

Putnam Central School District Reopening Guidelines

July 28, 2020

The health, safety, and well-being of the children and adults in our schools is paramount. The Putnam Central School District is committed to a reopening of school that incorporates all DOH and CDC guidelines in the extent possible. All procedures are carefully examined with the safety of students and staff as the overarching focus on any implementations or changes.

- **Health and Safety** Focused on preventive actions, schools and districts will be required to perform health checks and screenings, per DOH guidance, and recognize signs and symptoms of illness in students and staff; develop plans to maximize social distancing; develop plans to manage and isolate ill persons until they can be sent home; instruct students and staff in proper hand and respiratory hygiene; require wearing appropriate face coverings; and develop cleaning and disinfection procedures for the school in accordance with CDC and DOH guidance.

Protocols and procedures for mandatory health screenings, including temperature checks, of students, faculty, staff, and, where applicable, contractors, vendors, and visitors to identify any individuals who may have COVID-19 or who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Responsible Parties will limit the number of visitors permitted on school grounds or in school facilities, and, if visitors are allowed, screening of such visitors

Putnam Central School will require affirmation of student well-being by parent/guardian in the form of a daily questionnaire. Students and staff will have their temperature monitored upon entry into the school building daily.

Responsible Parties: Responsible Parties shall be responsible for developing the plan, affirming to having read and adhere to this guidance, and meeting the standards set forth herein. For school districts and BOCES, the district superintendent, or another party as may be designated by the district superintendent, and for private and charter schools, the head of school, or another party as may be designated by the head of school, is the Responsible Parties. The designated party can be an individual or group of individuals responsible for the operations of the school or schools.

Face Coverings: Responsible Parties must maintain protocols and procedures for students, faculty, staff, and other individuals to ensure appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is used to protect against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus when on school grounds and in school facilities. Specifically, appropriate PPE means, at least, an acceptable face covering, which is strongly recommended to be worn by all individuals at all times but is required to be worn any time or place that individuals cannot maintain appropriate social distancing. However, if face coverings are to be worn by all individuals at all times, Responsible Parties should allow students to remove their face covering during meals, instruction, and for short breaks so long as they maintain appropriate social distance.

Acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings (e.g., homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana), and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose.

PPE

Staff will wear masks at all times they are with children or cannot be 6 feet apart from another adult.

Student PPE *All students must wear acceptable face coverings; excluding students who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering. The district will give two reusable masks to each student. Students may also use their own masks. Disposable masks will be available for students who forget a mask. Students will be given face covering breaks when they can socially distance. Students will not be required to wear a mask during meal time, snack time, or in-classroom instruction when social distancing can occur.*

Social Distancing: Responsible Parties must maintain protocols and procedures for students, faculty, and staff to ensure appropriate social distancing to protect against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus when on school grounds and in school facilities. Specifically, appropriate social distancing means six feet of space in all directions between individuals or use of appropriate physical barriers between individuals that do not adversely affect air flow, heating, cooling, or ventilation, or otherwise present a health or safety risk. If used, physical barriers must be put in place in accordance with United States Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines.

Staff will affirm District checklist of requirements for entry prior to swipe card entry daily. All staff are required to individually swipe in with social distancing in the kiosk area.

All classrooms are set up to meet or exceed social distancing requirements. Teachers will wear masks whenever instructional needs infringe upon the aforementioned requirements. Students will be required to wear masks on busses and in areas of outside of nutrition and direct instructional placements.

Students will receive "mask breaks" where they will be afforded time to exit the building and use outdoor space before returning to the school building.

Hand sanitizing stations will be placed in the most effective routing pattern to maximize student and staff use.

Cleaning and disinfecting procedures will be a continual process throughout the day based on CDC and DOH guidance.

No visitors will be allowed into main school building area barring an emergency. Contractors or outside facility workers will be tested for temperature and required to wear masks while on District property.

Parent/Guardian drop-off/pick-up of students is established currently to employ the social distancing requirements set forth by CDC and DOH.

