

Region 10 Schools Opening and Educational Continuity Plan

2022-2023



Message from the Superintendent

8/16/2022

In September of 2020 the Region 10 schools fully reopened for all students with in-person learning five days per week along with a voluntary distance learning option. The school system remained open for the remainder of the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years under the reopening plans developed by a committee of school and community stakeholders and approved by the Region 10 Board of Education..

Our understanding of the virus that causes Covid 19 and the pandemic has grown and the availability of testing and vaccines has greatly enhanced the tools we have to keep our community and schools safe. This plan for opening of schools for the 2022-2023 school year was developed in coordination with state and local public health officials and the Connecticut Department of Education.

This plan will be posted on the Region 10 Website, www.region10ct.org. If during the year the plan is revised or amended the updated plan will be posted at the same link and the community will be notified that the plan has been revised or amended.

The Region 10 schools remain committed to working with our community to support all our students. This will continue to require us to be flexible and adapt to the changing contexts presented by covid's possible impacts on public health.

Best regards,
Howard Thiery
Superintendent
Regional School District 10

Section 1: School Operations:

A. Model of Instruction:

- Region 10 Schools will open for in-person fulltime learning for all students in the fall of 2022. **The first day of school for students is Wednesday August 31, 2022.**
- Schools may switch to hybrid or remote learning in cooperation with local and state public health officials to maintain educational continuity should a future health emergency arise related to covid infections.
- Students or classrooms may be required to quarantine if directed to do so by state or local health officials. **Currently only students or staff who have covid are required to quarantine.**

B. Attendance:

- **All students will be expected to attend school in-person. There will not be a remote learning option.**
- Students who are absent due to illness, including for covid, will make up work and learning as laid out in the student handbook.

C. Student Meals:

- The state has provided funding to provide free school meals to all students until December 23, 2022

D. Transportation:

- All students in Regional School District 10 are offered transportation to the school they are zoned for. Updated bus routes will be available and communicated in August as usual.

E. Arrival and Dismissal:

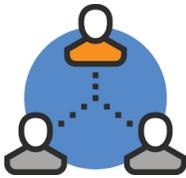
- Arrival and dismissal procedures will be communicated by the schools. At this time no special processes related to covid are planned.

F. Cocurricular Activities Including Sports:

- All typical school activities and clubs will occur with the same health and safety protocols that are present in the schools at that time.
- All typical middle school and high school sports will occur. All athletic activities will operate in accordance with DPH and CIAC guidelines.

Section 2: Health and Safety Strategies

 <p>Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks</p>	<p><u>Masks will not be required for students or staff except in specific circumstances.</u></p> <p>Masks will need to be worn if students or staff, with no known covid case in their household, have mild respiratory symptoms, no fever and have <u>tested negative for covid.</u></p> <p>Masks will also need to be worn by students or staff who are returning from having covid after quarantining five days until day eleven after symptom onset or positive test.</p> <p>Use of masks in schools will continue to follow the guidelines set by state Departments of Public Health and Education as well as the Directors of the Bristol-Burlington Health Department and Torrington Area Health District. These guidelines may change during the year as the public health data evolves and individuals should be prepared for these changes.</p>
 <p>Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette</p>	<p>Hand sanitizer stations will remain available throughout all schools.</p> <p>Proper hand washing will continue to be encouraged where appropriate.</p> <p>Signage and instruction will encourage students to appropriately cover coughs and sneezes as well as wash and sanitize afterward.</p>

 <p>Facility Cleaning and Ventilation</p>	<p>Schools will be regularly cleaned in accordance with state DPH guidelines</p> <p>Ventilation, including the increased exchange of outside air, will continue to be maximized to the extent possible based on building design and season.</p>
 <p>Contact Tracing and Quarantining</p>	<p>Close contacts are no longer required to quarantine regardless of vaccination status but should monitor themselves for symptoms.</p> <p>Contact tracing and quarantining will occur when directed to do so by state and local health officials.</p>
 <p>Daily Screening and Diagnostic Testing</p>	<p>As a preventative practice all members of the school community will be asked to conduct daily screening prior to coming to school. If students or employees feel ill, they are asked to remain home until they are symptom free for 24 hours.</p> <p>Anyone with mild respiratory symptoms, who is fever free and has no known covid cases in their household may take a covid test and if they test negative may attend school but must wear a mask.</p> <p>Anyone who has been a close contact to someone with covid or who has symptoms of covid are asked to be tested. Testing is readily available at regional health centers and pharmacies.</p>



Vaccinations

Region 10 has partnered with the Bristol Burlington Health Department and the Torrington Area Health District to provide the opportunity to be vaccinated for all employees and for eligible students.

