



RyeNeck Schools
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OPERATION PLAN

Operation and Instruction During the COVID-19 Pandemic

2021-2022

This plan is a “living document” that will be continuously updated as plans are finalized or improved and new guidance is received. This plan was last updated on August 17th, 2021.

Introduction

Recently, the NYSDOH advised that schools should follow the CDC’s operational strategies for schools. On August 12th, the NYSED issued guidance for the opening of schools that is based on the same CDC information.

While districts have been instructed by NYSED to prioritize in-person instruction, the district has plans for emergency remote learning, as well as for a hybrid model that combines in-person instruction and remote learning if necessary. Full, in-person instruction with all students on a regular daily academic schedule relies on PPE, social distance, disinfection, enhanced ventilation, and other mitigation strategies.

The plan outlined here is for the operation of schools in the Rye Neck Union Free School District for the 2021-22 school year. This plan includes procedures that will be followed in all four of our schools: Daniel Warren and F. E. Bellows Elementary Schools, Rye Neck Middle School, and Rye Neck High School.

The health and safety of our students, our staff and their families is our top priority. We want students and employees to feel comfortable and safe returning to school campuses. Our reopening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the CDC’s [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#) and the NYSED’s [Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-2022 School Year](#), in addition to our continued partnership with the WCDOH and NYSDOH.

It is possible that we may need to alternate between in-person and remote learning throughout the year due to recommendations and guidance from our partnering agencies or loss of staffing due to quarantines. The level of infection, the spread of the virus, and the response to the disease in our community will be at the forefront of our decision-making as we move to open our schools.

Mrs. Corinne Ryan is acting as the district’s COVID-19 Coordinator. As such, she serves as a central contact for schools and stakeholders, families, staff and other school community members and will ensure the district is in compliance with and following the best practices per state and federal guidelines. Mrs. Ryan’s contact information (cryan@ryeneck.org) is posted on the district webpage under the COVID-19 tab, along with contact information for other district personnel.

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Table of Contents	3
Communication/Family and Community Engagement	5
Health & Safety	7
Vaccination	7
Travel Guidance	7
Social distancing, face coverings & Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	7
Infection control strategies	8
Facility Alterations and Acquisition	9
Plumbing Facilities and Fixtures	9
Ventilation	9
Management of ill persons, contact tracing and monitoring	10
Aerosol Generating Procedures	10
If Students or Staff become Ill with Symptoms of COVID-19 at School	10
Return to School after Illness	11
COVID-19 Testing	11
Contact Tracing	12
School Closures	12
Case management and Quarantines	12
Health Hygiene	13
Hand Hygiene	13
Respiratory Hygiene	14
Cleaning and Disinfecting	14
Vulnerable Populations/Accommodations	15
Visitors on Campus	15

RyeNeck Schools

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School Safety Drills	15
Facilities	16
Child Nutrition	16
Meals Onsite	17
Meals Checkout Process	17
Lunch and Recess	17
Transportation	18
School Bus Staff	19
Social Emotional Well-Being	19
School Activities/Extracurriculars	20
School Schedules	20
Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism	21
Technology and Connectivity	22
Teaching and Learning	22
In-person Instruction	22
Emergency Closures	22
Quarantined Students	23
Hybrid Plan	23
Homebound Instruction	23
Homeschooling	24
Special Education	24
English as a New Language	25
Staff	25
Key References	25

Communication/Family and Community Engagement

The district remains committed to communicating all elements of this plan to students, parents and guardians, staff and visitors. The plan is available to all stakeholders via the district website at www.ryeneck.org, and will be updated throughout the school year, as necessary, to respond to local circumstances. The link to the plan appears on the website homepage, as well as individual school pages, under the “COVID-19” tab at the top of the page. Every effort has been made to ensure that the plan is accessible to all individuals in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A/AA. The plan can also be translated into other languages, via the G-Translate feature available on the district website.

The district will use its existing communication channels including the Blackboard system, email, mailings, and the district website to disseminate consistent messaging regarding new protocols and procedures, expectations, requirements and options related to school operations to district staff, students, parents/guardians, visitors and education partners and vendors.

The district will rely on our website, superintendent updates, district social media websites, and building principal updates (newsletters, emails, etc.) to communicate news, requirements and updates related to reopening and in-person instruction, including social distancing requirements, proper wearing of face coverings, vaccination news, and proper hand and respiratory hygiene. The information that we will share will be based on state and local guidance. Input from stakeholder groups will be sought and shared as necessary.

The district will follow its existing engagement and communication protocols with parents regarding the provision of special education services for their child. A translator will be used when needed and communications via Blackboard will be sent in the family’s home language.

In addition, the district will make every effort to ensure that communication to parents/legal guardians is in their preferred language and mode of communication. Additionally, items will be posted so families can use Google translating tools.

