

2021 - 2022 RCS School Year Q & A

If you have any additional questions that are not answered here, [please fill out this google form](#). If you have a question regarding your specific child, please call your school's main office to speak with their principal. As a reminder, you can search this document by simultaneously clicking the "Control" (Ctrl) button and "f" on your keyboard. New questions will be added to the bottom.

[Here is a matrix of reopening plans](#) for each building.

Added Monday, August 16, 2021:

Q: Within the planned return to regular transportation capacity and schedules, would that include the two mid-day PreK bus runs?

- **A:** Yes, we expect to return to our 2019-2020 transportation schedule which does include two mid-day PreK bus runs.

Q: Will PreK and K students be able to play together in centers and work in small groups like they typically do? Will grades or classes, in general, get to intermingle during the year?

- **A:** Our reopening committees will be discussing how to facilitate normal station work, small group work, and play outside and within our classrooms. We will unquestionably have more freedom for collaboration this year. There is still merit in maintaining cohorts of students to better prevent the spread of infection. We are not yet sure how/if grade levels and other classes will be able to intermingle. This will likely be based on infection and transmission rates in our schools/region.
- **Update: 9-3-21** - students will be able to collaborate within their classrooms and, with distancing in mind, among classrooms when appropriate.

Q: When will families be notified if additional supplies are needed, those that are not being supplied by the school?

- **A:** As a reminder, the school will be providing most supplies for students. If additional supplies are required, students and families will be notified by those individual teachers in school. We will be very respectful of students and families time in obtaining any additional supplies, knowing that some information may not be able to be shared until after school starts.

Q: The letter indicated that Chromebook will be distributed in the near future. Does this apply to all grades or MS & HS?

- **A:** All grades will receive their Chromebooks right from the classroom during school hours.

Q: If they are being distributed to elementary classes, will the devices be coming home every day?

- **A:** At the beginning of the year, for the elementary schools, Chromebooks will be primarily used during their school day and not transported home. In the secondary schools, they will likely be transporting the Chromebooks home on a nightly basis as they did last year. These will be distributed during the first week of school.

Q: When will classroom assignments and class schedules be mailed to families?

- **A:** Schedules and teacher assignments will be mailed to all families by Monday, August 30th at the latest.

Added Saturday, August 21, 2021:

Q: What will lunch look like for elementary, middle, and high school?

- **A:** The recommendation is 6' distancing while eating. We have been measuring and experimenting with furniture in our cafeteria spaces. It is our hope to be able to serve all students within the cafeteria.
- **Update 9-3-21:** We may be using additional spaces in the elementary, MS and HS to accommodate all students during lunches in order to ensure as much social distancing as possible.

Q: Will the school require our children to wear masks?

- **A:** Masks, combined with other mitigations, were an integral part of our safety protocols during the 20-21 school year. RCS had little or no discernable transmission of the COVID-19 virus while at school among staff and students who followed our safety protocols. Although the CDC, State Education Department, and the American Association of Pediatrics have recommended that all persons be masked at all times while in schools, RCS has not yet made a decision on masking. [Here is an article](#) on the effectiveness of masks as shared by Dr. Whalen, the Commissioner of the Albany County Department of Health.
- **Update 9-3-21:** Masks are required for all students and staff as per the NYSDOH

Q: How does the school plan on fully reopening for all students and still maintain social distance? Won't there be too many kids in each class to distance effectively?

- **A:** We have set up model classrooms throughout the district and will be able to maintain 3' or more social distancing in most, if not all, areas.

Q: When will bus schedules be released?

- **A:** Transportation schedules will be mailed to families by Monday, August 30, 2021.
- **Update 9-3-21:** **The district has updated routes and times since cards were mailed home to families.** Please look at these updated routes [here](#).

Q: Will the district be providing free lunch to all students this year regardless of the family income?

