusetts' school re-opening in the fall. A link to the Governor's press conference is [here](#) and a link to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) initial reopening of school guidance can be found [here](#). On July 17, 2020 DESE released Protocols for responding COVID scenarios in school, on the bus or community settings, a link to the complete document can be found [here](#). During the Governor's press conference, the spokesperson for the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics stated that they "share [MA DESE] goal of bringing most children in the Commonwealth back to in-person learning this fall, while minimizing risk to them, the school staff, and their families."

The MA DESE guidance sets forth the several guidelines for public schools, including but not limited to the following:

- All staff will wear face-masks
- Students in grades 2 through 12 will wear face-masks in school;
- All students and staff will stay three to six feet apart;
- Schools should organize students at the middle and high school levels by cohorts to minimize interaction

The health, safety, and well-being of our students and staff is our top priority. As noted in the Your Health, Safety, and Well-Being section of this Plan, we are working with the local Board of Health and Town health officials to plan the safest return-to-school in the fall. We know that some epidemiological studies suggest we could experience a "second wave" of the pandemic in the fall. It is important to keep in mind that the health metrics may dictate a full return to remote learning, and we should all be prepared to make a rapid transition if needed. Conversely, we should not lose sight of the fact that once the virus has run its course or a vaccine is made, we should be able to return to school as we once knew it under pre-COVID-19 conditions.

## Your Return-to-School Options

Until such time as we are able to return to school without restrictions related to COVID, we are providing two options for teaching and learning for the 2020-2021 school year: **(A) a Hybrid Learning Model**; or **(B) a Remote Learning Academy**. We anticipate that students and staff who are immunocompromised or otherwise disinclined to return to in-person learning will be able to participate in the Remote Learning Academy that is offered online.

After weighing the pros and cons of many models of learning as detailed later in this document, it was determined that these two return-to-school options best meet the needs of the Rockland school community at this time. Once you have chosen either the Hybrid Learning Model (HLM) or the Remote Learning Academy (RLA), you should **plan to remain in that model for the entire term** (or until such time that we return to pre-COVID-19 conditions). Note that in either scenario, students on IEPs and 504s will receive

their required services. These services will take place either remotely or in-person, depending on individual circumstances.

## **Option A—Hybrid Learning Model**

The “Hybrid Learning Model” is a combination of remote and in-person learning. For now, our focus is on the framework of the model, and the details will follow. Once this Plan is finalized, staff members and families can arrange daycare and begin to finalize plans for the fall. There are many additional details that are either under development or noted elsewhere in this Plan. Families have expressed a desire to have siblings be on the same schedule for in-person and remote learning with a hybrid learning model. We will make every effort to keep siblings on the same schedule.

### **If you choose Option A, the Hybrid Learning Model, here is what you can expect in the fall:**

- The K-12 student population will be divided into two cohorts: Cohort A and Cohort B.
- Cohort A will include 50% of students who will learn remotely through synchronous and asynchronous experiences. Cohort B will include the other 50% of the K-12 student population and that group will attend school in-person 5 days per week. After one week of remote learning, the cohort will move the following week to in-person learning.
- Cohorts will be diverse, inclusive, and heterogeneous (mixed ability groups). The learning students do during the in-person weeks will be the same for both cohorts. The learning students do during the remote weeks will be the same for both cohorts.
- Students on IEPs and 504s will receive their required services. These services will take place either remotely or in-person, depending on individual circumstances.

One of the benefits of participating in Option A—the Hybrid Learning Academy—is that we will be able to build on what we have learned and convert quickly to a remote teaching and learning model should the health metrics indicate the need to be fully remote.

## **Option B—Remote Learning Academy**

The Remote Learning Academy is designed specifically to respond to the needs of those students, families, and staff who are immunocompromised and can provide medical documentation. Students and staff who are thriving in the remote learning environment and prefer a non-traditional school experience also may wish to consider this option; however, placements are not guaranteed.

- Elementary (PK-5) students begin their day with a synchronous learning experience. Students will be engaged throughout the day with a curriculum that aligns to that provided to students in the Hybrid Learning Model. Students will end their day with a synchronous learning experience.
- Middle School students in Grades 5-8 will be placed on remote teams. They will begin their day with a synchronous learning experience. Asynchronous activities will be made available to early risers.

- High School (9-12) students begin their day with a synchronous learning experience and asynchronous activities will be made available to early risers.
- Students in the Remote Learning Academy will have the option of demonstrating what they know and can do through traditional or non-traditional grading systems. More details will be provided later this summer.

## HYBRID SCHEDULES

### Elementary - Grades K-2

	Week 1 (A Group)		Week 1 (B Group)
	Week 2 (B Group)		Week 2 (A Group)
	In School In-person		At Home Remote
Time	Subject/Activity	Time	Subject/Activity
08:05 AM - 08:45 AM	Teacher prep period	08:05 AM - 08:45 AM	Teacher prep period
08:45 AM - 09:10 AM	<b>Morning meeting with remote group (A or B)</b>	08:45 AM - 09:10 AM	<b>Morning meeting with teacher/agenda</b>
09:10 AM - 09:15 AM	Arrival of in-person students	09:10 AM - 09:55 AM	Reading - iReady - book
09:15 AM - 09:45 AM	Breakfast/morning meeting	09:55 AM - 10:10 AM	Recess/snack
09:45 AM - 10:30 AM	Foundations & Haggerty	10:10 AM - 10:55 AM	Math - Video Tim Mc - iReady
10:30 AM - 11:00 AM	Lunch/recess grades K & 1	10:55 AM - 11:30 AM	Technology - video - online program
11:10 AM - 11:40 AM	Lunch/recess grade 2	11:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Lunch
10:30 AM - 11:00 AM	WIN (what I need) block grade 2	12:00 PM - 12:30 PM	Specialist (art/phys ed/music/STEAM)
11:10 AM - 11:40 AM	WIN (what I need) block grades K & 1	12:30 PM - 01:30 PM	Writing/grammar - activity
11:40 AM - 12:30 PM	Math	01:30 PM - 02:25 PM	WIN (what I need) block interventionist
12:30 PM - 12:45 PM	Snack/movement	02:25 PM - 02:35 PM	<b>Afternoon check-in meeting with teacher</b>
12:45 PM - 01:30 PM	Writing	02:35 PM - 02:50 PM	Office Hours by appointment
01:30 PM - 02:00 PM	WIN block/technology		
02:00 PM - 02:25 PM	Closing meeting/dismissal		
02:25 PM - 02:35 PM	<b>Afternoon meeting with remote group (A or B)</b>		
02:35 PM - 02:50 PM	Office Hours by appointment		

## Elementary - Grades 3 and 4

Week 1 (A Group)		Week 1 (B Group)	
Week 2 (B Group)		Week 2 (A Group)	
In School In-person		At Home Remote	
Time	Subject/Activity	Time	Subject/Activity
08:05 AM - 08:45 AM	Teacher prep period	08:05 AM - 08:45 AM	Teacher Prep
08:45 AM - 09:10 AM	<b>Morning meeting with remote group (A or B)</b>	08:45 AM - 09:10 AM	<b>Morning meeting with teacher/agenda</b>
09:10 AM - 09:15 AM	Arrival of in-person students	09:10 AM - 09:55 AM	Reading - iReady - book
09:15 AM - 09:45 AM	Breakfast/morning meeting	09:55 AM - 10:10 AM	Recess/snack
09:45 AM - 10:45 AM	Reading	10:10 AM - 10:55 AM	Math - iReady - video Tim Mc
10:45 AM - 11:00 AM	Movement break	10:55 AM - 11:30 AM	Technology - online programs
11:00 AM - 11:50 AM	Writing	11:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Lunch
11:50 AM - 12:20 PM	Lunch/recess grade 3	12:00 PM - 12:30 PM	Specialist (art/phys ed/music/STEAM)
11:50 AM - 12:30 PM	WIN (what I need) / technology grade 4	12:30 PM - 01:30 PM	Writing/grammar - Writable
12:30 PM - 01:00 PM	Lunch/recess grade 4	01:30 PM - 02:25 PM	WIN (what I need) block - interventionists
12:30 PM - 01:00 PM	WIN (what I need) / technology grade 3	02:25 PM - 02:35 PM	<b>Afternoon check-in meeting with teacher</b>
01:00 PM - 02:00 PM	Math	02:35 PM - 02:50 PM	Office hours by appointment
02:00 PM - 02:25 PM	Closing meeting/dismissal		
02:25 PM - 02:35 PM	<b>Afternoon meeting with remote group (A or B)</b>		
02:35 PM - 02:50 PM	Office hours by appointment		

## MIDDLE SCHOOL - GRADES 5-8 - "IN-PERSON" Week

Students will be placed on a grade level team (A or B). Students will be placed in a cohort that will remain together for all classes. In grade 8 students will not be placed on a specific team, however they will be put in cohort groups.

- 5 classes per day
- Teachers teaching 5 classes per day, one is remote
- Important to dismiss students at 1:40 pm to free up teachers to teach remotely for their 5th class

### In-Person Learning Schedule

Periods	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-9:05 AM Includes HR	A Block	E Block	D Block	C Block	B Block
9:05-10:05 AM	B Block	A Block	E Block	D Block	C Block
10:05-11:05 AM	C Block	B Block	A Block	E Block	D Block
11:05-12:35 PM Includes lunch/duty	D Block / Lunch	C Block / Lunch	B Block / Lunch	A Block / Lunch	E Block / Lunch
12:35-1:40 PM Includes dismissal	E Block	D Block	C Block	B Block	A Block



## MIDDLE SCHOOL - GRADES 5-8 - “REMOTE (from home)” Week

During each class period, students will have a 25 minute Google Meet class. Assignments will be provided for the rest of the class period.

- 5 synchronous classes per day
- End of day - 2:35-3:05 office hours
- Unified arts every day for one period - UA teachers are attached to a TEAM

Periods	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-9:05 AM Includes HR	A Block GM 25 RL25	E Block GM 25 RL 25	D Block GM 25 RL 25	C Block GM 25 RL 25	B Block GM 25 RL 25
9:05-10:05 AM	B Block GM 25 RL 25	A Block GM 25 RL 25	E Block GM 25 RL 25	D Block GM 25 RL 25	C Block GM 25 RL 25
10:05-11:05 AM	C Block GM 25 RL 25	B Block GM 25 RL 25	A Block GM 25 RL 25	E Block GM 25 RL 25	D Block GM 25 RL 25k
11:05-12:35 PM Includes lunch/duty	D Block GM 25 RL 25	C Block GM 25 RL 25	B Block GM 25 RL 25	A Block GM 25 RL 25	E Block GM 25 RL 25
12:35-1:40 PM Includes dismissal	E Block GM 25 RL 25	D Block GM 25 RL 25	C Block GM 25 RL 25	B Block GM 25 RL 25	A Block GM 25 RL 25

If RMS transitioned to full remote learning, students would follow this schedule.

GM = Google Meet

RL= Remote learning - During this period team teachers will work with 2 groups of students remotely. Each teacher will have a remote learning block which provides students with synchronous instruction with all five teachers every day.

## HIGH SCHOOL - GRADES 9-12 - “IN-PERSON” Week

- Students will receive 25 minutes of synchronous instruction in world language, math, English, history, and science, 4 out of every 6 days in a cycle on the REMOTE WEEK
- Students will also be assigned on average, 30 minutes of homework per class per day
- Students will take 6 classes (includes one elective)

### Hybrid of In-Person and Remote Learning

Students will be placed in one of two cohorts. Cohort A will be students with Last Names A-L and Cohort B will be students with last names M-Z.

In-Person Learning	Remote Learning
Cohort A: Begins Last Names A-L  Group B: Last Names M-Z	Cohort B: Last Names A-L  Group A: Last Names M-Z

Periods	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
8:00-9:00AM	A Block	A Block	A Block	A Block	A Block	B Block
9:10-10:10 AM	B Block	B Block	B Block	B Block	C Block	C Block
10:20-11:20 AM	C Block	C Block	C Block	D Block	D Block	D Block
11:30-12:20 PM	Homeroom/ Lunch	Homeroom/ Lunch	Homeroom/ Lunch	Homeroom/ Lunch	Homeroom/ Lunch	Homeroom/ Lunch
12:30-1:27 PM	D Block	D Block	E Block	E Block	E Block	E Block
1:37-2:35 PM	E Block	F Block	F Block	F Block	F Block	F Block
<i>DROP</i>	<i>Drop F</i>	<i>Drop E</i>	<i>Drop D</i>	<i>Drop C</i>	<i>Drop B</i>	<i>Drop A</i>

## HIGH SCHOOL - GRADES 9-12 - “REMOTE” Week

Periods	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
8:00-9:00AM	A Block English Synchronous Learning	A Block English CP Time	A Block English Synchronous Learning	A Block English Synchronous Learning	A Block English Synchronous Learning	B Block Math Synchronous Learning
9:10-10:10 AM	B Block Math Synchronous Learning	B Block Math Synchronous Learning	B Block Math CP Time	B Block Math Synchronous Learning	C Block History Synchronous Learning	C Block History Synchronous Learning
10:20-11:20 AM	C Block History CP Time	C Block History Synchronous Learning	C Block History Synchronous Learning	D Block World Language Synchronous Learning	D Block World Language CP Time	D Block World Language Synchronous Learning
11:30-12:20 PM	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:30-1:27 PM	D Block World Language Synchronous Learning	D Block World Language Synchronous Learning	E Block Science Synchronous Learning	E Block Science Synchronous Learning	E Block Science Synchronous Learning	E Block Science CP Time
1:37-2:35 PM	E Block Science Synchronous Learning	F Block Student Homework	F Block Student Homework	F Block Student Homework	F Block Student Homework	F Block Student Homework
<i>DROP</i>	<i>Drop F</i>	<i>Drop E</i>	<i>Drop D</i>	<i>Drop C</i>	<i>Drop B</i>	<i>Drop A</i>

### HIGH SCHOOL REMOTE LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

English, Mathematics, World History, History & Social Science, and World Language teachers will be assigned a synchronous learning period (as one of their 5 teaching periods). Each synchronous learning period (1 hour long) is broken down into two parts. The first 25 minutes will be for synchronous instruction daily to students in the teacher’s first-course prep, and the last 25 minutes will be synchronous instruction daily to students in the teacher’s second-course prep. In the rare instance when a teacher has a third prep, another teacher may be asked to help with synchronous instruction.

All staff is expected to assign remote learning work during the week when students are not present for in-person learning. Assignments should be reviewed with students on Friday prior to the students beginning their remote learning week. Assignments should also be made available on Google Classroom for parents and students to access.

**Teacher:**

- Incorporate asynchronous learning opportunities for all students for homework weekly. Whenever possible, provide access to recorded essential lessons so that students/families can view the lesson at a convenient time and/or refer back to the recording for assistance.
- Students should be assigned approximately 30 minutes of academic work each night. Consider assigning 15 minutes of self-directed learning (prerecorded videos, reading, etc.) and then 15 minutes of applied learning (worksheets, research, projects, activities).
- Provide frequent and timely feedback for students to improve their work.
- Maintain grades and assignments in Aspen every ten school days.
- Maintain ongoing communication with students and families via Google Classroom, email, phone calls, etc.
- Participate in group professional learning, staff meetings, and attend virtual learning sessions intended to support remote learning twice each month (during regularly scheduled faculty meetings, department meetings, and early release time).
- Fulfill professional responsibilities as assigned by the administration.

**Student:**

- Attend synchronous classes daily as identified in the weekly schedule. (Attendance will be taken). Students should be participating in 2-2.5 hours each day of synchronous learning.
- Students should be assigned 30 minutes, in addition to their synchronous class periods, of homework to be completed during the remote learning. This means, students should be working for 5-6 hours each day.
- Follow technology use and student handbook expectations as delineated by Rockland Public Schools.
- Complete activities and work assigned by the teacher(s).
- Stay connected with your teacher through Google Classroom and Aspen.
- Be available for school work from 8am until 2:35pm Monday thru Friday to complete school work.

**Parent:**

- Continue to check in with Rockland Public Schools via our [website](#) or mobile app. With the app, you can access sports scores, cafeteria menus, news updates, and even emergency notifications. Download the app on Android: <http://bit.ly/2P8Fmxi> or iPhone: <https://apple.co/361wDU>
- Agree to the Rockland Public Schools Chromebook loan agreement and acceptable use policy.
- Ensure home access to the internet or use free WIFI hotspots in Rockland.
- Familiarize yourself with the RHS Remote Learning website.
- Monitor your child's engagement with their remote work expectations.
- Contact RHS school with questions, concerns or for any needed support.

# REMOTE ACADEMY SCHEDULES

## ELEMENTARY GRADES K-4 “ACADEMY” SCHEDULE

		Primary	
Time	Subject/Activity	Teacher	Student
-			
AM	Teacher prep period		
08:45 AM - 09:00 AM	Office Hours - by appointment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
09:00 AM - 09:30 AM	Attendance/morning meeting/agenda	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
09:30 AM - 10:30 AM	Reading/SPED & EL interventions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10:30 AM - 10:50 AM	Recess/Office Hours by appointment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
10:50 AM - 11:50 AM	Math	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
11:50 AM - 12:30 PM	Lunch/recess/transition		
12:30 PM - 01:30 PM	Writing/grammar/technology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
01:30 PM - 02:20 PM	WIN (what I need) block - differentiations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
02:20 PM - 02:50 PM	Office Hours - by appointment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
02:20 PM - 02:50 PM	Specialists (art/music/phys ed/STEAM)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADES 5-8 “ACADEMY” SCHEDULE

- Students would work with RMS teachers in online classes for 30 minutes per class period. Remainder of class would be spent working on assignments through Google Classroom. Opportunities will be provided for collaborative student work and activities.
- Remote Academy and hybrid teachers will follow the same curriculum to support students seamlessly returning to hybrid model.
- Virtual activities will be planned by remote teachers with support from K-12 department heads.
- Academy will be overseen by Assistant Principals.

### Remote Schedule

8:00-9:05 AM Includes HR	Math
9:05-10:05 AM	English
10:05-11:05 AM	Virtual Art, Music, PE Activities, Field Trips, Extra Help Office Hours
11:05-12:35 PM Includes lunch break	Social Studies
12:35- 1:40 PM	Science

## HIGH SCHOOL GRADES 9-12 “ACADEMY” SCHEDULE

### REMOTE LEARNING ACADEMY

Students who choose to enroll in the RHS Remote Learning Academy (students not returning to Rockland High School Hybrid Model) would engage in online coursework through Apex Learning. RHS guidance counselors would serve as the school point of contact helping Remote Learning Academy students register for courses, check-in daily with students, communicate with parents, and submit grades.

Students who complete coursework through Apex Learning will receive letter grades. Students who enroll in this Remote Learning Academy must remain in the Apex Learning courses for the entire semester. If a student requests to leave the Remote Learning Academy prior to the end of the first semester to transition back to the hybrid model offered by RHS teachers, students and families should be aware that a) students may not have a schedule with their requested course requests b) students may have learning gaps as the courses offered through Apex learning cover similar curriculum standards but are not taught in the same order.

Below is the schedule for Remoted Learning Academy students.

<b>Bell Schedule for Remote Learning Academy</b>	
8:15-8:30 AM	Morning Meeting/Check-In
8:30-9:15 AM	English
9:30-10:15 AM	Mathematics
10:25-11:10 AM	Science
11:20-12:00 PM	Lunch
12:00-12:45 PM	History
12:55-1:40 PM	World Language
1:50-2:35 PM	Elective

# YOUR HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING

## What we know about the COVID-19 Pandemic

- According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), as of August 2, 2020, in the United States, there were 4,601,526 total cases resulting in 154,002 deaths.
- During that same time period in Massachusetts, 118,000 cases have been reported resulting in 8,626 total deaths.
- During that same time period in Plymouth County, 9,107 cases have resulted in 711 deaths.
- During that same time period In Rockland, just fewer than 300 cases have been reported which has resulted in 30 deaths.
- For more information on current trends in Massachusetts [click here](#)).

## How the COVID-19 Virus Spreads

Coronaviruses are respiratory viruses and are generally spread through respiratory secretions (droplets from coughs and sneezes) of an infected person to another person.<sup>1</sup> There is preliminary evidence that airborne transmission — in which the virus spreads in the much smaller particles from exhaled air, known as aerosols.<sup>2</sup> Because of this, it is important to do what we can to improve the ventilation of indoor spaces and encourage outdoor activities when possible. Given the nature of the pandemic, we know it is impossible to completely eradicate the risks associated with COVID-19. In Massachusetts, however, we have seen evidence that risk can be mitigated by engaging in good respiratory hygiene, proper handwashing, maintaining appropriate social distances, wearing a covering on the face to stop the spread of germs, avoiding touching our eyes, nose, mouth or face, and, most importantly, by staying home when we are sick. We expect that all students and staff will incorporate these healthy practices, making them a part of their daily routine when we begin the 2020 - 2021 school year.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Preparedness

On March 13, 2020, all schools in Rockland closed for a two-week period, which was extended twice by Governor Baker and eventually through the end of the 2019 - 2020 school year. In February we began

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health website accessed at 8:32 a.m. on June 27, 2020 <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19>.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Morawska L., Cao J. Airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2: the world should face reality. Environ. Int. 2020;105730 doi: 10.1016/j.envint.2020.105730.



purchasing large quantities of hand-sanitizer, hand wipes, and cleaning supplies. RPS also recently placed a substantial order of PPE and cleaning supplies that will help to keep us healthy and safe. These expenses should be reimbursable under the CARES Act administered by Plymouth County and Federal Emergency Association (FEMA) grants.

Supplies purchased to date include the following:

- Nitrile and vinyl gloves
- N95 Masks
- Disposable masks (adult and child-size)
- Face Shields
- Plexiglass barriers
- Sanitizer Wipes
- Disposable gowns for designated personnel
- Pulse Oximeters
- Infrared Thermometers
- Hand Sanitizer Dispensers (Classroom)
- Hand Sanitizer Dispensers (Standing)
- Hand Sanitizer Refills

# SCHOOL SAFETY PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES

The School Business Administrator in charge of operations, the Head Nurse, and the Rockland school nurses are collaborating to develop protocols to keep our students and staff safe. Walk-thrus of facilities continue in collaboration with the Rockland Board of Health. RPS staff members will meet over the summer to learn and review safety protocols, ensuring that we create the safest return to school possible. As recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) safety protocols are being developed to address each of the following scenarios.

- [What to do if Sick](#) - learn more about steps to take if a child or staff member is sick and presents with COVID-19-like symptoms; including [isolation room protocols](#)
- [Handwashing](#) and [proper respiratory hygiene](#);
- [Instruction on masks/face coverings](#) (how to do, wear, remove, and store);
- [Student transportation options](#) and capacities;
- [Safe ways](#) for students to enter and exit the school building and classrooms;
- [Food Service Protocols](#) - Safe ways for students to eat lunch;
- [Plans to monitor bathrooms](#) - disable air dryers/water fountains, provide paper towels;
- [Cleaning and disinfecting action plan](#) - custodial plan for regular cleaning and disinfecting

Frequent Risk assessment checks will be conducted by Administrators to ensure that all safety measures are being followed and supplies are in stock.

## What to do if Sick

1. Individual Arrives in Health Office and is assessed for illness
  - a. If no ill symptoms, treat for presenting symptom visit and return to class
2. If an individual has illness symptoms:
  - a. Isolate them from well children/staff
  - b. Obtain History: onset of symptoms, type of symptoms, anyone sick at home, any recent exposure to anyone with COVID-19, any recent travel? If so, where and when?
  - c. Assessment: Temperature, RR, physical appearance, pulse oximeter reading, mental status
  - d. If a temperature above 100.4 degrees or pulse below 98%, dismiss immediately and refer to PCP.
  - e. If it is a student, the child will be provided a mask, if they are not already wearing one. If it is a staff member, they should notify their supervisor immediately and the nurse should collaborate with the school administration and evaluate the disposition of the students in the staff member's classroom.

- f. Assess if the individual needs further medical evaluation and guide the staff member or family on how to proceed. If the person is having difficulty breathing, has any chest discomfort, mental status changes, lethargy/unable to stay awake, and/or cyanotic- call 911. Inform dispatcher the person has symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and will need further evaluation.

Follow up with family/staff member to see how they are feeling and if they were tested for COVID-19.

If the individual is tested and is COVID positive, the nurse will consult with the Rockland Board of Health. The Health Service Director will immediately inform the Superintendent of a positive case/suspected case. Families and employees need to be informed of exposure while the confidentiality of the individual is maintained. The school nurses will collaborate with the Rockland Health Department for contact tracing and guidance for when the individual can return to school.

### **Isolation Area Protocol for COVID-19**

CDC provides guidance on an isolation plan if someone arrives or becomes ill at school. The definition of **isolation** “separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick” (CDC, 2017)

#### **Isolation Area**

An area in the school building other than the nurse’s office that has good ventilation and easy access to exit the building.

Students will be monitored by appropriate staff in full PPE during their stay in the isolation room.

#### **Isolation Procedure**

1. Any suspected COVID case is immediately brought to the isolation space.

The following symptoms will be considered as needing isolation:

- Fever >100.4F
- Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath
- Difficulty Breathing
- Headache
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Fatigue
- Sore Throat

- Muscle or Body Aches
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Signs and symptoms of MIS-C (Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children)
    - Rash, Red Eyes, Cracked/Swollen lips, Red/Swollen Tongue, Swelling
    - Hands/Feet, and Stomach Pain.
2. The use of facemasks for persons with respiratory symptoms and fever over 100.4F is mandatory.
  3. If the school nurse deems that the student is in distress, based on the physical exam, the nurse will call 911 immediately. Symptoms prompting a call to 911 include, but not limited to:
    - Shortness of Breath
    - SPO2 <95% in a student without an underlying respiratory condition
    - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
    - Confusion or change in behavior
    - Altered level of consciousness
    - Circumoral cyanosis or change in coloring to face and/or extremities
    - Inability to wake or stay awake
  4. Should the school nurse determine that the student should be sent home, they will contact the student's parent/guardian or emergency contact. Pick up will occur 45 minutes of contact.
  5. Should the isolated student need to use the restroom, the student will use the nurse's restroom. Once this restroom has been used by an isolated student, the room will not be available to any other employee or student until it is disinfected appropriately. Notification will be posted on the restroom door stating that the restroom is currently closed. The sign will be removed after the restroom has been appropriately disinfected.
  6. The school nurse will provide the parent/guardian or emergency contact with written instructions regarding the need to home isolate and/or visit their primary health provider.
  7. Remember that *schools are not expected to screen students and staff to identify cases of COVID19*. If a school has cases of COVID19, local health officials will help identify those individuals and will follow up on next steps.
  8. Refer parents of high-risk students to their healthcare providers to determine when school re-entry is recommended.
  9. N95 masks are recommended for healthcare personal. If N95 masks are not available due to supply issues, other facemasks may be used.
  10. The chair used by the ill student will be disinfected once they leave. If multiple students are in the isolation room at the same time they will maintain a distance of 6 feet or greater from each other.

## References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine>

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

[https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/03182020\\_NASN\\_Considerations\\_for\\_School\\_Nurses\\_Regarding\\_Care\\_of\\_Students\\_and\\_Staff\\_that\\_Become\\_Ill\\_at\\_School\\_or\\_Arrive\\_Sick.pdf](https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/03182020_NASN_Considerations_for_School_Nurses_Regarding_Care_of_Students_and_Staff_that_Become_Ill_at_School_or_Arrive_Sick.pdf)

## **GENERAL MITIGATION PROCEDURES**

### **Hand Washing Instructions**

How to wash your hands? Follow these five steps every time.

- **Wet your hands** with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- **Lather your hands** by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Scrub your hands** for at least 20 seconds.
- **Rinse your hands** well under clean, running water.
- **Dry your hands** using a clean towel or air dry them.
- **Wash your hands** frequently with soap and water frequently for at least 20 seconds.

Handwashing should be done often, but always:

- **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- **After** being in a public place
- **Before** eating and/or preparing food
- **Before** touching your eyes or putting in contact lenses
- **After** using the toilet
- **Before and after** treating a cut or wound
- **After** touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- **After** touching garbage

[Handwashing Video for younger students.](#)

If you are unable to wash your hands, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer - Hand Sanitizer

Additional Information:

- [Your Health is in Your Clean Hands](#)
- [Handwashing Poster](#)
- [Hand Washing and Hand Sanitizer \(2 pages\)](#)
- [Stop Germs: Wash your Hands](#)
- [Germs Are All Around You](#)
-

### **How to put on a face mask:**

- Ensure your face mask is clean, dry and not damaged
- Wash and dry your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face- no gaps
- Make sure you can breathe easily
- Wash and dry your hands

### **While wearing a face mask:**

- Do not touch the front of the face mask. If you do, clean your hands and dry thoroughly.
- Avoid touching your face, as infection can still be introduced by touching your eyes or if you are not wearing your face mask correctly.
- Face masks should not be moved during use. This includes being pulled up or pulled down below your chin. If you need to remove your mask (for example, to eat) - remove it safely, dispose of it appropriately (or wash if a home-made facial covering or cloth mask) and clean your hands.
- Replace the face mask if it becomes damp, damaged, or soiled.

### **To safely remove your mask:**

- Clean your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer (containing at least 60 percent alcohol). Ensure your hands are dry.
- Remove the face mask from behind (do not touch the front of the mask) by untying ties or removing loops and pull it away from your face. Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing your mask
- Clean, store or dispose of it appropriately
- Clean your hands again (as above)

### **Practice good sneeze/cough hygiene.**

- Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue
- Throw the tissue away immediately in a trash can, and then wash your hands.
- If no tissue is available, cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm on your sleeve.
- [Cover Your Cough \(CDC\)](#)

**Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose, and mouth**, where it is easy to spread the virus to yourself.

**Clean frequently touched surfaces** daily, including doorknobs, counters, tables, tablets, keyboards, phones, bathroom fixtures.

### **Observe Physical “Social” Distancing Guidelines**

- The CDC recommends 6 feet of distance between individuals.
- Per the CDC, the more closely you interact with others and the longer the interaction time the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread.

