Connetquot Central School District

Reopening Plan

Update 9/22/2020
Community questions

• Mask Wearing – Why with 6 ft. distancing and barriers - must students continually wear masks? As per the American Academy of Pediatrics: A significant number of individuals with Covid-19 have no symptoms and can transmit the virus through respiratory droplets. These droplets are released when coughing, sneezing, loud speaking, or singing. A mask acts as a barrier and can decrease the number of respiratory droplets released into the air. While it is not a perfect barrier, it is one of the best tools we have to prevent the spread of Covid-19 along with social distancing.

• Why must students wear masks while outside? – SED guidance states that masks should be worn when social distancing cannot be maintained. On our playgrounds, our students are encouraged to play together, which often brings them into close contact with our playground equipment. However, if a student wants a mask break while outside on the playground, seeking out a teacher aide to ensure social distancing during the break is certainly allowable.
Community questions

• Why aren’t all students afforded a mask break?
  • This is what was provided for teacher’s guidance:

  • As you are aware, recommended mask-break protocols have been itemized within the Re-Opening Protocols for In-Person K-12 Instruction Health & safety Protocols 2020-2021, which has been distributed to all employees. It is imperative to direct staff, for purposes of health and safety, that all students are entitled to mask-breaks at a minimum of once an hour at the elementary level, and once a period at the secondary level, as this is not an optional practice.

  • Elementary Schools: The itemized mask-break recommendations referenced in the re-opening packet are appropriate as listed. Please also ensure that mask-breaks are provided when taking an outdoor break, or during recess, if necessary, when students are physically active and in the presence of an aide.

  • Middle Schools: The itemized mask-break recommendations referenced in the re-opening packet are appropriate as listed. Further, additional mask-breaks may be provided during a change of period, when students are seated, or at the teacher’s discretion.

  • High School: The itemized mask-break recommendations referenced in the re-opening packet are appropriate as listed. Please ensure that mask-breaks are provided each period while the students are seated. Note: Please further ensure that all students are permitted to lower their masks for the purpose of sipping water from their personal water bottle while seated at their desks.
Community questions

• Why weren’t boxes of reusable masks distributed to teachers? Everyone who enters the building and/or district transportation must be wearing a mask. Every bus is stocked with a supply for students that may forget their mask.

• Reusable masks in classrooms would only need to be distributed if a student or faculty member’s mask broke or became dirty. They are a back up to the mask that the family has provided. Each teacher has been given a small supply and knows who to contact in their building if they run out of masks.

• What is the ETA on reusable masks? We have a tentative receipt date of Friday, September 25th.

• QR Codes – some parents aren’t filling out the QR codes – SED guidance provides that “multiple avenues of completion must be available and cannot be used as a basis to exclude students from school.” SED further states that screening of students includes a daily temperature check and periodic completion of the questionnaire. All students are temperature checked upon entering the building.
Return to School if a student has been sent home due to COVID symptoms:

- “Responsible Parties must establish protocols and procedures, in consultation with the local health department(s), about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment at school.

- This return to school protocol shall include, at a minimum, documentation from a health care provider following evaluation, negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result, and symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation.”
NYS Department of Health

- Free COVID-19 Screening/Diagnostic
- NYSDOH Guidance 1-888-364-3065
- www.covid19screening.health.ny.gov
Community questions

• Barriers- Cumbersome, students/staff scratched, went to nurse, glare. Secondary level seems to be of the most concern. Is the problem with the sharp clips resolved? How? The vendor is sending employees to the district tomorrow to fix the sharp clip issues by modifying the clips. We anticipate completion in a week due to the number of clips. The vendor is designing a cover to the desk guards so that the student will not have to carry them, and instead carry the cover. As soon as it is in production the district will order.

• Concern about the air flow in the libraries at Sycamore and Duffield. Air conditioning units were installed on Monday, September 14, 2020.

• Students without a device Mr. Mittleman has begun to recollect the devices from our elementary families to redistribute to our secondary families that do not have a device, while we await our order that is still anticipated delivery late September, early October, 2020.
Community questions

- Parents are upset about having to now bring in their personal computers/devices from home since the chrome books are not here yet? What happens if personal devices or computers break while in school etc. Many of our secondary teachers placed Chromebooks on their supply lists or course outlines. The District cannot require parents to purchase such devices. Over the past few years, our District has allowed/encouraged a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) environment at Connetquot High School. This past summer, the District presented a plan, using Smartschools funding, to purchase a device for every student and teacher. The District’s Chromebook order for students in grades 6-12 has not arrived, and the Smartschools application has yet to be reviewed by NYSED. In the meantime, the District will begin collecting the Chromebooks that were loaned to our elementary families this past Spring. These Chromebooks will be distributed to our fully virtually students and secondary hybrid students.

