



The Foundation School
Our Team. Your Child.

Fall Reopening Plan
2020-2021 School Year

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OUR PRIORITIES

The Foundation School plans to reopen for in-person student engagement following these guiding principles:

- Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff;
- Allowing all students the opportunity to return to school full time starting in the fall;
- Monitoring the school, students, and staff and, when necessary, potentially canceling classes in the future to appropriately contain COVID-19 spread; Emphasizing equity, access, and support to the students emerging from this historic disruption;
- Fostering strong two-way communication with partners such as families, educators, and staff; and
- Factoring into decisions about reopening the challenges to the physical safety, social emotional well-being, and the mental health needs of our students when they are not in school.

Fall Reopening Model

The Foundation School is prepared to initiate in-school instruction accessible to all enrolled students beginning August 31, 2020. In the event this date needs to be adjusted for reasons beyond our control, parents, LEAs, and staff will be notified as soon in advance as possible.

Our reopening plan covers three contingencies:

- In-person instruction for all students
- In-person for half the population at a time with remote instruction for the other half Remote instruction for all students.

Each student attending in-person will participate in all specialized instruction and related services as described in their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Community settings stipulated in certain goals and objectives will be taught by staff identified in the IEP but, depending on local conditions, may be addressed at school in simulated settings.

In-person instruction may be halted and replaced by remote learning opportunities, or a blended program incorporating in-person and remote instruction, any time state or local health authorities, the Connecticut State Department of Education, The Foundation School medical advisor or school administration determines it necessary.

Specific strategies to keep students and staff safe and promote learning and well being are detailed below.

Temporarily Choosing Not to Participate

Students who opt out of in-person instruction and therapy will be provided with remote learning opportunities. The instruction may take the form of group or individual instruction via an electronic learning platform - synchronously or asynchronously. To the extent possible, the students' IEPs will be followed and their goals and objectives addressed and instructional time and progress tracked. Students learning from home may also have the opportunity to participate remotely in on-campus classes attended by students in the building. All students will be presumed to be participating in-person unless we are notified otherwise by parent or guardian. Students may opt out, or back in, of in-person or remote learning for non-medical reasons after giving five days notice. Students who have had close contact with others who have been exposed to COVID-19, have symptoms, or have tested positively, may opt for remote learning without notice.

School Liaison, Communications Plans, and Data Collection

The School has designated Michael Nicholson to serve as the COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison. He will act as facilitator of The School ReOpening Committee, and work with teachers, therapists, administrators, students and families to develop and review policies and practices and keep members of the school community informed. He will be responsible for polling staff and families around reopening issues and sharing poll results with those responsible for setting and overseeing school policies. Two to three weeks in advance of our scheduled opening, staff members and students' families will be asked for their decision to attend in-person or participate remotely.

Announcements important for parents issued from the Governor and SDE will be relayed to families through email. The school website home page will feature up-to-date policies and the school's status with respect to opening and closing. Student attendance data for in-person students, and progress logs for remote learners will be maintained and made available to LEAs.\

OPERATIONS PLAN

Facilities

All student spaces in the building will be evaluated for student occupancy based on the ability to distance students at least six feet apart and the capacity of the ventilation system to provide sufficient fresh air. The cafeteria and adjoining recreation area will be considered for their potential as instructional areas along with the gym. Bookshelves, storage and filing cabinets may be moved out of classrooms to increase floor space. Seating available in each area will be limited to the number of students and staff the room can accommodate while observing social distancing. Temporary outdoor protection and seating will be considered to enable students and staff to spend part of the day in the fresh air. A minimum of six feet social distance will be scrupulously maintained when outside, but face mask requirements may be relaxed consistent with CDC guidelines.

The week of August 24-28 is for staff only and will be reserved for training in COVID-19 precautions and procedures, professional development around social and emotional needs of students and technological challenges in remote instruction, planning for hybrid and remote contingencies, cleaning protocols,

hygiene practices, and other topics relevant related to the implementation of our Reopening Plan.

