

# BLUEPRINT FOR REOPENING SCHOOLS



2021-2022

**COMMACK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Commack, New York**

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## **The Commack School District Mission Statement**

*Within the context of a caring community of learners, our primary mission is to provide an exemplary learning experience that will allow each child to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to become a successful, contributing member within our school community and greater society.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The closing of schools in March 2020 had a profound impact on the Commack community. This impact will continue to be felt through the 2021-2022 school year and beyond. While no one can predict all of the challenges that may arise, it is imperative that the Commack School District develop a plan for the safe and orderly return to school for students and staff.

The 2021-2022 school year will be our time to return our students to our buildings full-time to renew the spirit of the Commack School District. The District is committed to working with staff, students, parents/guardians, and the Commack Community to address the challenges the District will continue to face due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with resiliency, tenacity and grit.

The Commack School District is committed to providing training and instruction on health and hygiene protocols and procedures. The instructional focus will be on returning to five day in-person instruction, recovery of skills, and subsequent growth. The District will also prepare staff, students and families to transition to eLearning in the event of a school closure.

### **The Guiding Principles for the District's Blueprint for Reopening Schools are:**

- Maintain the health and safety of students and staff
- Provide continuity of instruction
- Create student schedules to meet the needs and/or requirements of all students

The plan outlines the full reopening of all District schools for the 2021-22 school year. Commack School District will return to full,

everyday live in-person instruction for all students. This plan includes protocols and procedures for all Commack Schools.

For the 2021-2022 school year, transportation will be provided to all eligible students. Lunch will be served in the cafeterias and students will be able to navigate the hallways, following a schedule that allows movement from class to class throughout the building. Students will be in classrooms with desks three (3) feet apart. Students will have live in-person specials such as PE, art, music, and library. Elementary students will have recess and enjoy other recreational activities.

Before and after school clubs and activities will run and there will be more opportunities than in years past. All College and Career level as well as Wilson Tech programs and elective classes will run.

Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, determinations related to athletics will be made according to Section XI guidance. At this time we have been informed that we are moving forward with a regular fall season. High School Fall season begins on August 23, Middle School athletics begin September 9.

The health and safety of the District's students, staff and families is the top priority. Our reopening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), the [New York State Department of Health \(NYSDOH\)](#) and the [New York State Education Department \(NYSED\)](#).

It is possible that the District may need to alternate between in-person and remote learning throughout the year due to recommendations and guidance from our partnering agencies, rising infection rates in our schools, and stay-at-home orders from the Governor. The level of infection within our schools, the spread

of the virus, and response to the disease in our community will be at the forefront as the District moves to open our schools.

Mr. Jordan Cox and Dr. Michael Inforna will continue to serve as the District's COVID-19 Coordinators. Mr. Cox and Dr. Inforna will work closely with the local health department and will serve as a central contact for schools, stakeholders, families, staff and other school community members. The contact information for Mr. Cox and Dr. Inforna can be found on the District Website.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The following Health and Safety protocols and procedures will be in place in all District schools for the 2021-22 school year.

### **Masking Protocols**

Governor Kathy Hochul announced on Tuesday, August 24, 2021 that she will be directing the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) to require a universal mask mandate for all schools in New York State for the 2021-22 school year. On Friday, August 27, 2021, the New York State Department of Health issued an emergency health directive mandating that masks must be worn by all students, staff, and visitors while inside school buildings, regardless of vaccination status. All students, staff, and visitors must be masked while indoors and on school buses. Mask wearing outdoors is optional.

While the District's initial intent was to offer a mask optional approach for students while sitting at their desks, with this new directive, the Commack School District will comply

**Students and Staff** always wear face coverings when indoors with the following exceptions:

- A person (student and/or staff member) who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Discuss the possibility of reasonable accommodation with workers who are unable to wear or have difficulty wearing certain types of masks because of a disability.
- A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the relevant workplace safety guidelines or federal regulations.
- Mask breaks as necessary while always maximizing social distancing (staggered masks breaks, every other student).

## Mask Exemption Protocol and Process

A person (student and/or staff member) who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), must adhere to the following:

- District mask exemption form must be submitted with proof of medical documentation.
- The District will review the medical documentation with the District physician.
- If the mask exemption is granted, the District will discuss reasonable accommodations with the parent and/or staff member.

[Please click here to access the Mask Exemption Form](#)

## **Recess/Physical Education:**

In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors (e.g., participating in outdoor play, recess, and physical education activities).

## **Health Checks**

The requirement is for any student or staff member with a fever of 100.0° F or greater and/or symptoms of possible COVID-19 virus infection to not come to school. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [list of Coronavirus symptoms](#) was used to develop these resources.

The Commack School District will implement the following practices to conduct mandated health screenings.

## **Students**

- Parents/guardians will determine if their child/children may attend school and if they should consult with their health care provider.
- All students on school provided transportation regardless of vaccination status, must wear masks.
- Upon arrival, all students will be socially distanced wearing a face covering and supervised by staff.
- Students will pass through a temperature scanner.
- An individual who screens positive for COVID exposure or symptoms must be immediately sent home with instructions to contact their Health Provider.
- Students who require screening to be completed at school will be treated in a confidential manner and the screening is

completed as quickly as possible to minimize time away from class.

- Students with a temperature of 100.0°F or greater will be isolated from other students. The student's parent/guardian will be contacted and he/she will be immediately dismissed from school.

