[Voorheesville Central School](https://www.voorheesville.org/%22%20%5Co%20%22Go%20to%20Voorheesville%20Central%20School.)**>**[About Us](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/)**>**[COVID-19](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/)**> COVID Reopening Plan**

**COVID REOPENING PLAN**

[Introduction](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#intro) | [Communication & Engagement](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#comm) | [Health & Safety](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#health) | [Facilities](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#facilities) | [Child Nutrition](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#nutrition) | [Transportation](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#transportation) | [Social Emotional Well-being](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#wellbeing) | [School Schedules](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#schedules) | [School Activities](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#activities) | [Attendance & Chronic Absenteeism](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#attendance) | [Technology & Connectivity](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#technology) | [Teaching & Learning](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#teaching) | [Special Education](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#speced) | [Bilingual Education & World Languages](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#language) | [Staff](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#staff)

NOTE: If for any reason you have difficulty accessing this plan, please contact the district’s communications specialist.

**Introduction**

On Monday, July 13, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced that school districts in New York can follow plans to reopen for in-person schooling in September. Determinations about opening and closing schools as the COVID-19 pandemic continues will be made based on the state’s micro-cluster strategy in consultation with public health partners.

Determinations will be made by region about opening and closing schools as the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

While districts have been instructed to prioritize efforts to return all students to in-person instruction, the district is also planning for remote/distance learning as well as a hybrid model that combines in-person instruction and remote learning. Parents will always have the choice to remain in the remote learning model. The district is currently developing what the remote learning option for students will look like.  Written requests for **remote learning** may be submitted to the principal of the child’s building by the **end of the business day on August 10th.** Students who are receiving full remote learning will be required to stay in a remote setting for at least 1 trimester for elementary (k-5) students and 1 semester for students 6-12.

The plan outlined here is for the reopening of schools in the Voorheesville Central School District for the 2020-21 school year, following the building closure related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This plan includes procedures that will be followed in the following schools:

**Voorheesville Elementary School**

Principal – Jeffrey Vivenzio
jvivenzio@voorheesville.org
129 Maple Avenue
Voorheesville, NY 12186
Phone: 518-765-2382 Ext. 504
[Voorheesville Elementary School Webpage](https://www.voorheesville.org/voorheesville-elementary/)

**Voorheesville Middle School**

Principal – Jennifer Drautz
jdrautz@voorheesville.org
432 New Salem Road
Voorheesville, NY 12186
Phone: 518-765-3314 Ext. 421
[Voorheesville Middle School Webpage](https://www.voorheesville.org/voorheesville-middle-school/)

**Clayton A. Bouton High School**

Principal – Laura Schmitz
lschmitz@voorheesville.org
432 New Salem Road
Voorheesville, NY 12186
Phone: 518-765-3314 Ext. 209
[Clayton A. Bouton High School Webpage](https://www.voorheesville.org/clayton-a-bouton-high-school/)

The health and safety of our students, our staff and their families is our top priority. We want students and employees to feel comfortable and safe returning to school campuses. Our reopening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html), the [New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH)](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Pre-K_to_Grade_12_Schools_MasterGuidence.pdf) and the [New York State Education Department (NYSED)](http://www.nysed.gov/news/2020/state-education-department-issues-guidance-reopen-new-york-state-schools).

It is possible that we may need to alternate between in-person and remote learning throughout the year due to recommendations and guidance from our partnering agencies, and stay-at-home orders from the Governor. The level of infection, the spread of the virus and response to the disease in our community will be at the forefront of our decision making as we move to open our schools.

**Joe Sapienza** will serve as the district’s COVID-19 Coordinator. Joe Sapienza will work closely with our local health department, medical director, and superintendent. Mr. Sapienza will be responsible for communication regarding health and safety with district administration, school health officials, and families as needed. Mr. Sapienza is the Director of Athletics, Dean of Students, and Department Chair for Health and Physical Education. He will serve as a central contact for schools and stakeholders, families, staff, and other school community members; and will ensure the district is in compliance and following the best practices per state and federal guidelines.

