

## **Strafford School District – SAU #105**

### Strafford School District Reopening Plan

August 26, 2021

#### **A. Purpose**

The purposes and goals of the Strafford School District Reopening Plan are:

- To provide a safe school for students and staff;
- To ensure that students' best interests are at the center of planning;
- To the extent possible, minimize risk of COVID transmission among the school community;
- To articulate COVID prevention strategies being utilized in the school;
- To provide clarity for students, families, and staff regarding operations during the pandemic;
- To ensure, to the greatest extent possible, a “normal” school experience, which includes full-time, in-person learning supplemented by a full program of extracurricular activities.

#### **B. Decision-Making Authority**

School Board: the Board holds the responsibility and the legal authority to set and establish policy, provide resources for school operations, and evaluate the superintendent of schools. In the context of this Plan, the Board may:

- Alter school occupancy;
- Consider changes to the Plan;
- Make budgetary and staffing decisions;
- Other policy-level decisions.

Superintendent: the superintendent holds the responsibility and legal authority to implement Board policies, advise the Board on relevant issues, comply with state and federal laws and rules, and manages the operations of the district. In the context of this Plan, the superintendent may:

- Establish school and transportation schedules;
- Establish cleaning and disinfection practices and routines;
- Establish criteria for nursing and health screening;
- Provide general response guidance for students and staff, such as individual spacing and use of personal protective equipment;
- Provide for precautions for specific activities, such as recess, athletics, music, etc.

Governor and Other State Officials: over the past year and a half, our governor has issued a variety of Executive Orders relative to the pandemic; other state officials generally provide recommendations; it is the district's intent to comply with any governor's orders

Other individuals and groups: other individuals and groups may participate in the decision-making process by reporting on school conditions and making recommendations relative to student and staff safety and good health.

#### **C. DOE and DHHS Recommendations**

The New Hampshire Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services both provide guidance and recommendations relative to school operations during the pandemic. Recognizing that the pandemic presents the district with dynamic, evolving conditions, it is critical that the district attend to both long-term guidance and periodic changes to guidance that both agencies provide. The district's administration prioritizes regular review of this guidance, as well as participation in the periodic briefings provided by each agency.

In addition, guidance is also provided by the Centers for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and other national health-oriented organizations. The district recognizes that the guidance from these organizations is directed to a national audience and may not apply to New Hampshire or Strafford. However, it is acknowledged that the district's administration must remain cognizant of information and guidance from such sources and consider in the context of local and state conditions.

#### D. District Operations

The following guidelines are established for the opening of school:

- Arrival at School: Students enter the school directly from drop-off; students do not congregate outside of school prior to entry; drivers are requested not to leave your vehicles; drivers who transport pre-kindergarten students are requested to walk the students to the school lobby at the main office.
- Athletics: Outdoor athletics utilize guidelines for recess; indoor athletics utilize physical education class requirements; guidelines are reviewed prior to and during each athletic season.
- Attendance: Accurate class attendance is recorded daily to ensure that all possible contacts with a potential individual infected with COVID be identified.
- Cafeteria Social Distancing: The school cafeteria maintains social distancing of three feet in between students, between students and adults, and between adults.
- Class Quarantines: Class quarantines are no longer recognized as a potential mitigation strategy by health officials.
- Classroom Social Distancing: Classrooms maintain social distancing of three feet in between students, between students and adults, and between adults, as much as possible.
- Cleaning: Our school custodians and cleaners continue to utilize enhanced cleaning techniques that were established by the CDC and operationalized in Strafford during the last school year.
- Communications: Communication needs are assessed on a regular basis; it is a responsibility of the superintendent of schools to advise families and staff of changes to this Plan.
- Daily Screening: Families and staff members are expected to perform a brief self-screening for COVID symptoms on a daily basis.
- Food Service Workers: Food workers will be masked when preparing and serving food to students and adults.