The school district will continue to partner with our local health departments to have opportunities for our community members to be vaccinated.



Accommodations for children with special needs with respect to health and safety

Planning and Placement Teams, or 504 Teams, will convene as needed to identify and/or review student accommodations, where needed, with respect to health and safety policies and practices.

Section 3: Planning and Implementation Process

A. Continuity of Service:

Region 10 schools will begin the school year with full time in person learning for all students. The first day of school is Wednesday August 31, 2022. Schools will communicate a variety of orientation programs for students prior to the start of school. A variety of summer programming was offered for students with identified covid related needs in academics, social emotional wellness and socialization.

B. Periodic Review Process:

This plan is required to be reviewed and when appropriate revised at least every six months through September 30, 2023. Each review must include an opportunity for public review and consideration of public comment in assessing the need for revisions.

Region 10 must publicly post and submit a refreshed or updated plan to the CSDE on the following dates:

- December 23, 2022
- June 23, 2023

C. Understandable and Uniform Format

Federal regulations require that this plan be in an understandable and uniform format, to the extent practicable; is written in a language that the community can understand or, if not practicable, orally translated; and upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.

Should we become aware of any community members' needs regarding accessing this plan we will provide appropriate support and accountability to access an understandable and uniform format.



LAUNCHING INTO HEALTHY LEARNING – Fall



2022

Respiratory Disease Prevention Strategies
for

School, Child Care, and Camps:
*Continuing forward to support in-person
learning and childcare.*

Minimize impacts from respiratory disease outbreaks and maximize successful in-person learning and childcare during the coming school year by thoughtfully employing familiar mitigation strategies.

As we continue last school year’s transition away from executive orders to local decision-making regarding COVID-19 response, it is important for schools, childcare programs, and youth camps to keep in mind the tools and resources for respiratory disease prevention that remain available to them. As part of this local decision-making process, schools, childcare programs and camps are reminded to continue to work collaboratively with their local health departments and members of their communities, including staff and families, to determine which of the various prevention strategies are most appropriate to implement within their facilities. The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) offers the following guidance to assist in local decision-making, in the context of local conditions, to balance respiratory disease prevention measures with maximizing in-person participation opportunities for children.

START HEALTHY

with vaccination.

Vaccinations are the **first and most important** line of defense in preventing respiratory diseases like COVID-19 and influenza from disrupting the continuous operation of schools, childcare programs, and youth camps. The effectiveness of any other respiratory disease prevention strategy at a school, childcare program or youth

camp is likely to be dependent on the underlying level of COVID-19 and influenza vaccination in staff and children. **Everyone 6 months of age or older can receive both COVID-19 vaccine and a seasonal vaccine for influenza.** Many school aged children are eligible for a **COVID-19 vaccine booster dose** right now, and it is likely that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will recommend that **all eligible school aged children should receive a COVID-19 booster dose before winter.** Schools, childcare programs, and youth camps should encourage all children and staff to get [up to date](#) with their COVID-19 vaccinations prior to the start of the school year and should encourage the same for seasonal influenza vaccines when they become available this fall. Hosting on-site vaccination clinics is a great way to encourage vaccination and show your support to the children and families you serve. [DPH can assist](#) facility administrators with organizing these events and [local health departments](#) can be a great resource as well.

MAXIMIZE IN-PERSON LEARNING

with symptom awareness and at-home testing.

It is clear that in-person attendance provides the greatest benefit to children for both social/emotional/physical wellbeing and academic achievement. CDC recommends that people with symptoms of infectious diseases, including COVID-19, influenza, and gastrointestinal infections should stay home and get tested for COVID-19, and DPH supports this recommendation. However, DPH also recognizes the severe impact this prevention strategy can have on in-person learning opportunities, student achievement, attendance, and engagement for some children and communities. This is especially true during fall and spring allergy seasons and the winter months when mild respiratory symptoms seem to be almost constant. CDC continues to advise that children and staff should not report in-person to school, childcare, or camp if they are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, regardless of a negative test result. While DPH supports CDC's guidance, we also support an alternative approach for those administrators who feel that it may benefit their students and staff by providing more in-person learning opportunities.