- [Poster for Social Distancing](#)
- [Poster Social Distancing for Middle and High School Students](#)
- [Video for Teens on Social Distancing \(30 seconds\)](#)

### **General COVID-19 Education**

- [Stop the Spread of Disease Poster \(6 ways\)](#)
- [Stop the Spread of Germs Video \(1 minute\)](#)
- [CDC how to don and doff PPE Posters](#)
- [COVID-19 CDC Fact Sheet](#)

### **General ways to stay healthy:**

Practice preventative health measures:

- Eat well-balanced meals
- Get enough sleep
- Exercise
- Stay hydrated
- Manage your stress- take a break from the media
- Wash your hands frequently

Education will be provided to RPS staff during the re-orientation to return to school. Family education will be ongoing and will begin prior to the start of school. Student education will be ongoing and visual cues, such as posters and infographics will be placed around the school to remind the student ways to stay healthy and prevent

the spread of COVID-19. The modes of education will include: videos, PowerPoints, posters, infographics, stories, fact sheets, website updates, social media, as well as in person demonstration of educational topics- such as handwashing, respiratory etiquette, masks and social distancing.

## **HEALTH PROTOCOLS PRIOR TO COMING TO SCHOOL**

### **School Personnel:**

Every day prior to coming to work staff will be asked to complete a self-administered [Self-Screening Tool](#).

If a staff member has any symptoms, they should call their supervisor and report the symptoms and stay home from school.

Staff should follow up with their PCP for further evaluation. They will be allowed to return to school based on their symptoms, further evaluation, and clearance from the Rockland Health Dept.

Staff who become ill while at school will be sent home immediately.

**Students:**

**Before** coming to school or getting on the bus:

Families should assess their child's state of wellness before leaving home for school.

If the student has any 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, whether the child was seen by a medical professional and any testing that was done. The child can return to school once cleared by the school nurse and/or the Rockland Board of Health.

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.

These symptoms include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- GI Symptoms: Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and/or abdominal pain

If a child becomes ill at school, families will be notified and for everyone's safety asked to pick up the child within 45 minutes.

**Cleaning and Disinfecting Action Plan**

Many of these building cleaning measures are regularly performed daily throughout the year to combat the spread of colds and flu. However, in response to the pandemic, we are coordinating resources and supplies for additional preventive cleaning/disinfecting.

**Disease Prevention Cleaning Plan**

**Purpose:** To set forth the district plan for cleaning buildings to prevent the spread of disease.

**Objective:** Prevent the spread of disease to students, staff, through frequent, effective and safe cleaning and disinfecting procedures in district buildings.



**Scope:** Memorial Park, Esten, Jefferson, the Rogers Middle and the High School, including the Pre-School.

**Staff Requirements:** The custodial staff has been trained in appropriate use of PPE and all regular and COVID specific equipment and materials. All nonessential items are being removed from all classrooms and placed in storage. All needed cleaning and disinfecting supplies have been procured and are being stored.

Routine cleaning will continue to be performed on a daily basis by district custodial staff assigned to the particular building or area. In addition restrooms, staff break rooms, offices and common areas will be disinfected throughout the day with special emphasis on high touch point areas. The isolation room and any individual classroom that has an incident will be thoroughly disinfected on an on call basis. Cafeterias, if used for meals, will be disinfected after each use. The Pre-School classrooms (chairs, desks, high touch surfaces and playground equipment, if used) will be completely disinfected between the morning and afternoon sessions and again in the evening.

**High touch point cleaning:**

High touch point surfaces will be disinfected multiple times by day shift staff. High touch point surfaces include the following areas:

- Door Knobs and Handles (interior/exterior)
- Sink Faucets
- Door Push Plates
- Light Switches
- Stair Railings
- Vending Machines
- Dispensers
- Pushbuttons
- Flush Handles
- Door Panic Bars
- Refrigerator Door Handles
- Counter tops
- Copier/Printer and Fax Controls
- File Cabinet/Drawer Handles
- Mask break areas

Night shift custodial staff will perform a more substantial disinfection of all classrooms, office and common areas including desks, chairs, phones and cabinet handles in addition to all surfaces listed above.

**Chemicals:** Rockland Public Schools utilizes the ECO dispensing system. Main cleaning and disinfecting chemicals are as follows:

- **ECO E15 Buckeye Peroxide Cleaner:** This is a stabilized hydrogen peroxide cleaner. It is a great general purpose cleaner, carpet spotter and window cleaner that dispenses out at 2oz. per gallon. This product is Green Seal certified.

- **ECO E13 Buckeye Glass Cleaner:** A dilutable glass cleaner for use on glass, windows, mirrors, Plexiglas and other surfaces. This window cleaner that dispenses out at 8oz. per gallon. This product is Green Seal certified.
- **ECO E14 Buckeye Eco Muscle Cleaner:** This is a spray and wipe, concentrated cleaner for use on walls, fixtures, desks, lockers and other hard surfaces where water is used Eco Muscle Cleaner is effective on most types of graffiti. This cleaner that dispenses out at 16oz. per gallon. This product is Green Seal certified.
- **ECO E23 Buckeye Neutral Disinfectant:** A multi-purpose, neutral ph, germicidal detergent and deodorant effective in hard water up to 200ppm in the presence of a moderate amount of soil according to the AOAC use dilution test.
- **ECO E32 Buckeye Floor Cleaner:** This is a super concentrated floor cleaner for use on all types of floors where water may be safely used. Applied with auto scrubber or mop.
- **Signatry ADX Foam Botanical Handwash:** 1250mL foam hand soap with spa-inspired, botanical elements. USDA Certified Biobased Product.
- **Solo 417Li Battery Backpack Spraying System:** Spray mist disinfection and sanitation cordless battery unit. 4.5 Gallon capacity. Will be used with BNC-15 one step disinfectant at 2oz per gallon.
- **BNC-15:** Hospital Grade cleaner, disinfectant, sanitizer mildewcidal, fungicidal disinfectant. Effective against many viruses including the Human Coronavirus.
- **Santi-T-10 Plus:** This is a 4<sup>th</sup> generation quat-based, foodcontact sanitizer for use with food handling and process areas. Light duty sanitizer that can be used on many surfaces and toys.
- **CDC Recommended Hand Sanitizer** will be conveniently located in all classrooms, offices, break rooms, cafeterias, libraries and gyms.

**HVAC:** HVAC systems will be operated to CDC and DESE recommended percentage of fresh air make-up and set per those specifications. All air filters are changed and units inspected every 6 months.

**Summary:** The overriding purpose for these processes is to protect the health of students, staff and the general public. Implementation of the cleaning procedures must be done with safety and transparency in mind for all stakeholders.

Please keep in mind that the situation is rapidly evolving and the operational plans will continue to be modified as needed.

### **School Attendance Guidelines**

- [Staff and Family Procedures](#) before coming to school.
- Students and staff must stay home if they do not feel well. This is very important in preventing the spread of COVID-19. We will relax the rules on attendance to ensure that we are not placing an undue burden on families to have their children report to school when sick. The State may release guidance on attendance requirements in the future.
- Many higher education institutions are utilizing staff attestation forms with a daily self-screening tool to review COVID-19 symptoms. In August, we will provide RPS staff with a [self-screening tool](#) that they can use to self-monitor possible symptoms.
- Students and staff with a temperature above 100.4 degrees should not attend school until they have been fever-free (under 100.4 degrees) for three (3) days and without the use of antipyretic medication, such as Tylenol, Motrin, Advil, or Ibuprofen.
- Sick students and sick staff members should not return to school until they have met the criteria established by the Massachusetts Department of Health (MPDH) to [Discontinue Home Isolation](#) and [Quarantine](#). Students and staff will check with their school nurse prior to returning as well. A safe return to school is based on symptoms, duration of symptoms, test results, and clearance by the Rockland Office of Public Health.

### **When a Student or Staff Member becomes Ill**

On July 17, 2020 DESE released Protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in school, link [here](#). If a student or staff member

- Any student or staff member exhibiting COVID-19-like symptoms [must stay home](#). Staff and families should not come to school if they become sick with COVID-19 [symptoms](#), test positive for COVID-19, or have been [exposed](#) to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case (see RPS procedures). Staff and families will be asked to report any illness symptoms that precludes them from attending school, to be able to identify symptom surveillance.
- Staff and [children](#) with COVID-19 [symptoms](#) (such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath) at school will be separated from well students/staff. Individuals who are sick will be triaged by the school nurse and asked to either go home immediately or to a healthcare facility depending on the severity of the symptoms. Any individual who becomes sick at school will be triaged for further medical assessment and testing based on their symptoms. They will be asked to follow [CDC guidance](#) for caring for oneself and others who are sick.
- Each school will have a designated “sick area,” where staff and/or students will be triaged and assessed for an appropriate disposition. Sick students and staff will be separated from well students and staff who are well.
- School nurses and other healthcare providers should use [Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions](#) when caring for sick people. See also [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know](#), a

protocol that explains what we need to know about caring for patients with confirmed or possible COVID-19 infection.

- If the nurse/school personnel are calling an ambulance or bringing someone to the hospital, they will alert the dispatcher that the person may have COVID-19.
- Families need to provide the school nurse with at least four emergency contacts, indicating individuals who will be able to come to the school and pick up their child if they become sick during the school day. Dismissing sick children (and staff) in a timely fashion (within 45 minutes) is imperative for the safety of all.

### **Staff Self-Screening Tool**

**Instructions:** If you answer yes to any of the following questions, do not go to school. Contact your primary care physician to be tested for Coronavirus and notify your school nurse of your symptoms

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	Yes	No
1. Fever of 100.4 degrees within the last 14 days?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have you taken a fever reducer (Tylenol, Ibuprofen, etc.) in the last 4-8 hours?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reason for taking? _____		
3. Cough/Shortness of Breath	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Pneumonia/Flu - recent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Have you traveled out of the country in the last 14 days or to New York or another US state with community spread?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Have you had contact with anyone who has lab confirmed Novel Coronavirus within 14 days of symptom onset?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Clean and Disinfect**

- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after [cleaning and disinfecting](#).
- Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of [cleaning and disinfection products](#), including storing products securely away from children.
- [Cleaning and disinfecting Action Plan](#)

### **Clean and Sanitized Restrooms**

We continue to follow the guidance below from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), which includes the ongoing maintenance of restrooms, ensuring they have functional toilets, clean and disinfected surfaces, and handwashing supplies. We will continue to take the following precautions:

- Ensure that we operate with functional toilets.
- **Clean and disinfect** regularly using **EPA-registered disinfectants** that are effective against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, particularly high-touch surfaces such as faucets, toilets, doorknobs, and light switches.
- Clean, and disinfect restrooms daily or more often if possible.
- Instructions for proper hand washing will be posted in restrooms.
- Follow the **Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting** to develop, implement, and maintain a plan to perform regular cleanings to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Regularly stock with supplies for handwashing, including soap and paper towels for drying hands or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol and no touch trash cans.

