

AUGUST 14, 2020

# RETURN- TO-SCHOOL PLAN



## OVERVIEW

# Reopening Task Force & Guiding Principles

The Spire School Reopening Task Force was formed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The school closed our physical doors on March 13, 2020, resulting in school-wide synchronous remote learning for the duration of the 2019/2020 school year and throughout ESY programming June 29-July 31, 2020. Our reopening task force includes teachers, administrators, health professionals, and operations staff.

Our plans are intended to thoughtfully prepare for various reopening scenarios including:

### **Physical Return:**

All students and staff physically return to school in September following health & safety guidelines and low transmission rates.

### **Remote Learning Return:**

Rather than being physically present, students are taught remotely with synchronous classes in the event of high transmission rates.

### **Hybrid Return:**

A mixture of both in-person and remote learning is ongoing throughout the school day or week based on moderate transmission rates.

### **Guiding Principles:**

1. Health and safety of all members of the community
2. Most up to date research, guidance and practices
3. Maintaining high quality, engaging and developmentally appropriate teaching and learning
4. Supporting the social emotional well being of all members of our community
5. Equity for all of our students

## FALL REOPENING MODEL

### Executive Summary

### **We are planning for a full physical return to school on Tuesday, September 8.**

Protocols will include:

- Physical distancing in classrooms, halls, common spaces, bathrooms, etc.
- Uni-directional hallway traffic patterns
- Signs, floor markings and expectations posted throughout school campus
- Regular hand-washing
- Mask and face coverings for students and teachers
- Plexiglass partitions where appropriate
- Limited shared materials and touch points
- Overflow spaces
- Frequent cleaning and sanitizing
- Restricted visitors and parents in the building
- Restricted cubby and locker use
- Boxed lunches eaten in classrooms
- Additional cohorting of students where possible
- Extended transitions to ensure social distancing and time for cleaning between classes
- Frequent hand washing and sanitizing stations



# FALL REOPENING MODEL

continued

Flexibility will be paramount based on individual student health needs. Our plan takes into account that hybrid classes and remote learning will need to be offered based upon individual student need and community transmission rates.

In the event that the entire school needs to return to distance learning based on guidance from the state, we will do the following:

- Leadership team will work with educational staff to enhance lesson planning, student engagement, and assessment during virtual learning
- Same subject and interdisciplinary co-teaching to be encouraged in order to enhance student motivation
- Faculty will develop extra help sessions for students as needed
- Reinforce proper virtual classroom protocols and expectations, to be communicated by Teachers and Administration (depending on individual student circumstances)

## TEMPORARILY CHOOSING NOT TO PARTICIPATE

Families may choose not to send their students into the school for physical classroom instruction.

Students who opt out of in-person instruction will be able to access live classroom instruction via technology so that all students are receiving education either in-person or via the computer through Google Meet, as facilitated by computer, camera and microphone in the classroom.

Based on our successful remote learning plan last spring, we are confident in our ability to deliver our classroom instruction remotely.

### **IMPORTANT:**

**All parents must inform school leaders in writing of their choice for in-person or full-time remote learning by Friday, August 21. Should the student need to switch (into remote learning or from remote learning to in-person), we require advanced notice for planning purposes.**

# OPERATIONS PLAN

## Facilities

**Classroom Layout:** Social distancing between student desks and workstations will be maximized, achieving 6 feet when feasible, in determining the classroom layout. We have been taking the following steps:

- Measuring classrooms, common areas, etc. to determine number of adults and students in each room with 6 feet social distancing, where possible
- Identifying one way passages in halls where feasible
- Reducing students in multi-stall restrooms
- Marking the floor in high traffic areas to designate social distancing, direction of flow
- Identifying overflow classroom spaces
- Identifying outdoor spaces for classes
- Outdoor space and common areas, such as student lounges, will be used for classrooms as needed

**Reopening Before First Day of Classes:**

- All DPH Cleaning and Disinfecting and Building Water Systems guidelines will be followed
- Teachers will be provided with PPE
- Nurse's office will be equipped with running water
- Two medical isolation rooms have been established
- All building areas will be deep cleaned in preparation for student and staff reentry.
- Four (4) single-stall ADA-compliant bathrooms have been added and multi-stall bathrooms will limit occupancy to allow for greater social distancing

**Signs & Messages:**

- Arrow floor graphics will be installed to alert students and staff of uni-directional traffic flow
- Social distancing "circles" will be installed on the floor to remind students of where to stand (6' apart) as needed
- Signage will be posted in all restrooms reminding students and staff to wash their hands per CDC guidelines
- Signage will be posted throughout the building related to stopping the spread of COVID per CDC guidelines
- Signage posted to clearly mark hand sanitizing stations (entrances/exits/throughout building)

