Preparing for a Safe Return to Classroom Learning

Summer School Opening Plan

JUNE, 2020

Connecticut®

The top priority is to safeguard the health and safety of students, teachers and school staff

Guiding principles for the state's school re-opening plan

Protect the people of Connecticut

- Delegate opening timing decision to local experts
- Implement safety measures to prevent spread
- Anticipate potential re-emergence of the virus – and have a plan to stop it

Ensure all students continue to learn and be engaged during this transitionary period

Engage the full community in path forward

- Seek and incorporate input from administrators, educators, and parents
- Communicate transparently and often

Summer school plan developed in coordination with array of stakeholders

Members of the public

Governor's office

Education Sub-Committee, which represents:
- Teachers
- Students
- Superintendents
- State officials

Topic experts on:
- Special education
- Pediatrics
- Bus transportation
- Facilities maintenance
- School nursing
- Legal

Guidelines Sub-Committee
- OSHA, DPH
- Other occupational health experts

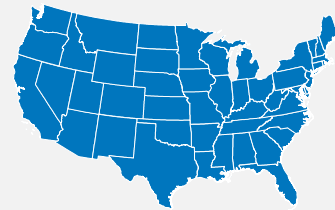**Re-Open Connecticut Advisory Group**

In addition, various research sources were consulted to develop details of reopening plan

Global practices

Consistent safety practices required by Asian and European countries that have returned to school

State and city plans

Protocols enacted by localities that have already returned to school to complete 2020 school year

Research surveys

Gauges of parent, educator, and education official sentiment

Health authority guidance

Cleaning, opening, and operational guidelines released by the CDC and others

Summer Schools can open as of July 6th

A Superintendent is encouraged to begin in-person summer school classes on July 6 if:
- Locations comply with the requirements set out in this document and with the CDC Decision Tool available here; and
- Plans have been reviewed with Local Director of Public Health and school medical advisor, if applicable

A Superintendent may suspend in-person classes at any time due to health & safety risks

The summer school acknowledgement form must be completed by Friday, June 15th and submitted electronically to the Connecticut State Department of Education

Announcement and communications related to Covid-19 and risks

LEAs must **communicate their summer school plans** and associated safety protocols, including by posting plans on their school district websites

It is **important to communicate to families and staff** to ensure they have access to relevant information

In addition to staff trainings, schools shall ensure all students, parents, and staff are **made aware of the places to access the latest CDC and DPH COVID-19 guidance**. This information will also be **posted in public areas** and should be **available in native language of recipient**

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Priority access for special student populations

LEAs will develop a consistent policy for their approach to priority access. Where possible consistent with the public health and safety requirements, in-person summer school programming will prioritize students who require the most learning recovery support. Schools should also prioritize their obligations for extended school year (ESY) services when determining access to in-person educational opportunities.

More information on the ESY topic brief can be found **here**

LEAs will assess and then determine how to safely accommodate students with special health care needs during summer school

Students most in need of learning recovery support include, but are not limited to:
- Students with special needs
- Students who are English Learners
- Students who have had limited to no access to devices to engage in virtual distance learning
- Students who otherwise did not access educational materials despite the LEA's providing the opportunity

Priority School Districts (PSDs)

PSDs are reminded that under C.G.S. §10-265m, §10-265g, and §10-265l the PSD Summer School grant program prioritizes summer reading and literacy programs to students in Grades K-3 who are determined to be substantially deficient in reading, in order to develop and deliver a personal reading plan for the student, to be monitored by the school literacy teams.

- The district may also require, within available appropriations, students in Grades 4 through 6 who fail to make progress with additional instruction provided in their personal reading plans, to attend summer school

Districts not designated as Priority School Districts and that do not receive PSD grant funding, need to prioritize students who are required to attend summer school according to district-determined deficiencies, with a priority emphasis on:

- Addressing early reading and literacy gaps.
- Support for English Learners
- Remediation recovery
- Acceleration and enrichment programming
- Social connection and support provided through summer programming focused on social and emotional support for students and families

Required safety measures

Pre-requisites to opening

- ⭐ District-appointed compliance liaison (slide 9)
- ⭐ Medical professional available in each district (slide 10)
- ⭐ Case protocols, attendance monitoring and notifications plan in place (slide 11, 12)
- ⭐ School closure and reopening procedures (slide 13)