### **Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts**

- In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, school nurses/administrators should notify the Rockland Office of Public Health, staff, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**.
- The RPS Nursing Team will work collaboratively with the Rockland Office of Public Health to identify individuals who have tested positive and/or who had **close contact** with a person diagnosed with COVID-19. Individuals and families will be instructed to stay home and **self-monitor for symptoms**, following **CDC guidance** if symptoms develop.
- RPS Director of School Health Services will work closely with the RPS Administrative Team to identify any COVID-19 cases and any necessary actions.

### **Health Protocols Prior to Coming to School**

#### **School Personnel:**

- Every day prior to coming to work staff will be asked to complete a self-administered **Wellness Screening Check**
- If a staff member has any symptoms, they should call their supervisor and report the symptoms and stay home from school.

- Staff should follow up with their PCP for further evaluation. They will be allowed to return to school based on their symptoms, further evaluation, and clearance from the Rockland Health Dept.
- Staff who become ill while at school will be sent home immediately.

**Students:**

**Before** coming to school or getting on the bus:

- Families should assess their child’s state of wellness before leaving home for school.
- If the student has any 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, whether the child was seen by a medical professional and any testing that was done. The child can return to school once cleared by the school nurse and/or the Rockland Board of Health.
- 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.

These symptoms include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue when accompanied by other symptoms
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache when accompanied by other symptoms
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- GI Symptoms: Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and/or abdominal pain

If a child becomes ill at school, families will be notified and for everyone’s safety asked to pick up the child within 45 minutes.

**Transportation Safety**

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) has recently distributed [Fall Reopening Transportation Guidance](#) which can be found [here](#).

RPS plans to implement the following when transporting students under the State and Federal guidelines:

- students will be seated one student per bench, alternating sides for each row.
- A 77 student bus will accommodate up to 24 students, one monitor, and the driver
- Windows on buses will be kept open to circulate fresh air.
- All riders and the driver will be required to wear a mask
- Students will be assigned to a seat, and staff will mark their seat locations in advance. Not planning on that.
- We are exploring the possibility of having a bus aide assigned to each bus so that the driver is not the only adult on the bus. The bus aides primary job would be to monitor and remind students of safety protocols.

Currently, we are in the process of exploring staggered drop-off and pick-up times at schools, routing options, cleaning and sanitizing schedules, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements for drivers and riders, and special education van capacities.

We strongly encourage families to drop children off, or walk with their child to reduce possible exposure on buses, traffic congestion, and carbon emissions. One of the best ways to reduce traffic congestion in the Town of Rockland is to increase the rate that children are walking to school.

## **RPS Arriving At School/Procedures**

### **Arriving at School**

- Staggered arrival times and students will go right to their classrooms
  - Multiple doors will be utilized for entry to allow for physical distancing
  - Entry/Dismissal doors will be assigned by each school
  - Individuals will be stationed to direct students
- A. Buses
- Disembarked in a staggered manner
  - Each bus will be emptied by row
- B. Walkers/Drivers
- Stagger arrival and dismissal time
  - **Families/Visitors will NOT be allowed into the school** so please plan accordingly

### **Classroom Set-Ups**

- Classrooms will strive to maintain 6 feet
- Classes will be encouraged to go outside when feasible
- Desks are arranged in rows, at a minimum of 6 feet between students
- Staff will be encouraged to keep a seating plan to assist with contact tracing if

necessary

- Tape will be placed to “mark off” 6-foot increments for visual cues
- Posters and infographics will be displayed in the classroom to assist students in understanding the need for social distancing.

### **Playground Structures**

- Playground Areas will operate at a reduced capacity and students will wash their hands at the end of the play period
- Masks per DESE guidelines will be required for grades K and up

### **Classroom Special Considerations**

- FM Systems
- Students should not share supplies- pens/pencils/crayons
- Anything that is passed around the class should be discouraged, such as a microphone

### **Hallway Passing**

- When feasible, hallways will be designated as “one way”
- Where feasible, stairways will be designated as “one way”
- In Emergency Situations/Evacuations the quickest evacuation route will be used
- Students will be encouraged to adhere to social distancing guidelines when walking in the hallways
- Staggered changing times will be discussed at the school level

### **Dismissal**

- Staggered Dismissal - reverse of arrival to school procedure
- Walkers/Drivers dismissed in a staggered fashion
- Buses loaded in a staggered fashion
- Will use multiple exit points of school to expedite dismissal and loading buses.

### **Special Considerations**

- No gathering of large crowds - students or staff (or families/community meetings)
- Physical Field Trips are on hold
- Virtual Field trips are allowed
- Out of state and out of country travel is on hold
- Limit Nonessential visitors to schools including parents/guardians



## **Cafeteria Protocols**

School cafeteria staff will offer breakfast and lunch every school day. Breakfast and lunch will be offered daily to remote learners and in school learners.

We are peanut free district. Food choice will be limited to one hot lunch choice across the district but will meet all state and federal nutrition requirements. There will be no al la

All school cafeteria personnel will receive training on hygiene, PPE utilization and work area cleaning. All PPE and cleaning materials have been purchased and delivered.

The elementary schools are currently planning on eating in the classrooms. Breakfast and lunch will be ordered in and delivered to the classrooms. Hand and sanitizer, trash barrels and desk disinfectant/cleaning materials will be provided.

The middle and high school are planning to do grab and go lunches from the cafeteria. The High School will eat socially distanced in the cafeteria and robotics rooms and the Middle School will eat in the cafeteria, library and gym. Lunches will be staggered to maximize social distancing, hand sanitizer will be available throughout the entry/exit points and all tables and surfaces will be disinfected between each group of students.

## **SCHOOL FACILITIES**

### **Preparing our Schools**

Both families and staff are eager to return to teaching in learning in their school buildings. We have taken a number of school safety measures to minimize risk to all members of our school community to ensure we can safely return to school while the COVID-19 risk remains. First, we conducted a classroom-by-classroom “Facility Needs Assessment.” The purpose of the Facilities Needs Assessment is to determine the number of teaching spaces and classrooms in each school that provide adequate square footage, based on approved social distancing guidelines, to safely seat students and staff. We are in the process of analyzing air handling and filtration system capacity to ensure adequate, safe, and high quality ventilation in teaching spaces. We have conducted walk-throughs with the Rockland Office of Public Health, the Rockland Fire Department, and the Rockland Building Inspector to identify additional expanded space for staff to separate sick students from well students, and care for students or staff in the event they become sick during the day. Finally we worked with the Department of Public Facilities to identify, measure, and procure plexiglass screening for high traffic areas, such as library and administrative offices, providing enhanced safety for staff and students.

## **Assessing Air Quality Risk**

Some members of our school community have expressed concerns about classroom air quality, particularly in aging or overcrowded school buildings. A recent NPR [article](#), “Amid Confusion about Reopening, an Expert Explains how to Assess COVID-19 Risk,” Terry Gross characterizes the problem this way:

There's an old phrase in the environmental movement, "The solution to pollution is dilution." And actually in infectious diseases, the same thing is true. ... When you and I talk, we fill a room full of aerosols. If you actually had a special camera (that does exist and you can do this), you can actually see aerosols fill the room and these little particles after just 20 or 30 minutes of talking. So anything that moves air and moves that out more quickly is surely helpful...

Respiratory droplets and aerosols carried through the air are what spread the COVID-19 disease. HVAC systems are designed to circulate fresh air into the buildings. Out of an abundance of caution, we have contracted with *Universal Environmental Consultants* of Framingham to evaluate our HVAC systems district-wide. We will share the results of our Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) audit of systems with the public and with Delshaun Flipp, Rockland’s Director of Public Health.

## **EQUITY AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

During this period of school closure, some students and families have been more vulnerable than others. COVID-19 has exacerbated systemic inequities that have existed for decades. The recent protests against racial injustice in our nation and the pandemic has created new gaps as well. The development of our plan for the coming school year maintains our focus on the needs of all of our students while recognizing the need to engage students and staff in a district self-inventory regarding systemic racism and our role in this struggle.

We are forming a new district-wide Diversity Committee that will include parents, students, and teachers. This group will be charged with assessing RPS as an organization from a structural and procedural perspective as well as looking at curriculum and access issues.

RPS will continue town and community partnerships to provide necessary support for all families. We also will continue to adapt our provision of specialized supports for our students who need them, including the introduction of teletherapy for students with disabilities this fall.

## **English Language Learner (ELL) Supports**

Rockland’s English Language Learner (ELL) teachers have worked diligently to remain connected with our English Learners (ELs) and their families in spite of the obvious difficulties created or made worse by

the current pandemic. These home/school relationships were an important factor in enabling the families in our program to make the successful transition to remote learning. Through the coordination of our Technology Department, RPS families who requested assistance were provided with electronic devices and Internet access.

As we begin the 2020-2021 school year, the ELL Department will continue to assist our English learners in their language acquisition and support students in developing the linguistic skills to succeed in their content classrooms through the provision of language instruction via a variety of methods, whether in-person or remotely, depending on student and family needs and circumstances. New students may need to have their English skills assessed. You will be contacted by the ELL department to set up a time for testing if needed.