**Ventilation:**

- Ventilation will comply with all DPH requirements
- Please refer to the presentation from Colliers International for more information and specifics

**Training Related to Facilities:**

- We are providing teachers with detailed professional development about health and safety guidelines including social distancing, wearing of masks/shields/face guards, and physically navigating buildings safely
- We will repeat professional development as CDC/DPH/State of CT guidelines change and allow for weekly designated time as needed.
- Two staff members have been designated to serve as trainers in our building
- Students and parents will also be trained on safety protocols, both remotely and in-person
- We are delaying our student return until September 8 to conduct additional staff training and practice protocols prior to having students in the building

# OPERATIONS PLAN

## Facilities (cont.)

### Training Related to Facilities (cont.):

COVID-related Required Professional Development for All Staff will include:

- Social distancing
- Frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer
- Use of face coverings that completely cover the face and nose
- Respiratory and cough etiquette
- Enhanced cleaning/disinfection of surfaces
- Site Specific Professional Development
- Procedures for students and staff to enter and exit the building
- Specific arrival/dismissal protocols
- Procedures for utilizing the restrooms, and demonstrating to students how to utilize the touch-free towel dispensers and toilets to minimize touch of surfaces
- How to minimize high touch in the classrooms by limiting shared resources and materials like calculators, pencils, drawing tools, Chromebooks, stress relief items and surfaces
- How to move through the building to maximize social distancing and respecting the floor mapping which has been provided, even if the walk is a little longer from one point to the other
- How to support social distancing in outside areas by staggering play spaces and activities.

In addition to in-school orientation and training for students starting September 8, we will be creating custom training videos to send to families in advance to familiarize students with the new building and protocols.

### Bathroom Protocols:

- Bathroom cleaning and disinfecting will comply with DPH guidance
- Electric hand dryers will be disabled or eliminated and disposable hand towels will be used instead
- Bathrooms will be assigned to cohorts to reduce number of students using them
- Bathroom cleaning and disinfecting schedule will be increased, following DPH guidance
- Ventilation and fresh air intake will be optimized
- Touch-free paper towel dispensers, faucets, urinals and toilets will be installed as feasible

## DAILY OPERATIONS

- Spire will cohort where possible and limit movement during scheduled passing times. However, given our small class sizes of 4-6 students and highly individualized curriculum, that may not always be possible.
- Water fountains have been replaced with filtered water refill stations.
- Students and staff will be asked to observe a Clean Desk Policy, keeping all desks free of materials when they leave to assist with our ability to clean and sanitize.

## FOOD SERVICE

The Spire School has retained Brock & Co. to provide premier culinary services at our new campus. School lunch will be provided for each student and is included in tuition. As we return to school, lunches will be individually boxed and delivered to classrooms for safety. Parents will receive more information in the coming weeks.

**Note: for the safety of our students and staff, and in-line with our No Visitors Policy, deliveries from GrubHub, Seamless, UberEats, etc. will no longer be allowed.**

# BROCK



## TRANSPORTATION

**As transportation is provided by school districts, we will partner with them to ensure these protocols are being implemented and adhere to them on our shuttle to/from Stamford Train Station.**

### **Low Transmission Risk:**

- Plan to operate at full capacity or close to while maximizing health and safety protocols, as well as considerations outlined in the plan.
- Require passengers to wear a face mask or cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth during transit, prior to boarding the bus, and must be kept in place until they are completely off the bus.
- Passengers should load into the bus from the back row to the front (where the first passengers onto the bus sit in the back row) and then unload the bus in a controlled manner upon arrival at the school from front to back by seat.
- Upon exiting the bus/van/shuttle, students will stand 6 feet apart on marked spaces while waiting to enter the building.
- The dismissal procedure will be staggered to reduce congregation in hallways and entrance ways.

- Increase staff presence for both arrival and departure to enforce social distancing guidelines and assist with student traffic flow to eliminate congregation.
- For parent pick up and drop off, parents will be required to remain in their vehicle.

### **Moderate Transmission Risk:**

This will be the same as Low Risk, with the following changes:

- Plan to operate at significantly reduced capacity while maximizing health and safety protocols, as well as considerations outlined in the plan.
- Bus passengers should be spaced with family members sitting together and non-family members should be spaced 6 feet apart utilizing alternating diagonal seating.

