

Steven Rioux, Superintendent of Schools
45 Westminster Road, Canterbury, CT 06331
Phone (860) 546-6950 Fax (860) 546-6423
srioux@canterburypublicschools.org

August 15, 2020

Dear Parents and Community Members,

We hope you were able to manage the widespread power outages last week. This year never stops bringing us surprises.

Since the release of the Canterbury Reopening Plan, the State Department of Education (SDE) has released several updates to its guidance and requirements. As a result, we have made several changes to our plan, which will be outlined in this week's correspondence. It is our expectation to provide further guidance on Friday, August 21.

Canterbury continues to have one of the lowest transmission rates in the state. This is great news for our students and families. The Governor and the SDE are allowing superintendents to determine which reopening model makes the most sense for its community. Canterbury Public Schools will be reopening schools under the hybrid model. We have made a few changes to our hybrid model to better align with surrounding districts and to better meet the needs of our students.

It has been five months since students have left their classrooms. They will be returning to a new environment with new rules and procedures. We believe the hybrid model will allow students and teachers to work through this transition in small groups. The hybrid model will allow for a more nurturing transition, as supporting 10-12 students in a class versus 20+ students provides for a more individualized approach.

It is our intention to return to a full in-person model as quickly as possible, using the established metrics provided by the state. Essentially, if transmission rates remain less than 10 per day in Windham County for a week, we will return to a full in-person model in October.

While not all parents have completed the survey, 80-85% of families have chosen to return to school under the hybrid model. It is our hope as parents better understand what a school day will look like, more families will elect to send their students to school.

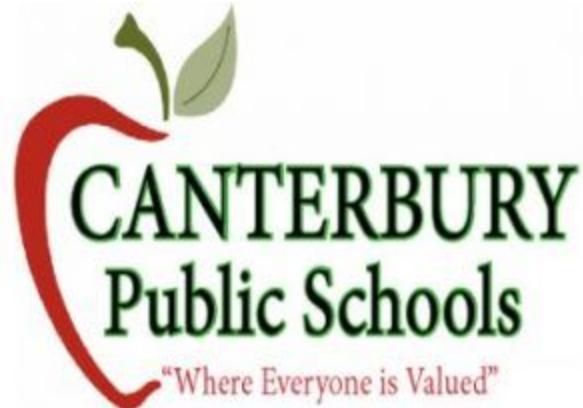
This week there has been a lot of media attention regarding high school sports. While no formal decision has been made regarding middle school sports, it is likely that the fall season will be postponed or canceled all together. We will keep families updated as information becomes available.

Attached to this letter is an overview of the routines and protocols set for the district and each school based on the updated SDE guidance. As a reminder, our planning efforts are very fluid and subject to change at a moment's notice. We want to thank the families in advance for their flexibility and patience. Please note your administrative staff, teachers, and many other staff members are working hard to create the best conditions for learning and safety during this crisis. Working together we will get through this.

In Partnership,

Steven Rioux

Superintendent of Schools



Revised (8/14/20)

Re-Opening Our Schools Plan

SUMMARY

Canterbury Priorities

The Canterbury Public Schools have identified priority areas that must be in place to reopen, including: (1) the safety of the students and staff; (2) the development of appropriate educational opportunities; (3) the awareness of social and emotional well-being of students, families, and staff; and (4) the expectation that all children will achieve at the expected grade level by June 2021.

	Safety of Students and Staff Our schools will be prepared to reinforce healthy practices among our staff and students, take preventative actions to prevent the spread of all respiratory illnesses, and prepare for any potential cases or increased transmission of COVID 19.
	Development of Appropriate Educational Opportunities Our schools will reopen with instructional schedules and model options that are flexible and based on current transmission levels, understanding that we may start the school year with one model, and as new information becomes available about health and safety, may transition to different models.
	Awareness of Social and Emotional Well-Being Our schools will reopen knowing that the COVID-19 pandemic has created different types of traumatic experiences and high levels of stress for many of our staff, students, and families. The pandemic has shown the importance of social/emotional well-being for all. In addition, there is a growing body of research proving that social/emotional learning (SEL) is fundamental to academic success.
	Achievement at Expected Grade Level by June Our schools will consider and solidify a systematic cycle of assessments, including initial screenings and formative and summative assessments in order to inform instruction and gauge student learning. We will work to analyze individual student data to identify shifts and changes in instruction to meet students' needs and implement intervention strategies.