## Staff

- All staff are required to pass through a Temperature Scanner necessary to enter the school.
- Any person failing the health screening may not enter the building or return to work until medically cleared.
- If a staff member or student comes into direct contact (within six feet) with a person with COVID-19 for for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, they must report such to the District.
  - This is immediately reported to the Department of Health.
  - They are then disallowed from entering school property and may be subject to quarantine by the Department of Health for 10 days.
    - **Vaccinated Individuals:** If asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts do not need to quarantine at home following an exposure (they can continue to attend school in-person and participate in other activities). Note: vaccinated individuals if symptomatic demonstrating symptoms should stay home and should see their doctor before attending school.
    - **Unvaccinated Individuals:** Close contacts who are not fully vaccinated should be referred for COVID-19 testing. Regardless of test result, they

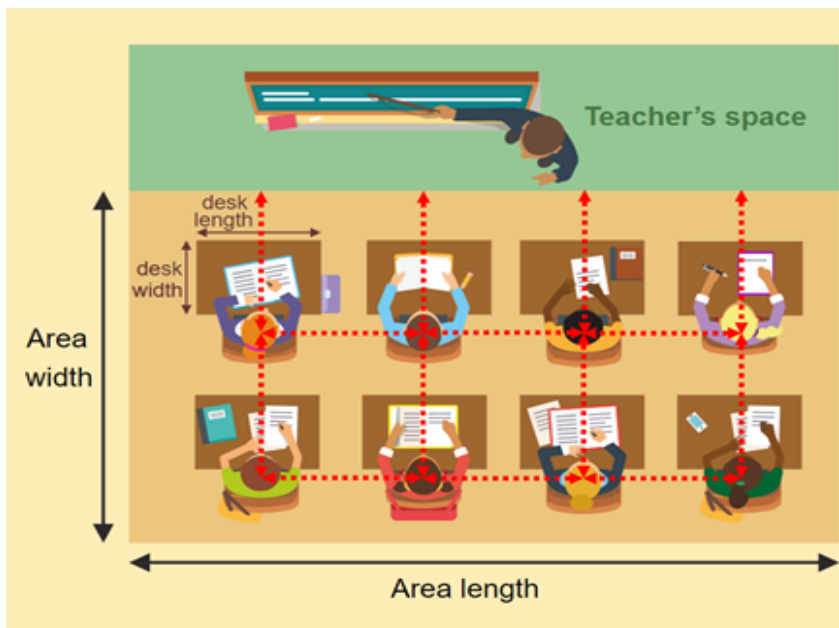
should quarantine at home for 10 days after exposure and monitor symptoms for 14 days.

- Subsequently, if they had entered a school or building, said building would be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before students and staff would be permitted to return. This may call for the facility to be closed for a period of time.

## Social Distancing

The District will continue to maximize social distancing and has a plan with protocols and procedures for maintaining social distancing of all students, faculty, and staff when in school facilities.

Every classroom (depending on room size) can be seated according to the NYS Department of Health guidelines. (3ft. apart) Students will be required to wear face coverings indoors. Students will have mask breaks as necessary while always maximizing social distancing (staggered mask breaks, every other student).





## Management of Ill Persons, Contact Tracing and Monitoring

The District requires students, faculty, or staff members who develop COVID-19 symptoms during the school day to report to the nurse's office. The District has designated areas to separate individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 from others until they can go home or to a healthcare facility, depending on the severity of their illness. One area will be used to treat injuries, provide medications or nursing treatments, and the other area will be used for assessing and caring for ill students and staff. Both areas will be supervised by an adult and have easy access to a bathroom and sink with hand hygiene supplies.

<b>School</b>	<b>COVID Symptoms Isolation Area</b>	<b>Treatment/ Medication Area</b>
Commack High School	Room 113	Health Office
Commack Middle School	Room A-1	Health Office
Sawmill Intermediate School	Room 103	Health Office
Burr Intermediate School	Room 103	Health Office
Wood Park Primary School	Room 10	Health Office
Rolling Hills Primary School	Room 33	Health Office

North Ridge Primary School	Conference Room	Health Office
Indian Hollow Primary School	Back Conference Room	Health Office

School health office cleaning will occur after each use of cots, bathrooms, and health office equipment (e.g., blood pressure cuffs, otoscopes, stethoscopes). Health office equipment will be cleaned following manufacturer’s directions.

**Return to School After Illness**

The District has established protocols and procedures, in consultation with the local health department(s), about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment at school. This protocol includes:

1. Documentation from a health care provider following evaluation.
2. Negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result.
3. Symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation.

The District requires that individuals who were exposed to the COVID-19 virus and deemed a close contact, complete quarantine before returning to in-person learning. The discharge of an individual from quarantine and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the local health department.

## Contact Tracing

The District will notify the state and local health department immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result by an individual within school facilities or on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors of the District.

To assist the local health department with tracing the transmission of COVID-19, the District has developed and maintained a plan to trace all contacts of exposed individuals in accordance with protocols, training, and tools provided through the New York State Contact Tracing Program.

Commack School District is assisting with contact tracing by:

1. Keeping accurate attendance records of students and staff members.
2. Ensuring student schedules are up to date.
3. Keeping a log of any visitor which includes date and time, and where in the school they visited.
4. Assisting the local health departments in tracing all contacts of the individual in accordance with the protocol, training, and tools provided through the NYS Contact Tracing Program.

Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state laws and regulations.