# TRANSPORTATION

## continued

### Moderate Transmission Risk (cont.):

- The dismissal procedure will be staggered to reduce congregation in hallways and entrance ways.
- For parent pick up and drop off, parents will be required to remain in their vehicle.
- Increase staff presence for both arrival and departure to enforce social distancing guidelines and assist with student traffic flow to eliminate congregation.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

### When Students and Staff Must Stay Home

The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at school is for an infected person to isolate themselves from the rest of the school population. Students and staff should stay home if any of the following circumstances apply:

#### 1. Travel Subject to Quarantine:

If you have traveled to any of the states and territories identified in the Connecticut Governor's executive order within two weeks prior to a given school/workday. Students and staff who have traveled to any of the identified states within the past two weeks must quarantine at home and not return to school until the conclusion of the 14 day quarantine. Please refer to <https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus/travel> for the most up-to-date Travel Advisory from the state.

#### 2. Temperature:

If you have a temperature of 100.0-degrees or above in the morning before school. All students and staff must take their temperature at home every morning before coming to school.

#### 3. Symptoms:

If you are exhibiting any signs or symptoms of COVID-19, stay at home and contact your healthcare provider. If you develop COVID-19, you must quarantine as instructed by your health care provider. Please refer to the CDC's list of symptoms.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

#### 4. Contact with Others:

If you have been in close contact with someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19 (closer than 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer). If you have had this type of contact, you must quarantine for 14 days.

#### 5. Positive Test:

If you test positive for COVID-19, even if you are not experiencing symptoms, you must quarantine as instructed by your healthcare provider. The school will establish and regularly reinforce health and safety information, including HIPAA reminders to manage potential misinformation, rumors, and unkind behavior.

### Returning to School after Illness or Quarantine

Any student or staff member who has tested positive for COVID-19, or who has been required to quarantine as provided above, should follow state guidelines from Addendum 5 (<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/COVID19/COVID-19-Resources-for-Families-and-Educators>) prior to returning to school. All testing information will remain strictly confidential.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

continued

## Testing Considerations

If a student or staff member presents with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 at school, they will be asked to contact their healthcare provider and will be strongly encouraged to get tested. Students who test positive for COVID-19 are asked to report the results to the school nurse and school leadership. Staff who test positive for COVID-19 should report the results to human resources. In the event that a positive test result is reported to the school, the school will collaborate with the Stamford Health Department to identify close contacts.

## Student Absences from School Due to Quarantine or Positive COVID-19 Diagnosis

Students who are excluded from school due to exposure to an infected person, or who are out for quarantine, will continue their schoolwork via remote learning so long as they are well enough to do so. Students who are out of school due to illness will be allowed to make up any work missed once their symptoms are resolved.

## Face Coverings and Masks While In School

All individuals entering the school building will be required to wear a face covering. The primary purpose of wearing a face covering is to reduce the number of respiratory droplets released into the air from a person's nose or mouth. Face coverings are an essential element of the measures being taken to control the spread of COVID-19. Face coverings must have multiple layers of material, fit snugly against the side of the face, and allow for breathing without unnecessary restriction. While the school will maintain a limited supply of masks for emergencies and when a mask is damaged at school, staff and students are expected to provide their own face coverings. Face coverings must be worn at all times except when eating and during planned mask breaks. All staff and students are required to wear a mask except for adults and/or children with documented medical conditions that preclude the wearing of a mask or individuals who are unable to remove their own mask.

The school may isolate students and staff who are unable to wear masks. Masks may be made from fabric or may be manufactured paper surgical masks.

Acceptable face masks/coverings include:

- Cloth masks made from cotton synthetic materials. Cloth masks must consist of at least two layers and must be washed before reuse according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Neoprene masks are synthetic. Neoprene masks must be washed before reuse in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Surgical masks are disposable and must be discarded after use or when wet.

**Important: Disposable or reusable face masks with valves filter air being breathed in, but they do not filter air being exhaled. Therefore, masks with valves will not be permitted. Additionally, bandannas and neck gaitors have been found to have limited virus protection in recent studies and will not be permitted.**

For the health and safety of all students and staff, students are required to wear masks at all times except during approved "mask breaks" and when eating or drinking. We recognize that some students may experience challenges in consistent mask-wearing or may inadvertently forget to maintain safe face (nose & mouth) coverage. As we do with all challenging behaviors, we will work with students to develop this new skill in a thoughtful and collaborative manner and partner with parents to achieve this goal. If we are not able to achieve our goal with the student (i.e. the health & safety of students and staff may be impacted or compromised), we may request/direct that a student learn remotely from home on an interim basis and continue to work with the student to master this new skill. Staff who refuse to wear a mask without an acceptable, documented medical reason, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including, termination of employment.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

continued

## Acceptable Face Coverings:



## Unacceptable Face Coverings (Masks with Filters, Bandannas, Gaitors):



## Mask Breaks

Mask breaks will be implemented at all levels, in locations and at times where a minimum distance of six feet can be achieved, preferably outdoors.