High-needs students should be prioritized for full-time in-person learning when feasible. That is, even if most students are not in school each day, we are working to set up small programs that would run daily for one or more cohorts of high-needs students, including students with disabilities and English learners who are most in need of in-person services.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **Overview of Special Education Supports**

Special education educators often have particularly close connections with their students; therefore, ongoing communication and meaningful partnerships with families continues to be of paramount importance to us. As we move into the start of the new school year, special educators will be collaborating with general educators, related service providers, English Language education staff, instructional assistants and others who support children in Special Education. During this collaboration, staff will ensure that recommendations for activities are appropriate and accessible, whether they occur in person or remotely, and that necessary modifications occur in the least restrictive environment (LRE.) The collaboration that took place during the spring closures will continue into the new school year to provide students with their IEP services. **Remote learning in the school year 2020-2021 is expected to be more robust than the models of remote learning implemented in the spring of 2020 when school districts did not have time to fully plan for the changes in instruction and service delivery due to emergency school closures.**

**The Rockland School District** is dedicated to providing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to our students, **while abiding with the need** to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services. Students will receive their IEP services in the fall, with some in-person and some remote opportunities. In support of some of our more vulnerable populations, preschool students and students in substantially separate programs will have the choice to attend continuous full time in-person learning to the greatest extent

possible. Resource students will receive support to access the curriculum both in-person and remote. Transition planning and services will continue. Specialized PPE will be provided when the instructional needs require closer proximity. As we consider social distancing requirements, the District will factor in the additional special education personnel, who enter classrooms to provide accommodations and modifications, in a manner that avoids overlapping with other staff members or related service providers will provide services in the general education setting remotely via video conferencing. IEP meetings will be held mainly remotely to limit the number of people in a building, and the District will continue to work with families to meet timelines or agree to extensions for Initial Evaluations, Reevaluations, and IEP Team Meetings. The District will make every effort to maintain as much in-person instruction as is safely possible should a full closure once again be necessary.

Students with disabilities, along with their peers in general education, will be assessed to evaluate skill gaps. In addition, special education progress reports and data on levels of performance towards goals prior to closure will be reviewed for progress and regression post-closure. For students in the Extended School Year (ESY) program, progress reports and discussions on individual levels of current performance will be important in assessing skill gaps and regression. We anticipate further guidance from the State, which will provide public schools with a process for identifying how compensatory services will be determined and how Districts should be thinking about delivering in-home services.

Students in Out of District Schools will continue to receive their services either remotely or in-person as directed by the individual schools. RPS will continue to receive remote learning plans and progress reports on all students as appropriate.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact your Special Education Team Chairperson, in each school building, with any questions or concerns. Please know that we are here for you, and we want to support you.

### **More In-Person Opportunities for Sub-Separate and At-Risk Youth**

Throughout the period of closure, feedback from parents, students, and staff has consistently conveyed the school community's profound sense of loss with the inability to deliver in-person instruction and maintain close connections during the COVID-19 pandemic. Optimizing the amount of in-person opportunities with in-person instruction is a priority, as we further develop the special education component of the back-to-school plan.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) has focused on having districts make at-risk youth or students with disabilities a high priority for in-person instruction when developing plans for re-opening in the fall. MA DESE recommends considering the following when prioritizing students for in-person instruction:

- Students with multiple disabilities;

- Students who will need time to learn new procedures and protocols to increase their successful reentry to school in the fall;
- Students whose level of engagement with remote learning during closure was low.

The new “Hybrid Model of Learning” will include both in-person instructional opportunities, as well as synchronous instruction and asynchronous offerings. As always, flexibility will be key to ensuring that a model of service fits the individual needs of students and families, especially within the remote environment.

A focus during in-person instruction will be the delivery of related services, such as speech and language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and reading. Protective Personal Equipment (PPE) and training for staff on the proper ways to wear PPE’s will be required prior to beginning any in-person instruction.

In a learning environment that rotates between in-person (in school buildings) and remote learning, some services and instruction will be delivered synchronously through online platforms that allow for optimal instruction, communication, and observation between therapist and student. For example:

- Therapies will be provided in-person when possible and remotely when appropriate, as dictated by a student’s needs and schedule. Individual staff situations may also affect in-person instruction.
- Special educators and related service providers may spend a portion of their day supporting some students in-person and another portion of their day providing students remote asynchronous support.
- Special Education evaluations will be conducted in-person whenever possible, whereas IEP meetings will likely be conducted remotely, to limit the number of people in a building, and as agreed upon with parents and guardians.

Should full closure occur after the start of the school year, the District will explore continuing in-person services on a one-to-one basis. Such a decision will be in agreement with parents, staff, and the Board of Health guidelines.

Guidelines are forthcoming from State and local authorities for in-home services. We will share more information soon.

Currently, the District is exploring grant funding that may help cover staffing costs to begin meeting with students prior to the start of the school year in the hopes that this may help those students transition back into school.

### **In-Person vs. Remote Services**

In many cases, the individual circumstances of staff and student health and safety may dictate the availability of in-person services, including speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy,

orientation/mobility, visual, hearing, and reading support. The District is exploring providing services to students on an out-patient basis regardless of a student's assignment to remote learning in any given week. However, there will certainly be times when teletherapy services are safest and most appropriate.

To prepare for this contingency, the District has been exploring tools that staff could use to provide teletherapy services. Multiple potential tools have been identified, and the District is in the process of establishing the necessary student data privacy agreements with vendors. All Speech and Language Therapists are currently in the process of completing their ten hours of teletherapy training through the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). All Speech and Language Therapists working extended school year (ESY) will have completed training by the year's program start. Additionally, quiet rooms will need to be assigned to individual therapists in buildings and equipment, such as headphones and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for closer distance instruction provided. Once school begins, therapists will be scheduling students for in-person services or synchronous teletherapy services, depending on the individual needs and schedule of students. These services will be delivered individually or in small groups. Schedules will need to accommodate the time needed to sanitize these rooms after each student or small group. Parents of children participating in the Hybrid Learning Model can expect that their children will receive a combination of in-person and teletherapies, as required.

### **Districtwide Special Education Programs**

RPS has several focused Special Education programs for students with specific learning profiles, as listed below. Students within each of these programs will be invited to participate in full-time, in-person schooling, although some services may be provided via teletherapy when appropriate. In the event of another full school closure, the District will plan on trying to maintain as much in-person therapies as is safely possible.

Rockland Public Schools has 4 morning preschool programs. Two morning programs are fully integrated and two programs are substantially separate.

#### **The substantially separate programs at the Preschool level are as follows:**

- The Learning Experiences and Activities for Preschoolers Program (LEAP) provides services for students diagnosed with Autism, social communication disorders or non-verbal learning disabilities. The focus is academics, behavior, social skills and inclusive practices.
- Striving to experience Play and Socialization ( STEPS) program provides services for students with significant developmental delays or intellectual/neurological impairment.

In addition, there are four fully integrated afternoon preschool programs.

**The substantially separate programs at the elementary level are as follows:**

- The substantially separate programs at Jefferson Elementary School, Practical Academic and Life Skills Programs, PALS 1 (Grades K-1) and the PALS 2 (Grades 2-4): provides services to students with significant developmental delays or intellectual/neurological impairments.
- The substantially separate programs at Esten Elementary School, Practical and Social Supports, PASS 1 (Grades K-1) and PASS 2 (Grades 2-4) provides services to students diagnosed with Autism, social communication disorders or non-verbal learning disabilities. The focus is academics, behavior, social skills and inclusive practices.
- The substantially separate programs at Memorial Park Elementary School, Transitional Learning Center, TLC 1 (Grades K-1) and TLC2 (Grades 2-4) provides services for students with social emotional and behavioral issues so they can more effectively access curriculum.

**The substantially separate programs at the Rogers Middle School are as follows:**

- Transitional Learning Center (TLC) Grades 5-8: Provides services for students with social emotional and behavioral issues so they can more effectively access curriculum.
- Practical Academics and Social Support (PASS) Grades 5-8: Provides services for students diagnosed with Autism, social communication disorders or non-verbal Learning Disability. The focus is academics, behavior, social skills and inclusive practices.
- Practical Academics and Life Skills (PALS) PALS 1-Grades 5-6, PALS 2- Grades 7-8: Provides services for students with developmental delays, intellectual impairments and neurological disorders.

**The substantially separate programs at the Rockland High School are as follows:**

Pathways: This program supports students in grades 9-12. The program provides students with academic, independent and pre-vocational skills.

Transitional: This program provides students age 18-22 with career and college ready activities.

Alternative: This program provides students with academic and social emotional support so they can more effectively access the curriculum.

## REIMAGINING TEACHING AND LEARNING

On March 13, 2020, Rockland schools were closed for a two-week period amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Two days later, [Governor Baker extended the period of school closure through April 5, 2020](#), and on March 25, 2020, [he announced closures through May 4, 2020](#). During this period of time, Rockland Public Schools first paused to thoughtfully plan the approach to learning, still not knowing with certainty the duration of school closures. On April 21, 2020, Governor Baker announced that schools would be closed through the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

Given the differences between a remote and in-person approach to learning and the suddenness of the closures, the District has engaged in evolving and adapting teaching and learning throughout the spring, continuing this work over the summer months. This evolution necessitates a redesign of our curriculum, significant adaptation or creation of new teaching materials, and creating new professional learning opportunities to enhance the capacity of our approximately 295 instructional staff (including roughly 230 classroom teachers and 78 Paraprofessionals, who work with teachers at all levels to provide ESL and special education services) and to deliver remote instruction. In doing so, we also had to take into account that as a community, Rockland residents and our staff were experiencing significant and traumatic disruptions to their own lives.

### **Student Orientations to New Learning Models**

Students' return to school in September—whether as part of the Remote Learning Academy or the Hybrid Learning Model—will include a robust orientation to the coming school year. RPS staff recognizes the need to spend time reconnecting with students and helping them reflect on their identity as learners following the emergency school closure and a summer hiatus. This need to build strong relationships with students will be true in the fall of 2020, more than ever. In order to prepare our community to engage with the levels of challenge and rigor appropriate to each individual student within these new learning models, RPS staff will work collaboratively with each other and with families and students to provide the solid social-emotional foundation and conditions for thriving during the coming school year, including attending to students' basic psychological needs prior to diving into more traditional academic content. Specific time will be set aside at the start of school to reflect and reconnect.

We will be learning how to function within this new educational landscape, and to that end, RPS staff will orient themselves and their students to the social norms of the physical and digital environments in which we will operate. This orientation will include explicit instruction in health and safety protocols and extensive review of acceptable- and responsible-use policies for synchronous and asynchronous virtual learning activities.



## **A Process for Identifying Learning Gaps**

During the period of emergency closure, families and staff expressed concern that their students are “falling behind,” as were families across the Commonwealth and nationwide. We are in the midst of a pandemic, we share these concerns, and we are working proactively to address them.