Central Ventilation Systems

The School is following Connecticut Department of Public Health guidance around ventilating all areas of the building including:

- Operating systems for a full week prior the reopening of school
- Applying alternative procedures in our School Security Plan to allow classroom doors to remain open when school is in session
- Flushing the air inside the building for a minimum of two hours prior to occupancy and one hour after occupancy
- Keep the ventilation system running during all hours that the building is occupied
- Running bathroom ventilation fans full-time

Some instructional areas and office space will require passive ventilation (opening of windows) to provide outside air into the classroom or office. These designated areas will have staff assigned to open windows and turn on exhaust fans if available. Administrators have been advised of these areas and will limit occupancy and activities in these areas.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

The School maintenance staff have completed a thoroughly comprehensive cleaning and sanitizing prior to the reopening of school. After we open, they will use CDC approved techniques, cleaners and disinfectants on all contact surfaces, dispose of all trash, launder reusable face masks and other PPE, and all other necessary procedures to prepare the school for students and staff to reenter the next day. During the school day, a staff member will regularly monitor bathrooms and clean commonly touched fixtures such as exterior and bathroom door handles and bathrooms. Weekends provide the opportunity for more rigorous cleaning and In the event we move to a blended model with face-to-face instruction on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, Wednesdays will be used for more intense cleaning and sanitizing also. It is important for each individual staff member to take responsibility for their personal space and objects they handle or touch. Using the cleaners provided in every classroom, teachers should clean their table, desk, and chair, keyboard, and Chromebook as often as needed. In addition, teachers are responsible for

cleaning student work surfaces between classes. To the extent possible, students should have their own educational supplies and equipment, but desks, tables, keyboards and some instructional equipment are handled throughout the day by multiple students and should be sanitized between use employing supplied disinfectant and paper towels.

Finally, students will be asked to participate to the extent of their abilities in the effort to keep themselves and everyone else in school safe. In addition to the basics of social distance and wearing PPE, they will be asked to carry their own supplies and materials, refrain from using items belonging to others, and even clean items they have come in contact with.

Daily Operations

Each of the two units of The Foundation School will begin the school year with a population of approximately 35 students and will function as separate cohorts for the entire school day and students will not interact in person with students from any other program during this time.

After-school social and recreational activities will resume on a limited basis beginning November 2, 2020. Activities will follow all applicable COVID protocols and are be limited to Foundation School students and staff.

Child Nutrition

Orange students will continue to bring lunch from home and eat in designated areas that provide a minimum of six feet of separation between students. Masks may be removed for eating and drinking.

The high school will suspend cafeteria-style serving until further notice. Students are invited to bring lunch from home or order an individually-portioned bag lunch during homeroom. At lunch time, the bag lunch will be delivered to their assigned, socially-distanced lunch seat. An exception for social distance seating at lunch will be allowed for members of the same family. Seating areas for lunch will be expanded to include the cafe and adjacent recreational areas. Cafe II may also be used for up to four students. Outside seating may be available, space and weather permitting. Masks will of necessity be removed when eating and drinking but must be back in place as soon as finished.

Staff members may choose to spend their lunch break in their empty classroom, outdoors, off campus, or in the teachers lunchroom which can accommodate up to four staff members at a time.

OPERATIONS

Transportation

Transportation to and from school will continue to be the responsibility of sending districts per each student's IEP. Students will be expected to follow the protocols stipulated by their district. Exceptions, for wearing face masks for example, need to be worked out with the district or other transportation provider. Parents may elect to drive and/or pick up their student from school following the same procedure on arrival and dismissal as district busses and vans.

In the event a student voluntarily participating in distance learning chooses to return to school full-time, they should give their district and transportation provider sufficient notice for them to resume transporting.

Until further notice, school vehicles will not be used to transport students.

HEALTH PRACTICES AND PROTOCOLS

Education in standard health practices including hand washing, cough and sneeze etiquette and appropriate social distancing will continue to be taught and reinforced at school and remotely.