In addition to our own priorities, Canterbury Public Schools are expected to follow the guidelines of the State Department of Education. Below is a link to various resources provided by the SDE.

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/COVID19/COVID-19-Resources-for-Families-and-Educators>

Reopening School Highlights

The following pages include brief updates and highlights from our full reopening plan document, <http://www.canterburypublicschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/REOPENING-OUR-SCH-OOLS-Fall-2020.docx-1.pdf>

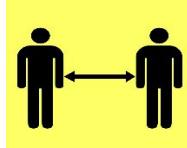
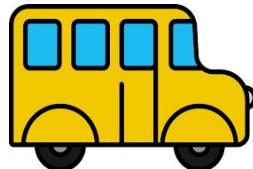


Compliance Liaison: The Superintendent of Schools, Steven Rioux will serve as the District Health & Safety Compliance Liaison. He can be reached at 860-546-6950 or by email at srioux@canterburypublicschools.org.

- The District Liaison will engage with students, parents, faculty, staff, and administrators to answer questions about the health & safety requirements set out in this document and address questions about compliance.
- Each school nurse is also available to answer questions:
 - Canterbury Elementary School Nurse, Cassie Stimson
 - Dr. Helen Baldwin Middle School Nurse, Kimberly Jodoin

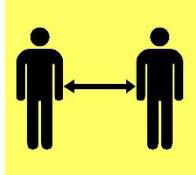
Keeping our schools open...is everyone's responsibility!

Canterbury Student Expectations

	<p>Stay home if feeling ill. Students must stay home if they are feeling sick, have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19.</p>
	<p>Morning health check by parents required. In order to prevent transmission among the school population, parents are instructed to screen students before leaving for school. Check to ensure temperature is below 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit and observe for symptoms associated with COVID 19 outlined by public health officials.</p>
	<p>Face coverings or masks required. Students must wear face coverings or masks that completely cover the nose and mouth while inside the school and on the bus, with exceptions only for those students for whom it is not safe to do so due to medical conditions. "Mask Breaks" will be provided during the day. Parents will be responsible for providing students with face coverings or masks. Schools will have backup disposable masks available for students who forget them.</p>
	<p>Physical distancing required. Students must maintain physical distancing to the greatest extent possible. Students are expected to practice physical distancing when entering and exiting the building, in classrooms, and moving throughout the school. Sharing of school supplies and materials will not be allowed.</p>
	<p>Frequent hand washing or hand sanitizing expected. Students must engage in frequent hand washing or sanitizing upon arrival, before and after meals, after bathroom use, and after coughing or sneezing.</p>
	<p>Students may not change buses. Students will be expected to ride the same bus to school in the morning and the same bus to home in the afternoon every day. Face coverings or masks must be in place prior to entering the bus.</p> <p><i>Parents are strongly urged to drive their children to school each day.</i></p>

Keeping our schools open...is everyone's responsibility!

Canterbury Adult Expectations

	<p>Stay home if feeling ill. Teachers, staff, and volunteers must stay home if they are feeling sick, have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19.</p>
	<p>Morning self-screening required. In order to prevent transmission among the school population, teachers, staff, and volunteers are instructed to self-screen before leaving for school. Check to ensure temperature is below 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit and observe for symptoms associated with COVID 19 outlined by public health officials.</p>
	<p>Face coverings or masks required. Teachers, staff, and volunteers must wear face coverings or masks that completely cover the nose and mouth while inside the school, with exceptions only for those for whom it is not safe to do so due to medical conditions. "Mask Breaks" will be provided during the day. Teachers will be allowed to remove masks during direct instruction with permission and greater physical distancing. Schools will have backup disposable masks available for teachers, staff, and volunteers.</p>
	<p>Physical distancing required. Teachers, staff, and volunteers must maintain physical distancing to the greatest extent possible.</p>
	<p>Frequent hand washing or hand sanitizing expected. Teachers, staff, and volunteers and staff must engage in frequent hand washing or sanitizing upon arrival, before and after meals, after bathroom use, and after coughing or sneezing.</p>

HYBRID LEARNING MODEL

The Hybrid Model is intended to reduce the number of students in school. In general, students will be provided direct instruction at school two days a week. When students are not in school, they are working at home with materials provided from the teacher and school. Students will be provided with three days of learning activities to be completed from home. These learning activities will include, video based learning, non-screen time activities, and at times, direct virtual instruction.

The following table is an example of our revised hybrid model. Students will be placed in two cohorts. Cohort A will attend school on Monday and Tuesday. Cohort B will attend school on Thursday and Friday. Wednesday is identified as a flex-day or remote learning day for all. More details about the flex day will be forthcoming soon.

A-B Days (Students go to school on alternate days)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Student Group A 50% of Students in school	Student Group A 50% of Students in school	A & B Groups Remote Learning	Student Group B 50% of Students in school	Student Group B 50% of Students in school

Please note, area superintendents have agreed to group students based on their last name. Families who have children with different last names will be placed in the same cohort. The primary goal of beginning the school year in a hybrid model is to reduce class size. In order to ensure all classes are equally balanced, there will be few (if any) exceptions in changing cohorts or classes. Please understand, this is a difficult task with many variables.

Administration continues to work on specific details as they relate to the delivery of instruction in a Remote Learning environment. Designing an effective model to support students, while utilizing our existing staff, will require that the district knows which families will select the Full Remote Model, Hybrid Model, or Homeschooling.

If you have not completed the survey, please do so as soon as possible.

<https://tinyurl.com/y64jjeuk>

Dr. Helen Baldwin Middle School Day Overview

In-School Schedule:

Day One:	
8:00-8:25 AM	Arrival of buses and students 5-8 by family transportation Students will report directly to classrooms; no morning recess as a school.
8:30-9:30 AM (Mask Break from 9:00-9:05)	7/8 Grade- Academic Time 5/6 Grade- Academic Time
9:37 AM-10:37 (Mask Break from 10:10-10:15)	7/8 Grade- Academic Time 5/6 Grade- Unified Arts (Specials)
10:45-11:45 (Mask Break from 11:15-11:20)	7/8 Grade- Unified Arts (Specials) 5/6 Grade- Academic Time
11:50-12:45	Lunch and Recess. One grade per day will eat in the cafeteria, to allow appropriate socialization while maintaining physical distancing requirements. During recess, students will be expected to maintain physical distancing.
12:50-1:50 (Mask Break from 1:20-1:25)	7/8 Grade- Academic Time 5/6 Grade- Unified Arts (Specials)
1:55-2:55 (Mask Break from 2:25-2:30)	7/8 Grade- Unified Arts (Specials) 5/6 Grade- Academic Time
3:00 PM	Parent Pick-up begins
3:05 PM	Bus dismissal begins

Day Two:	
8:00-8:25 AM	Arrival of buses and students 5-8 by family transportation Students will report directly to classrooms; no morning recess as a school
8:30-9:30 AM (Mask Break from 9:00-9:05)	7/8 Grade- Academic Time 5/6 Grade- Academic Time
9:37 AM-10:37 (Mask Break from 10:10-10:15)	7/8 Grade- Academic Time 5/6 Grade- Unified Arts (Specials)
10:45-11:45 (Mask Break from 11:15-11:20)	7/8 Grade- Unified Arts (Specials) 5/6 Grade- Academic Time
11:50-12:45	Lunch and Recess. One grade per day will eat in the cafeteria, to allow appropriate socialization while maintaining physical distancing requirements. During recess, students will be expected to maintain physical distancing.
12:50-1:50 (Mask Break from 1:20-1:25)	7/8 Grade- Academic Time 5/6 Grade- Academic Time
1:55-2:55 (Mask Break from 2:25-2:30)	All Grades- Students meet with their homeroom teacher for social emotional support and to prepare for remote learning.
3:00 PM	Parent Pick-up begins
3:05 PM	Bus dismissal begins

*Schedule subject to revision

Changes to Specials:

Students will travel to their specials' classrooms, to receive their Unified Arts education. Unified Arts teachers will provide educational opportunities that follow all of the same safety guidelines as core content area teachers. PE class will be held outside as often as possible.

Breakfast Expectations

Students who purchase breakfast will head directly to the cafeteria down the stairs next to the main office. Students will purchase their breakfast and then, using the stairs directly across from the counseling office, head directly to their first period class to eat. Students must respect physical distancing guidelines at all times, both on their way to and from the cafeteria as well as while waiting in line to purchase breakfast.

Lunch Expectations

During their lunch period, students who purchase lunch will head directly to the cafeteria down the stairs next to the main office. Students will purchase their meal and then, using the stairs directly across from the counseling office, head directly to the next class that is on their schedule, to eat their food. Students must respect physical distancing guidelines at all times, both on their way to and from the cafeteria as well as while waiting in line to purchase breakfast.

Every day, one grade-level will eat in the cafeteria, to allow for appropriate socialization, while also respecting physical distancing requirements.

Recess Expectations

During outdoor recess, students are expected to follow physical distancing guidelines. Staff will be assigned to recess duty to ensure that students are following all required protocols. Certain games that have been deemed “low-risk” by the state of Connecticut, such as soccer, will be permitted. Students will be allowed to remove masks outdoors, only if maintaining 6 feet from one another.

Mask Wearing

Students must wear masks at all times while in the school building, with special attention to high-traffic areas such as the hallway. The only exception to mask wearing is an official letter of excusal from a licensed physician. Students who refuse to wear masks or who attempt to take their mask off inappropriately will be warned by the staff. Repeated refusal or inappropriate mask behavior will result in disciplinary action.

Mask Breaks

Staff will build in mask breaks at a minimum of 5 minutes per academic period. Staff may identify additional time periods during their class where they feel it is appropriate for students to remove their masks for a brief break.

Hallway Transitions

Students are expected to travel single-file, on the right-hand side of the hallway. (See attached photo). Students should maintain appropriate physical distancing, and should safely walk directly from one classroom to the next, without stopping at lockers, bathrooms, or fountains.

Bathroom Breaks

Students will have opportunities to use the bathroom as needed. Students must wear their mask while heading to and being in the bathrooms. Certain stalls and toilets have been closed in order to ensure safe physical distancing protocols; however, students must follow physical distancing protocols while washing their hands and while entering and exiting the bathrooms.

Use of Water Fountains and Water bottles

Water fountains are closed for direct drinking. Students in-need of a drink should bring a water bottle from home. They will have access to the bottle-filling capabilities of the water fountains around the school building.

Arrival Protocols

Students who ride the bus will head directly from their bus into the school building. Once in the hallways, they will walk single-file directly to their first-period classroom, ensuring that they follow all physical distancing requirements.

Students who are dropped off by parents will enter through the appropriate parent drop-off entrance. Once in the hallways, they will walk single-file directly to their first-period classroom, ensuring that they follow all physical distancing requirements.

Any student who purchases school breakfast will head directly to the cafeteria (See breakfast expectations above) before heading to their first-period class.

Dismissal Protocols

Dismissal will begin promptly at 3:00 PM. Parents with children in both CES and DHBMS are encouraged to pick up at CES first, to alleviate traffic congestion with buses. Grades 5 and 6 parents will pick their child(ren) up in the parking lot in front of the district offices. Grades 7 and 8 parents will pick their child(ren) up in the parking lot in front of the art room. No parent shall, at any time, pass buses that have their red, blinking stop signs out and that are actively loading students. More specific protocols around parent pickups will be forthcoming.

Main Office Protocols (visitors)

At this time, Baldwin Middle School is closed to visitors or volunteers who are not directly related to the curriculum. If parents need to complete paperwork, they will be allowed into a secondary office space, where they will be accommodated by office staff.

Canterbury Elementary School Day Overview

CES Master Schedule-Hybrid Model Grades K-4

8:00-8:20 AM	Arrival of buses and students K-4 by family transportation
	Students will report directly to classrooms; no morning recess as a school
8:20-9:00 AM	Students in classrooms with teacher and classroom cohort Activities focused on social emotional health such morning meetings Daily planning activities such as attendance and lunch
9:00 AM-11 AM	Academic Time in classrooms Mask breaks at least every hour Opportunity for outside breaks as classroom as needed Specials, Grade 4 9:00 am Specials, Grade 3 10:00 am
11:00 – 1 pm	Lunch across the building; mostly in classrooms to start with opportunities to be in the cafeteria available after the first few weeks Mask breaks at least once an hour Opportunities for outside breaks as needed Academic time when not at lunch or recess Specials, Grade 1 12 pm
Recess	Recess will be conducted by each classroom teacher Outside areas will be marked and ready for classroom cohorts Recess time will be at least 30 minutes a day Teachers will have the flexibility to take breaks for their students as needed
1:00 – 2:45 pm	Academic Time Mask breaks at least once an hour Specials, 1 pm Grade K Specials, 2 pm Grade 2
2:45-3:10 PM	Classroom meetings; check in with students with a social emotional focus; clarification of assignments and expectations for remote work reviewed

2:50 PM	PK Dismissal (families dismissed together)
3:00 PM	K dismissal (families dismissed together)
3:05 PM	School dismissal begins; parent pick up Grades 1-4
3:20	Bus dismissal after Baldwin in the circle

Preschool Expectations

We are preparing a separate letter for PK families since the expectations are slightly different because of Office of Early Childhood guidance. PK students will attend school 4 days a week in half day sessions, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. See below for session times.

Preschool

8:30 - 11:00 AM Morning session
 12:15 - 2:45 PM Afternoon session

Changes to Specials

Students will continue to have access to our special teachers, but the model of delivery will be different. Each child will have one special every day.

Breakfast Expectations

Students will still be able to get breakfast at CES. They will eat breakfast in their classrooms to begin the year.

Lunch Expectations

We will continue to offer a variety of foods to students. We will start the year with students eating in their classrooms and increase access to the cafeteria setting after the first few weeks.

Recess Expectations

Students will go to recess as a classroom and not as a grade level. Teachers will have the opportunity to take extra breaks as needed. Outside areas will be designated and marks to promote physical activity while remaining physically distant.

Mask Wearing

All staff will be required to wear masks. All students will be required to wear masks, except for PK while in their classroom. PK students will wear masks while transitioning in the hallways.

Mask Breaks

All students and staff will need mask breaks and we will plan for these breaks as part of our daily schedule and give more breaks, as needed. It is required that there is a mask break at least once an hour.

Masks may not be worn outside, but one way traffic in outdoor areas will be taught and all physical distancing measures will be supervised.

Hallway Transitions

All staff and students will wear masks in the hallways and maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet. The hallways will be marked to assist students with this new routine.

Bathroom Breaks

Students will continue to have access to the bathroom in their classrooms. Bathroom breaks have always been available to students as needed and that will continue to be true.