- Funding: Strafford School has received several federal grants to address pandemic-related needs of students and the school; funds are utilized in compliance with grant requirements; fund expenditures are expected to continue through the 2021-2022 school year.
- Hallway Traffic: adult supervisors monitor hallway traffic to ensure that distancing is maintained while students are in transit within the school building.
- Large Group Gatherings: Outdoor large group gatherings are permitted; indoor large group gatherings of students must adhere to distancing of three feet.
- Masking: Facemasks are optional for both students and adults.
- Meetings: At this time, meetings between parents and guardians and school personnel (for example, special education team meetings) are conducted remotely if agreed upon; in-person meetings remain an option for parents and guardians.
- Music Classes: Generally, classroom social distancing requirements apply; when group singing occurs, students and adults are masked; students engaged in playing of musical instruments with mouthpieces, observe distancing of six feet between students, between students and adults, and between adults.
- Notification: The district is required to notify the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services of COVID cases identified in our school community.
- Operational Changes: As noted above, changes to this Plan may occur throughout the year; the superintendent of schools will notify families and staff of any such changes in a timely manner.
- Outdoor Instruction: Teachers are encouraged to take outdoor breaks, as well as utilize outdoor spaces for learning activities.
- Parent/Guardian Symptom Monitoring: Parents/guardians are respectfully reminded that COVID symptoms may be different in children and that children may evidence only one of the following symptoms if infected: fever or chills, nasal congestion or runny nose, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, headache, and muscle aches or body aches.
- Personal Safety Measures: Frequent hand washing, respiratory protocols, and other personal safety measures are taught and incorporated into school routines.
- Physical Education Classes: Physical education classes occur outdoors when practical; when physical education classes occur in the school gym, classroom social distancing requirements apply.
- Recess and Break Times: Masks are optional for outdoor recess and outdoor break times.
- Remote Learning: The district does not currently offer remote learning.
- Self-Isolation: Self-isolation requirements are as follows:

- An individual who tests positive for COVID must self-isolate for ten days after the onset of symptoms and for twenty-four hours after being fever-free with improving symptoms.
  - An individual who lives in a household with another individual who has tested positive for COVID must self-isolate for ten days after the last exposure, unless vaccinated.
  - An individual who believes that he/she was in close contact with a non-household member should notify that person; the original individual should then self-monitor for symptoms and seek testing, if necessary.
  - An individual who is fully vaccinated against COVID and more than fourteen days have passed since the second vaccination dose or an individual who had previously tested positive for active COVID within the previous ninety days are not required to self-isolate.
- Sickness: Sick students remain at home; students who display symptoms at school are sent home; families are advised that infected young people can display a single symptom, often a symptom that is not identified as pandemic-related.
  - Special Services: As occurs during non-pandemic times, students with special medical needs will be accommodated in full compliance with federal and state laws.
  - Symptoms of COVID in Children: Children may display one or more of the following symptoms: fever or chills, nasal congestion or runny nose, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, headache, and muscle aches or body aches.
  - Transportation: Families are encouraged to utilize private vehicles when practical; facemasks are required on buses by the district's transportation contractor.
  - Vaccination: The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human services encourages schools and school district to encourage vaccination; the Strafford School Board provided staff members with vaccination opportunities last spring.
  - Ventilation: The district installed additional air filtering equipment during the last school year; use of building windows for ventilation and additional air exchange during cleaning occurs daily.
  - Visitors: Visiting the school is discouraged; when visitors enter the school beyond the lobby area during school hours, facemasks are suggested; visitors who are experiencing one or more COVID symptoms are respectfully requested to reschedule their visit.

#### E. Status Changes

As we know from last year's experience with the pandemic, that status changes may occur during the 2021-2022 school year. Several factors may indicate that the restrictions described above may be reduced; these include, for example:

- The potential availability of vaccinations of younger people;
- The pandemic's end is acknowledged by state authorities; or
- The number of circulating COVID cases is extremely low.

On the other hand, increasing restrictions and precautions may be indicated, such as:

- The district's inability to staff the school due to COVID cases among faculty and staff;
- Changes in guidance from health authorities;

- The number of circulating COVID cases rises dramatically.

F. Data Monitoring

As noted above, the district's superintendent of schools is responsible for monitoring and reporting to the School Board a range of data relative to the pandemic; these sources include local, county, and state cases reported; guidance from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services; and guidance from other health authorities.

G. Communications

Finally, the superintendent of schools is charged with developing a communications plan for pandemic-related updates and information; the plan will be approved by our School Board and shared with our school community; the purpose of this plan will be is to keep Strafford students, families, and staff members advised of the latest local developments and potential Plan changes.