* Mr. Sapienza’s contact information will be posted on the district website in the published COVID-19 Plan,
	+ Building Administrators will share his name, contact information, and duties to community members through SNN and Opening Day Communication Packets
	+ To staff through training and staff emails
	+ To the greater community through website posting, SNN, and communication through community groups (such as the local churches and public library).
* The district will have a COVID-19 hotline for schools, stakeholders, families, staff and other school community members.  **HOTLINE FOR COVID-19 – 518-765-3314 ext.207**
* To email Mr. Sapienza, The COVID-19 Coordinator,  at jsapienza@voorheesville.org

The following reopening plan is not rigid. In fact, the plan is meant to be fluid throughout the pandemic to address changes in guidance from the Governor’s Office, CDC, DOH and to be responsive to student and district needs.  The following plan that has been published as of July 31, 2020, will not be the same plan that is in place a week or month from now.  Like good teaching, you should adapt to the needs of your room.  What is in this plan is what is attainable at the time of publication or what the requirements are at the time.  The district will constantly look at our process and procedures to ensure that all aspects of this plan are at the highest level possible.

[*Top of page*](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#top)

**Communication/Family & Community Engagement**

To help inform our reopening plan, the district has sought feedback and input from stakeholders, including administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/guardians of students, local health department officials and health care providers, employee unions and community groups. Engagement efforts included online surveys, virtual forums/meetings, and one-on-one conversations. The district has also utilized stakeholder meetings and building level sub-group meetings that included administrators, teachers, staff, parents, health officials, students, PTA, and Board Members.

At the publication of the district plan, the district has held a live stream public forum for stakeholders where questions were solicited prior to the evening.  The events were held on July 29, 2020.  The student and parent forums [can be found here and on the district’s YouTube page](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFZwdhGD5abIjj-VO-llmMQ).  The elementary and secondary forums were held on July 29th, 2020, but were not recorded.

The district remains committed to communicating all elements of this reopening plan to students, parents and guardians, staff, and visitors. The plan is available to all stakeholders via the district website and will be updated throughout the school year, as necessary, to respond to local circumstances. The link to the plan appears on the website homepage and every effort has been made to ensure that the plan is accessible to all individuals in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A/AA. The plan can also be translated into other languages, via the G-Translate feature available on the district website.

In support of remote learning and virtual learning, the district will make computer devices available to students and teachers who need them.  If a device is needed, contact your school office.  An arrangement will be made to pick up the device at either of the district campuses.

As part of its planning for the reopening of schools and the new academic year, the district has developed a plan for communicating all necessary information to district staff, students, parents/guardians, visitors and education partners and vendors. The district will use its existing communication channels, including SchoolMessenger, the district website, scheduled community letters, and the text, email, phone system One Call – as well as appropriate signage and training opportunities to support the dissemination of consistent messaging regarding new protocols and procedures, expectations, requirements and options related to school operations throughout the pandemic.

The district is committed to establishing and maintaining regular channels of communication and has reviewed and determined which methods have proven to be the most effective in communications with our school community. The district will rely on building newsletters, electronic messages, the district website, One Call, and mailings to communicate news, requirements and updates related to reopening and in-person instruction.  This will include social distancing requirements, proper wearing of face coverings and proper hand and respiratory hygiene. The district will evaluate the best approach to communicate this information to each student’s age group.  The district will provide multiple opportunities for the school community to review and relearn these policies and procedures. The information that the district will share will be based on state guidance and developed by subcommittees that include health professionals, VCSD staff, the medical director, and the department of health.

The district will use existing internal and external communications channels to notify staff, students and families/caregivers about in-person, remote and hybrid school schedules with as much advance notice as possible.

The district will follow its existing engagement and communication protocols with parents regarding the provision of special education services for their child. Preferred language and mode of communication is usually established during the registration process. If there is an initial preferred language and mode of communication, notification to the special education office will be documented and this information will be shared with staff.  If a family would like to change the preferred language/mode of communication, they should notify their building administrator, who will document and notify the special education department.  Every effort will be made to ensure that communication to parents/legal guardians is in their preferred language and mode of communication. Frequent communication with the parent/legal guardian will be maintained in order to ensure meaningful engagement.