The district is committed to ensuring that all of its students and their families understand expectations related to all public health policies and protocols. The district will assess the best approach to communicating the information for each student age group and will provide frequent opportunities for students to review these policies and protocols. These trainings will cover:

- Hand hygiene: Informational posters have been posted in restrooms to reinforce hand hygiene protocols taught by school nurses, faculty and staff.
- Proper face covering procedures (how to wear and remove): Informational posters reinforce proper face covering procedures taught by school nurses, faculty and staff. Vaccination status may or may not affect mask rules for individuals or groups: these rules and any related changes will be made clear before and during the start of the school year.
- Social distancing: Signage has been posted around the school building reminding students to socially distance themselves from others. Signage also directs students and staff where to stand while waiting to enter congregate areas such as the dining hall and restrooms.

- Respiratory hygiene: Informational posters reinforce procedures for coughing and sneezing to contain respiratory secretions. This coughing etiquette will be explained and reinforced by lessons from the school nurse and other appropriate school staff.
- Identifying symptoms: Employees, older students, and parents/guardians are notified of symptoms associated with COVID-19. These same indicators are part of the health pre-screening attestation that employees, and parent/guardians must complete to gain entry to any district facilities. The nurse has provided training to school staff so they might recognize and be familiar with procedures to refer possible symptomatic individuals to the nurse. Informational posters have been posted in buildings as well.

In addition to signage, the district will encourage all students, faculty, staff and visitors through verbal and written communication to adhere to CDC and DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE through additional means such as Blackboard communications, emails, newsletters, and postings on the district website and social media platforms.

The district is committed to creating a learning environment that protects student and staff health, safety and privacy. Our district will operate under a standard procedure for addressing situations in which an individual has tested positive for COVID-19 or appears symptomatic. These procedures are outlined in the *Health & Safety* section of our reopening plan.

In the event that a student or staff member is sick or symptomatic, notification to exposed individuals will occur pursuant to the state's contact tracing protocols as implemented by the local health department. The district will notify the wider community as required by local health officials. The mode of such communications will depend on the scope and privacy considerations associated with each case, but may be by Blackboard Connect, our website, or phone.

School Closures

The district has prepared for situations in which one or more school buildings or grades need to close due to a significant number of students or staff either testing positive for COVID-19 or being forced to quarantine, or a considerable regional increase in COVID-19 cases. All such decisions will be made after either direction from the state government or consultation with local health agencies.

The district may choose to modify operations in one or more schools prior to closing to help mitigate a rise in cases. The district will consult its Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and the local DOH when making such decisions.

School building administrators communicate with each other regularly, and if needed, will consider closing school if absentee rates impact the ability of the school to operate safely. If a decision is made to close schools, this will be communicated using the Blackboard messaging system.

Health & Safety

The health and safety of our students, our staff and their families is our top priority. We want students and employees to feel comfortable and safe returning to school campuses. Our 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 \(NYSED\)](#).

The following protocols and procedures will be in place in all district schools for the 2021-22 school year should in-person schooling resume. Anyone with questions or concerns should contact our COVID-19 safety coordinator at cryan@ryeneck.org.

Vaccination

The CDC notes that “vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic” and asks schools to encourage eligible students and staff to become vaccinated. Current information on eligibility and access to the vaccine may be found on our website under “Vaccine Information” under our COVID-19 tab.

Travel Guidance

As per current CDC guidelines,

- Domestic travel
 - Unvaccinated people: get tested 1-3 days before the trip; get tested 3-5 days after the trip and self-quarantine for 7 days OR self-quarantine for 10 day.
 - All: follow mask protocols and monitor for symptoms
- International travel
 - Vaccinated people: must have a negative test result no more than 3 days before reentering the US; get tested 3-5 days after the trip
 - Unvaccinated people: get tested 1-3 days before the trip; must have a negative test result no more than 3 days before reentering the US; get tested 3-5 days after the trip and self-quarantine for 7 days OR self-quarantine for 10 days
 - All: follow mask protocols and monitor for symptoms

Social distancing, face coverings & Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The district has developed a plan with policies and procedures for maintaining social distancing of all students, faculty, and staff when on school facilities and grounds. Proper social distance is considered to be as close to a minimum of six feet as possible between individuals in common areas, six feet between adults and between adults and students, and three feet between students while in classrooms. Lockers at the MS/HS campus will be inaccessible to maintain the flow of student movement in the hallways; lockers will be available at FE Bellows on a staggered schedule.

Cohorting, or grouping, will be used to minimize the number of classmates students are exposed to. At the elementary level, this usually refers to the single class section (e.g. “Mrs. Spedafino’s class”). Since

that type of organization is not possible at the secondary level, students in the MS and HS will be cohorted alphabetically . With students seated alphabetically in each class period, students would typically only be in proximity to those whose last names are close alphabetically. Exceptions to this rule will be made for those with special accommodations.

Proper face coverings must be worn at all times indoors. For those medically unable to wear face coverings, individual plans will be made (any such condition unknown to the district must be brought to our attention immediately).