Social Distancing

Every student instructional seat will be located at least six feet from every other student. Classroom furniture and fixtures may be moved or modified to ensure sufficient space and seat locations will be clearly marked on the floor. Every classroom will have posted the maximum number of students and teachers who can occupy it at any one time. Classes or activities that require increased capacity will be relocated to areas within the school that can safely accommodate their numbers. Transitions between classes will be reduced and staggered when possible, but students will move about the building to get from class to class. Where useful, one-way traffic will be adopted, corridors will be marked with directional lanes and class changes staggered to minimize the number of persons passing at any one time.

Use of Face Coverings, Masks, and Face Shields

It is required that everyone in school wear a mask that covers the mouth and nose. Wearing masks is at least inconvenient for all, and seriously problematic for some, but the expectation is that all students and staff will wear a face mask while indoors at school. The School will provide cloth and disposable masks or individuals are invited to wear a preferred style they bring from home. Regular breaks will be scheduled throughout the day, outside when practical, to give students a safe setting to regularly remove their masks for at least for a brief period. Our experience is that students often exceed expectations around wearing face masks and we will continue to educate them on the why and how of wearing masks and reinforce compliance. Each classroom will contain a supply of disposable, and cloth, facemasks. In the event that a student soils their mask, will have a sanitary method to dispose of paper masks and cache reusable masks until they can be laundered. If, for medical or other reasons, a student is unable, or unwilling to wear a mask in school, he or she may be restricted with respect to access to certain areas, participation in some activities, and interactions with others. Face shields will be available and may be a viable alternative for students unable to wear a mask.

In addition to soap and water available in all bathrooms, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% ethyl alcohol or 70% isopropyl alcohol will be available outside every bathroom and in other locations throughout school. Students will be required to wash or sanitize their hands upon entering school and frequently throughout the school day.

Sharing of materials will be minimized through the purchase of individual supplies and instructional materials where appropriate and increased use of iPads and Chromebooks dedicated to individual students. Where it is not possible to provide individual use equipment - exercise and therapy equipment, computer keyboards, vocational tools and implements for example - items will be put aside after each use and cleaned and disinfected using approved procedures before they will be made available to another student.

A "Health Room" has been identified and will be used in the event a student reports to school with symptoms or develops symptoms while in school. The rooms allows a student to be observed/supervised while remaining isolated from other students while awaiting pick-up.

If a student is isolated in the Health Room awaiting transportation home, one restroom will be designated exclusively for that student and not used by anyone

else until the student has left the building and maintenance staff have cleaned and sanitized the restroom.

Health Monitoring Plan

The School relies on parents to keep their child home from school if they observe or suspect possible signs of Covid-19 including:

- Fever (>99F) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of senses of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Students/families and staff should perform a self-assessment each day prior to leaving for school to identify fever and other possible COVID-19 symptoms. The School will inform parents and staff and regularly remind them of this obligation. Attendance will be monitored and close attention paid to changes in attendance patterns for each student.

At this time The School will not conduct daily temperature screening for students or staff entering the building, but if recommendations from state or local health departments, or our School Medical Advisor change, a contingency plan is in place to screen students and staff when they arrive at school in the morning.

Reporting Illness

Parents and guardians of students, and all staff and students are instructed to inform an adult if they develop any of the same symptoms in school and staff members will be vigilant to observe changes in appearance or behavior in students. That student would be referred immediately to the isolation room where he would be questioned and have his temperature taken. Parents will be called immediately to pick up a child suspected of having symptoms.

If a student, staff member or visitor who has been present in school has a confirmed diagnosis of COVI-19, the Unit Director will contact the COVID-19

Health and Safety Compliance Liaison and the Executive Director. The Foundation School COVID Compliance Officer will notify the local health officials immediately.

