

Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District

Reopening Plan for the 2021-2022 School Year

1. Calendar

Per DESE guidance on May 27, 2021 all districts and schools will be required to be in-person, full-time, five days a week for the 21/22 school year. During the 21/22 school year, full-time remote learning programs will not count toward structured learning time hours unless specifically previously authorized by DESE.

COVID-19 related absences will be treated consistent with other absences and provide work for students that can be completed while at home.

The first day of school for all students in grades 1-12 is September 1, 2021. Kindergarten screening will take place on September 1, 2021 and September 2, 2021. The first day of school for PreK will be September 7, 2021. The first day of school for kindergarten will be September 8, 2021.

2. Safety Protocols

Social Distancing

Per State guidance, there are no physical distancing requirements for the 21/22 school year, even during meals. However, STGRSD will implement physical distancing to the extent possible. Students at all grade levels will organize by cohorts whenever possible to minimize interaction.

Masking

- In accordance with the DESE Mask Requirement issued on August 25, 2021 public school students (age 5 and above) and staff in all grades are required to wear masks indoors in schools. Masks are not required when outdoors. All visitors are also expected to wear a mask in school buildings.
- On August 30, 2021 the Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School Committee adopted a policy requiring masks for all individuals and on school transportation.
- The types of masks that will be permitted for use include: disposable surgical masks and washable cloth masks (2 layers are most effective).
- Masks that will not be permitted include: bandanas and gator style masks.

- All masks and face coverings worn by students must be school appropriate and will adhere to the STGRSD policy, Code of Dress and Grooming.
- Exceptions to mask/face covering requirements will be made for those for whom it is not possible due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors. Staff seeking an exception should reach out to Anne Larkham, Human Resources Manager. Parents seeking an exception should reach out to the school nurse. School Nurses, in conjunction with the Southwick DPH, will determine accommodations for individual students based on the students' needs and in conjunction with health providers.
- Masks/face coverings should be provided by the student/family, but extra disposable face masks will be made available by the school for students who need them.
- We encourage families to pack an extra reusable face mask for each student daily.
- The district will have available disposable face masks for situations where a mask is soiled or unwearable.
- Staff are welcome to provide their own reusable or cloth face coverings also.
- Face shields and plexiglass barriers are additional possible mitigation strategies but do not replace the requirement of mask/face coverings and do not provide adequate protection when used alone. This standard has also been confirmed by the Town of Southwick Board of Health.
- Students will receive training at the start of the school year in the proper way to put a mask on and take a mask off.
- Positive behavioral interventions, conferencing between families and school administration and progressive discipline will be used to address student non-compliance with the mask policy. Only after these steps are taken may a student be removed from the school building until such time as they can comply with the requirement or the requirement is lifted.
- Mask breaks will occur throughout the day. These breaks will occur when students can be three feet apart and ideally outside or at least with the windows open.
- By federal public order, face mask/covering that covers the nose and mouth is required for all students and staff on school buses.

Hand Washing and Hand Sanitizing

Increased handwashing and hand sanitization is expected, including upon arrival to school and then periodically during the school day

- Students and staff will continue to exercise hand hygiene (handwashing or sanitizing) upon entering the school, before and after eating, before putting on and taking off masks, when using the bathroom, after coughing or sneezing, when using electronic devices or other shared equipment, after discarding a soiled mask and prior to putting a new one on, and before dismissal.
- Handwashing: When handwashing, individuals should use soap and water to wash all surfaces of their hands for at least 20 seconds, wait for visible lather, rinse thoroughly, and dry with an individual disposable towel.
- Hand sanitizing: If handwashing is not feasible, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent ethanol or at least 70 percent isopropanol content will be used. Hand sanitizer should be applied to all surfaces of the hands and in sufficient quantity that it takes 20 seconds of rubbing hands together for the sanitizer to dry. Hand sanitizer will be placed at locations that do not have access to sinks.

Community Daily Symptom Checks

- Daily symptom checks by staff, families and caregivers should take place in order to ensure that students and staff in attendance are symptom free
- Individuals **MUST STAY HOME** if they, or anyone in the home has any of the bolded symptoms listed below (or a combination of any non-bolded symptoms):
- Families can help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 in our school by checking their children daily for any COVID-19 symptoms. Below is the full list of symptoms for which caregivers should monitor their children, and staff should monitor themselves. Unvaccinated individuals and any close contacts presenting these symptoms should contact the school and follow testing and quarantine response protocols. Vaccinated individuals who are not close contacts should follow the testing and quarantine response protocols if they are experiencing symptoms in bold. These individuals may also seek clinical guidance to assess the need for PCR testing if they have other symptoms on this list.
- COVID-19 symptoms list:
 - **Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills**
 - **Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**

- **New loss of taste or smell**
- **Muscle aches or body aches**
- Cough (not due to other known cause)
- Sore throat, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea when in combination with other symptoms
- Headache, when in combination with other symptoms
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms
- Students must be kept home from school if they are sick or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19. In each of these scenarios, the family should notify their school principal that the child will be absent and the reason for the absence. The school nurse will follow-up with the family regarding the child's symptoms. It is important to know that the symptoms of COVID-19 mimic the symptoms of many other illnesses. To protect all students and staff, any symptoms of COVID-19 will be treated as a suspected case until determined otherwise.
- Students who have been instructed to self-isolate or quarantine by their doctor or a local public health official should remain at home and notify the school principal.
- STGRSD will be implementing Test&Stay rapid antigen testing, additional information to follow.