Students, staff and visitors to our schools are expected to wear face coverings indoors. Students are allowed to remove face coverings during meals or for short breaks so long as they maintain appropriate social distance, and outside. Masks *might* be required outdoors if a particular activity requires sustained close contact. Teachers will instruct students when mask breaks are permitted. The timing and duration of mask breaks will be designated by supervising staff. Students who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering will not be required to wear one as long as a medical note is provided by a physician.

Face coverings are provided to students and staff, if needed, at no cost. Acceptable face coverings for COVID-19 include, but are not limited to, cloth-based coverings and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose.

Face coverings should not be placed on:

- children younger than 2 years old.
- students where such covering would impair their health or mental health, or where such covering would present a challenge, distraction, or obstruction to education services.
- anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious.
- anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

The district will instruct students, parents/guardians and staff, contractors and vendors on:

- the proper way to wear face coverings.
- proper way to discard disposable face coverings.

Training and instructional materials will be provided by the school nursing staff. Face coverings required, practice social distancing, directional arrows and “stand here” signage will be utilized throughout district facilities.

Infection control strategies

At all three buildings, either staggered schedules, delayed entries, or separate entrances and exits are used to minimize the flow of foot traffic.

In lieu of a daily health screening questionnaire and temperature check, both no longer recommended by the CDC, a list of COVID-19 symptoms will be posted at each entrance, posted on our website, and mentioned in district communications. Parents, students, and staff should be aware of these potential signs of infection, not enter the building, and take the appropriate steps to ensure that they are healthy.

During the day, movement and relocation of student groups has been reduced to the minimum necessary for instruction; secondary staff is lenient with class start times to allow students to move from class to class safely rather than hurrying for a bell; secondary students are encouraged to use exterior sidewalk routes rather than interior halls when weather permits; foot grips reduce the need to grasp handles on certain doors (e.g., bathrooms); hand sanitizer stations are dispersed throughout the buildings and hand sanitizer is available in all classrooms.

Students will be socially distant at three feet in all instructional settings and as close to six feet as possible in congregate areas such as hallways, dining areas, and outdoor settings. Bathrooms are restricted to a maximum of two students at a time.

Facility Alterations and Acquisition

Classroom furniture has been minimized or rearranged to provide for better social distancing during instruction. This has required the storage or replacement of some furniture to provide adequate space.

Spaces such as libraries or cafeterias may be used for instruction when needed.

Plumbing Facilities and Fixtures

- Drinking Water: water fountain spouts have been disabled and bottle fillers remain functional.
- Water systems in the building are flushed weekly, if unused.
- Restroom practices:
 - Washroom use will be limited to two persons at any time.
 - Those waiting to access bathroom facilities must socially distance per provided signage.
 - In addition, the district has modified existing bathrooms as follows:
 - All toilet seats have been replaced and all seats include lids.
 - Air dryers have been disabled. Bathrooms have contact-free paper towel dispensers (either electronic or self-advancing).
 - Hand sanitizer is available outside of all bathrooms.
 - Bathrooms have been marked with appropriate signage to remind persons to social distance, close lids when flushing toilets and to properly wash hands.
 - Additionally, custodial staff will be monitoring bathroom cleanliness on a more frequent basis. A log of daily cleaning will be maintained.

Ventilation

- The district is maintaining adequate natural or mechanical ventilation.
- Staff will increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (e.g., opening windows and doors) while maintaining health and safety protocols.
- HVAC units remain on daytime settings during the week in order to cycle and purge air more frequently. New spaces built as a result of our recent capital project (MS Gymnasium and HS STEAM Wing) use MERV #13 filters, while HVAC systems in pre existing spaces utilize MERV #11 filters.
- Air purifiers have been added to all instructional spaces.

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 severity of 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.

- High School / Middle School
 - Covid symptoms isolation area - Inner office within the school nurse's office
 - Non-Covid treatment/medication area - school nurse's office
- Daniel Warren Elementary
 - Covid symptoms isolation area - Room 200 located across the hallway from the school nurse's office
 - Non-Covid treatment/medication area - school nurse's office
- F.E. Bellows Elementary
 - Covid symptoms isolation area - Room 207A located across the hallway from the school nurse's office
 - Non-Covid treatment/medication area - school nurse's office

PPE requirements for school health office staff caring for sick individuals include both standard and transmission-based precautions. In areas with moderate to substantial community transmission, eye protection (e.g., goggles or face shield) should be added. When caring for a suspected or confirmed individual with COVID-19, gloves, a gown, eye protection, and a fit-tested N-95 respirator can be used, if available. If an N-95 respirator is not available, a surgical face mask and face shield will be used.

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. Disposable items will be used as much as possible.

Aerosol Generating Procedures

Respiratory treatments administered by nurses generally result in aerosolization of respiratory secretions. The district requires the following PPE to be worn during AGPs: gloves, N-95 or a surgical mask with face shield, eye protection and a gown. Cleaning of the room will occur after use.