Use of Water Fountains and Water bottles

All water fountains will be closed except for the one in the cafeteria which allows students to fill water bottles. Families are encouraged to send water bottles however other beverages are not recommended. Water only please.

Arrival Protocols

Students will arrive via the buses and enter through the main entrance, walking directly to their classrooms. Students arriving through family transport will be dropped off by the gymnasium entrance and will enter the building through that entrance. Students will walk directly to their classroom.

Dismissal Protocols

Parent pick up will occur on the circle at specific times, starting with PK. Families will be dismissed together. So if a PK student has siblings in Grades 2 and 4, all members of the family will be dismissed at the same time. We will start with PK, then K, and then the rest of the building as has been our practice in recent years. Students will remain in their classrooms until their bus is called and then they will report to the foyer and then on to the bus. More specific details to follow to families.

Main Office Protocols (visitors)

The office will respond to visitors promptly to take care of needs. Covered outside space will be provided for filling out paperwork and leaving items. Meetings such as PPTs and SAT will be conducted remotely. Staff will sign out children after verifying the adult picking up and bringing the child to the front door for dismissal. Conversely, staff will sign in students upon arrival and meet families at the front door so that the students may enter and go to class with a pass. As needed, we will allow visitors into the building in a limited and case by case basis.

Special Education Updates

Planning and PLacement Team Meetings

PPTs will be mostly virtual in order to minimize the number of visitors to the schools. If families or students feel strongly that we need to meet in person, we will make all attempts to accommodate that request by reserving a space to ensure physical distancing can take place. Meeting in person will be considered if a compelling need presents, but may take additional planning time to secure an adequate space.

Additional PPE for Speech and Emotional Support

In addition to the traditional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that was ordered (i.e., masks and gloves), plexiglass shields and see-through masks have been secured to allow speech pathologists, those providing counseling services, and those supporting our children with sensitive emotional needs to enhance interactions through use of facial expressions and facial cueing. The additional PPE equipment will also allow for evaluations to be completed with an added barrier of protection in the one-on-one scenario.

Social Emotional Screener

The district is taking measures to ensure the social/emotional wellbeing of students. At the start of the school year, parents of every student will receive a questionnaire asking questions about your child's emotional health in general, as a result of the isolation experienced from the pandemic. The questionnaire is ordinarily completed by teachers who know the students well, but since we have not seen your children in over five months, we (in collaboration with the publisher of the questionnaire) are asking parents to complete the questionnaire to help us understand what your child may need in- and out-of-school as we re-enter school.

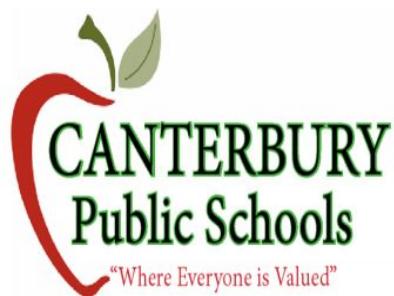
Resocialization with peers is great in many ways, but it may also give rise to anxiety not previously experienced by our children. You will receive more information about the survey when it is sent. The survey is a social emotional learning assessment and is called the DESSA (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment).

Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan

Every student who has an IEP is eligible for a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). We must ensure that every child receives FAPE and LRE which takes a significant amount of skill, creativity, and preparation under typical circumstances. The state has designed a Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan which will be an additional plan for every child who has an IEP that cannot be fully implemented while instruction is delivered in a hybrid or remote model. Your child's case manager will be developing this plan in full communication with parents during our planning days before students arrive in the buildings. You will receive contact from our department to plan further, once staff return.

Meeting the Intensive Needs of Students

The State of Connecticut has updated guidance on which children with IEPs may be eligible for four days of school per week. We are currently going through the criteria for each child who has an IEP and we will offer four days of school only for children who are eligible.



Please note that all plans and items included in this document are subject to change based on requirements and/or advice from the Governor of Connecticut, the Connecticut State Department of Education, and the Northeast District Department of Health.