- How will specials run for virtual learning (instrument lessons, etc.) At the secondary level, specials are part of the child’s schedule. The staff is conducting their classes, to the best of their ability, in the same manner for virtual and in-person students. Teachers have been given the authority to modify activities or projects for safety or equipment reasons. For virtual elementary students, the District hired teachers to provide physical education, art, and music. It is part of the student’s class schedule each week.
Community questions

• How will they participate in school events – book fair, picture day? At this time, there are no school events. Events will continue to be reevaluated throughout the school year and based on guidance from NYSED and SCDOH. Schools are currently creating plans for picture day, which will be held outdoors.

• Teachers are not interacting with the at-home kids AT ALL. The kids are being asked to turn off mics AND cameras like they’re not even there. Hybrid kids are at least getting something, fully virtual kids are being completely ignored by most (not all) of the teachers. Students have been in school for nine days. This method of instruction is new for teachers, students, and families. Our teachers are gaining a comfort level with the technology, the method of teaching, and the changes in how the school is organized. The District is continuing to encourage teachers to interact with their virtual students. If parents have concerns regarding their child’s instruction, please contact the department Director/Chairperson or the building Principal.
Community questions

• How is attendance being done virtually? Are virtual children engaged? Attendance is recorded each period or session by the classroom teacher and recorded into eSchool. The District is evaluating and modifying attendance practices for virtual students at the secondary level. Once complete, an update will be provided to teachers from their building administration. Engagement levels of students have varied by course and by level.

• How is gym class doing this virtually - we are hearing kids are being told not to bother logging in for gym. The staff is conducting their classes, to the best of their ability, in the same manner for virtual and in-person students. Teachers have been given the authority to modify activities or projects for safety or equipment reasons. For virtual elementary students, the District hired teachers to provide physical education, art, and music. It is part of the students class schedule each week. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mr. Pete Melore, Director of Physical Education, Health, and Athletics.
Community questions

• Do all students have the Chromebooks they need to be virtual? Are they all able to log in? Who is in charge of the attendance for all these children? How are virtual students getting their materials? The District’s Chromebook order for students in grades 6-12 has not arrived, and the Smartschools application has yet to be reviewed by NYSED. The vendor informed the District that the Chromebooks should arrive in October. Students can log in to their classes from home with any device that connects to WiFi. Attendance is recorded each period or session by the classroom teacher and recorded into eSchool. The District is evaluating and modifying attendance practices for virtual students at the secondary level. Once complete, an update will be provided to teachers from their building administration. Elementary students picked up their materials this past Saturday. For secondary students, their material pickup has been ongoing and is coordinated by the building principals.

• A good amount of kids have two of his periods in a row together. The second teacher has them sit in alpha order which means they have to change desks from their first of the two periods which seems like it may be defeating the purpose. This information was shared with the building administration, and they will follow-up with their staff.
Community questions

- Kids w no lunch and given a study hall was told they had to wait for virtual to come out to get scheduled seat. Not true. They were moved 4 days before school start. For this school year, students are able to eat in a study hall period. Those study halls are generally scheduled in either the Auditorium or LGI. During periods 4, 5, or 6, the building administration has allowed students to use the Auditorium. On a case by case basis, students who choose a full schedule and do not have a scheduled lunch period may eat in a classroom with the approval of that teacher and building administration. If parents have any questions or concerns regarding their child’s schedule, they should contact their child’s guidance counselor and building administration.

- What’s the deal with High School orchestra? My son plays the bass and of course we do not have our own personal instrument. When asked if he could borrow one from the school he was told that he would have to bring it back and forth every day. Really?? A bass back and forth?? I know that the district is still working out the kinks but virtual orchestra class and lessons without an instrument doesn’t work. So far he has logged on daily and listened to chatter among the students for about 15 minutes then told class is over. He wants out but can’t even get an appointment with guidance. Historically, the District supplied an instrument for in-school use and has asked parents to rent an instrument, such as a bass, for the student to keep at home. This year, the District is providing both instruments. Contact Mr. Rockwin, Interim Director of Fine and Performing Arts.
Community questions

• What is the 4th and 5th grade split model? Explain the pros and cons please. The intent of the Re-Opening Plan was to have our elementary students attend school daily in socially distant classrooms. This was accomplished by reducing the class size in all K-5 classrooms. Due to space and fiscal constraints as well as the layout at each elementary school, 4th and 5th-grade sections were split between a teacher and teacher assistant. Over the first nine days of school, the building principals have identified challenges with the model and are working with Central Office to provide meaningful solutions. Several schools will begin piloting alternatives such as broadcasting from their classroom.