## SCDOH Close Contact and Quarantine Requirements

### **Close Contact Defined by the CDC**

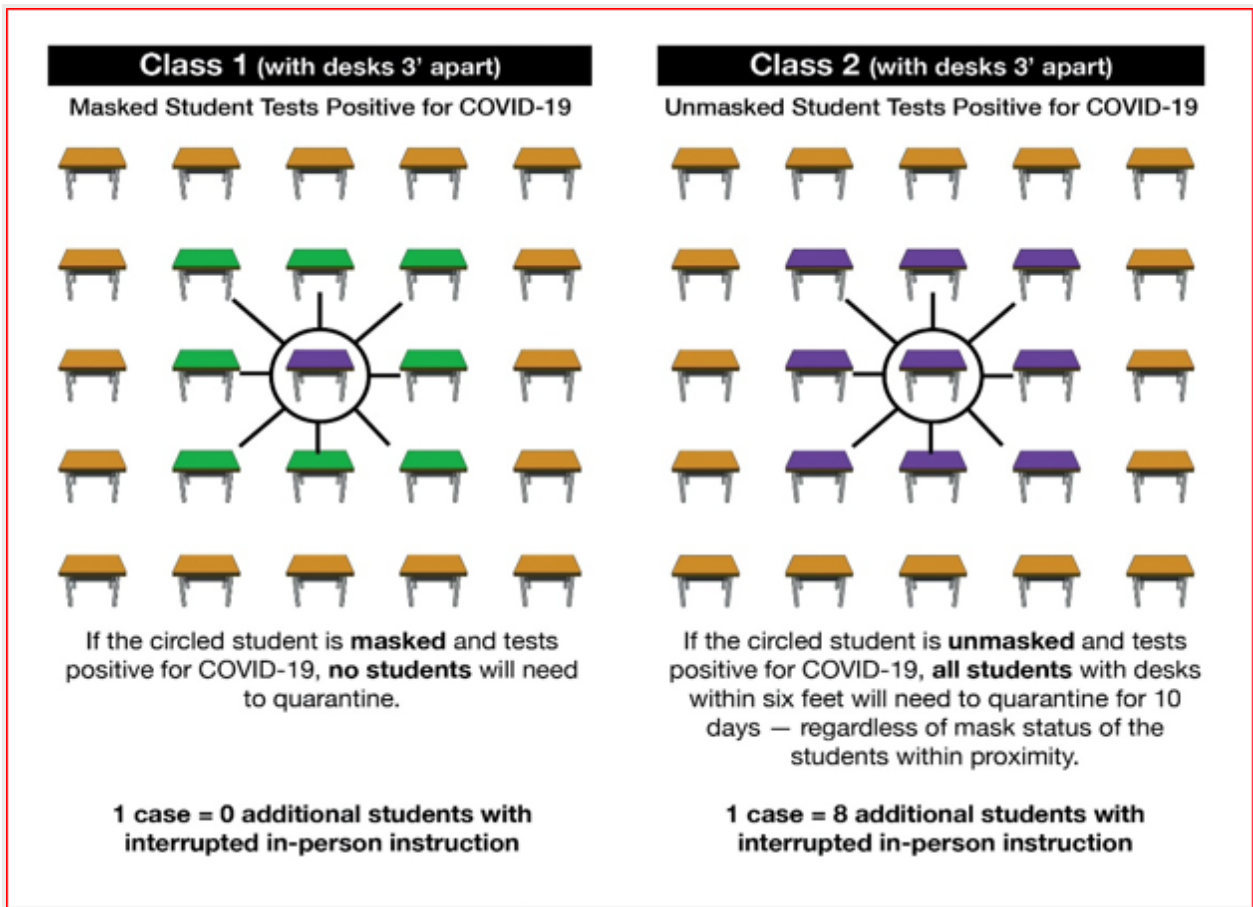
- Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a

cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes).

- Exception: In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.
- This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

**Vaccinated Individuals:** If asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts do not need to quarantine at home following an exposure (they can continue to attend school in-person and participate in other activities). Note: vaccinated individuals if symptomatic demonstrating symptoms should stay home and should see their doctor before attending school.

**Unvaccinated Individuals:** Close contacts who are not fully vaccinated should be referred for COVID-19 testing. Regardless of test result, they should quarantine at home for 10 days after exposure and monitor symptoms for 14 days. Options to shorten quarantine provide acceptable alternatives of a 10-day quarantine or a 7-day quarantine combined with testing and a negative test result.



## Health Hygiene

The District will emphasize healthy hygiene practices for students and staff by providing initial and refresher education in hand and respiratory hygiene, along with providing adequate supplies and time for frequent hand hygiene. Signs will be posted throughout the school (e.g., entrances, restrooms, cafeteria, classrooms, administrative offices, auditorium, custodial staff areas) and regular messaging will be shared with the school community. sharedSignage will be used to remind individuals to:

1. Stay home if they feel sick.
2. Cover their nose and mouth with an acceptable face covering.

3. Properly store and, when necessary, discard PPE.
4. Report symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19.
5. Follow hand hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection guidelines.
6. Follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

## Hand Hygiene

Students and staff must carry out the following hand hygiene practices.

- Wash hands routinely with soap (any kind) and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Dry hands completely after washing. Use paper towels to dry hands instead of a hand dryer, if they are available.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizer should be rubbed on the hands until it is completely absorbed. DO NOT dry hands if sanitizer is used.

Hand washing should occur:

- Before and after eating (e.g. snacks and lunch).
- After using a tissue.
- Before and after using shared materials.
- After coming in from the outdoors.
- Anytime hands are visibly soiled.

## Respiratory Hygiene

The COVID-19 virus spreads from person to person in droplets produced by coughs and sneezes. Therefore, the District will emphasize the importance of respiratory hygiene.



Students, faculty, and staff will be trained on proper hand and respiratory hygiene, and such information will be provided to parents/guardians on ways to reinforce this at home.

The District will provide and maintain hand hygiene stations around the school, as follows:

- For handwashing: soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels.
- For hand sanitizing: an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical.
- Accommodations for students who cannot use hand sanitizer will be made.

Regular cleaning and disinfection of the facilities will occur, including more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk and frequently touched surfaces. This will include desks and cafeteria tables, which should be cleaned and disinfected between each individual's use. Cleaning and disinfection will be rigorous and ongoing and will occur at least daily, or more frequently as needed.

The District will ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms. Restrooms should be cleaned and disinfected more often depending on frequency of use.

## Visitors On Campus

Limited outside visitors or volunteers will be allowed on school campuses, except if it concerns the safety and well-being of students. Parents/guardians will report to the front office and not go beyond unless it is for the safety or well-being of their child.



Essential visitors to facilities will be required to wear face coverings and will be restricted in their access to our school buildings.

Visitors must follow all safety protocols as listed above.

## School Safety Drills

The District will conduct fire (evacuation) drills and lockdown drills as required by education law and regulation and the fire code without exceptions. Schools must continue to conduct mandatory evacuation and lockdown drills according to the existing statutory schedule.

Fire Code Section 404 requires that schools maintain Fire Safety, Evacuation, and Lockdown Plans and these plans include how lockdown and evacuation drills are conducted. Methods to promote and provide for social distancing during the evacuation drills are ultimately the District's or other applicable school's decision and responsibility. Those changes must be included in the Fire Safety plans.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

The school calendar typically includes one or more staff-only days before students arrive at school. Acknowledging the challenges that our teachers and staff have faced, the District will provide support to staff in the areas of social-emotional health and technology integration.

As the District enters the new school year, teachers will be encouraged to spend time building relationships, supporting students with the transition back to school. In-school learning will consist of:

- Training and instruction on health and hygiene protocols and procedures.
- Focusing on in-person instruction, recovery of skills, and subsequent growth.
- Building and developing strategies and supports for students, families and staff members.
- Preparing staff, students and families to transition to eLearning in the event of a subsequent school closure.

The District offered a Reconnecting and Discovery program where students received project-based academic programming along with collaborative art, music and movement programming to support re-acclimation to a school setting. Students also received academic programs and additional support where needed. For 21-22, teachers will utilize assessment data to determine whether there are any gaps and make adjustments if necessary. Further, in-school and after school extra support and tutoring will be available to all students.

## In-Person Instruction

The Commack plan for in-person instruction will consist of the following:

- All students will have live in-person PE, art, music, library, etc.
- Elementary students will have recess and other recreational activities.
- Field trips and other inter-school activities such as second graders visiting Burr and Sawmill, will take place.
- Middle and High School students will have every day live, in-person schedules.

- Before and after school clubs and activities will run and there will be more opportunities than in years past.
- All College and Career level as well as elective classes will run

## Possibility of eLearning model

Given the possibility that communities may experience spikes in COVID-19 cases at any point during the school year, which may prompt short or long-term school closures, our District has developed an eLearning model and schedule that is agile and in sync with our onsite program.

All instruction will continue to be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards.

As noted previously, student schedules will remain the same whether instruction is in person or remote so that students do not encounter conflicts wherein synchronous lessons for different subjects are offered simultaneously.

To ensure high-quality remote learning experiences, we will standardize the use of a single online learning platform, to the extent possible, and develop a common, coordinated set of guidelines for teachers to follow when using the platform with students.

## Tutoring for All

Commack School District will offer after school tutoring virtually to support learning. Tutors will be grade and subject specific. Sessions after school will include evening sessions i.e., 6:00 pm sessions for students in athletics and club sessions. Access to online tutoring will be communicated to parents by individual buildings once the schedule is complete.

## Elementary

- After school, synchronous, online tutoring based on student need and parent request.

## Secondary

- After school, synchronous, online tutoring based on student need and subject specific.

## Virtual School Options for Medically Fragile Individuals

The plan in Commack is to have five days per week of in-person instruction for all students.

**Commack is not offering a district-run remote learning option for students and all students who are not medically excused are expected to attend school and participate in-person daily.**

In an effort to accommodate students who are medically unable to attend school in-person, Western Suffolk BOCES is planning to offer a Regional Virtual School beginning on September 20, 2021. We have been informed;

- This program will meet all New York State Learning Standards;
- Will provide students with the opportunity to meet all graduation requirements along with their grade-level peers;
- Instruction will be live (synchronous) each day and will be led by educators from within the region;
- Participating Districts will be required to offer some level of staffing and a support fee, each of which qualify for BOCES State aid at an approximate rate of 50% (approx. \$10K-\$15K per student).

## Entrance Criteria for WSBOCES Full Remote Program

The purpose of this school is to provide medically excused students with the opportunity to continue their education in a remote / virtual environment.

Parents must provide a written, doctor approved, medical exemption from regular school, for each child they wish to enroll in the BOCES virtual school.

Registration for the virtual school requires a full year commitment (September 2021 - June 2022) and students will not have the opportunity to transition back to their home school until the following school year (September 2022).

Commack School District has prioritized efforts to return all students to in-person instruction. The District is not offering a district-run remote learning option for students and all students who are not medically excused are expected to attend school and participate in-person daily.

If you are interested in registering your child for this program, please contact Leslie Boritz, Principal of Leadership and Instruction, at 631-912-2027; or email [lboritz@commack.k12.ny.us](mailto:lboritz@commack.k12.ny.us).