Daily operating practices

- ⭐ Face coverings or masks worn by all students and staff in school and on buses (slide 14)
- ⭐ Daily health screening for students and staff (slide 15)
- ⭐ Group sizes limited and physical distancing practices implemented (slides 16, 17)
- ⭐ Thorough facility maintenance and regular cleaning (slides 18, 19)
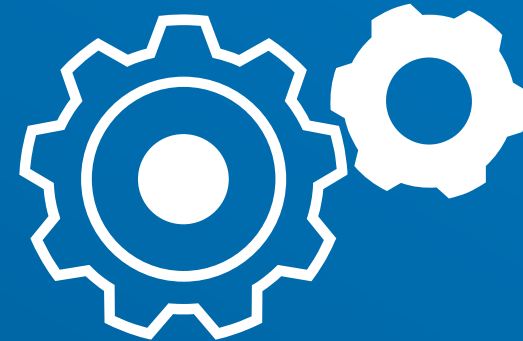- ⭐ New bus transportation protocols, including spaced seating and bus monitors (slides 20,21)

Restrictions

- ⭐ No sharing of educational materials (slide 22)
- ⭐ No visitors allowed in schools (slide 23)
- ⭐ No meal times and student storage provided (slide 23)

Detailed Operating Guidance

Compliance liaison

The Superintendent must appoint an employee of the school district to serve as COVID-19 Health & Safety Compliance Liaison
- The Liaison, whose contact information must be made public, will engage with students, parents, faculty, staff, and administrators to answer questions about the health & safety requirements set out in this document and address questions about compliance
- The Liaison will support the implementation of these requirements, as well as the implementation of other school health & safety measures relating to COVID-19 and any additional guidance provided by the Department of Public Health

Medical professional

The Superintendent must ensure that a nurse is available to each operating school in their district to manage in coordination with local health department, positive and suspected cases

School medical advisors may also review and provide feedback to Superintendents regarding all summer school health protocols

Case protocols

Guidance from the CDC that may inform sick procedures and exclusion protocols are available at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html, including:

- When staff and students should stay home (such as if they have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 symptoms); and
- Exclusion for staff and students who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 and the duration for when they should stay home and monitor their health

Staff or students with signs or symptoms of COVID-19 may only return to school with a documented negative COVID-19 test result or a note from a healthcare provider clearing them to safely return to the school program

Notifications

If a child or staff member who has been present in school has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, the local health department must be notified immediately

In addition, the school superintendent or designee (such as the school nurse or school medical advisor) should establish specific notification procedures that must be taken if a staff member or student is suspected of being sick, while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with FERPA, privacy expectations, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Attendance monitoring

LEAs should actively monitor staff and student absenteeism to identify any trends that would suggest spread of illness such as COVID-19

School closure and reopening

Any school should implement short-term closure procedures regardless of community spread if an infected person has been in a school building. The CDC recommends dismissal of students and most staff for 2-5 days to allow time for:

- Local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school
- Superintendent, in consultation with the local health department, to determine appropriate next steps

Additional considerations:

- During school dismissals, also cancel extracurricular group activities, school-based afterschool programs
- Communicate dismissal decisions and possible COVID-19 exposure with staff, parents, students, and relevant stakeholders
- Initiate recommended CDC cleaning procedures following a confirmed COVID-19 case

Recommendations for the scope and duration of school dismissals will be made on a case-by-case basis

Decision to suspend or close a school program for some or all participants will be made by Superintendent or designee

Decisions on which, if any, staff should be allowed in the school should be made in collaboration with your local health department and school medical advisor, if applicable

Administrators should work with their local health department following a temporary closure to determine when students and staff can safely return

Face coverings or masks

All students and school personnel must always use a face mask while on school property or a school bus. Face covering includes cloth face covering or face masks. This also applies to parents dropping off or picking up children. The following individuals are excepted from this requirement per CDC guidance:

- Anyone for whom use of a face mask would be contrary to his or her health or safety
- Any child if the person responsible for the child is unable to remove the face mask on the child's face

In addition, educators that can maintain a six-foot distance with students and determine that removing their face mask is critical for instruction, can consider removing their masks

Other protective equipment:

- N95 respirators should be primarily reserved for school nurses who may be involved in aerosol-generating procedures
- Face shields should be used by staff who are involved in aerosol-generating procedures, staff who support students with special healthcare needs or by students during speech and language exercises when face coverings/masks are not appropriate for the activity

CDC instruction for wearing a mask can be found here.

Schools must provide face covering to any student or staff member who does not have one

In cases where close contact between educators and students is highly likely (such as when interacting with certain students with disabilities who cannot socially distance), schools **must provide high-risk educators with surgical masks and face shields**

For the safety of themselves and others in the school community, students with special healthcare needs who may require suctioning, nebulizer treatments, high-flow oxygenation, or conditions that aerosolize secretions or conditions that create uncontrolled respiratory secretions, must provide medical and treatment authorizations from their healthcare provider on how to provide their safe and effective care while in school, including the PPE that must be used by school staff

Health screening and attendance monitoring

Screening

All staff and students are required to be screened for any observable illness, including cough or respiratory distress, and to confirm temperature below 100 degrees. This will be conducted by a health screener.