If Students or Staff become Ill with Symptoms of COVID-19 at School

The district requires students or staff with a temperature, signs of illness, and/or a positive response to the questionnaire to be sent directly to a dedicated isolation area where students are supervised, prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home. Students will be supervised in the isolation area while awaiting transport home and will be separated by at least six feet. Students will be escorted from the isolation area to their parent/guardian. Students or staff will be referred to a healthcare provider and provided resources on COVID-19 testing. The district will follow DOH guidance regarding specific steps to be taken following an illness.

Return to School after Illness

The district has established protocols and procedures, in following local, state ([Pre-K to Gr 12 COVID-19 Toolkit](#)) and CDC guidance for allowing a student or staff member to return to school after exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. If a person is not diagnosed by a healthcare provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) with COVID-19 they can return to school:

- Once there is no fever, without the use of fever reducing medicines, and they have felt well for 24 hours;
- If they have been diagnosed with another condition and have a healthcare provider written note stating they are clear to return to school.

If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider based on a test or symptoms, or does not get a COVID-19 test but has symptoms, they should not be at school and should stay at home until:

- It has been at least ten days since the individual first had symptoms;
- It has been at least three days since the individual has had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine);
- It has been at least three days since the individual's symptoms improved, including cough and shortness of breath.
- They have a healthcare provider written note stating they are clear to return to school.

The district will refer to the NYSDOH guidance ([Pre-K to Gr 12 COVID-19 Toolkit](#)) regarding protocols and policies for faculty and staff seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, or after the faculty or staff member had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19.

The district requires that individuals who were exposed to the COVID-19 virus complete quarantine as directed by the WCDOH, and demonstrate that they have not developed symptoms 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.

COVID-19 Testing

The decision of whether or not a test needs to be conducted as a result of a visit to the nurse, illness, or exposure to a positive case will be determined by the individual's healthcare provider or local department of health while adhering to the above-mentioned NYSDOH Toolkit. School nurses will be able to provide referrals and resources for families in need of testing.

When the level of community infection meets the criteria outlined by the CDC, COVID-19 tests can be used for "surveillance" of rates of infection in our schools. Tests are not mandatory and consent is required before any student would be tested, but the process becomes more effective with greater numbers of people tested. Participation in this testing is a way of collectively demonstrating our commitment to keep our students and employees safe and in school.

Through a partnership with the WCDOH, Rye Neck will conduct regular testing for students and staff.

In addition, Rye Neck maintains a stock of the Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Rapid Test used last year and has partnered with Affinity Laboratories to complete pool testing if necessary.

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 to 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](#).

If/when COVID-19 cases are discovered in the school, in consultation with the local health department, the district will assist 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. School staff should not try to determine who is to be excluded from school based on contact without guidance and direction from the local health department.

School Closures

A closure refers to contingency plans, protocols, and procedures for decreasing the scale or scope of in-person education and/or closing the school. The district will collaborate with the local health department to determine the parameters, conditions, or metrics (e.g., increased absenteeism or increased illness in the school community) that will serve as early warning signs that positive COVID-19 cases may be increasing beyond a practical level.

Case Management and Quarantines

- When the district learns of an individual testing positive for Covid-19, the following information is ascertained:
 - When was the test administered?
 - Was the individual symptomatic and, if so, when did symptoms begin?
 - When was the last day in school?
- If the individual was present in school during the exposure period (the two days prior to onset of symptoms or positive test result since an infected person can spread SARS-CoV-2 starting from 2 days before they have any symptoms or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days before the positive specimen collection date) contact tracing will begin.
 - Questions may be asked of the individual to obtain more information such as meetings attended, lunch off campus, etc.

- School will contact DOH and may be asked to share details
 - types of classrooms i.e., gymnasium, libraries, etc.
 - indoor/outdoor
 - length of time
 - share photographs and room dimensions
 - if necessary, school will check cameras for clarification
 - vaccination or past infection status
- Close contact
 - A Close Contact is defined as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 10 minutes or more over a 24-hour period
 - *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 masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to adults in the indoor classroom setting.
- After DOH determines which classes will need to quarantine, class lists will be run and checked against attendance; call teams will be assembled; families/staff of those deemed to be contacts by the DOH will be contacted by phone by the school and then a follow up letter will be sent; all contacts will be shared with the DOH, who should follow up with families
- Fully vaccinated close contacts should be referred for COVID-19 testing. If asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts do not need to quarantine at home following an exposure and may continue to attend school in-person.
- 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.

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. This will be supported by lessons from our school nurses.

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. Signage 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 when unable to maintain social distance from others, or in accordance with any stricter policy implemented by the school.
3. Adhere to social distancing instructions.
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 and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Dry hands completely after washing.
- 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 going to the restroom, or after assisting a student with toileting.
- 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 and staff must carry out the following respiratory hygiene practices.

- Cover a cough or sneeze using a tissue. If a tissue is used, it should be thrown away immediately.
- If you don't have a tissue when sneezing or coughing, sneeze into your elbow.
- Wash your hands after sneezing or coughing.
- Face coverings are protective. Wearing a face covering will keep the respiratory droplets and aerosols from being widely dispersed into the air.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

The district will ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH. Cleaning and disinfection logs will be maintained that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection.