Positive Screen Protocols • Any individual who screens positive for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms, if screened at the school, must be immediately sent home with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing. Students who are being sent home because of a positive screen (e.g., onset of COVID-19 symptoms) must be immediately separated from other students and supervised until their parent/legal guardian or emergency contact can retrieve them from school. Responsible Parties should provide such individuals with information on health care and testing resources, if applicable. Responsible Parties must immediately notify the state and local health department about the case if diagnostic test results are positive for COVID-19. Responsible Parties must require individuals to immediately disclose if and when their responses to any of the aforementioned questions changes, such as if they begin to experience symptoms, including during or outside of school hours. Responsible Parties must establish policies, 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. This returning to learning protocol must include at minimum documentation from a health care provider evaluation, negative COVID-19 testing, and symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation. Responsible Parties must designate a central point of contact(s), which may vary by activity, location, shift or day, responsible for receiving and attesting to having reviewed all screening activities, with such contact(s) also identified as the party for individuals to inform if they later experience COVID-19-related symptoms or COVID-19 exposure, as noted on the questionnaire.

Any staff member or student exceeding the temperature limits will be isolated in a pre-established area of the building until they can be sent home. This area will be monitored by a staff member that will follow social distancing requirements at all times.

Contact Tracing: Responsible Parties must 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. In the case of an individual testing positive, Responsible Parties must develop and maintain plans to support local health departments in tracing all contacts of the individual, in accordance with the protocols, training, and tools provided through the New York State Contact Tracing Program. Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state law and regulations. Responsible Parties must cooperate with all state and local health department contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine efforts.

Plans to support local health departments in contact tracing efforts using the protocols, training, and tools provided through the New York State Contact Tracing Program – an initiative between the Department of Health, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and Vital Strategies;

Immediate coordination with Washington County and/or Essex County DOH will be undertaken by Putnam CSD. The District will seek out and implement guidance procedures set forth by the DOH.

Communication: Plan to communicate internally and externally throughout the closure process. State-Issued Guidance and Minimum Standards Pre-K through Grade 12 schools involve a variety of activities depending on their specific educational and extracurricular programs and services, and, as such, should reference relevant “industry-specific” guidelines provided by DOH – and available on the New York Forward website – for operations of food services, office workspaces, transportation, and other activities, as applicable. Specifically, operations of cafeterias and other food services must operate in accordance with “Interim Guidance for Food Services during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency” with additional precautions for students that are contained herein, such as social distancing between students or cohorts of students. Administrative functions must operate in accordance with, “Interim Guidance for Office-Based Work during the COVID19 Public Health Emergency.” Transportation services administered by the school must operate in accordance with “Interim Guidance for Public Transportation Activities during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency” with additional precautions that are contained herein. Interscholastic athletics are not permitted at the t

Weekly emails to staff and families about reopening will continue, and will be based on the announcement by the governor in the first week of August relating to school reopening. Signage throughout the building and grounds will detail appropriate behaviors for students and visitors to District property. Staff will educate students on proper hand and respiratory hygiene. The district website will be updated regularly to reflect the most recent information, including the formal reopening plan the district must submit to the state.

Direct conversation surveys will be undertaken by the District to record and address any parent/guardian concerns in relation to school reopening protocols and overall safety of schools.

Facilities Schools and school districts should promote social distancing while maintaining existing safety requirements designed to protect students. To accomplish this, schools may expand their physical footprint or change the way they utilize space. Schools should also continue to meet or exceed ventilation requirements and may wish to consult with design professionals to increase ventilation and filtration. Schools must continue to conduct mandatory fire and lockdown drills according to the existing statutory schedule. School leaders will need to plan for these drills to be conducted in a manner that maintains social distancing at exits and gathering points outside the building, while still preparing students to respond in emergencies.

Putnam CSD will conduct fire drills in the established manner except to add the social distancing requirement to the evacuation procedure in the extent possible and prioritizing student safety.

Spaces: To reduce social density, Responsible Parties should consider and assess additional and/or alternate indoor space(s) that may be repurposed for instruction or other required purposes in support of in-person instruction within the school facility, school grounds, municipal facilities, municipal

grounds, or community (e.g., community centers), as well as outdoor space(s) where health and safety conditions (e.g., allergies, asthma) allow for such potential usage.

Ventilation: Responsible Parties should increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (e.g., opening windows and doors) while maintaining health and safety protocols, particularly for younger students.

Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection: Responsible Parties must adhere to and promote hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection guidance set forth by DOH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Responsible Parties must train all students, faculty, and staff on proper hand and respiratory hygiene. Responsible Parties must maintain logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection, as well as identify cleaning and disinfection frequency for each facility and area type and assign responsibility to staff.