- A: The RCS School District has secured a grant that will allow us to provide free breakfast and lunch for all students for the 2021- 2022 school year, regardless of family income or school building. However, **it is imperative** that families who are eligible for free or reduced lunch still fill out the free and reduced lunch application for the 2021-2022 school year. The application will be mailed to families in the 2021-2022 RCS calendar. Filling out this form will allow families to access many additional services and support networks they otherwise might not be able to. It will also give our school district and local municipalities valuable information about needed resources. You can also find the forms and more information on our food service website [here](#).

Q: Will high school and middle school students have access to lockers this year?

- A: Student locker assignments and combinations have been distributed with student schedules.

Q: Will volunteers be allowed to help at the schools this year?

- A: STARS Volunteers are affiliated with the district and will be able to work in our buildings. RCS will be making a decision about other types of volunteers after the school year has commenced.

Added Friday, September 3, 2021:

Q: Will students be expected to change for PE?

- A: Students will not be required to change for PE, however, they may if they so desire. Locker rooms will be available for them to do so.

Q: For 9/10-6/7 orientation will they have to bring backpacks with supplies, etc.?

- A: Students do not need to bring supplies, but they will have access to their lockers during orientation if they would like to bring supplies or materials in.

Q: Why have there been no surveys to get parent's opinions for reopening?

- A: We have released a ThoughtExchange Survey that runs through Wednesday, September 1st. The results of the survey may be found [here](#).

Q: If you haven't made a decision on masking yet, then when do you plan to?

- A: On Friday, August 27, the New York State Department of Health [filed an emergency regulation that will mandate](#) all students, faculty, visitors, and staff of public and private schools, pre-K through 12th grade, to wear masks while inside all school buildings, regardless of vaccination status. Here is a draft of the [RCS Tiered Mitigation Reopening Plan](#).

Q: How are you addressing vaccinations amongst your staff? If our children need to be immunized, so do staff.

- A: Currently, there is no mandate surrounding vaccinations in schools. On September 2, 2021, the NYSDOH issued [updated directives](#) about the testing of unvaccinated staff and students. There are still some unknowns about how this will be accomplished at RCS or any school. We will continue to monitor the guidance and update our community accordingly.

Q: Will extracurricular activities after school resume?

- A: Clubs and extracurricular activities will operate using established protocols (ie. indoor activities must include masking, social distancing, etc.; outdoor activities can include unmasking [based on current CDC guidance]). Advisors and facilitators will maintain records of attendance for contact tracing purposes.

Q: Will cleaning on buses and classrooms continue at the same intervals as before?

- A: Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk Central School District will follow all CDC guidance surrounding cleaning and disinfecting. Students and staff should continue to utilize good hand hygiene and/or hand sanitizing, as needed. Individualized materials will be encouraged, but not mandated. The CDC has recommended the cleaning/sanitizing of surfaces once per day. High-touch areas will continue to be cleaned/sanitized regularly by custodial staff.

Q: I plan on driving my children to and from school until further notice, should I contact the transportation department?

- A: If you do not need transportation for the 2021-2022 school year, please visit https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeq9SxGfRQxSfWL5HM5-DWlolv7idWwM9fmzO5QvqV9CsMf3w/viewform?usp=sf_link to fill out the form to opt your child out. For more information on transportation for the 21-22 school year, please see [here](#).

Q: Will there be a virtual learning option for kids whose parents do not want them wearing masks all day?

- A: No, New York State mandated a remote option for students during the 20-21 school year and this has expired. RCS does not have the resources to offer both in-person instruction to the majority of our students and offer comprehensive quality remote instruction. RCS and many districts utilized the “hybrid” model at the secondary level last year, where a teacher left their Chromebook open and attempted to work with both virtual and in-person students at the same time. That was a stop-gap measure with limitations in equipment, communication, and participation. Our elementary schools pulled all remedial and enrichment teachers from their post to help teach in-person and remote learning last year, thus depriving students of both opportunities. This year, New York State has directed us to provide in-person instruction to our students, with the caveat that we may allow a remote option for medically fragile individuals. RCS alone would be unable to provide even this option, which is why we are partnering with BOCES to provide this service for our neediest students.