Lunch and Breakfast

- Both breakfast and lunch will be available free of cost to all students during the 2021-2022 school year.
- Breakfast will be available at "Grab and Go" tables located at each school entrance.
- Lunch may be in the classroom or in the cafeteria and students may remain with classroom cohort during lunch
- Three feet or more of distance will be maintained while students eat lunch.

Recess

- Children need to move their bodies and stay physically active. Getting outside for fresh air and movement on a daily basis is important to support physical and mental health. Cohorts may remain separated during recess

times with each cohort having its own assigned recess area. Students should wash or sanitize hands before and after recess.

- During recess students can use traditional recess equipment.
- Playscapes will be used by individual cohorts on a rotating basis with only one class using it at a time. Students will be required to wash or sanitize hands before and after using equipment.

Health Office

- In order to keep students, who need to remove face coverings in order to receive scheduled medical treatments safe, the school nurses need to control the traffic flow of symptomatic students in and out of the Health Office area. Students must be triaged over the phone to limit health office visits to individuals with only valid health concerns for additional treatment in the health office. The use of the phone call will assist the nurses in providing an alternate triage location that the student may need to report to first. Whenever possible the nurse will go to the child and triage the student on site.
- Procedures for the health office will include:
 - hand hygiene protocol entering and leaving the office
 - mandated mask or face coverings
 - maintaining physical distancing
 - visits kept to a brief limited time period
 - no visitors or parent pick-up in the health office
 - visits limited to medically indicated reasons only
- Communication will be sent home to parents explaining how to make an appointment prior to the start of school to bring medication and the health care providers medication order to the school building. Medication drop-off procedures will need to occur outside of the school building with staggered appointment times, parents remaining physically distant, and no medication dropped off by anyone who is ill.
- Per DESE guidance, STGRSD schools will not maintain a dedicated medical waiting room. If an individual is symptomatic on the bus or at school or tests positive for COVID-19 while at school, when feasible they will be in a separate room with the door closed. If a separate room is not available, they must adhere to strict 6 feet of physical distancing until they can go home.

Personal Protective Equipment

- The District will continue to procure the following safety supplies for use throughout the year:
 - Disposable masks for staff
 - Disposable masks for students (at 1 mask per week to supplement masks supplied by parent/guardian)
 - Nitrile and vinyl gloves
 - N95 masks for health and custodial staff
 - Disposable gowns (or substitute), eye protection, and face shields for student programs requiring additional protection
 - Hand sanitizer for wall units and classrooms
 - Electrostatic disinfection devices
 - Disinfection solution and cleaning wipes
- The acquisition of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies will continue to be a challenge for the school system as we will compete with other public-school districts in Massachusetts and throughout the world.

Cleaning and Disinfecting the Building

- All cleaning procedures and protocols are and will continue to be based on guidance from the state.
- Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected daily or more often if possible.
- Powder Mill and Woodland Schools will receive a deep sanitization process one day a week during on-site operations.
- Custodial staff will be using electrostatic disinfection devices to assist in keeping classroom spaces free from germs. Additionally, a hospital-grade disinfectant will be used by custodians. This disinfectant needs to air dry and may leave a feeling of residue on the surface.
- Cleaning supplies will be provided to staff for use on an as needed basis.

Ventilation

- Whenever possible, classroom doors will be kept open to minimize the need for people to touch doorknobs and increase ventilation and windows will be kept open.

Visitors

- Until further notice, STGRSD will not allow visitors on the grounds. Whenever possible meetings and conferences will be held remotely. Fall Parent Teacher Conferences will be held via telephone or Zoom.
- When a child is being picked up, a parent or guardian will be screened outside of the building via camera and intercom and the child will be brought to them.
- Attached is a Visitor COVID-19 Symptom Attestation Form. It should be completed by any visitor/vendor who has a need to enter the building beyond a vestibule. See Appendix 1

3. Test and Stay

For the 2021-22 school year, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has partnered with CIC Health to provide free COVID-19 testing to students, teachers and staff who have been identified as a close contact through school-based contact tracing. Beginning on October 4, 2021, Test&Stay will be available at STGRSD for all students and staff who have a completed consent form.

- Test&Stay is a FREE rapid COVID-19 antigen test that uses a shallow nasal sample collected under the supervision of a school nurse or trained health care provider.
- Test&Stay is a voluntary program that is only available for students and staff that have been identified as school-based close contacts by the district and are not showing symptoms.
- Individuals must have permission from a parent or guardian to participate in Test&Stay.
- Individuals displaying symptoms of COVID-19 are not eligible to participate in Test&Stay.
- The duration of the Test&Stay program is seven (7) days from the date of exposure. Some of these days could be non-school days (i.e., weekends or holidays). Testing is only required on school days, unless the individual participates in school-sponsored sports or extracurricular activities that fall on a non-school day. If the 7th day falls over a non-school day, the individual must be tested on the morning of their return to school.
- For school-sponsored events and sports that take place on non-school days, testing is necessary on those days for close contacts to participate. If these close contacts do not consent to testing, or if specialized home testing kits are not available, individuals may not participate. Coaches and activity advisor will require the results of the test for the student to participate.

- If an individual tests positive for COVID-19 using the rapid antigen test, they will be required to leave campus and stay home pending the results of a PCR test in accordance with quarantine protocols as outlined by the State.
- For individuals to participate in the program, a one time consent form must be completed. Consent forms may be completed at any time.
- Anyone wishing to remove their consent may do so by submitting a request in writing to the school nurse.

4. Quarantine Protocols

All quarantine protocols will be in accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's guidance.