Students, faculty, and staff will be trained on proper hand and respiratory hygiene, and such information will be provided to parents and/or legal 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.

Regular cleaning and disinfection of the facilities will occur, including more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk and frequently touched surfaces. Cleaning and disinfection will be rigorous and ongoing and will occur at least daily, or more frequently as needed. Restrooms should be cleaned and disinfected more often depending on frequency of use.

Vulnerable Populations/Accommodations

We recognize that some students and staff members are at an increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness or live with a person who is at an increased risk. It is our goal that these individuals are able to participate in educational activities safely. The following individuals, based on guidance from the CDC, are considered a part of the vulnerable population:

- Adults over the age of 65 years
- Pregnant individuals
- Individuals who are immunocompromised
- Individuals suffering from
 - Chronic Lung Disease
 - Moderate to Severe Asthma
 - Serious Heart Conditions
 - Severe Obesity
 - Diabetes
 - Chronic Kidney Disease Undergoing Dialysis
 - Liver Disease
- Other medically fragile students or staff

Visitors on Campus

No outside visitors or volunteers will be allowed on school campuses or in our buildings.

Parents/guardians will report to the front door of the school and will not be allowed entry unless it is for the safety or well-being of their child.

Essential visitors to facilities will be required to wear face coverings indoors and will be restricted in their access to the interior of our school buildings and each respective campus. Visitors will only be allowed entry after undergoing a temperature check and answering the health screening questionnaire.

Parents/guardians who need only to drop off items for students should ring the doorbell, inform the office, and use the following locations for the drop off:

- Daniel Warren: labeled drop box at the inside entrance near the Lobby Guard kiosk.
- F. E. Bellows: labeled drop box at the inside entrance near the Lobby Guard kiosk.
- Middle School: desk in front of the third window to the left of the MS main entrance (23b).
- High School: fifth window to the left of the senior lounge entrance (Room E4) is designated for "Registration and/or Drop-off".

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. Drills will 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.

The following modifications to drill procedures will be in effect:

- Drills will be conducted with all groups.

- Evacuation drills (bomb scare, gas leak, early dismissal, fire) will include social distancing during exit and in assembly areas.
- Lockdown drills will feature verbal instruction and physical demonstration by the teacher to identify interior hiding areas to students rather than clustering by the group; staff will instruct students on routes of emergency egress when outdoor lessons are conducted.
- Sheltering drills will feature staggered timing to allow students to enter sheltering locations in smaller groups to maintain social distance.
- Lockout procedures will stress use of upper windows or windows inaccessible from the outside for ventilation when exterior doors must be secured.
- **All of the above modifications are made with the understanding that in case of a real emergency, speed and safety take priority over social distancing.**

Facilities

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection in the district, facilities operations will be geared toward meeting 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.

In addition, the following activities have occurred :

- Drinking Water Facilities: Water fountain spouts were disabled and bottle fillers remain functional. For additional plumbing facilities and fixtures activities, please see the section above.
- The district is maintaining adequate natural or mechanical ventilation.
- Staff has increased ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (e.g., opening windows and doors) while maintaining health and safety protocols.
- HVAC units remain on daytime settings during the week in order to cycle and purge air more frequently. New spaces built as a result of our recent capital project use MERV #13 filters, while HVAC systems in pre-existing spaces utilize MERV #11 filters.
- Air purifiers are being used in all instructional spaces.
- Cleaning logs are being maintained on all premises. These logs include what is being cleaned, how it is being cleaned and when or how frequently it is being cleaned.
 - Emist electrostatic disinfectants are being used to clean and sanitize where possible.
 - High touch surfaces and other points are disinfected throughout the school day.
- The procurement of cleaning products and PPE is centralized throughout the district.

Child Nutrition

School meals will be available to all students. All requirements of the National School Lunch Program will be met. Meals are free of charge under the current USDA program which allows schools to provide meals under the National School Lunch program at no cost to students. A la carte items must still be purchased.

For information about meals, visit the Food Services tab on our individual school webpages. Information is also emailed to parents before the start of the school year.

Meals Onsite

Meals are provided while maintaining appropriate social distancing between students. Students do not need to wear face coverings when seated and eating so long as they are appropriately socially distanced.

The district ensures social distancing between individuals while eating in the school cafeterias. Meals may be served in alternate areas (e.g., classrooms), outdoors, or in staggered meal periods to ensure social distancing and proper cleaning and disinfection between students. The sharing of food and beverages is prohibited, except for members of the same household.

The daily meal menu is posted on the district's website. The menu is interactive and parents are able to click on the items on the menu to check for ingredients, nutritional and allergy information.