Q: Why are the kids who are first on in the morning the last off in the afternoon? (Will my child have a 45-minute ride each way?)

- A: Above and beyond the pandemic we strive to have students on our buses for as short a time as possible. The pandemic will require that we diligently follow this protocol. Thus, if a child is the first one

picked up in the morning (farthest away from school), they will be the last one dropped off in the afternoon. Reversing a route and dropping off the farthest student first may extend the time that a cohort of students is together on a bus. Bus routes are also designed with the safest passage for students and traffic.

Q: What will drop-off and pickup look like this year?

- A: Parent drop-off and pick-up will look similar to last year at all of our buildings. The drop-off at the MS/HS will begin at 7:30 am at the earliest. PBC parent drop-off and pick-up will look like last year. AWB has made some adjustments to improve the flow of traffic. Both elementary schools may move to using a phone App that will assist in this process.

Q: What should I do if one of my children has symptoms (will the need to be tested, just stay out of school until asymptomatic)?

- A: We are still awaiting guidance from the Albany County Department of Health (ACDOH). However, the NYSDOH has just released [this chart](#) of exposure and contact tracing. Based on last year's quarantining rules, we are making some assumptions about what next year will hold in regards to quarantine and illness [here](#). Most importantly, if a child or staff member is sick they should stay home.

Q: Would I need to keep my other children home if one of their siblings is sick?

- A: At the end of the 2020-2021 school year, the [ACDOH](#) lifted the "sibling rule" - which was that siblings need to be quarantined if a sibling was ill. At this time, they do not need to stay home if a sibling is sick.

Q: What would students do if they have to stay home due to illness or if they test positive and have to quarantine for days?

- A: Illness would look the same as in any year. Work would be made up upon return to school and asynchronous (offline) work may be provided by the teacher during the absence. The question about quarantine is answered below...

Q: What will the protocol be for COVID infections? Will there be an online option for children in quarantine?

- A: We are still awaiting clear guidance from the Albany County Department of Health. We are making some assumptions about what next year will hold in regards to quarantine and illness [here](#). Instruction for children who are in quarantine will vary depending on the grade. Asynchronous work may be provided at any grade (work that can be done offline), but elementary will likely have some type of tutoring to assist with any asynchronous work and secondary may utilize our PM school or staff specifically designated to teach lessons outside of the day. Each building will share the quarantine instructional plans with affected families.

Q: Do students in grades 6-7 and 9-10 need to attend orientation? What if parents have questions about school, the building, or their schedule?

- A: No, students do not need to attend orientation, they will not be missing anything mandatory, rather this is a time for students to orient themselves with the building and get more comfortable before the first day of school. In lieu of having parents come in and take the tour, we will be creating a Q&A and some short videos to acclimate both students and their families to the middle and high school. If you have any questions about your student's schedule, please reach out to our counselor during the summer, you can find their contact information [here](#).

Q: What are the guidelines for athletics and spectators?

- A: The NYSDOH guidelines require anyone inside a school building to be masked. Masks are not required for outdoor events, but the CDC recommends the wearing of masks when in congested areas outside. Social distancing of at least 3' is recommended.

Q: Will students be receiving planners this year?

- A: Planners will be available for students who desire them. Students will be encouraged to use their chromebooks and Google calendar.

Added Thursday, October 7, 2021:

Q: What is the directive for homework this year at the elementary level?

- A: Teachers currently set the level of expectations for homework within their class. The district encourages families to read daily and practice math fact fluency with their students for 10-20 minutes. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these matters, please reach out to your building Principal.

Q: Will middle school and high school students need to change for PE class?

- A: Use of the locker room is not required for PE class this year however it will be available to students who would like to change for class.

Q: Will middle school and high school students be able to use their lockers this year?

- A: Yes, both the middle and high schools will be able to use their lockers this year. Middle schoolers will have assigned locker use time and high schools will be able to use their lockers during passing periods.