



August 18, 2021

Dear Haldane Community,

In preparation for the upcoming school year I would like to update you on a few health and safety related procedures in light of the continued impact of Covid-19 on our communities.

These procedures have been informed by the review of information provided by the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) and the [American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#), and through discussions with our school district physician and officials at the Putnam County Department of Health. A more detailed description of our health and safety procedures will be included in the district's reopening guide, which will be finalized and posted to the district's website by the end of next week.

The district will continue to implement a layered mitigation approach to reduce the potential for the spread of illness in our schools and to reduce the potential for disruption to in-person instruction due to quarantine orders.

These mitigation strategies include, but are not limited to:

Physical Distancing

A minimum of 3 feet of physical distancing will be implemented in all classrooms and may be expanded based on the number of students and available space in each room.

Masks

All students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, are required to be masked while indoors. Masks will not be required in outdoor settings.

Covid-19 Testing

The district plans to continue its Covid testing program for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in coordination with the Putnam County Department of Health. Please consider providing consent through [FamilyID](#) to have your child tested at school. Additional information regarding the district's testing program will be made available in the coming weeks.

Staff Vaccination Status

As of March 1 approximately 86% of all Haldane employees were fully vaccinated. The district will update this figure when all staff are back on campus this fall.

Ventilation

Last year the Facilities & Operations Department conducted a thorough review of the buildings' ventilation systems and instituted practices to ensure adequate air flow throughout each of the spaces. This included maximizing outdoor air supplied to the buildings via installed mechanical systems, installing MERV-13 rated filters and conducting routine filter changes, instituting a preventative maintenance program for mechanical systems, and ensuring proper operation of the Districts Building Management System. These practices will remain in effect throughout this academic year.

In addition to our mitigation efforts, the following procedures will be in place for the start of the school year:

School Schedules

All schools will revert to their pre-Covid daily schedules. Classes will begin at Haldane Middle School and High School at 7:33 a.m. and at Haldane Elementary School at 8:35 a.m.

Outdoor Learning

Each building will have defined outdoor learning spaces for use throughout the day. This will follow the same procedure that was implemented last year with some slight modifications. Teachers will be encouraged to utilize these spaces to the greatest extent possible, depending on the weather. Tented spaces will again be set up to provide additional covering.

Food Services

Students will continue to enjoy their lunches in our outdoor spaces, weather permitting. The district is currently reviewing seating arrangements in the cafeteria to allow safe distancing, in the event that students are unable to eat outdoors.

Remote Learning

Remote learning will only be available for students who are required to quarantine due to exposure to a Covid-positive individual or in the event of a school closure due to Covid-19. The district will revert to its pre-Covid procedures for homebound instruction for other health-related absences.

Transportation

All students who access the district's transportation will be required to be masked and seated at least 3 feet apart on the bus.

Athletics

All fall sports will occur as scheduled. Participants in high risk sports may be required to submit weekly Covid screenings in order to participate. Additional details will be shared with families in the coming weeks.

I will be reviewing these guidelines in more detail with our Board of Education at its meeting on Tuesday, August 24. Each building principal will also host a parent forum prior to the start of the year to discuss any questions or concerns that you may have. Please look for these communication notices.

I anticipate that we will update these guidelines on a continual basis as local conditions change. Significant adjustments will be communicated to all community members via the district's electronic messaging service.

We continue to be in a precarious situation within this pandemic. These health and safety procedures are essential to help us continue to meet our goal of providing every student in-person instruction and reducing the potential for disruption due to quarantine.

I wish you all a restful close to summer and I look forward to seeing you again in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,
Phil Benante, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools