



Our Children, Our School
Our Future

Netcong Elementary School

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2021-2022 School Opening Questions and Answers

I. Communication

Q: How quickly will parents be notified of a positive COVID-19 case in the school?

A: The Netcong School District will follow the same protocols as last year regarding parent/community communication. Parents and students directly impacted by any potential COVID-19 related exposure will be contacted immediately. The entire community will be contacted thereafter.

II. Classroom Environment and Physical Distancing

Q: Will remote learning be an OPTION during the school year?

A: No, remote learning will not be a parental OPTION during the school year. All students are required to attend full-day, in-person instruction. Virtual learning will only be provided when quarantine is required. Information regarding remote learning due to necessary exclusion can be found below.

Q: Will the school district consider returning to an early dismissal schedule to shorten the amount of time students need to wear a mask?

A: No. The New Jersey Department of Education is requiring all school districts to return to full-day, in-person instruction.

Q: Will students be socially distanced in school?

A: Students will be socially distanced to the greatest extent possible. However, an inability to maintain 3 feet of social distance between students will not preclude the full-time opening of the school. Student desks will be arranged in classrooms to avoid face-to-face interactions in close proximity. Grouped seating arrangements will be avoided when group collaboration is not intended or required.

Q: Will students be arranged in cohorts during the school day?

A: Although every attempt will be made to minimize the 'mixing' of student classes during the day, cohorting will not be possible in most situations.

Q: What impact will classes with 'mixed grade levels' have on unvaccinated students? Will an unvaccinated student be at a greater risk?

A: As a PK-8 district, it is understood that most students will not be vaccinated at the start of the school year. During homeroom and other classes in which student grade levels are mixed, grouping of

students will be avoided. Students will remain primarily at their desks during this time, to encourage social distancing.

Q: Will visitors be permitted to enter the school buildings or district offices?

A: Yes, however visitations must be approved by administration and follow Board of Education Policy and Regulation 9150. All visitors must follow all school health guidelines.

III. Masking

Q: Will masks be required for all students and staff regardless of their vaccination status?

A: Yes. As outlined in the Governor's Executive Order 251, issued on August 6, 2021, all students, educators, staff, and visitors will be required to wear face masks indoors for the start of the 2021-22 school year. This is the case for all public, private, and parochial preschool, elementary, and secondary school buildings.

Q: Will masks be required during physical education?

A: Masks will not be required during physical education, aside from when students are entering and exiting the gymnasium and when middle school students are using the locker rooms.

Q: Will students be required to wear a mask when outdoors?

A: No. Students and staff will not be required to wear a mask when outdoors.

Q: Will students be provided with "Mask Breaks?"

A: Opportunities will be provided throughout the day for students to briefly remove masks, in addition to snack time, lunch, physical education and outdoor recess.

Q: Will students with 'medical conditions' be exempt from wearing a mask?

A: If a student has a medical condition that would prevent them from safely wearing a mask, accommodations will be made. However, documentation must be provided and verified by the school district's physician. The student may be required to see the district's physician before accommodations are made. Last school year, all students in preschool through grade 8, even those with significant disabilities, were able to successfully wear a mask throughout the school day.

IV. Student Lunches

Q: Where will students eat lunch?

A: Students will eat lunch in the school cafeteria.

Q: What is the Seamless Summer lunch program?

A: The Seamless Summer Option (SSO) is a program that encourages Public School Districts to provide meals in low-income areas during the school year. During the current health pandemic, the Netcong School District has become eligible for this program and any student interested in receiving a **free** breakfast or lunch will be able to do so each day.

Q: Will students be socially distanced in the cafeteria during lunch?

A: The number of students able to sit at each cafeteria table will be minimized during lunch.

V. Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Q: Will hand sanitizer be available for students?

A: Yes. Students will have access to hand sanitizer and sinks to wash hands throughout the day. Each classroom and the cafeteria will have a hand sanitizer dispenser and students are also encouraged to bring their own.

Q: What additional hygiene instruction and opportunities will be provided during the school day and throughout the school year?

A: Upon the reopening of the school for students in September, the school nurse will provide a handwashing and general hygiene demonstration for all students. In addition, students will be reminded and encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into their elbow.

VI. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow

Q: What is being done to ensure the safety of students and staff at school? Will the District continue to adhere to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures?

A: In addition to following the mask mandate, the Netcong Elementary School Custodial Staff will continue to utilize a schedule for increased cleaning and disinfection. This will include routinely cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects that are frequently touched with an EPA-registered product for use against SARS-CoV-2. If a person exhibits COVID-19 compatible symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19 within 24 hours of being in the school building, facilities staff will use an electrostatic sprayer to apply disinfectant to all surfaces in rooms occupied by the symptomatic individual, in addition to their daily cleaning and disinfection procedures. All indoor facilities have adequate ventilation systems that have been checked by qualified professionals. Filters have been cleaned and replaced, where needed, and air flow will be monitored throughout the school year. Furthermore, all classrooms and office spaces are equipped with CASPR portable indoor air purifiers which provide continuous air and surface disinfection. Teachers and school staff will be encouraged to open windows when safe to do so, and when the weather is appropriate.

VII. Screening, Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff, Exclusion

Q: Will students and staff engage in health screening upon entering the school?

A: No. Although screening by the school will not take place, it is expected that parents will monitor their children for COVID-19 symptoms each day and keep their children home if they are ill. The same expectations apply to school staff.

Q: If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, what will the quarantine procedures be?

A: Currently, the Department of Health (DOH) is still recommending that schools follow the [guidance document](#) issued on March 23, 2021. Quarantine determinations will be based on symptoms, exposure, vaccination status, and by the Regional Transmission Risk Level (CALI Score). The

Netcong School District will consult with the Mount Olive Department of Health regarding quarantine requirements for students and staff.

Q: Is quarantine required for individuals after being identified as a close contact of a COVID POSITIVE individual?

A: As of August 19, 2021, individuals will be required to quarantine after being identified as a ‘close contact.’ The length of quarantine is determined by several factors, including the State CALI report and vaccination status. Minimal quarantine timeframes, as recommended by the DOH are outlined [here](#).

Q: What are the criteria for school closings due to COVID-19 cases in the school?

A: The Department of Health (DOH) provides schools with guidance on COVID-19 cases and potential school closures. School officials will consider the guidance from the DOH and make decisions on a case-by-case basis, always considering the safety of students and staff.

Q: Should the entire school be forced to close, what will happen?

A: As currently outlined in “The Road Forward” document issued by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), days of virtual or remote instruction will count towards the 180-day requirement if the District is forced to close for more than three consecutive days of school. Currently, the first three days WOULD NOT count towards the 180-day requirement.

Q: If a vaccinated student is directly exposed to an individual that tests positive for COVID-19, would their sibling be required to take a COVID-19 test and/or quarantine if they are not vaccinated?

A: No. An individual is only considered a ‘close contact’ if they are directly exposed to an individual who is symptomatic or who tests positive for COVID-19. An individual will not be forced to quarantine or be tested if they are not directly exposed.

Q: Will students and staff be required to quarantine after travel outside of PA, NJ, NY, CT, DE per CDC and NJDOH guidance?

A: Parents and staff are encouraged to refer to the [CDC guidance for domestic travel](#), the [CDC guidance for international travel](#), and any other guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH). However, there is currently no state mandate for travel quarantines.

VIII. Remote Learning Necessary Due to Exclusion

Q: Will there be virtual/remote learning in the case of positive COVID-19 cases in the school? If my child is ill or needs to quarantine, will virtual instruction be provided?

A: Although remote learning is not an **option** for the 2021/22 school year, it may become necessary for individual students, groups of students, or even the entire school to pivot to a virtual learning platform. If individual students are forced to quarantine for any reason, parents must notify the school nurse as soon as possible.

Q: How will remote/virtual instruction be provided in the case of a student quarantine?

A: If it is determined that a student must quarantine due to a legitimate COVID-19 related illness or exposure, accommodations will be determined to provide virtual instruction to the student within 24

hours. Teachers will make parents aware of live streaming options and classwork will be shared using Google Classroom.

Q: What steps will be taken to ensure students are prepared to pivot to a remote learning environment?

A: Students will continue to utilize electronic learning devices (Chromebooks) during the school day, and the platform that teachers use each day will be consistent with what would be used in the case of a pivot to virtual instruction.

Q. Will the Netcong School District provide Chromebooks to students in the case of quarantine or whole school closure?

A: A technology survey was distributed to families to determine the needs of each family. Any child needing to sign out a Chromebook will have the ability to do so. Please contact the main office for more information.

IX. Vaccination

Q: Will all faculty and staff be required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

A: Yes. Governor Murphy announced on Monday, August 23, 2021, that all school staff will be required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine by October 18, 2021, or agree to be tested for COVID-19 once to twice weekly. The district is waiting for more information on this mandate.

Q: Will students be required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, when available to their age groups?

A: No. As of 8/23/2021, there is currently no requirement for students to be vaccinated.

Q: Will routine COVID-19 tests be required for students and/or staff?

A: Routine COVID-19 tests will be required for unvaccinated staff. As of 8/23/2021, COVID-19 tests for students may be required to return to school after situations of illness or exposure. This will be determined case-by-case as many variables can impact the need for a COVID-19 test.

X. Addressing the Social and Emotional Needs of Students

Q: How will the District support students' social emotional needs throughout the school year?

A: The District will continue to implement a multi-tiered system of academic and behavioral supports (RTI) that is responsive to the academic, social, and behavioral needs of students. Our guidance counselor and school psychologist are also available to provide student support, as needed.

XI. Other Questions

Q: Will the school offer extracurricular activities and schedule school trips this year?

A: Yes. After school activities will be available for students. Class trips will also be considered and scheduled when possible. The greatest deterrent to scheduling school trips is the current shortage of school bus drivers.

Q: Will Back to School Night and Parent/Teacher Conferences be in-person or virtual this year?

A: At this time, Back to School Night and fall Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held in person. Additional information is forthcoming.

Q: Will school-wide or grade level assemblies within school hours be organized this year?

A: Yes. Assemblies and other programs will be scheduled and provided. All safety guidelines will be followed.

Q: What happens in the event of inclement weather or a non-COVID-19 related emergency closing.

A: At this time, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) will not approve a whole-school pivot to remote learning due to inclement weather or a non-COVID-19 related closing until the school/District has been forced to close for three consecutive days.