In the spring, all educators PK-12, worked to identify “bridge standards”—those standards that they felt were essential for students to focus on at the end of the year, helping to smooth their entry to the next grade this fall. In June, curriculum leaders and staff have been taking the next step in that process of curriculum realignment, and determining the essential standards of focus for the coming year given that 1) the overall time for learning will not be as great as it would be under pre-COVID-19 conditions; and 2) that some learning can happen more effectively in a remote setting than others. Educators also have been analyzing data gathered from their departments, as well as district-wide data to identify students who struggled in the spring, or were disengaged or disenfranchised. The needs of these students will be a primary focus area for educators in the fall.

During July and August, curriculum leaders and educators will modify their lessons and activities to account for these significant variables. They will be engaged in professional learning to support their choices in instructional methods that are best-suited to remote learning and flipped learning methodologies. This process will continue throughout the year, with the expectation that regular educators work collaboratively with their special education and English Language Learner (ELL) counterparts to co-plan lessons that support learning for all students.

The goal is to develop a curriculum that is flexible and sustainable under learning conditions that are unusual and challenging for all involved. One significant difference from the learning that happened in the spring is that expectations will be very different for student learning. Assignments will not be optional, and the focus will be on both social-emotional well being of the students and their traditional academic growth. We will be returning to the norms we all recognize—teachers teaching students directly, students working on assignments and passing them in for grades, and students engaged in a wider range of classes and activities. Additionally, the various screening tools and diagnostic assessments typically used will continue to be used to identify areas of need for all students.

## **Differentiated Learning**

Both prior to and during closure, students and families expressed a need for more differentiated learning opportunities. Differentiation benefits all learners. It provides for different paces of learning, varied resources to match learning styles and interests, and varied products to demonstrate learning. It allows for students who want to stretch to try new things in new ways, and it provides options for students who want or need to take more time on a topic or skill.

Differentiation also requires that our teachers work together to co-plan and organize instruction that meets the needs of all students. Special educators and teachers of English Language Learners (ELL) bring a wealth of knowledge and skill to designing effective learning for their students and regular education teachers, and all students benefit from co-constructing lessons rather than adapting them after the fact.

We also know that students' equity and access needs are varied in a remote learning environment. Technology-based instruction offers new ways to enhance student access, but we must be intentional when designing instruction to fully achieve this benefit. To this end, a variety of professional learning opportunities will be provided throughout the year to support educators in the differentiated lessons at all grade levels, as well as the effective and purposeful use of technology to enhance accessibility for a wide range of students. General educators will have an opportunity to work with and learn from special education staff and teachers of English language learners. They will offer expertise on how to design instruction that is accessible for students with special needs.

## **Feedback, Grading, and Assessments**

A new and significant challenge noted by families was related to the optional nature of learning activities offered during the closure. Accountability for learning is important and the optional nature of work during the spring was a challenge for many students, staff, and families. It is important to remember that the focus of much of the work in the spring was to facilitate student engagement, support them emotionally, and to provide maximum flexibility for families and staff during a stressful and uncertain time.

We also know that meaningful educator feedback is critical to learning. Feedback to students comes in a variety of forms (both formal and informal) and has a variety of purposes. The most useful for teachers and students is feedback that can be used to inform instruction and meet learners where they are. This information also provides needed feedback for students and families so they may also reflect on how they are progressing and make adjustments.

In terms of more formal reporting of grades, as curriculum and instruction is modified for the upcoming school year, RPS is considering the skills and content to be assessed. Those standards are being identified now by teams of curriculum leaders and educators and will drive what we report out on and inform any adjustments we need to make to report cards.

A key element in the process will be more consistency and continuity across grade spans and across schools at the same level. Families can expect to see common expectations and structures in terms of nature of assignments, length of assignments, feedback tools and executive functioning support for all students.

## **Music, Physical Education, Visual Arts, and STEAM**

The Vision of the Rockland Public Schools is to “empower students to excel, to lead, and to become dynamic and successful members of our global society.” One of the many ways we live that mission is by

ensuring that our students have well-rounded, diverse educational experiences. The Visual and Performing Arts, Physical Education and Wellness, and STEAM are integral to the comprehensive education that students receive in the Rockland Public Schools and we value them equally as other subject areas.

Families and staff have been wondering how we will be able to sustain our Arts and Physical Education/Wellness classes given the need for social distancing. Our staff are in the process of conducting an inventory of available performing and visual arts space and also exploring options for temporary outdoor space (covered and uncovered) by using dedicated parking free areas. Teachers will develop modified lessons, keeping in mind social distancing, equipment, class space and the weather for outdoor activities. Staff will also collaborate with our school nurses and the RPS Health Department to provide instruction regarding hygiene and safety to promote safe interactions among students. Specific strategies and modifications to be employed by our Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Physical Education, and STEAM teachers for the 2020-21 school year include:

- Focus instruction on outdoor activities (weather permitting) that promote lifelong fitness, stress relief, and healthy diet whenever possible. This focus is more important now than ever as we see the rise in the effects of COVID-19 in people with comorbidities.
- When indoor activities are unavoidable, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Physical Education, and STEAM teachers will divide students into smaller groups and spread activities across multiple class spaces (e.g. using some combination of the gymnasium, cafeteria, and auditorium)
- At the end of each class the environment and equipment will be disinfected
- Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Physical Education, and STEAM teachers will maximize opportunities to avoid sharing any equipment among students along with encouraging students to provide their own equipment to use when possible (e.g., instruments, sticks/mallets, paint brushes).
- Some students will need art supplies for home use. The Visual Art department can provide some of these materials for students and will ensure opportunities to access art materials families may not have in their home.
- When applicable, teachers will maximize opportunities to use a flipped classroom model to allow students to understand and apply concepts when physically present. For more about flipped learning, see [Flipped Learning](#).

## **TECHNOLOGY**

The RPS Technology department played a significant role supporting remote teaching, learning, and working during the spring school closure period. After the closure of schools, the department provided more than 600 devices to students and families who were without the necessary technology to access school. The department also provided devices for support staff and other stakeholders which allowed them to support students in the classroom and also helped the district to continue to operate smoothly during the closure. Students, families and staff were able to safely get support through the remote technology office throughout the school closure period.

In addition to providing devices and technical support, the Technology Department collaborated with the curriculum office to support teaching and learning across the PreK-12 continuum. One positive result from the school closure was the increased learning that took place with many teachers and other staff related to technology tools and using those in teaching.

## **Tech Tools You Can Use**

In looking ahead and reflecting upon our remote schooling experience this spring, the Technology Department, along with other staff across the district, are looking at the tools that we used and how we can best improve our delivery of instruction in the event that remote or hybrid learning environments are part of our future.

Rockland educators will continue to have access to Google's suite of collaboration and communication tools which greatly support teaching and learning in a remote environment. These tools allow students to demonstrate learning and acquire new skills, easily complete assignments, communicate with the teacher, maintain a sense of community, and collaborate with peers in a safe environment. Additionally, based on student and teacher feedback, the District and Technology Department are looking to provide increased student access to additional tools which will support further collaboration for students related to group projects, help support peer relationships and continue to provide a sense of community.

The Technology Department and staff continue to partner with district curriculum leaders as we plan curriculum to ensure that we have the right tools and resources to support students in all learning environments. Teams working on curriculum and instruction planning are encouraged to communicate both with their curriculum department heads, as well as technology staff and data services staff throughout the summer and in advance whenever possible to ensure desired tools and digital materials are:

- Aligned with RPS curriculum and instruction
- Appropriate for use with students
- Are not duplicative with other available RPS tools
- Can be supported by other departments, as needed
- Can be fiscally sustained
- Can be made available in time for instruction

RPS is committed to maintaining a core group of digital tools in order to make remote learning more accessible to students and easy for families to access and support. Strategic focus on a core set of tools (i.e. a less is more approach) can help achieve consistency, enhance the ability of RPS departments to provide critical support and opens up the opportunity to achieve deeper capacity and skill building among staff to effectively use tools. This core group of tools includes:

- [Google Classroom](#) (Required for grades PreK - 12)
- [Google Drive](#) (Grades 3-12)
- [Class Dojo](#)

- [Google Meet](#)
- [Google Chat](#)
- [Zoom](#)

After successfully using Google Meet among staff and for public meetings throughout the spring and consultation with other districts, educators will be able to use Google Meet with students. Staff and student feedback suggests in some cases GMeet has features and functionality that could enhance the remote learning experience. Staff will receive guidance and training on how to securely use Gmeet and control access to meeting rooms in order to minimize known challenges, learning from other districts who have been able to successfully and safely use this tool with students. For more about Zoom security features, see [here](#). At the same time, Google Meet has (e.g. see [here](#) for recent enhancements), and continues to rapidly evolve and improve its features (e.g. potential new features that would allow users to more easily set up breakout rooms). Although the exact timeline on these planned improvements is unknown, the district will continue to monitor development of this tool and continue to provide support staff in how they can effectively use new Google Meet features for remote learning and work.

Educators also will continue to have access to communication tools which will allow them to share information with parents and families through websites, email and conferencing tools.

Our learning from this spring has resulted in our looking to also provide learning opportunities for families to better understand the digital learning tools that their children use and how they can support students in a variety of ways in a remote learning environment. This may include opportunities to learn about devices, software, and how to help students be successful in a remote or hybrid learning environment.

## **Student Data Privacy**

As a district, we will continue to follow student data privacy laws which help keep our students safe during their online experiences. Educators will continue to investigate tools that most appropriately support the curriculum and are safe for students to use. We understand that students need tools that promote engagement and learning while at the same time, ensure a level of safety while working online. Our district continues to maintain and refine processes for using software and apps and how to request the use of those software/apps, as we work to protect student data. Digital literacy content will be part of the first week of school activities—before academic and specialist classes begin—to help make students safe users and consumers of digital tools and resources. In addition, we are planning continued professional learning opportunities for parents and families around technology and curriculum and instruction.

## **Deploying 1:1 Devices for Students**

Prior to the outbreak, Rockland had planned to provide every student K-12 with a Chromebook for the start of the 2020-2021 school year. Despite substantial budget shortfalls due to the Coronavirus, the district has been able to realize the goal of providing all students K-12 with Chromebooks because of the federal governments CARES Act of 2020 and its emphasis on connecting students to online learning platforms.