DPH advises that children and staff with **mild respiratory disease symptoms** (infrequent cough, congestion, runny nose, sore throat, etc.), **no fever, and no known COVID-19 case in their household** should self-test at home for COVID-19 prior to leaving for school, child care, or camp every day they have symptoms and can be allowed to attend in-person if their test result is negative and they feel well enough to participate. **Anyone with a fever ($\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$) or who feels feverish should not report in-person** until their fever has resolved for at least 24 hours without the use of medication and should test for COVID-19. COVID-19 self-tests kits will be made available to all school districts, childcare providers, and operating youth camps (see DPH/CSDE/OEC's *Launching into Healthy Learning: Operational Strategies – Fall 2022*

information). Families can also order self-test kits by visiting [COVID.gov/tests](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19/qa/when-to-test.html). Children and staff choosing to report in-person with mild symptoms should be **strongly encouraged** to wear a well-fitting mask indoors. Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 should complete isolation according to the [CDC Q/I Calculator](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s0921-covid-19-isolation.html).

USE AVAILABLE PREVENTION TOOLS

based on conditions in your area.

School districts, childcare programs, and youth camps are **still required to report COVID-19 cases** using systems put in place by DPH and OEC, and DPH encourages continued sharing of general information about COVID-19 cases in your facilities with families. However, DPH recommends that school, child care, and camp administrators rely on the CDC [COVID-19 Community Levels](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s1105-covid-19-community-levels.html) to determine when to consider applying enhanced measures for the prevention of respiratory viral diseases (e.g., COVID-19, influenza). Facilities located in counties with **Low** community levels can focus on maximizing in-person learning days and rely on routine everyday strategies to provide healthy learning environments. If their county moves to the **Medium** level, administrators can consider whether implementing some additional prevention strategies could be beneficial in mitigating any impact that increased COVID-19 cases in their community may have on in-person learning. Facilities located in counties with a **High** COVID-19 Community Level can consider whether implementing even more advanced mitigation strategies could be beneficial, including such things as universal masking and contact tracing, to prevent further surges or outbreaks at their facilities. Administrators who may be experiencing case clusters or outbreaks at a facility should [contact DPH](#) and [their local health department](#).

Facilities located in counties with **LOW** community levels should maintain everyday prevention strategies:

- Encourage and facilitate [COVID-19 vaccination](#) for all children 6 months of age and older and all staff, including [booster vaccine doses](#) when recommended.
- Support children and staff who choose to continue [wearing a mask](#) even when not required.
- Follow [isolation guidelines](#) for individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have symptoms and live in a household with someone with COVID-19.
- Recommend [self-testing and masking](#) for children and staff with respiratory disease symptoms (with or without fever) or known exposures to COVID-19 cases with or without symptoms.
- Ensure that ventilation systems are well-maintained and operating appropriately.

- Maintain routine cleaning and disinfection protocols for all classroom surfaces and common areas.
- Continue advising parents to report cases of COVID-19 to the school and

maintain accurate absentee data. Additional prevention strategies to consider for facilities located in counties with **MEDIUM** community levels:

- Increase spacing between seated individuals in classrooms and during other activities, if possible.
- Be prepared to respond quickly to rapid increases in absenteeism, cases, or outbreaks in schools.
- Increase ventilation to ensure maximum delivery of fresh outdoor air to occupied spaces, appropriate filtration of any recirculated air, and use of outdoor spaces to the extent possible.
- Reinforce frequent hand cleaning and proper respiratory (cough/sneeze) etiquette.
- Communicate early and often with students, staff, and families regarding any changes in policies and procedures in order to ensure a heightened awareness of any respiratory disease symptoms.

Advanced prevention strategies to consider for facilities located in counties with **HIGH** community levels or those experiencing outbreaks:

- Implement a universal mask use policy for indoor spaces.
- Limiting outside visitors to the school to those who are necessary for instruction or student support.
- Cohort classrooms and during meals, recess, and other gathering times.
- Implement strategies to monitor and prevent in-school transmission of COVID-19, such as contact tracing, quarantine or daily screening testing (i.e., *Test-Mask-Go*) of close contacts of a COVID-19 case in any setting (with or without symptoms), and classroom-level exposure notifications.
- Discuss whether extracurricular activities that involve high-intensity close contact (e.g., indoor athletics, performing arts) should be temporarily suspended.

Head Start programs operating in public schools and in the community must also meet national performance standards and follow [COVID-19 requirements set forth by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#). These requirements may differ from state guidance, and schools are urged to work closely with Head Start programs to ensure that policies and procedures take into account any differences that may impact a child or family's experience with in-person learning.