Meal Checkout Process

- For students purchasing breakfast (MS/HS only) or lunch:
 - Cashless transactions are required at the elementary schools and are strongly encouraged at the MS/HS (prepaid accounts can be set up at www.MySchoolBucks.com).
 - Checkout process:
 - Daniel Warren: Meal and milk counts are taken each morning in the child's classroom and are sent to the cafeteria where the student's account is billed.
 - F.E. Bellows: Students either enter or tell the cashier their ID number.
 - MS/HS: Touchless scanning of ID cards can be used for checkout. If a child does not have their ID card, they can enter their ID number.
 - Social distancing protocols will be followed in all food service areas.
 - Decals on the floor indicate where students should stand to encourage social distancing.

Lunch and Recess

Daniel Warren

DW will have three lunch periods to allow one grade at a time in the cafetorium (11:20 for 1st Grade, 11:50 for 2nd Grade, and 12:20 for Kindergarten). Tables are labeled with seat spots and face one direction. DW students will eat outside if the weather permits, one grade at a time. Rainy day recess will continue to be one class in a designated area (gym/music room/library/wonder studio/art room/classroom) for indoor play. Snacktime will be regulated by the teachers to ensure that snacks will be eaten either outside or inside with at least six feet of social distance.

F. E. Bellows

FEB will have three lunch periods. FEB students will eat outside if the weather permits, one grade at a time. For each grade, one half eats while the other half enjoys recess, then they switch. In case of inclement weather, one half will eat in the cafeteria while the other eats in the Auditorium. Both groups

will remain in place for recess. Snacktime will be regulated by the teachers to ensure that snacks will be eaten either outside or inside with at least six feet of social distance.

Middle School

Each MS grade has its own 42-minute lunch period. Each grade will be split into 21-minute eat/recess or recess/eat halves to reduce the number of students in the Dining Hall. Students eating in the Dining Hall will have individual rolling desks. When not in use for PE classes, the MS Gym will be used as an indoor dining space.

High School

HS students will also have access to the Dining Hall. However, additional space in the Library and other areas of the building may be used. Eleventh and 12th grade students will be permitted to leave campus during their lunch periods.

Sanitation and Disinfection in the Lunchroom

- Hand sanitizing stations are available in all cafeterias.
- High touch surfaces (desks, tables, chairs) are disinfected between lunch periods.

Transportation

The district does not provide any in-district bussing to the general population; only certain special education and interscholastic athletic student populations are transported through contracted vendors. Contracted vendors will conduct transportation activities that are consistent with CDC, 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 distance to the extent practicable. Masks will be provided for those who do not have their own.

Students who are able will be required to wear masks and social distance on the bus to the extent practicable; however, students whose physical or mental health would be impaired are not required to wear a face covering, but must be appropriately socially distanced. Members of the same household may be seated next to each other.

Wheelchair school buses will configure wheelchair placement to ensure appropriate social distancing.

Whether school is in session remotely or otherwise, pupil transportation will be provided to nonpublic, parochial, private, charter schools 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, homeless, or attend private or charter schools. Parents 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 they experience 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 along with an optional face shield. Those who must have direct physical contact with a child must wear gloves.

Transportation staff will be trained and provided periodic refreshers on the proper use of PPE and the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

Transportation departments/carriers will need to provide PPE such as masks and gloves for drivers, monitors and attendants in buses. They must also provide hand sanitizer for all staff in their transportation locations such as dispatch offices, employee lunch/break rooms and/or bus garages.

Social/Emotional Well-Being

The district will continue to promote mental health education and support the work of the K-12 School Counseling Mental and Physical Wellness Committee that began last school year. This programming includes:

The Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling plan posted on the School Counseling Department's homepage outlines the full range of programs, services, and courses offered. Students, staff and families will have access to adults who are responsive and kind. The district will continue to provide a continuum of services to support social-emotional adjustment to transitions, the possibility of another school closure, and the practices of mental and physical health including but not limited to suicide prevention, depression, and the importance of stress reduction practices and physical exercise.

Programming also includes opportunities for students to build community pride, gain resilience and develop civic participation. The district practices proactive communication with students, families, and staff online, through emails and with phone calls. The district will continue to support students and teachers in classrooms, group meetings, and individual consultations.

This program plan has been reviewed and updated to meet current needs. The district has hired a social worker to assist in supporting the plan. In addition, the district will use federal funds to add an additional school counselor at the elementary level. The district social worker, school counselors, psychologists, teachers, administrators and staff will continue to monitor the mental health status of our students closely. Support staff will collaborate with teachers, parents and administrators to identify those who are having difficulty and will work with those students and families to ensure that all students feel safe. The district will also provide resources to students and families.

The district will assist faculty and staff on how to speak 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. This is addressed by:

- Working in collaboration with the PTSA to present Mental Health speakers in interactive and live-streamed formats with opportunities for students to ask questions.
- Direct guidance from the district social worker, counselors, and psychologists
- Communication with teacher
- Staff development
- Mental health resources and information
- Collaboration with PTSA to present Mental Health speakers in interactive and live-streamed formats with opportunities for students to ask questions.