Outdoor spaces will be maximized and other spaces within the facility will be repurposed to maximize social distancing protocol. Physical Education classes will use outdoor spaces, weather permitting, as the main instructional area.

Cleaning

All staff must ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH, including "Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19," and the "STOP THE SPREAD" poster, as applicable. Regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms will be done throughout each day. Cleaning and disinfection of exposed areas in the event an individual is confirmed to have COVID-19 are outlined in the containment plan. Each child's belongings should be kept separate and in an individually labeled storage container, cubby, or area. Belongings will be sent home regularly to be cleaned.

- **Nutrition** Schools and school districts should include food service directors in reopening plan discussions so they are able to meet their requirements to provide all enrolled students with access to school meals each school day whether school is in-person or remote; address all applicable health and safety guidelines; ensure compliance with Child Nutrition Program requirements; and communicate with families through multiple means, in the languages spoken by those families.

Putnam CSD will use classroom spaces to accommodate for social distancing guidance during meal times. All staff will be required to wear masks and gloves at all times during meal prep, distribution and disposal/clean-up.

Measures to protect students with food allergies in spaces outside the cafeteria will be implemented. Staff members will ensure all students will perform hand hygiene before and after eating, and sharing of food and beverages will be discouraged.

If served in the same common areas, lunch times will be staggered to ensure that all tables and chairs that require cleaning and disinfection are done prior to the next group of students arriving for meals. At the K-5 level, limited amounts of students will be in common areas to start the school year. Food service will consist of a “grab and go” model to ensure that all students are able to receive an individual, pre-packaged meal prepared in advance by kitchen staff.

- **Transportation** The school bus is an extension of the classroom and services should be provided to all students with consistency and equity. Each district will be required to: perform regular school bus disinfection measures; train students and school bus staff regarding social distancing on the bus, at stops, and at unloading times; and train students and staff regarding the wearing of masks. Both students and drivers will wear masks and social distance on the bus. Districts will continue to provide transportation to homeless students, students in foster care, those who attend religious, independent or charter schools – and those with disabilities.

All parents/guardians will be required to screen their child/children before they board a school bus. Masks must be worn at all times while riding on the bus. Students should maintain social distance (6 feet separation) on the bus. Siblings or children who reside in the same household should be encouraged to sit together. Students and parents should maintain 6-foot distancing at bus stops and while loading and unloading. All buses that are used by our district and contract carriers must be cleaned/disinfected once a day. High-contact areas will be wiped down after the am and pm runs. Buses will be disinfected nightly

- **School Schedules** Schools must create a comprehensive plan for a schedule that includes in-person instruction, remote instruction or a hybrid of both in-person and remote. All plans should be clearly communicated, with as much advance notice as practicable, to students, families and staff. To adhere to state and local health and safety guidelines and ensure social distancing practices, schools may consider various reopening plans and schedules that stagger or alternate their students’ return to campus. Schools should collaborate with district stakeholders when considering alternate schedules.

Due to the lack of broadband service in the area encompassing the Putnam community, it is impossible to create a remote or hybrid schedule that includes remote capability. Should the district be once again limited to a form of remote instruction, it would be a form of paper packet distribution and retrieval. This option is not ideal for our students, but every effort would be considered to assist our students should this be needed.

The District has set up and provided broadband access in the school parking lot for any parent/student who wishes to use that service. Using Buses or other hot spot tools are not effective in the Putnam geographic area based on availability of connectivity.

- **Budget and Fiscal** All schools and school districts must continue to meet existing state aid reporting requirements. Additionally, the content of data submissions, such as attendance data, will remain consistent with past practice, except where modified by law, regulation or executive order.

- **Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism** Schools must develop a mechanism to collect and report daily teacher student engagement or attendance. While this requirement is straightforward in an in-person setting, a procedure should be developed to make daily contact with students in remote or hybrid settings. Schools may consider for instance, assigning the homeroom teacher or advisory teacher to be the point of contact to touch base with a specific group of students daily. Attendance data must be reported in the student information reporting system or SIRS. School policies and procedures must focus on the academic consequences of lost instructional time and address absences before students fall behind in school. It is critical for schools to use a variety of creative methods to reach out to students and their families who have not engaged in distance learning.

- **Teaching and Learning** Mandatory teaching and learning requirements include providing clear opportunities for equitable instruction for all students; ensuring continuity of learning regardless of the instructional model used; providing standards-based instruction; ensuring substantive daily interaction between teachers and students; and clearly communicating information about instructional plans with parents and guardians. To allow for schools and districts to adapt to complications caused by the pandemic, certain flexibilities will be authorized, including: flexible student/staff ratio in prekindergarten; extended time for prekindergarten and kindergarten screening to be completed; a waiver allowing districts to convert UPK seats from full-day to half-day (not applicable to Statewide Universal Full Day Pre-K programs); flexibility with the 180 minutes per week Unit of Study requirement; flexibility in the delivery of physical education; allowance for a blend of hands-on and virtual science laboratory experiences; and when appropriate, districts and charters may utilize remote or virtual work-based learning experiences for CTE and CDOS programs.

In-Person Instruction: To ensure equity in education, Responsible Parties should prioritize efforts to return all students to in-person instruction at this time. However, based on the dynamic nature of local community transmission of the COVID-19 virus, a phased-in approach or hybrid model combining in-person instruction and remote/distance learning may be necessary at various times through the 2020-2021 school year. In planning for these approaches and models, school plans should indicate if certain students will be prioritized to return to in-person instruction first or more frequently based on educational or other needs (e.g., early grades, students with disabilities, English language learners), given requirements for **equity**, capacity, social distancing, PPE, feasibility, and learning considerations.

Due to the lack of broadband service in the area encompassing the Putnam community, it is impossible to create a remote or hybrid schedule that includes remote capability.

Technology and Connectivity Recovering, Rebuilding, and Renewing: The Spirit of New York's Schools Questions related to this guidance may be directed to reopeningguidance@nysed.gov 9 Adequate access to a computing device and high-speed broadband is essential for educational equity. Schools and districts must determine the level of access all students and teachers have in their places of residence; to the extent practicable, address the need to provide devices and internet access to students and teachers who currently do not have sufficient access; and provide multiple ways for students to participate in learning and demonstrate their mastery of the learning standards in remote and hybrid instructional models. Schools and districts should provide instruction on using technology and IT support for students, teachers and families and provide professional development for teachers and leaders on designing effective online/remote learning experiences.

Due to the lack of broadband service in the area encompassing the Putnam community, it is impossible to create a remote or hybrid schedule that includes remote capability. Should the district be once again limited to a form of remote instruction, it would be a form of paper packet distribution and retrieval. This option is not ideal for our students, but every effort would be considered to assist our students should this be needed.

The District has set up and provided broadband access in the school parking lot for any parent/student who wishes to use that service. Using Buses or other hot spot tools are not effective in the Putnam geographic area based on availability of connectivity.

- **Special Education** Schools and school districts are required to provide: a Free Appropriate Public Education consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those providing special education and services; meaningful parental engagement regarding the provision of services to their child; collaboration between the Committee on Preschool Special Education/Committee on Special Education (CPSE/CSE) and program providers representing the variety of settings where students are served; access to the necessary instructional and technological supports to meet the unique needs of students; and documentation of programs, services and communications with parents. Schools and school districts should consider in-person services a priority for high-needs students and preschool students with disabilities whenever possible and consider contingency plans developed by the CPSE/CSE to address remote learning needs in the event of intermittent or extended closure.

Cohorts: Responsible Parties should “cohort” students, to the extent practicable, to limit potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Cohorts, particularly for younger students, are self-contained, preassigned groups of students with reasonable group size limits set forth by the Responsible Parties in their plans. Responsible Parties should enact measures to prevent intermingling between cohorts, to the extent possible (e.g., separation by appropriate social distancing, particularly if there are multiple cohorts in one area). Responsible Parties should make reasonable efforts to ensure that cohorts are fixed – meaning contain the same students – for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Faculty may instruct more than one cohort so long as appropriate social distancing is maintained.

Based on the extremely small class/grade sizes at Putnam cohorting students is not necessary to meet the requirements. However, efforts to minimize intermingling of grades will be considered when designing student movements.

Staffing and Human Resources As schools and school districts create their plans for the 2020-21 school year, they must ensure that all teachers, school and district leaders and pupil personnel service professionals hold a valid and appropriate certificate for their assignment; can continue to utilize incidental teaching when determining how to staff their classrooms; can employ substitute teachers to address staffing needs for the allowable amount of days given their qualifications and teaching assignment; should work with educator preparation programs to identify appropriate ways in which student teachers can support classroom instruction; and should consider whether their currently approved APPR plans may need to be revised in order to be consistent with their plans for re-opening under an in-person, remote or hybrid instructional model.