## Homeschooling

Students who are not medically excused from attending in-person instruction and choose not to attend in-person instruction may opt for Homeschooling.

Students enrolled in Homeschool are not enrolled in a public school system because the parent opted not to enroll in a public or a private school and instead will deliver all instruction at home in accordance with state homeschool guidelines.

Parents of, or persons in parental relation to, compulsory school age children have the legal right to instruct their children at home. If a child is being educated at home, the local school district must be assured that the child is receiving instruction in certain required courses/subjects.

Parents who wish to homeschool their children must provide written notice of intent to the school district superintendent/designee. The school district must then respond to the family and provide a copy of the home instruction regulations as well as an individualized home instruction plan (IHIP) form to complete. Parents are responsible for identifying the curriculum materials that they will use to instruct their children in the required subject areas.

Students with disabilities who are in home instruction programs pursuant to section 100.10 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education are eligible to receive special education services from their school district.

### Homebound:

Homebound instruction is a form of tutorial services provided to students who are unable to attend school because of a temporary physical, mental, or emotional illness or injury. Parents requesting these services must comply with local board of education requirements to provide medical verification of the student's inability to attend school for a time that exceeds the number of days required by the district (about 10 days).

## **FACILITIES**

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection in the District, facilities operations will continue to meet social distancing requirements and cleaning frequently touched spaces regularly.

In carrying out projects or tasks supporting infection control, requirements will be met for changes associated with building spaces.

## Bathrooms

In order to maintain the required number of fixtures, the District will continue to monitor bathroom access. Paper towel dispensers are installed in bathrooms to replace hand dryers as existing hand dryers were disabled; however, not removed.

## Ventilation

Where possible, filtration has been upgraded to MERV 13. Ventilation will be closely monitored during the school year and will be immediately repaired as needed. Teachers are encouraged to open classroom windows to increase ventilation.

## Classrooms

Reconfiguration of classrooms will include the placing student desks 3 feet apart. No temporary or movable partitions are required at this time.

## Custodial

Drinking fountains, restrooms, handrails, elevator controls and other hi-touch surfaces will be disinfected throughout the school day as well as in the evening. Each day, all evening custodians will disinfect all classrooms & offices thoroughly, including high touch areas (door knobs, light switches, desktops, etc.). Bathrooms will be thoroughly disinfected nightly, including floors. All schools have been issued mops and buckets specifically for bathroom use only; this will prevent any possible cross-contamination.

## NUTRITION

School meals will continue to be available to all students in the cafeteria. The District will continue to work with our food distribution company, Whitsons Culinary Group to ensure that all health and safety guidelines are followed and the district is in compliance with Child Nutrition Program requirements.

### Meals Onsite

The District is working with our food service distributor, Whitsons Culinary Group, to ensure that students will be able to purchase lunch. Further, free and reduced lunch recipients will be provided lunch every day. For students, meals will be provided while maximizing physical distancing between students. Students do not need to wear face coverings when seated and eating.

Students will be taught about proper hand hygiene before and after eating.

All buildings will be required to follow the District's Allergy Plan.

### Lunch Program for all levels:

We have developed social distancing plans for each school cafeteria to maximize social distancing as appropriate. Elementary students will split their 50 minute lunchtime into equally allotted eating time and recreational time. Middle School students will split their 41 minute lunchtime into equally allotted eating time and recreational time. High School students will participate in a 40 minute lunch period. All students will wash/sanitize hands before eating and tables will be disinfected between seatings and social distancing will be maximized.



## TRANSPORTATION

### **All eligible students will be able to ride the school bus**

- Depending on the bus, students may need to share seats with other students.
- Parents can drive their child to school if they so wish.

*Passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses, including on buses operated by public and private school systems, regardless of vaccination status, subject to the exclusions and exemptions in the CDC's Order.*

The district will conduct transportation activities that are consistent with state-issued public transit guidance and NYSED School Reopening guidelines. Students and school staff must wear acceptable face coverings at all times on school buses (e.g., entering, exiting, and seated) and should maintain appropriate social distancing to the extent practicable.

Students whose physical or mental health would be impaired and provide medical documentation are not required to wear a face covering.

Pupil transportation will be provided to nonpublic, parochial, private, or students whose Individualized Education Plans have placed them out of district whose schools are meeting in in-person sessions.

All students are entitled to transportation by the district to the extent required by law. Transportation departments do not have the ability or the right to deny transportation for children who are in foster care or homeless. Parents/guardians who may have

missed the due date to request out of district transportation due to a reasonable excuse may file a 310 appeal with the Commissioner of Education.

## School Bus Staff

School bus drivers, monitors, attendants and mechanics are required to perform a self-health assessment for symptoms of COVID-19 before arriving at work. If personnel are experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19, they will notify their employer as per the reporting policies and seek medical attention.

School bus drivers, monitors, attendants and mechanics must wear a face covering.

Transportation departments/carriers will provide Personal Protective Equipment such as masks and gloves for drivers, monitors and attendants in buses as well as hand sanitizer for all staff in their transportation locations such as dispatch offices, employee lunch/break rooms and/or bus garages.

Students who participate in District provided transportation will adhere to the the following protocols:

- All students will be required to wear a face covering on the bus.
- The District will be reinforcing bus rules in the schools and ask that families do the same at home to help ensure the safety of bus riders. Every bus is equipped with a camera that will be used to identify students who break rules related to their face covering. The District will be enforcing a three-strike policy for offenders. Strike one results in a one-week bus suspension. Two strikes results in a two-week bus suspension. Three strikes will result in students being suspended from the bus for the remainder of the year. Please note, students who

are unable to medically tolerate a face covering and have submitted medical documentation for a proven reason will be provided accommodations.

Protocols for bus drivers, monitors and attendants include:

- Transportation staff are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water before and after am and pm runs to keep healthy and prevent the spread of respiratory and diarrheal infections from one person to the next. Germs can spread from other people or surfaces when you:
  - touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hand
  - touch a contaminated surface or objects
  - blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into hands and then touch other people's hands or common objects

## **SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING**

We recognize that the social emotional well-being of our students and staff during these challenging times is critically important. The District has made resources and referrals available to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional needs of students, faculty, and staff. The District has done this by planning the following for students:

- Orientation programs will be facilitated by counselors, social workers, psychologists and teachers to re-orient students to the school building and new model of school.
- Small in person groups will meet. These groups are designed to foster and build relationships with adults and peers. Some themes will include: Mindfulness, Relationship Building, Self-Care, Self-Management, and Healthy Living.
- Teachers will work in unison with counselors and mental health providers on social emotional learning in the

classroom, including a focus on the Social Emotional Competencies.

- Continue the use of the District's referral process for students in need of additional support.

The District has established an advisory council. In partnership with parents/guardians, administrators, teachers, support personnel and community members; school counselors will continue to review and update the comprehensive developmental school counseling program plan to meet current needs.

The District will provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff on how to talk with and support students during and after the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency, as well as provide support for developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, and staff. For 2021-2022, our mental health COVID response plan includes; expanding our mental health staff and offerings to students and families.

- Teachers and staff will engage in professional development on; trauma-informed teaching and coping in a pandemic.
- We will expand our drug and alcohol prevention and intervention groups, emphasizing prevention and positive coping.
- We have identified curricula to support coping, and executive functioning skills.
- Commack will be providing additional counseling groups focused on: socialization, anxiety, transition, and executive functioning skills for students across all grade levels.
- We have hired additional mental health staff whose work will include providing counseling services before and after school for students.

- A Parent Resource Center will be available to families and will provide parent support. If necessary, the Resource Center will connect parents with outside community resources.

## **ATTENDANCE AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM**

The following mechanisms will be used to collect and report daily teacher–student engagement or attendance.

- Teachers will record student attendance.
- All attendance will be entered into our student management system which is utilized for State reporting purposes.

## **TECHNOLOGY AND CONNECTIVITY**

Given the possibility that the District may experience spikes in COVID–19 cases at any point during the school year, which may prompt short or long–term school closures, the District has developed a schedule that can continue as is in a fully remote environment.

### **Access to Devices**

It is imperative that students and staff are able to stay connected in a remote eLearning environment. The District has implemented a 1:1 device program for students K–12. Every student K–12 has received a personal Chromebook. In addition, all staff members have access to a laptop should the need arise.

### **Access to High Speed Internet**

The District will monitor and track student engagement and participation. In the event that there is a family who is unable to

connect to the internet, the District will provide contact information for Altice and Optimum (local internet providers) with the family.

## Learning Management Resource

Commack Schools will utilize an online learning platform to deliver instructional materials. Students and staff have Google accounts and access to the tools within Google Workplace. Every teacher will have a Google Classroom which aims to simplify creating, distributing, and grading assignments. The primary purpose of Google Classroom is to streamline the process of sharing files between teachers and students. Students will apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes; create original works as a means of personal or group expression; use models and simulations to explore complex systems and issues and identify trends and forecast possibilities. Teachers will be able to communicate and collaborate with students, staff and parents/guardians in new and more meaningful ways. Students will interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others employing a variety of digital environments and media; communicate information and ideas more effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats; develop cultural understanding and global awareness by engaging with learners of other cultures in a safe context while also learning about the responsible use of information technology.

## SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

**Field Trips:** Will be determined as per NYSED, DOH, CDC, and District guidelines. Activities will be monitored in relation to positivity rates.

**Co-curricular Activities:** Before and after school clubs and activities will run. Activities will be monitored in relation to positivity rates.

**Athletics:** A determination has been made by NYS Public School Athletic Association and/or Section XI regarding Athletics and the District will abide by that determination. Section XI has determined that Athletics will take place. We will continually be guided to the governing bodies of Athletics.

**Large Group Events:** Large group events will follow all CDC guidelines, and be monitored in relation to positivity rates.

**Community Use of Schools:** All community use of facilities will be limited and monitored based on CDC guidelines and monitored in relation to positivity rates. Approvals are subject to change due to positivity rates within each facility.

**School Visitors:** Responsible Parties should limit on-site interactions (e.g., designating separate ingress or egress for faculty and staff, eliminating bidirectional flow of individuals to the extent practicable). As a result, we will limit visitors to essential and/or necessary functions (i.e. picking up your child). This means parents/guardians will be strictly limited in classrooms, hallways or other areas.

## Childcare

A written plan is in place for before and aftercare programs run by SCOPE. Policies regarding before and aftercare programs include, PPE usage, cleaning and disinfection requirements, as well as risk of COVID-19 transmission.

# SPECIAL EDUCATION

## Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

A student's Individual Education Program (IEP)s is followed to the greatest extent possible. All materials will continue to be provided in a family's native language (via technology at Hubbs) and agency interpreters will continue to be used for CSE meetings. CSE/CPSE will continue to follow best practices in communicating in a parent friendly fashion when in meetings and when interpreting results of testing at meetings. All parents will be invited to participate in all conversations regarding student functioning.

## Collaboration

Commack will continue to work closely with preschool agencies and Out-of-District programs to identify the specific service plans for each center-based program/related service agency. The District will continue to ensure that we are following the IEP to the greatest extent possible when working with local schools and programs.

## Access

Commack has and will continue to provide students with their necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services and technology. Elementary students will receive instruction from their special education teachers as stated on their IEPs. Students will access all curriculum and materials in person.

## Documentation

Commack will continue to document attendance and student participation. When services are denied by families, providers will continue to file the requests/absences. These requests inclusive of



communication with families indicating the denial of programs/services will be honored and documented within the contact log in our online data system (IEP DIRECT).

## Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

The District will continue to educate students in their least restrictive environment. As such, students who are placed in split programs (i.e., Special Class and Integrated Co-Teaching) will continue to be enrolled in their appropriate and approved programs. Currently, students in our elementary special classes are paired with a buddy class to allow time with their non-disabled peers. The IEP will continue to reflect the process (management section) of how we provide instruction and access to LRE (different for each student).

## IEP Implementation

With the recognition of the fact that services are most effective in-person, the District's plan allows for students to receive in person programming. All students are scheduled to attend every day in person. Their program is provided in person. Related service groups are created based on classroom rosters, to the greatest extent possible. The goal is to have students in groups which are appropriate based on their level of need.

## Provision of Services

All students will be onsite daily, and all related services will be provided in person.

## Progress Monitoring

Teachers must continue to take specific data to support the academic progress of their students. Teachers and providers are

required to identify data collection methods that will determine the level of service students need. This data will help to identify student need/level of functioning and guide recommendations moving forward. This data will provide documentation of continued student progress to guide decisions about levels of service.

## IEP Implementation Documentation

IEP progress reports will continue to be specific in regard to how services are provided and the child's progress. Comments will continue to be required stating the specific circumstances of the students' provision of services.

## Child Find

The special education department will continue to work with families to initiate referrals to CPSE/CSE. The department will work with the county regarding students who are transitioning from Early Intervention to preschool so there is no lapse in services. In addition, schools continue to meet with their child study teams (or instructional support teams) to ensure students are getting evaluated and supported as needed.

## Referral

The referral process for initiating an evaluation by the Committee of Special Education will remain the same. Parents/guardians and/or school personnel can refer students to the Committee of Special Education if they are concerned a student is not making adequate progress. Parents/guardians can find guidance on the Commack UFSD website at [A Parent's Guide to Special Education in Commack School District](#). It is important to work with staff and parents/guardians, so they understand the referral process.

Parent and staff referrals will continue to be considered as per the Commissioner's Regulations.

## Communication and Meaningful Outreach

The special education department will continue to participate in Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA) meetings where information will be disseminated along with letters to parents/guardians on a regular basis. Case managers are required to have on-going conversations with parents/guardians to keep them informed and in contact with the school to foster the home to school connection.

## Procedural Safeguards/PWNS

The District will continue to send procedural safeguards via US mail and email. This information is sent home following the same guidelines as indicated by the regulations of the commissioner. The District will continue to meet as well as amend the IEPs with parental consent, when appropriate, to limit undue delays with student programming as per state regulations.

## Accommodations

Teachers will continue to use multisensory teaching and learning methods. All elementary students and special class students will engage in onsite learning. All staff working with students that have an IEP will be expected to know and implement all accommodations listed on the IEP. Accommodations such as extended time, separate location, etc. will continue to be given, as appropriate.

## Technology

All students who have the need for assistive technology on their IEP have continued access. All students in the Commack School District have been provided with a Chromebook as part of a 1:1 Device initiative. The District has provided parents with technology assistance for challenging IT situations. The District has also supported students who are in Out District Placements with IT support. The District will continue to be responsive to technology requests/concerns.

## **SUBSTITUTE TEACHING AND STUDENT TEACHING**

The District will continue to employ certified substitute teachers whenever possible. In the event a non-certified substitute is necessary, the District will follow all New York State guidance.

The District will continue to support prospective teachers in their student teaching assignments. Student teacher placement will be at the discretion of interested Commack teachers.

## **TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION SYSTEM**

All teachers and principals will continue to be evaluated pursuant to the District's approved APPR plan.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Below are responses to the questions that have been posed to the District over the last several months as we engaged in the planning necessary for the reopening of school.

## Health & Safety

### Will students be required to wear face coverings?

Governor Kathy Hochul announced on Tuesday, August 24, 2021, that she will be directing the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) to reinstate a universal mask mandate for all schools in New York State for the 2021-22 school year. All students, staff, and visitors must be masked while indoors and on school buses. Mask wearing outdoors is optional.

### Will remote learning be available for families who do not want to send their children to school?

Commack is not offering a district-run remote learning option for students and all students who are not medically excused are expected to attend school and participate in-person daily. Parents must provide a written, doctor approved, medical exemption from regular school, for each child they wish to enroll in the BOCES virtual school. Registration for the virtual school requires a full year commitment (September 2021 - June 2022) and students will not have the opportunity to transition back to their home school until the following school year (September 2022).

If you are interested in registering your child for this program, please contact Leslie Boritz, Principal of Leadership and Instruction, at 631-912-2027; or email [lboritz@commack.k12.ny.us](mailto:lboritz@commack.k12.ny.us).

### Will parents have to complete a daily health attestation for their children?

Health attestations are not required at this time.