In addition to enhancing our ability to recognize and speak with students in need across the district, specific means of student support include:

- MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports)/RTI (response to Intervention)
- RULER (emotional intelligence approach)
- DBT (dialectical behavioral therapy)
- CSE (committee on special education)

School Activities/Extracurriculars

After-school programs, extracurricular and enrichment activities, and assemblies will return and follow classroom guidelines if indoors. Assemblies in large spaces such as the MS/HS PAC will be at limited capacity to provide social distancing.

We will be operating an interscholastic athletic program in the 2021-22 school year. This includes modified, junior varsity and varsity-level play. In the event that adjustments to the status of any particular sports or seasons is necessary, we will notify our families and athletes accordingly.

School Schedules

Daniel Warren

Doors are open for entry between 8:25 and 8:45, allowing for staggered entry for all three grades at both the main and side entrance. Dismissal times are staggered as follows: 2:40 for Kindergarten, 2:50 for 1st Grade, and 3:00 for 2nd Grade.

F. E. Bellows

Students will have staggered entry times at 8:45 for 5th grade, 8:50 for 4th grade and 8:55 for 3rd grade. Dismissal times are staggered as follows: 3:00 for 5th grade, 3:05 for 4th grade, and 3:10 for 3rd grade.

Middle and High School

Middle and high school students will return to the pre-pandemic bell schedule:

	Regular	One-Hour Delay	Two-Hour Delay
Period 1	7:50-8:30	8:50-9:30	9:50-10:30
Period 2	8:33-9:15	9:33-10:08	10:33-11:00
Homeroom	9:18-9:28	10:11-10:17	11:03-11:13
Period 3	9:31-10:13	10:20-10:55	11:16-11:43
Period 4	10:16-10:58	10:58-11:33	11:46-12:13
Period 5	11:01-11:43	11:36-12:11	12:16-12:43
Period 6	11:46-12:28	12:14-12:49	12:46-1:13
Period 7	12:31-1:13	12:52-1:27	1:16-1:43
Period 8	1:16-1:59	1:30-2:05	1:46-2:13
Period 9	2:02-2:45	2:08-2:45	2:16-2:45

- HS students do not need to report until their first scheduled class or homeroom, whichever comes first. They will use the multiple doors at the HS main entrance and be allowed into the building 3 minutes before their first class.
- HS students will be permitted to leave after their last class is over.
- MS students will line up at separate entrances for each grade and be permitted to enter the building at 8:30 unless they are participating in extracurricular music (entry at 7:47) or breakfast service (entry at 8:10). Sixth grade uses the MS main entrance; 7th grade uses the “rear bike rack” entrance opposite the main entrance; and 8th grade uses the B-corridor entrance.
- MS will also have staggered dismissal times: 2:39 for 6th grade, 2:42 for 7th grade, and 2:45 for 8th grade.

Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

Standard attendance procedures will be followed for reporting an absence and the designation of excused and unexcused absences. This includes the attendance requirement for high school courses and middle school regents course credit.

Chronic absenteeism will be monitored by the nurses at the elementary schools and the attendance clerk at the middle/high school. Designated individuals such as the social worker, counselors and psychologists will conduct outreach for those students who have not engaged in distance learning.

Technology and Connectivity

All students in grades 3-12 will be equipped with a school-issued device to use in the classroom and/or on home-learning days in the event of a hybrid or remote period. This will give students in those grades the opportunity to participate in all learning activities, regardless of their location. Additional devices are available to support students in grades K-2 while they are in the school building. However, students in those grades who need access to an at-home device can request one by contacting the district's technology coordinator.

A limited number of families lack access to high-speed internet at home. The district has procured mobile hotspots to meet their needs. Families in need of at-home high-speed internet access can request a hotspot by contacting the district's technology coordinator at mlanza@ryeneck.org.

Several cloud-based instructional software subscriptions were purchased to support learning and instruction across the district. Students will be able to access these programs from their school-issued device whether they are home or in the classroom. Teachers and students will use Google Classroom as a primary method to post and access daily learning activities. Through Google Meet, teachers can hold synchronous learning opportunities for students in a remote environment if necessary. Additionally, students can use this platform to work in collaborative groups remotely, which offers more opportunities for flexible learning activities.

Teaching and Learning

In-person Instruction

The CDC indicates that layered mitigation strategies such as those detailed earlier in this document should be implemented in order to achieve full, in-person learning. With those strategies in place, Rye Neck aims to conduct everyday instruction with students physically present in the classroom. Remote instruction will only be used when necessary, namely for quarantines, pandemic-related school closures, and for medically-documented homebound cases.

Our previous pandemic experience has introduced families to the terms *synchronous* and *asynchronous* instruction, although both types of learning pre-existed the pandemic. Synchronous is generally defined as "on a particular schedule" while asynchronous is defined as "based on student choice".

Emergency Closures

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 is ready to pivot to remote learning as we did in the 20-21 school year. It is possible that the NY state of emergency could be

reinstated, or that the NYSDOH will provide new guidance regarding social distance or vaccination status, or some other reaction to a new phase of the pandemic. Rye Neck will adjust accordingly to provide the maximum amount of in-person instruction in the safest way possible.