The district is committed to ensuring that all of its students and their families are taught and re-taught new expectations related to all public health policies and protocols. As part of this continuous training, the district will assess the best approach to communicating the information for each students’ age group and will provide frequent opportunities for students to review and practice these policies and protocols. This targeted education will help ensure that all students and their families know what is expected of them as they successfully return to the school setting. These trainings will cover:

Hand hygiene:

* Video training for staff, students, and parents/guardians will be provided prior to school and during the first day of school.
* There will be a video on hygiene along with a quick guide sheet that will be communicated through building communications, School News Notifier, and will be accessible through each building’s homepage on the district website.
* Signage will be prominently displayed throughout all district building’s hallways and restrooms.
* Hand Sanitizer will be located at each entrance point and frequent traffic areas.
* Additional receptacles will be located in common areas and restrooms to collect soiled items.

Proper face covering procedures:

* Face coverings will be required on buses and within all district facilities.
* Face coverings will be provided to students and staff, if needed.
* Training will be provided on proper face covering procedures and will include how to wear and how to remove.
* Face coverings for Covid-19 include but are not limited to: cloth and  paper mask coverings that cover both the mouth and nose.
* Video training for staff, students, and parents/guardians along with a quick guide sheet that will be communicated through building level communications, School News Notifier, and will be available through each building’s home page on the district’s website.
* Signage will be prominently displayed in district hallways, and classrooms

Social distancing:

* Arrival and dismissal entrances and exits will be assigned by grade level.
* For in-person learning, master schedules are being designed for minimal and staggered transitions wherever possible.
* The district will use a push for staffing to limit the amount of interactions between individuals.
* Classrooms will have signage indicating each room’s maximum occupancy.
* School corridors will have one way traffic patterns, when possible,  and signage will be displayed in multiple locations delineating those patterns.

Respiratory hygiene:

* The district will develop in-person and video training for staff, students, staff, and parents/guardians.
* A quick guide sheet will be developed and shared through building communications, School News Notifier, and will be accessible through the building’s home page on the district’s website.
* Signage will be displayed prominently throughout district hallways

Identifying symptoms:

* Parents/Guardians, staff and students will be informed via video training, School News Notifier, and quick guide documents made available through each building’s website homepage to educate them about a careful observation of symptoms of Covid-19.
* Parents/Guardians will be instructed that any student with a fever of 100.0 F or greater and/or symptoms of Covid-19 will not be allowed present in school.

Most common symptoms of COVID 19 are:

* Fever or chills (temperature above 100.0 F)
* Cough
* Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
* Fatigue
* Muscle or body aches
* Headache
* New loss of taste or smell
* Sore throat
* Congestion or runny nose
* Nausea or vomiting
* Diarrhea

The district will create and deploy signage throughout the district to address public health protections surrounding COVID-19. Signage will address protocols and recommendations in the following areas:

* Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
* Acceptable face coverings and requirements related to their wear
* Hand washing
* Adherence to social distancing instructions

Symptoms/prevention of COVID-19

In addition to signage, the district will encourage all students, faculty, staff and visitors through verbal and written communication to adhere to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE through additional means such as School News Notifier, Principal’s newsletters and weekly correspondence methods.

The district is committed to creating a learning environment that protects student and staff health, safety and privacy. Our district will operate under a standard procedure for addressing situations in which an individual has tested positive for COVID-19 or appears symptomatic. These procedures are outlined in the Health & Safety section of our reopening plan.

In the event that a student or staff member is sick or symptomatic, notification to exposed individuals will occur pursuant to the state’s contact tracing protocols as implemented by the local health department. The district will not notify the wider community unless specifically directed to do so by local health officials.

**School Closures**

The district is preparing for situations in which one or more school buildings need to close due to a significant number of students or staff testing positive for COVID-19 or a considerable regional increase in COVID-19 cases.

VCSD will work closely with the Albany County Department of Health to gather the most up to date testing data and communication.  The district will consult with the district’s Medical Director for medical/scientific guidance.  VCSD has developed procedures to monitor absentee rates, the district’s daily health questionnaire and increased levels of positive COVID-19 tests.  All data points will be reviewed in order to make sound decisions of closure.