Mental Health, Behavioral, and Emotional Support Services and Programs: Available resources and referrals to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional needs of students, faculty, and staff when school reopens for in-person instruction (e.g., how they will identify and support students having difficulty with transitioning back into the school setting, especially given the changed school environment). Any training 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 information on developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, and staff.

District employees will receive communications about District procedures for addressing student mental health, behavioral and emotional support services prior to the commencement of school re-opening and throughout the school year. Counselors will establish a thoughtful well designed system of supports for students in their service.

Monitoring includes protocols and procedures to track health conditions at schools. At a minimum, plans must incorporate the following:

- **Screening:** Protocols and procedures for mandatory health screenings, including temperature checks, of students, faculty, staff, and, where applicable, contractors, vendors, and visitors to identify any individuals who may have COVID-19 or who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Responsible Parties should consider limiting the number of visitors permitted on school grounds or in school facilities, and, if visitors are allowed, screening of such visitors;
- **Testing Protocols:** Process for the provision or referral of diagnostic testing for students, faculty, and staff for COVID-19, in consultation with local health department officials, when needed, which should include plans for testing of symptomatic individuals, close contacts of COVID-19 suspected or confirmed individuals, and individuals with recent international travel or travel within a state with widespread transmission of COVID-19 as designated through the New York State Travel Advisory, before allowing such individuals to return to in-person to the school;
- **Testing Responsibility:** Identification of who in the community is responsible for referring, sourcing, and administering testing (e.g., local health department testing site, physician offices, hospital system), particularly in the event that large-scale testing at the school is needed; and
- **Early Warning Signs:** Defined metrics that will serve as early warning signs that positive COVID-19 cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level, as established by state and local health departments; define and deploy method(s) to monitor against such metrics.

Containment includes protocols and procedures for how to respond to positive or presumed-positive cases, as well as preventative practices. At a minimum, plans must incorporate the following:

- **School Health Offices:** Protocols for safely caring for a student, faculty, or staff member if they develop symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day;

- **Isolation:** Procedures to isolate individuals who screen positive upon arrival, or symptomatic individuals should they become symptomatic while at school, providing appropriate PPE for school health office staff caring for the symptomatic individual. Protocols for safe transportation, including pick-up arrangements, if applicable, for symptomatic students, faculty, and staff;
- **Collection:** Protocols for how parents or legal guardians should pick up their student with instructions that the student must be seen by a health care provider;
- **Infected Individuals:** Requirements that persons who have tested positive complete isolation and have recovered, and will not transmit COVID-19 when returning to in-person learning. Discharge from isolation and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the local health department.
- **Exposed Individuals:** Requirements that individuals who were exposed to the COVID-19 virus complete quarantine and have not developed symptoms before returning to in-person learning. Discharge from quarantine and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the local health department;
- **Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection:** Adherence to, and promotion of, hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection guidance set forth by DOH and CDC, including strategies for cleaning and disinfection of exposed areas and appropriate notification to occupants of such areas;
- **Communication:** Plans to share protocols and safety measures taken by the school with all relevant parties including parents/legal guardians, faculty, staff, students and the local community•

Closure includes contingency plans, protocols, and procedures for decreasing the scale or scope of in-person education, and/or closing the school. At a minimum, plans must incorporate the following:

- **Closure triggers:** Identification of the conditions that may warrant reducing in-person education or closing the school, in consultation with state and local health departments, and plan for an orderly closure;

- **Operational Activity:** Determination of which operations will be decreased, or ceased and which operations will be conducted remotely; include process to conduct orderly closures which may include phasing, milestones, and involvement of key personnel; and

Communication: Plan to communicate internally and externally throughout the closure process. State-Issued Guidance and Minimum Standards Pre-K through Grade 12 schools involve a variety of activities depending on their specific educational and extracurricular programs and services, and, as such, should reference relevant “industry-specific” guidelines provided by DOH – and available on the New York Forward website – for operations of food services, office workspaces, transportation, and other activities, as applicable. Specifically, operations of cafeterias and other food services must operate in accordance with “Interim Guidance for Food Services during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency” with additional precautions for students that are contained herein, such as social distancing between students or cohorts of students. Administrative 7 functions must operate in accordance with, “Interim Guidance for Office-Based Work during the COVID19 Public Health Emergency.” Transportation services administered by the school must operate in accordance with “Interim Guidance for Public Transportation”