Chromebooks will be distributed September 8-11 at each school. You will receive notice on where and when to pick up your chromebook from your principal.

## **PERSONNEL & STAFF SUPPORT**

While ensuring planning for making students safe when we come back to school in the fall, we also need to remember that our buildings are full of adults, and our focus is also on keeping staff safe and well.

If a staff member does not think he or she can return in the fall for reasons related to the Coronavirus, please contact your principal to discuss. Each case is different and will depend on your specific circumstances. The Central Office will reach out to you if you have indicated that you are not able to return to RPS buildings. We will work with you to review your options in accordance with your rights under contracts as well as state and federal law.

If you have questions, we can assist you. Please contact your principal or Jane Hackett, [jhackett@rocklandschools.org](mailto:jhackett@rocklandschools.org) for confidential support. In addition, members of the REA may reach out to Sharon McGonigal, [smcgonigal@rocklandschools.org](mailto:smcgonigal@rocklandschools.org), REA President or Fred Damon, [fdamon@rocklandschools.org](mailto:fdamon@rocklandschools.org), REA Chief Negotiator, for confidential support about your rights and the law.

Employees can also find information about paid sick leave and expanded Family and Medical Leave Act under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act [here](#).

## **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

### **Planning for the 2020-21 School Year**

The entire RPS faculty and staff will participate in four days of professional learning and development leading up to the start of the school year, on August 31, September 1st through the 3rd. On these days, educators will learn about safety practices and procedures related to the pandemic, culturally responsive social-emotional supports, and trauma-informed teaching for students in the context of current events. Professional learning will be provided to help educators adapt to the pedagogical shifts required for our hybrid and remote plans. In addition, curriculum leaders will be working with teams and departments to share plans that have been developed over the summer to assess student understanding and address learning gaps over the coming school year. Teachers will work collaboratively to develop flipped classroom structures and content, as well as common tools for assessing student learning in remote and hybrid settings. Technology training will be provided on the key tools listed in the Technology section of this Back-to-School Plan, and our Digital Learning Coaches (STEAM teachers) will be supporting teachers and curriculum leaders to use technology effectively in flipped teaching, feedback, and assessment. Educators new to Rockland will participate in a revised New Educator Orientation to prepare

them for the expectations of remote and hybrid learning, with continued programming throughout the year to offer just-in-time support.

## **Parent and Family Professional Learning**

The circumstances of the past few months have required students, staff, and families to make incredible shifts in practices, routines, and expectations—it has not been easy. As educators and students learned new technologies to support learning, we have reached out to parents and families to provide assistance in understanding how best to help their children navigate the demands of remote learning. Now that we have a better understanding of what remote learning looks like, and what challenges our students may encounter, we are working to further develop the parent and family professional learning to make sure everyone has the tools needed to succeed. We are planning to provide synchronous training opportunities for parents and caregivers as well as resources for asynchronous learning.

## **FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORTS**

Throughout this unprecedented shift to a new way of teaching and learning, our dedicated educators and support staff will continue to serve our community, connecting students and families with the varied resources necessary to engage in learning amidst this pandemic.

Since March, our Food Service Department has been active serving lunch and breakfast to the community Monday through Friday. On average, 500 meals per day have been served. We will continue to serve meals to families in need throughout the summer months Monday through Thursday, with a double meal served on Thursday.

Collaboration between and among the Rockland School Nurses, the Rockland Board of Health, the Rockland Fire Department, and the Rockland Police Department has resulted in a safer, more effective plan for our return in the Fall. Thank you for their participation and cooperation.

## **RPS Coronavirus Updates**

- RPS Coronavirus Updates: access [RPS communications](#) and [Town of Rockland](#) and [Massachusetts Department of Public Health](#) COVID-19 updates.
- Do Your Part: [Help Fight the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

## **Problem Resolution**

When a parent or caregiver experiences a frustration with their child's school experience, it can be challenging to know where to turn to get help and support. Some post their frustrations on social media, while others contact an elected official, Town offices, or District administrators. You certainly have a

right to contact whomever you choose whenever you choose. If you are a parent or caregiver interested in solving a problem that involves your child's education or remote learning, our best advice is to first talk with your child's teacher or special education liaison and try to work out the issues together. If you feel that the problem is still unresolved, or you are uncomfortable working directly with those individuals, feel free to reach out to your child's principal, assistant principal, or counselor. If the issue is still unresolved or you would prefer to speak to someone outside of your child's building, please feel free to contact me at [acron@rocklandschools.org](mailto:acron@rocklandschools.org) or by calling my office at 781-878-3893.



## APPENDIX A

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why aren't you recommending that we go back to school full-time? To meet current CDC [social distancing guidelines](#), students and faculty must remain 6 feet apart to minimize exposure and transmission of the virus. We do not have enough space to accomplish this if everyone was in school at the same time.
2. Why are we going back at all?
  - a. We have a model that follows all safety guidelines and allows us to return to school safely. We believe that in-person instruction is more effective than remote and that children need to be in school for a variety of reasons.
3. Is the district going to conduct regular temperature checks?
  - a. No. Currently, it is not recommended that we conduct mass regular temperature checks as they have proven to be unreliable with too many false positives/negatives.
4. Is the district going to conduct CORONA testing students and staff?
  - a. At this time, we do not have a plan to test all teachers and students. Instead, we are asking staff and students to self-screen daily, that if teachers or students are exhibiting symptoms, they should stay home and get tested. A comprehensive "Before you come to school" checklist will be provided to [all](#) prior to the start of school. Training on self-screening will also be included in the start of school plan.
5. Are you going to provide masks and hand sanitizer to students and staff? Students and staff are responsible for providing their own masks. However, extra masks and gloves will be available at each school for those who are unable to bring their own. Hand sanitizer will be made available to everyone throughout each school building - at all entrances, exits, offices, common areas, and classrooms.
6. Are my kids going to have specialists? Yes, during the remote learning weeks students will receive instruction in Music, Art, PE, and STEAM. Curriculum will be modified depending on the level and delivery method.
7. Can a bus driver refuse a student who refuses to wear a mask? Yes, unless a district-approved accommodation has been made.
8. Are my kids going to have recess? Yes, at the elementary level.
9. Are you going to have mask breaks? Yes

10. How will you handle food service? Breakfast and lunch will be eaten in classrooms. During remote weeks, a grab and go lunch will be provided to students and families. Pick up for lunch (and breakfast) will take place Monday through Friday at RHS between the hours of 11:30-12:30, similar to the current summer lunch program.
11. What happens if we get a case of COVID, student or adult? A positive case triggers a specific protocol that involves sending all “close contacts” home, initiating contact tracing, disinfecting the areas potentially compromised and communicating effectively with “close contacts”. DESE has provided a detailed “what to do if…” document regarding procedures related to suspected infection and confirmed infection. RPS will follow these guidelines.
12. What if a child has a doctors note and cannot wear a mask? These students will be encouraged to attend the Remote Academy.
13. If they are sitting 6 feet apart, why do they need to wear masks? Because a combination of tools (distance, mask, fresh air, duration) is most effective at reducing the spread of the virus.
14. Will the district offer before and after school daycare? We are not expecting to open before and after school care until after the 6-week reentry phase is completed and we can reflect and adjust.
15. What is the roll-out plan? As currently proposed, **phase one**, staff professional development, will last one week (4 school days), August 31 - September 3. **Phase two**, orientation, will last one week (4 school days), September 8-11, for student and family orientations as well as the distribution of Chromebooks PreK-12. **Phase three**,
16. What technology tools are we providing to students?
  - a. One-to-one Chromebooks
  - b. Rockland is now a Google Enterprise district
  - c. I-Ready and other programs by grade level
17. What do I do if I have no internet at home?
  - a. Contact your principal
18. How are you going feed students during “remote” weeks?
  - a. Families may drive up to RHS during 11:30 and 12:30, Monday through Friday, to receive their lunch and breakfast
19. What would cause us to go from Hybrid to Full Remote?
  - a. Each situation will be dealt with individually in cooperation with the Rockland Board of Health. Depending on the circumstances, we may close a room, a wing, or a building for multiple days or even longer should the situation require. We are exploring the possibility

of using specific criteria such as Heat Index and Rate of Positive Tests to trigger the move to full remote.

20. How will the district communicate “Covid Days”? Remote learning Days? Blackboard Connect, our Web Site, and our APP
21. What kind of protection are you providing for your custodial staff?
  - a. Full PPE as required by DESE and recommended by the CDC
  - b. Training on the proper use of PPE and approved cleaning procedures and materials
22. Under what circumstance might my child be moved from one cohort to another?
  - a. Siblings
  - b. Households
23. Can I switch from one model to another?
  - a. No, must stay in model for full-term (one marking period)
24. Will sub-separate children who are integrated into gen/ed classrooms still be going in and out of gen/ed classrooms? YES - As not all sub-separate students stay in that class all day.
25. When will negotiations begin with the teachers union so that everyone has time to plan? Formal negotiations on the details of the plan have begun. The union has been a part of the Steering Committee and has been working closely and collaboratively with us on this plan. Details of the “Plan” must be negotiated.
26. Will we have gym, music, art? If so how will this work especially gym? - Yes - Guidance was recently released from DESE on these subjects. In the elementary grades K-4, PE, music, and art will be delivered during “remote learning weeks” and additional classes will be scheduled “in-school” where possible. At the middle school, PE, music, and art will be delivered as one of the 5 classes students attend during their “in-school” week. We are still designing the programs for RHS.
27. Will general education students be changing classes in middle and high school? Yes. Release times for class changes will be staggered, hallways traffic patterns made one-way where possible, and release times staggered.
28. Will we be serving breakfast? Yes
29. Will children who are medically exempt from wearing a mask be in the general population? In general, no. However, according to our attorneys, there must be exceptions (VERY few) made for those with serious medical conditions. Most with this level of medical issue will be encouraged to participate in the Remote Academy, asked to wear shields or loose masks, or to adhere to even

more strict social distancing guidelines while in school.

30. Can I request which “Team” I am assigned to? In general, no. We are assigning students alphabetically (or same household) and making adjustments to the make up of the teams to ensure they are balanced. Because we understand the difficult position families are in, we will try to accommodate requests that make life easier for you where possible. For example two families that are working together to manage child care needs. I cannot, however, guarantee that all requests will be granted.