• Why weren't teachers contacted as they had been in years past - by mail - to let them know what to do the first few days? Most buildings did send home an opening day packet to teachers. However, the plan for the Superintendent Conference Days and Teacher Orientation Day was sent by Mr. Mittleman electronically on September 1st. This is usually sent to staff much earlier via mail by each building. This year’s program included significantly more professional development offerings over two additional days.
Community questions

• Have teachers been able to collaborate with one another to provide the best possible outcome for the children? In anticipation of the planning and preparation needed this school year, the District offered each teacher two paid hours of curriculum writing that they could use to collaborate with colleagues prior to the start of school on September 2nd. In addition, time was built into each of the Superintendent Conference Days and Teacher Orientation Day for staff to meet either as a grade level or department.

• Have FACS teachers been instructed as to how they can teach their classes? Are they allowed to cook? Yes, they have by Dr. Mary Loesing. For the High School – students are allowed to cook. Students will be as socially distanced as possible, with different students doing different parts of the recipe, and those not actively cooking working on something else at their desks. For the Middle School – teachers can demonstrate a cooking lesson in the classes they push into if they choose. We will periodically review this, with the hope that if the infection rate remains low, we may be able to bring the students to the FACS classrooms for a hands-on lesson once every week. Teachers working with Life Skills students who are in a classroom with cooking facilities can cook with these students.
Community questions

- Do teachers now have the info on students they need as if this were a normal year... info such as reading levels, math levels etc. Due to the closure last school year, State Assessments were canceled, elementary teachers were unable to benchmark students in reading or create and finalize the student’s literacy portfolio. Other benchmarks are incomplete as well. For this school year, in the month of September, teachers will use the Fountas and Pinnell benchmark for reading level. In October, an online adaptive assessment will benchmark students in literacy and mathematics.

- Why can’t kids use lockers? Students may request lockers at our secondary schools. The handles and/or locks will not be sanitized.
Community questions

- Will there be a virtual open house? Yes. Virtual Back to School Night will take place as follows:

  - September 21st Idle Hour
  - September 29th Sycamore
  - October 5th Duffield and Slocum
  - October 6th Cherokee, Bosti, Pearl
  - October 7th OBMS and RMS
  - October 8th Connetquot High School

- Specific building information will be provided by each building principal.
Community questions

- **SAT** –
  - Original discussion with College Board: September 26th could be rescheduled – however, now no firm date from CB.
  - October 3rd test could remain, however, now no firm commitment from CB.

- **PSAT** will be rescheduled for later in the year most likely during a school day, again, no firm commitment from CB.

- **Drivers Education** – All parents/guardians of spring driver’s education students have been notified of the process by the Coordinator of Driver’s Education, Mrs. Cheryl Sosa.
Transportation

- As students are getting used to memorizing bus route numbers and where their bus is located, this continues to improve dismissal at the high school.

- We have expanded the walkway at the high school to allow students to get to their buses promptly.

- Buses arriving at the middle schools continue to improve as the high school’s dismissal influences it.

- Seats are limited to one student per seat unless students are living in the same household.

- **Parent Reminders:**
  - Please ride the bus- an increase in bus ridership will reduce car traffic at the buildings.
Food Service

• MealPlanner App is restored and working on both Apple and Android devices.

• MealPlanner updates:
  • September 25th: parents will be able to order for a meal period for multiple days for the same student in one screen (instead of individual checkouts).
  • October 9th: Student name will be pre-populated (instead of parent name) & removal of additional options for an entrée (the district can only provide one entrée per student).

• Parent Reminders:
  • All orders must be placed in your child’s name.
  • Register each child on Mealplanner.
  • Website is open until 10:00 pm.
  • Gluten free orders must be e-mailed to cmiller@ccsdli.org.
  • Orders consist of one milk, one juice, two sides and one entrée (hot and cold options).
Overcoming the 5 D’s (Jon Gordon)

As a community, we need to overcome the five D’s that breed fear, stress, and anxiety:

• **Doubt** – have faith that your children can do this, and have faith that our teachers will provide the best instruction they can in this new reality.

• **Distortion** – Look for the facts. Call for verification.

• **Division** – there is no us vs. them. Our mission is always to have our students be well-rounded and successful in a safe and nurturing environment.

• **Distraction** – Keep focused on making sure our community is healthy and moving forward academically.

• **Discouragement** – Get through each day. One at a time. We will get through this. This will eventually come to an end, and we will be back to normal.
Help us help you….

Focus on what matters most – our children

We must work together to ensure the mission of our district –

**Ensuring that our students have the best well-rounded education possible**

Call your teacher and/or counselor first, their principal or curriculum director second, Central Office third. Let the person closest to the issue or concern help to solve it.
Patience and Understanding

- Everyone is anxious. Please know that we are all working to make this the best experience for all. It is new for our teachers, our staff, our students, and our community.
- There are likely to be glitches.
- We will work together to fix them.
- Be kind.