In case of such emergency closures, direct instruction would be provided in various ways based on grade level and/or school:

- Daniel Warren: Students would have a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning via their Google Classroom. Schedules and assignments will be posted for families to access.
- F. E. Bellows: Students would have a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning via their Google Classroom. Schedules and assignments will be posted for families to access.
- Middle and high school students will receive synchronous instruction on the bell schedule listed on page 21. Students will follow their regular schedule, be responsible for all assignments, and are subject to the school attendance policy.

Quarantined Students

If students are subject to a quarantine as per NYSDOH guidance, they will receive a mix of synchronous and asynchronous instruction based on the specific circumstances:

- Daniel Warren: Students would have a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning via their Google Classroom. Schedules and assignments will be posted for families to access. Types of instruction may vary based on the number of students quarantined.
- F. E. Bellows: Students would have a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning via their Google Classroom. Schedules and assignments will be posted for families to access. Types of instruction may vary based on the number of students quarantined.
- Middle and high school classes with small numbers of students missing would provide remote access to quarantined students but instruct in an in-person manner. Classes with all or almost all students at home would be instructed in synchronous remote fashion. There may be variations in the degree of synchronous vs. asynchronous instruction based on subject matter (i.e. pottery in art class vs. equations in math class).

Hybrid Plan

Should the NYSDOH or NYSED indicate that increased social distance is a must, it would be possible to return to the two-cohort Hybrid plan used during the 2020-21 school year. In that case, there would be an alphabetical division of our student body to provide consistent days for families followed by the necessary system changes, such as a revised letter day calendar.

Homebound Instruction

Homebound instruction refers to the process in which the district provides instruction to students who are documented as medically unable to come to school. This pre-existed the pandemic and has been used for students hospitalized for physical or mental health reasons, or those who are not ambulatory (e.g. with a severely broken leg).

Homeschooling

Homeschooling refers to the process in which a family chooses to officially withdraw their child/children from school. This pre-existed the pandemic and, while the district must still provide families with the NY State requirements for students to be educated and monitor the process on a regular basis, the actual provision of instruction is the responsibility of the families. Homeschooling will be honored as a family choice, but it is not our preferred method of instruction.

Special Education

Students with disabilities will be ensured equal access to the same opportunities as the general education student population and further, to the greatest extent possible, each student with a disability is provided the special education services identified in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Personal connections and face time between our special education providers and students/families has been strongly encouraged. In order to foster student engagement during remote learning, students' strengths, "voice and choice" of their assignments and ongoing teacher feedback to help students anticipate and be successful on their next steps, have been emphasized. Differentiation of instruction through small groups, increased check-ins and office hours, project based learning addressing real world issues, and professional development through G & R Associates will help improve student ownership of their learning during remote instruction.

The District will utilize the program review meeting or amendment process where circumstances require substantive changes to the student's education placement or accommodations. Related services of speech and language, occupational therapy and physical therapy will occur during this time in person also. If a parent has concerns or questions regarding their child's IEP or 504 plan/service, they should contact their child's supervisory teacher/case coordinator to address their concerns and questions.

The District will continue to use best efforts to ensure that special education evaluations (i.e. initial and re-evaluations) are conducted consistently with state and federal guidance and within required timelines. These evaluations will be done in person. The District will follow protocols for expediting evaluations that were delayed due to COVID-19 related closures, including increased evaluation planning and parent/caregiver participation and agreement.

Parents or guardians of special education students should contact their designated contact person if they have specific questions regarding their child's program or services:

- Michelle Bowman, school psychologist for grades K-1
- Dr. Laura Finkelson, school psychologist for grade 2
- Vanessa Dioguardi, school psychologist for grades 3-5
- Kristina Schlote, Department Chairperson, grades 6-12

English as a New Language

Our ENL staff will continue to complete the ELL identification process as specified in state requirements. Required instructional units of study to all ELLs will be provided based on their most recently measured English language proficiency level. Staff will communicate with parents/guardians of English-language learners in their preferred language and mode.

Staff

Teacher and Principal Evaluation System

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

Certification, Incidental Teaching and Substitute Teaching

All teachers will hold valid and appropriate certificates for teaching assignments, except where otherwise allowable under the Commissioner's regulations (e.g., incidental teaching) or education law.

Key References

- [Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-2022 School Year](#) (August 12, 2021).
- [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#) (August 4, 2021).
- [Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, NYS Department of Health](#) (July 7, 2021) .
- [AAP COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools](#) (August, 2021)
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Additional References

- [Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#) (March 25, 2021).
- [Interim Guidance for Food Services during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#) (June 8, 2021).
- [Interim Guidance for Office-Based Work during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#) (June 8, 2021).
- [State Education Department Issues Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools](#) (July 16, 2020).
- [Interim Guidance for Public Transportation Activities during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#) (June 26, 2020).
- [New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).
- [New York State Education Department Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).
- [State Education Department Presents Framework of Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools](#) (July 13, 2020).
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).
- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration COVID-19 Website](#).