# HEALTH MONITORING PLAN

- Provide required "Daily COVID Checklist" to be completed in compliance with HIPAA laws.
- Provide all staff and students access to current CDC/DPH guidelines at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus), [www.portal.ct.gov/dph.com](http://www.portal.ct.gov/dph.com).

## Health Related Input to Decision Making:

- Evan Wyner, Colliers International Project Leader (Facilities Consultant)
- Dr. Todd Palker, M.D., GEG Medical Consultant
- JoAnn Novak, R.N., School Nurse
- World Health Organization
- Connecticut Department of Health
- Center for Disease Control (CDC)
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together (CSDE AAA, 6/29/20)

# HEALTH MONITORING PLAN

## continued

### Protocols for containment and immediate response

- Immediate coordination with the local health department, including being ready to comply with requests for information from the local health department to assist with contact tracing.
- Follow CDC and CSDE guidelines: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).
- There will be two supervised isolation rooms for sick students, one adjacent to the nurse's office and one closer to the main entrance.
- School will work with local health officials to develop and follow procedures for individuals who are ill or are suspected to have been in contact with someone who is affected by COVID-19.

### Safety:

- Each school is required to have the following items:
  - infrared thermometers
  - pulse oximeters
  - face masks
  - plexiglass for office use as needed (nurse, front office)
  - sanitizing stations
  - disinfectant wipes and cleaning materials
  - gloves
  - signage to indicate social distancing procedures

### Response Team:

- Head of School
- Education Director
- School Nurse
- Head Life Coach
- Lead Administrative Coordinators
- School will work with local health officials to develop and follow procedures for individuals who are ill or are suspected to have been in contact with someone who is affected by COVID-19

Develop monitoring and containment protocols, and class cancellation plans, in the event there are public health indicators that may require temporary closure of the building, such as evidence of community transmission in the school.

### Isolation room:

- There will be a supervised isolation room for sick students that is separate from the nurse's office
- Designated supervised isolation room next to the health office equipped with a hand washing station, designated private bathroom and recommended ventilation per CDC/DPH guidelines.
- Designated supervised (second) isolation room close to exit to decrease multiple contamination areas.
- School will follow CDC/DPH recommendations for containment and isolation for suspected COVID.

### Tracking and Hygiene:

Protocols in place for tracking and tracing illness as well as protocols for closing (schools or cohorts) if someone tests positive for COVID-19. Follow recommended cleaning and disinfecting per CDC/DPH guidelines.

# CANCELLATION OF CLASSES, REMOTE LEARNING AND REOPENING PLANS

## **Cancellation of Classes:**

- We will follow the state's DPH guidance on remote vs. in-person learning found here: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/COVID-19/Addendum-4-Interim-Guidance-for-DecisionMaking-Regarding-the-Use-of-InPerson-Hybrid-Blended-or-Remot.pdf>
- In the event of health conditions that warrant a full remote learning model, the school will move immediately to a well-established synchronous remote learning plan as we did in March, 2020.
- Parents and our sending school districts will be notified in writing if/when we make the decision to move to remote learning.
- School Education Director will notify the CSDE regarding decisions to move to remote learning in addition to all school districts.
- School will survey parents and teachers before moving to remote learning to insure they have the proper technology, access to internet, and materials for remote instruction.

## **Future Planning for Remote Learning:**

- Since the School already has experience operating via synchronous, remote learning (March 16, 2020 through end of school year and ESY from June 29- July 31, 2020), we are fully prepared to continue that model if needed.
- This model included a survey of families and staff regarding technology access prior to remote learning in early March which allowed us to proactively provide devices and resources to all parties.
- School surveyed students, teacher, parents, and local district contacts to gather feedback on remote learning in June & July 2020.