- If any questions arise regarding the health screener's assessment of the observable symptoms or next steps, the health screener should consult the nurse in their district
- Staff and students should also be encouraged to self-report symptoms or exposures

Staff or students who have a temperature greater than 100 degrees must be excluded from school and return with a note from their healthcare provider or with a documented negative COVID-19 test result

## Safety measures for screening

For screenings, the school should include the following:

- Use **touchless or disposable** (preferred) or oral with single-use disposable covers. Be sure to provide adequate disinfection between individual uses
- The health screener (such as school nurse) **must wear a face mask and face shield** while screening for illness
- Schools must identify a **sick plan for children who develop an elevated temperature or who may become ill**
- In addition to the health office, schools must also **identify an isolation room** for students or staff who exhibit symptoms consistent with COVID-19 to wait
- Students must **never be left unattended** in an isolation room

Class groups
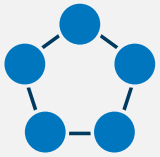
Group size in every classroom should be limited to no more than one teacher and ten additional individuals

- Individual student needs should determine the exact student-to-teacher ratio. Recommended ratio for students with specialized learning needs is 5:1, but no greater than 7:1

- Both children and additional support professionals should be counted towards the 10:1 group size limit

- 10:1 group size limit assumes that the instructional area is large enough to allow for six-foot social distancing between individuals

If more than one adult is required in a classroom, encourage staff to work in consistent teams to minimize cross-contamination of student groups. Prioritize keeping the same group of adults and students together each day when possible

Social distancing

Physical distancing of six feet should always be maintained . In the few cases where distancing is not possible, appropriate face coverings and other protection (such as face shields) should be available. The only times when distancing may not be possible should be when staff members are:

Accommodating students with special health care needs or disabilities who may require direct contact (e.g. assisting with toileting or ambulation)

Conducting health assessments or screenings (e.g. taking temperature or listening to lung sounds by the school nurse)

In these circumstances, appropriate face coverings and other protection should be available and utilized

Schools should select physical distancing strategies based on feasibility allowing for at least six feet of physical distance between individuals, such as:

- Increase the space between desks. Rearrange student desks to maximize the space between students
- Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other)
- Stagger arrival and dismissal times

Other ideas issued by the CDC can be found here

Cleaning & Disinfecting

School administrators, under supervision of the Superintendent, will communicate cleaning and hygiene protocols as recommended by CDC. These protocols will be adhered to by all summer school staff and students

- Areas where summer school operations are used must be cleaned, disinfected and/or sanitized. *CDC cleaning guidance can be found here.*

- Implement use of cleaning log to track cleaning frequency

- Bathrooms must be sanitized at least twice daily. Where possible, consider designating separate bathrooms for different classes or setting shifts *(detail on bathroom cleaning practices and use check **"Recommendations for School Bathrooms During COVID-19")***

- Signs on how to "Stop the Spread" should be posted in all school buildings in easily seen locations

An in-person or video training that covers cleaning protocols, social distancing & hygiene practices must be provided to and attended by all students and staff

Hand hygiene must be enforced:

- Reinforce to staff and children: regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer should be provided at every school entrance and in every classroom, kept secured in classrooms where children cannot safely use sanitizer without supervision

Respiratory hygiene must also be emphasized:

- Encourage all staff and children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of the elbow
- Dispose of soiled tissues immediately after use

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Facilities

Schools that share their facilities with summer camp organizations should ensure the coordination, collaboration and implementation of safe practices, including:

- Arrival and departure times and processes;
- Bathroom usage
- Common area usage (such as lunch room, gymnasium, playground)

As much as possible, adjust facilities to minimize risk of infection:

- Maximize ventilation with outdoor air
- Use outdoor instruction where safety conditions and physical space allow
- Consider implementing no-touch entrances and exits, and installing no-touch bathroom fixtures when possible

Ensure that all water and ventilation systems are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown

Additional recommendations for operating facilities and optimizing ventilation can be found here

Summer Bus transportation

Transportation should be provided by a guardian if possible. It will be made available where students cannot be transported and where it is required as part of an individualized education program or otherwise as required by law. In these instances:

A bus monitor must be employed by school district to ride on the bus at all times to monitor student density and ensure use of face masks

Require face masks for anyone within the bus, except among exempt individuals

Cleaning protocols must be communicated to all staff, including measures to prevent harmful human exposure to chemicals

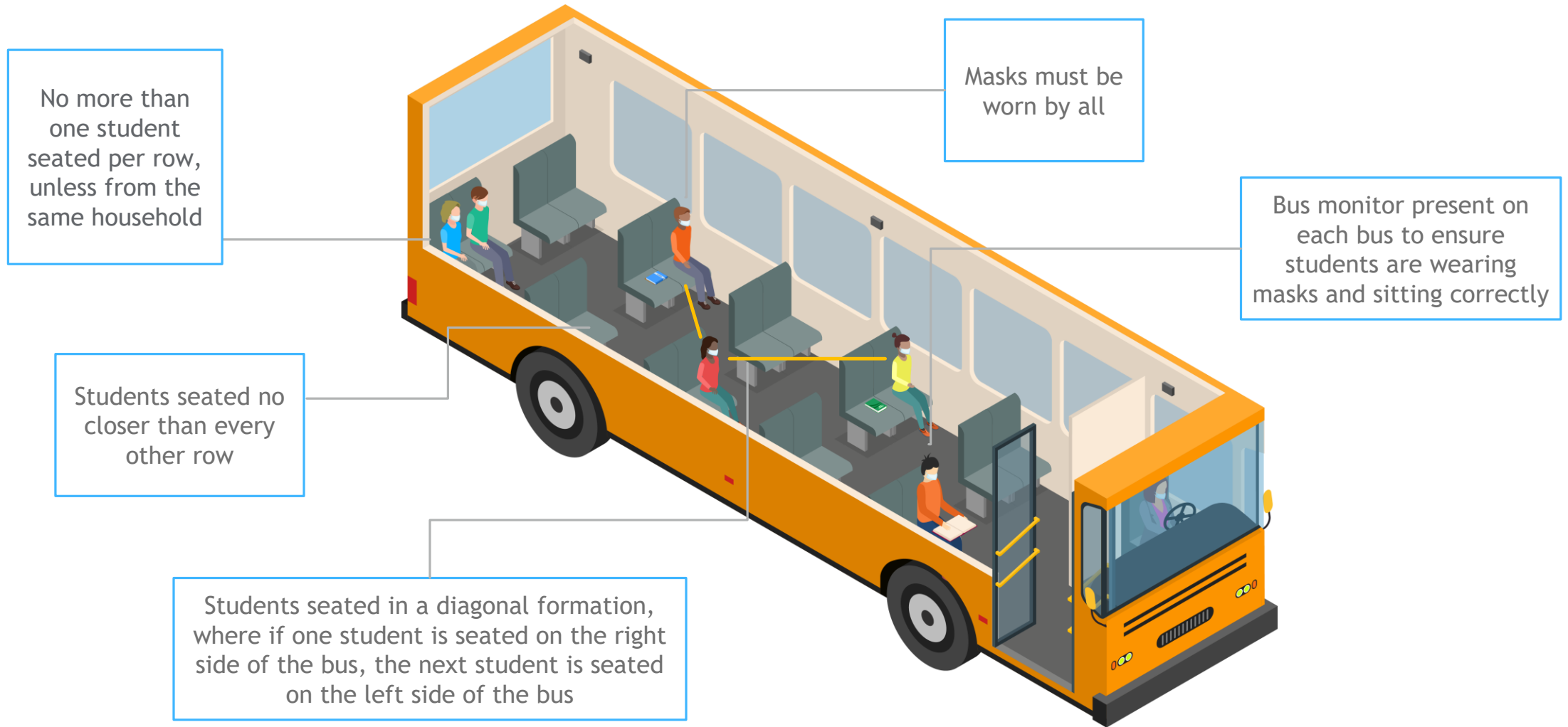Bus Drivers and bus monitors **must wear masks**. These must always be worn when children are in the bus

Implement **seating arrangements that allow for social distancing**

Seating arrangements

Student seating must adhere to the following restrictions:

- No more than one student seated per row, unless from the same household

- Students seated no closer than every other row

- Students seated in a diagonal formation, where if one student is seated on the right side of the bus, the next student is seated on the left side of the bus

Summary school bus safety protocols during COVID19

No more than one student seated per row, unless from the same household

Masks must be worn by all

Bus monitor present on each bus to ensure students are wearing masks and sitting correctly

Students seated no closer than every other row

Students seated in a diagonal formation, where if one student is seated on the right side of the bus, the next student is seated on the left side of the bus

Materials sharing

Restrict the sharing of educational materials between individuals

- These materials include (but are not limited to): books, computers, calculators, writing utensils, and arts supplies

- No two individuals should use the same materials in a given school day

- Appropriately clean, disinfect or sanitize materials, as appropriate, at the end of each school day

Additional measures

Student meals

Given that summer school should require students to be at school for only part of the day, student meal times should not be scheduled inside the facilities

In districts that provide summer meals for students, students should be able to grab their lunch to-go as they exit, and this exchange should be planned to happen consistent with all public health and safety guidelines for social distancing

No visitors

Visitors will not be permitted into school facilities unless required by law, or otherwise required by a students educational plan

Storage

Storage should be provided to each student (i.e. a specific cubby or locker to store their personal belongings)