Returning to School

A student or staff member who has been in isolation or quarantine with symptoms or a confirmed case of COVID-19 must contact COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison or The School Business Office for clearance prior to returning. Depending on guidance from the local health department and our School Medical Advisor, we may require evidence of two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart and/or clearance from the student's or staff member's health care provider. Details of our Exclusion and Return Policy are available on our website at [COVID-19](#)

In general, a student or staff member may not return to school before:

- At least 14 days since contact with a COVID case

or

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared and

and

- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication and symptoms have improved

Students home with symptoms or diagnosed with COVID-19 are eligible to participate in remote learning opportunities if they are healthy enough to do so.

Containment Plan

The School will notify the local Department of Health without delay in the event a student or a staff member has symptoms at home, in school, or if they tested positive for COVID-19.

Cancellation of Classes, Remote Learning, and Reopening plans

The Foundation School is prepared to modify or cancel in-person instruction when state or local health department or the Connecticut State Department of Education requires us to shift to full-time distance learning. In this case, The School will act immediately to notify parents and guardians of the school closure and provide the information families need to immediately initiate remote instruction.

In the event that circumstances at The Foundation School compel the School Executive Director to consider interrupting in-person instruction The School will notify and consult with the CSDE before cancelling classes. When the decision to cancel classes is made, The School will immediately notify affected families, LEAs, SDE, and the Milford Department of Health. Remote instruction will continue just as with more widespread closures.

If The School's status with respect to in-person or distance learning changes, parents will be notified immediately through our automatic text messaging system, LEAs and SDE will be contacted via email. School staff will be notified through email and/or text message. Direct phone calls will be made to any of the above if there is any doubt about the message being received.

Future Planning for Remote Blended Learning

The School's experience with remote learning for March through July 2020 opened our eyes to the challenges, and at least a few advantages, of teaching students from a distance. Throughout the spring and summer, we learned to better deal with pedagogical, operational, and technological challenges and improve both the quality and quantity of specialized instruction and therapy services we offered our students. The Foundation School is adjusting our 2020-2021 calendar to add three days of professional development and staff planning activities to the beginning of the school year to produce specific plans for blended programming or full-time distance learning. In the event of a school closure for any reason, we will be ready to provide continuity of instruction without interruption.

If circumstances compel us to switch to a blended learning model, we will be prepared to bring all our students into the building for two days per week and provide remote instruction for the other three. Students in the blended program will participate in-person for two days per week - either Monday and Thursday, or Tuesday and Friday. Wednesday will be dedicated to cleaning and sanitizing the

building. Students engaged in the hybrid program will participate remotely on the days they are not in physical attendance. Students already participating full-time in remote learning opportunities will continue to do so, but may have their schedules adjusted.

The Foundation School has ample room to socially distance students and staff even at full attendance. We may be in the position to offer full-time direct programming to all our students even when conditions compel other programs to scale back.

ACADEMICS

Special Education

All Foundation School students qualify for special education services and all placed by LEAs have IEPs in place. With planned full-time engagement in school for most students, we are able to strictly follow IEPs and ensure that IDEA and FAPE and LRE requirements are met. Distance learning for students kept home by their parents for specific reasons, and all students in the event of school closure, will also be subject to the same criteria consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students, as well as those individuals providing specialized instruction and related services to these students. It should be understood when all instruction and therapy is provided remotely, not all services can be provided in the same manner they are typically provided, but we will do our best to maintain the highest standards and operate within the flexibility allowed by federal disability law.

The nature and severity of a student's disability and developmental factors may require unique considerations with respect to requirements such as wearing a mask full-time and maintaining social distance. The school team will work with the student's parents and LEA to make modifications and accommodations that will enable the student to participate and learn while maintaining a safe environment for other students and staff.

English Learners (ELs)

There are currently no ELs enrolled in The Foundation School. If at such time, an EL student is referred and accepted, we will be certain to conform to FAPE and afford all

the rights they are entitled to under The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IV, the Equal Educational opportunities act, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We do have a small number of families more comfortable speaking a language other than English and we use bilingual certified staff to facilitate meetings and ensure they have access to the same information as English speaking families.

FAMILY AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Family Support and Communication

Parents have, and will continue to have, the opportunity to weigh in on their feelings around opening school, wearing PPE, riding the bus and other important issues. During remote learning opportunities, school staff are in contact, usually daily, with families and school administrators provide information and support regularly. The School's website is being revised to make COVID-19 information and updates more easily accessible. The Foundation School Reopening Plan will be posted on the website along with a Q & A or FAQ section to address the most frequently expressed questions and concerns. A follow-up survey will be conducted in August to reassess parents' concerns and willingness to have their child participate in direct instruction when school reopens.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health

In the week teachers are participating in Professional Development and planning for all three levels of student engagement, each student will be considered individually in a group meeting. The members of the team responsible for their remote learning in the spring and summer will summarize their performance, share successful interventions and techniques, and discuss specific challenges and concerns. The School staff will resume daily staff meetings when school reopens. Within the first month of school, each student will be the subject of a meeting that examines all relevant aspects including emotional state, academic achievement, physical well-being, and social behavior. Students suspected of struggling in these or other areas will be given priority.

After-school programming

For the immediate future, all after school and evening social and recreational activities in school will be suspended. In the case of remote instruction, it may be

beneficial in some instances to offer instruction and therapy outside the regular school hours or days.

Career and Technical Education

In cases where it isn't practical to provide individualized tools and equipment, shared items and materials will be cleaned and disinfected as necessary. Until transportation concerns are resolved, and local COVID-19 risk is acceptable, local excursions, community-based work experience and other transition goals and objectives will be addressed on-campus. Opportunities in school will be provided for students to develop the same competencies

STAFFING AND PERSONNEL

Certification and Personnel Planning

As of July 21, 2020, it is not known how many, if any, staff will make the decision not to return to school over COVID-19 concerns. It is conceivable that some number will decline to work directly with students, but ask to continue teaching remotely. Because of the nature of our students' needs and the direct knowledge necessary to engage them successfully, The Foundation School does not employ substitute teachers. And though the exact figure is also unknown, some students will opt to continue remote learning when school reopens. To try to avoid any potential staffing shortage, The School has suspended the intake process and is putting off accepting new students until there is more clarity.

If an employee will not be reporting to work, they should contact the Business Office and follow existing protocols for either requesting an accommodation for a disability, or otherwise requesting changed job duties or authorized leave, consistent with legal requirements and School policy.

The School is considering all the legal requirements related to staff, including but not limited to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Family and Medical Leave Act, Families First Coronavirus Response Act, and Pregnancy Discrimination Act. Any employee request for accommodations will be individually considered.

Professional Development

Mandatory training for staff will take place in the week before students are readmitted in September. Topics will include signs and symptoms of COVID-19, standard public health protocols, hygiene practices, PPE, Reporting Illnesses, and supporting social and emotional learning. Ongoing training will be scheduled as changes in recommendations and public health data become available.

Working cooperatively, the staff will design and implement specialized instruction to help students learn their role in social distancing, cleaning protocols and hygiene practices. Student behavior will be evaluated and support adjusted on an ongoing basis to mitigate sensory issues, increase tolerance and maximize compliance in these areas.

Opening Committee

The Foundation School Opening Committee has been meeting since the spring to address the challenges presented and this plan reflects their input. Michael Nicholson, the LEA COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison chairs that committee with Angela Piccerillo. Other representatives from The Foundation School include Cheryl Ceraso, Dawn Wirtz, Jill Laudati, Jessica Erbis,, Aksana Varapai, Angela Piccerillo, and Nick Huskes. Concerned members of the school community are invited to reach out to any of the above with your concerns and suggestions.

Changes to The The Foundation School Plan

Because conditions relating to COVID-19, state and CDC guidance are constantly evolving, it is expected that this document will change to reflect the necessary modifications and adjustments. The latest version of our Opening Plan is accessible on The School website at: www.foundationschool.org