The district may choose to modify operations in one or more schools prior to closing to help mitigate a rise in cases. The district will consult **Access Health Systems** when making such decisions.

School building administrators will communicate with each other regularly and, if needed, will consider closing school if absentee rates impact the ability of the school to operate safely. Under the current reopening plan only extra curricular activities that can be run virtually will resume. Authorization to run a virtual extracurricular club or activity must be given by the building principal. The district is prepared to resume all online synchronous learning in the event of a closure.

If, after consultation with the Albany County Department of Health, school closure is deemed necessary, or after reviewing data, the district must move to remote for a short time for full sanitization of the buildings, the district will notify all parents as soon as possible via OneCall and SNN so that families may plan accordingly.

[*Top of page*](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#top)

**Health & Safety**

The health and safety of our students, our staff and their families is our top priority. We want students and employees to feel comfortable and safe returning to school campuses. Our reopening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html), the [New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH)](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Pre-K_to_Grade_12_Schools_MasterGuidence.pdf) and the [New York State Education Department (NYSED)](http://www.nysed.gov/news/2020/state-education-department-issues-guidance-reopen-new-york-state-schools).

The following protocols and procedures will be in place in all district schools for the 2020-21 school year should in-person schooling resume. Anyone with questions or concerns should contact our COVID-19 safety coordinator at jsapienza@voorheesville.org or **HOTLINE FOR COVID-19 – 518-765-3314 ext.207**

For more information about how health and safety protocols and training will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit the [Communication/Family and Community Engagement section](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#comm) of our reopening plan.

**Travel and Quarantine**

Consistent with recent CDC guidance, asymptomatic individuals who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 do not need to quarantine during the first 3 months after full vaccination, if the following criteria are met:

* Are fully vaccinated (i.e., ≥2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2- dose series, or ≥2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine); **AND**
* Are within 3 months following receipt of the last dose in the series; **AND**
* Have remained asymptomatic since last COVID-19 exposure.

* Teachers, school employees, and child care workers must quarantine for a minimum of 3 days after returning to New York from a non-contiguous state due to the nature of education and child care services, and the risk and difficulty of adherence to the guidelines that govern such exemptions, and must be tested on day 4 after arriving, pursuant to EO 205.2. Although such workers are essential, the travel advisory exemption for essential workers does not apply to teachers, school employees, or child care workers, due to the sensitivity of these congregate settings, unless they are fully vaccinated.

**Health Checks**

The district has developed resources to educate parents/guardians and staff members regarding the careful observation of symptoms of COVID-19 and health screening measures that must be conducted each morning before coming to school. The resources include the requirement for any student or staff member with a fever of 100°F or greater and/or symptoms of possible COVID-19 virus infection to not come to school. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [list of Coronavirus symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html) was used to develop these resources.

The Voorheesville Central School District will implement the following practices to conduct mandated health screening:

* The District is utilizing a computer based electronic survey that staff and students (parents/guardians) and visitors must attest to and complete prior to entering any of the district buildings. The survey can be found on the district website under staffing.  The application that must be filled out and submitted can be found here: <https://entry.neric.org/vcsd>. Families, students, and staff are encouraged to bookmark or move the application to your homepage for easy access. If after the completion of the survey, you are deemed not able to enter the building or proceed for regular attendance, the attendance secretary or building administrator must be notified.
* If students or staff do not have the ability to complete an at home screening at home through electronic means, they are asked to call the building office with their health affirmation or complete a paper affirmation and send it to the school with their student.
* In the event that groups forget to do the survey, or do not have internet access at home, the following procedures will be followed. The district will do an initial survey to identify families who may not be able to complete the survey each day.  Students who do not do the survey prior to arrival will be identified and will report to a confidential screening location to complete a paper copy of the survey under trained district staff supervision.