## How and when will student temperatures be taken?

The District encourages parents/guardians to take their child(ren)'s temperature before departing for school. Additionally, upon entry into the school building, students' temperatures will be taken by walking through a temperature scanner.

## Bus Supervision – Will students be required to wear a face-covering on the school bus, and how will this be enforced?

All students will be required to wear a face-covering on the bus.

We will be reinforcing bus rules in our schools, and we ask that families do the same at home to help ensure the safety of our bus riders. Know that every bus is equipped with a camera that will be used to identify students who break social distancing rules and/or remove their face covering. We will be enforcing a three-strike policy for offenders. Strike one results in a one-week bus suspension. Two strikes result in a two-week bus suspension. Three strikes will result in students being suspended from the bus for the remainder of the year. Please note, students who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering for a proven reason will be provided accommodations.

## How will the District deal with medically high-risk students'/ family members?

The District will work with families to accommodate the needs of all students. If you completed the Western Suffolk BOCES Regional Virtual School survey and answered, "you do not plan on sending your child to school" please anticipate follow-up written communication from the District. If you did not complete the

survey, please email Leslie Boritz at [lboritz@commack.k12.ny.us](mailto:lboritz@commack.k12.ny.us) for assistance in the process.

### What happens if anyone in the school tests positive for COVID? Does everyone in the school need to quarantine for 10 days?

If anyone tests positive for COVID-19, the District will conduct contact tracing to determine any close contacts. The community will be notified of positive cases and the steps taken by the District.

### Will there be separate nursing areas for kids who are sick and kids who get hurt?

Yes, we will have a quarantine area for anyone suspected of being exposed to COVID or demonstrating symptoms (these individuals will be picked up by a family member as soon as practical). The nurse's office will remain in use for general injuries, medication dispersal, and/or general illnesses.

### Will students share supplies?

Students may share supplies coordinated with a system of disinfecting when appropriate.

### How will bathrooms, classrooms, and buses be properly disinfected?

Our facilities will be disinfected several times a day in accordance with CDC guidelines. This includes utilizing hospital grade disinfecting solutions and electrostatic disinfectant sprayers. The District will maintain cleaning schedules, daily logs, and redeploy the necessary staff to ensure the guidelines are met.

## What type of filters are in each of the buildings' vents?

All existing HVAC RTU's (rooftop units), which can be upgraded to MERV 13 filtration, will be. However, the majority of our classrooms have "uni-vents" which draw fresh air from the outside and provide heat in the winter.

## Will there be monitors in the bathrooms?

There will be NO monitors in bathrooms.

## Will Commack mandate a COVID vaccine?

Commack Schools cannot mandate that your child be vaccinated. However, *if* the State or Federal government mandates COVID vaccinations to return to school, *we will likely* be charged with enforcing such.

## Schedule

### Will the hours of the school day remain the same?

The hours of each school have been converted back to pre-covid schedules. Please see the website for more information specific to each school.

## Instruction

### What happens to Band, Orchestra and Chorus?

Band, orchestra and chorus will occur live and in-person adhering to all safety guidelines.



## Will students receive reading services and when will they be provided?

Reading services will be provided to students during the school day. Reading services for students in secondary schools will be driven by student schedules during the regular school day. These services will be reverted back to similar practices prior to COVID.

## Will Wilson Tech be available?

Wilson Tech has shared with the District that they do plan on opening every day for on-site instruction. Commack High School is working with Wilson Tech to create schedules for those students who are registered to attend.

## Will SCOPE be available?

At this time, SCOPE will be available for before and after care.

## Will all students be required to use a Chromebook?

The District is pleased with our 1:1 Chromebook initiative where EVERY child received a Chromebook for use! As part of their instruction, teachers will be utilizing Chromebooks and Google Classroom to enhance their curriculum and support student use of Chromebooks at home during remote instruction.

## If we have to move to remote instruction, what will that schedule look like?

If we are to move to remote instruction for a few days a child's schedule will remain the same – they will simply meet the teacher online. If the school is closed for an extended period of time further information will be communicated. If we do need to provide remote instruction for an extended period of time the District is

committed to a schedule, live instruction/interaction between students and teachers, defined grading structures, and attendance/participation requirements.

## General

### Will there be Kindergarten Orientation?

The District recognizes the importance of Kindergarten Orientation for our students and their parents/guardians. Dates for all orientation programs have been posted to the website. For further details, please contact each school building.

### Can students buy lunch or will they have to bring their own?

Similar to pre-covid, the District is working with our food service distributor, Whitson's, to ensure that students will be able to purchase lunch. Further, free and reduced lunch recipients will be provided lunch every day.

### Are secondary school students sitting in the same classroom all day long?

No, secondary students will be moving throughout the building changing classes for each course. There are no restrictions related to movement in the buildings. Throughout the day, secondary students will be provided with opportunities to safely interact with their peers and allow for breaks.

### Will students have the opportunity to have outside recess or engage in activities outside?

Students will have opportunities, weather permitting, to enjoy recess outdoors. Outside recreation will be available and all safety

guidelines will be communicated based on the age of students and available facilities.

### Will secondary students have access to their lockers?

Yes, secondary students will have access to their lockers.

### Will schools offer extracurricular activities and athletics?

Each school building will be identifying which extracurricular activities that the school offers to see which, if any, will be able to be offered based on all of the safety guidelines established by the NYSED, DOH, CDC, and the District. Please be aware that the District does not make the decision regarding athletics for both middle and high school. As guided by Section XI, we will be participating in a full athletic program.

### Driver Education

At this time, it is anticipated that driver's education will be offered.