- The School created a committee comprised of teachers, administrators, and IT specialists to review our Spring 2020 remote learning model and develop plans for multiple scenarios in 2020-2021.
- We are developing a hybrid model that will allow for students to continue learning in 3 possible scenarios
  - (1) students physically in building
  - (2) students logging in to classes remotely, following school day schedule (synchronous learning)
  - (3) students logging in to learn outside of class time (asynchronous learning)
- At this time, all staff who are providing teaching and related services must do so in school. We will not be allowing an option to teach or provide other services remotely unless the school moves to a fully remote teaching model.
- Teachers will continue to utilize the technology tools at their disposal in Spring 2020 (PowerSchool and Google suite, especially Meet, Classroom, Docs) and will receive more intensive training on additional ways to incorporate these resources as well as other available resources (Google Drawings, Google Jamboard, Kahoot, Quizlet, etc.) into classroom instruction during August professional development.
- Each classroom will be set up with appropriate technology hardware and software to produce quality audio and visual streams of class activities.
- Smartboard, projector, or tv screen for digital whiteboard in as many rooms as possible.
- Visuals of whiteboard and classmates for remote learning participants.

# CANCELLATION OF CLASSES, REMOTE LEARNING AND REOPENING PLANS

continued

## Future Planning for Remote Blended Learning: (cont.)

- Designated student computers for in school and at home use to eliminate spreading germs
- In the event of a full closure of the school building, the school would resume remote instruction as it was conducted in Spring 2020, having received additional training on various tools/software available to the school community.

## ACADEMICS

- During our synchronous Remote Learning Program beginning Mid March and continuing through our 5 Week ESY program, all student IEPs and Learning Plans for parentally placed students were implemented with fidelity including Related Services.

- All students have been placed at our school as the result of a PPT from their home district, been placed privately with Individual Learning Plans or been placed through a coordinated settlement agreement.
- Whether our model is full participation at school, a hybrid model of synchronous and in person learning or fully synchronous remote learning, all IEPs will be implemented with fidelity as we have demonstrated during our Remote Learning Program.
- If a student is experiencing challenges as a result of synchronous remote learning, the student's school team meets to identify areas of concern along with parents (and, if applicable, the partnering school district) to develop a modified program to enhance the student's success.
- All staff will implement the student's IEP or Individual Learning Plans based upon assessment of student's needs, lagging skills, challenges and unsolved problems, understanding that these lagging skills may be part of a larger disability category however not driven by such an identification.
- In preparation for returning to school, we will develop an educational program with the use of videos and in partnership with our parent community to use this as a teaching opportunity for all of our students and based upon their developmental levels.

## ACADEMICS

### continued

- The school will also build in appropriate and safe breaks for students throughout the day to remove masks.
- Our new facility allows sufficient space to implement successful social distancing while also providing ample in-the-moment social coaching by our staff along with our teaching faculty.

## FAMILY AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

### **Social-Emotional Learning and Mental Health:**

- Prepare safe access to counselors as needed to provide clinical services to students.
- Ensure the sanitation and safety of manipulatives and fidgets for student use.
- Prepare additional therapeutic support of students' social/emotional needs through the use of psychoeducational group curriculum.
- Continue to work with families and providers to support social/emotional needs.

### **Social-Emotional Learning and Mental Health: (cont.)**

- Continue to communicate and collaborate with the teaching team to further develop the skills necessary for effectively engaging the student population.
- Students will be organized in small groups and follow safety protocols, including maintaining physical distance from one another when in the classroom.
- Therapeutic groups will be held outside when possible. If a group cannot be held outside, students and instructors will wear masks and maintain appropriate safe, physical distance from one another.
- Therapeutic groups will provide socialization and support for students to process their thoughts and feelings in a safe environment.
- 1:1 counseling sessions will be held in ways that enable authentic connection between the student and the clinician. This includes holding sessions outside when possible, PPE's that allow body language to be seen, and safe physical distance.

### **Student Life:**

- Our after-school programming has been suspended until further notice
- Field trips will be held virtually or in small groups to comply with current health and safety guidelines

# STAFFING AND PERSONNEL

## **Professional Development:**

- Prioritize mandatory training for staff, before the beginning of the school year, that covers:
  - signs and symptoms of COVID-19,
  - Standard Public Health protocols
  - Hygiene Practices
  - PPE
  - Reporting Illnesses
  - Supporting SEL Plan
- Ongoing training will be provided as changes occur in recommendations and public health data.
- We will provide online video tutorials for families and staff which include:
  - Frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer
  - Use of face coverings that completely cover the face and nose
  - Respiratory and cough etiquette
  - Hallway Protocol
  - Social distancing in common spaces
  - Lining Up/Waiting for room to be cleaned
  - Transitions
  - Classroom layout