

Reopening Schools FAQs – as of July 30, 2020

Question/Concern:

Can students choose/create their own hybrid schedule under the current model? (i.e. - some days on campus, some days distance learning)

Response:

Parents can opt for distance learning for their child at any time. That does not mean that parents can create their own hybrid learning meaning sending them to school certain days of the week and not others. If schools are open, a parent has to choose in-person learning or five days a week distance learning. If one chooses distance learning, we will require prior notification (of up to 2 weeks' notice) of intent to return to in person learning so that we may properly plan for a safe return of the student. A separate email and form for voluntary opting into distance learning will be forthcoming.

Question/Concern:

Is it full in-person only or is a hybrid opening possible?

Response:

The State of CT, in their June 29 document to districts, had mandated all schools in CT return to all students 5 days a week. There has been no other option available to us other than 5 days a week in person in the building. With that said, the state has said and our plan states parents may choose to keep their child at home and we will provide distance learning.

As recently as this Monday, the Governor indicated at a press conference there may be flexibility for districts to open in hybrid. The district has now received written guidance from the state about the flexibility option to open in a hybrid to start the year. The Board of Education will be discussing the options at a special meeting next Wednesday, August 5th. You can access a livestream of the meeting at:

- https://www.waterfordschools.org/board_members/meetings/meeting_videos
-

Question/Concern:

What is going to happen with lockdowns and fire drills?

Response:

During on campus learning, our schools will continue with the lockdowns and fire drill requirements as outlined by the State of Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. Any alterations to drills will be made by the State of CT.

Question/Concern:

I am wondering what the distance learning option is going to be? Will it be available through the district or will I be required to home school? If it is the latter what will the requirements be?

Response:

Distance learning will be available for parents who choose to keep their child home. A separate email and guidelines for parents who are considering and ultimately opt for temporary distance learning will be coming out soon. There is some information on distance learning on page 16 of our plan which goes into some detail. Distance learning this year will look different than last spring. We will be aiming for students in distance learning this year to be active participants in live lessons by viewing the active learning board in the classroom and listening to an audio stream of the lesson. Should you wish your child return to the school building there will be a defined process for re-entry so we have time to adequately plan for your child's safe return.

Question/Concern:

What will the sports and extra-curricular activities look like this year?

Response:

The district is following the guidance of the State of Connecticut and the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) for high school sports. All other after school activities are covered on page 46 of the district plan. "The Superintendent of Schools will determine the viability of extra-curricular activities on a case by case basis. This may include full cancellation, virtual or modified in person programs."

Question/Concern:

What will procedures be for passing in the hallways and stairwells?

Response:

Administration is currently working on schedules and layouts to minimize the number of students in hallways and stairwells during passing periods through cohorting and staggered bell schedules. All schools will designate patterns for directional foot-traffic within hallways and stairwells through clearly labeled markings on the floors to minimize face-to-face contact of students. Please see page 36 of the Reopening Plan – Foot Traffic, Hallways, and Shared Areas.

Question/Concern:

What outside medical professional were consulted on the plan?

Response:

Our district reopen plan is based upon the state reopen plan which was a broad-based committee including officials from the CT Department of Public Health. In terms of our local plan, on page 5, our plan has been reviewed by Dr. Ramindra Walia, an MD who is our district medical advisor. It has also been reviewed by officials from the VNA and it is under review by the Director of Ledge Light Health District, Steve Mansfield. Medical experts are important and we will be consulting them regularly throughout the year.

Question/Concern:

If a student was to get sent home sick for the 10-14 days, would he/she be required to make up the work that was missed, would there be a relatively smaller amount, or something else?

Response:

If a student became sick and was required to quarantine at home, the district would provide distance learning for the student at that time. Students will be provided access to instruction through a synchronous audio live stream or video on availability via Zoom. Students will use a learning management system (Google Classroom, See Saw) to access their assignments and assessments. Additional strategies, including hard copy materials, can be considered for those students not meeting with success in the digital format. Please see page 28 of the Reopening Plan – Return to School or Work for information required for students or staff to return to on campus learning.