**Protocols and Procedures for Health Safety**

* Daily temperature checks and completion of the screening questionnaire provided in the [New York Forward Pre-K to Grade 12 School Guidelines](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Pre-K_to_Grade_12_Schools_MasterGuidence.pdf) for staff, contractors, vendors, and visitors Staff and contractors may utilize the district application or applications approved by the contractor’s organization.  Temperature checks should be done by the individual.  If temperature checks and the screening questionnaire are not done prior to entering the building, they will be done immediately upon entrance. Visitation will be permitted by appointment only. Visitors are to report to the main entrances/main offices to utilize a computer station to complete online screening application.
* Daily temperature check and completion of the screening questionnaire (mentioned above) for students [prior to arrival/at school]
* Students or Parents/ Guardian are to do a temperature check for themselves/child(ren) prior to their arrival to school or on the school bus using the online screening application.
* It is imperative for the health and safety of the school community that people are diligent and honest with the recording of the temperature.  A student should not have a fever reducer given to them and they must be at least 3 days fever free prior to returning to school.
* Families unable to conduct online screenings will be identified via confidential survey. Each building will have remote private in-person screening areas to conduct in-person screenings prior to the start of each in-person school day. Attendance personnel will identify students that have not had screenings completed prior to the start of classes for that day whenever possible and paper copies will be provided.
* Voorheesville Central School District will have the ability to conduct in-person screenings as well as on-line surveys. In-person screenings will be conducted in a method that will maintain each student’s right to confidentiality as well as maintaining equity for all students. Voorheesville Central School District will also conduct temperature audits by randomly selected groups of students upon entry to district buildings.
* Confidential in-person screenings will be performed by school nurses and/or trainees as soon as possible each school day.
* The screening data collection method will be the online survey application. Attendance personnel will be responsible for the collection of data and reporting information to Building Principals.
* Each building will have two isolation rooms designated to house students that may have screened positive for signs and or symptoms of COVID 19.
* Screened students will be escorted to the screening room while arrangements are made for dismissal. The building Principals will schedule supervision for isolation areas.
* The Voorheesville Central School District requires students, and staff to notify the district if they develop symptoms or if their answer to the questionnaire changes outside of school hours. Students and staff should report this information by calling 518-765-3314 ext. 207 and leaving a message on the Covid-19 reporting hotline.
* The Covid-19 hotline will be managed by The District Covid 19 Safety Officer, School Nurses, and Superintendent Of Schools.
* Staff and Students must notify their building Nurse if they experience Covid -19 symptoms.
* Parents/ Guardians will be notified weekly by Building Principals of screening methods or changes in any policies or protocols.

Principals will have a student supervision schedule to supervise students awaiting screening

* Supervisor will make sure students awaiting screening maintain social distance
* School nurses will conduct trainings for staff who will conduct health screenings
* Each district building currently has 5 thermometers
* District is in the process of obtaining an ample supply of PPE to be utilized by screeners as well as school personnel providing other required medical services.

Temperature screening protocols: Temperature screenings will be conducted by School Nurses in a designated area of each school’s health office. The temperature screening areas will be isolated in a specific area with appropriate barriers that adhere to CDC guidelines.  In the event that circumstances arise so that additional screeners are needed, each building will have additional screeners trained by School Nurses to conduct temperature screenings. All screeners will utilize maximum PPE which includes mask, shield, gloves, and gowns.

**Social distancing, face coverings & PPE**

The district has developed a plan with policies and procedures for maintaining social distancing of all students, faculty, and staff when on school facilities, grounds and transportation.

* The Requiring of Masks:
	+ If a student is not medically exempt from wearing a face mask and refuses to comply, the parent/guardian will be contacted and the student will be sent home for the remainder of the school day.  If the student continues to refuse the wearing of a facemask, they will be transitioned to remote learning for the remainder of the current school quarter (High School) and trimester (elementary).
	+ If a Visitor or Contractor is not medically exempt and refuses to wear the mask, they will be prohibited from entering the building or doing business in person.
	+ If a staff member is not medically exempt and refuses to comply with the face mask requirements, they would be subject to reprimand or disciplinary consequences.
	+ Cloth face masks that cover both the nose and mouth that include, but are not limited to, homemade sewn masks and surgical masks. Bandanas,  gaiters, and masks with an exhalation valve will not be allowed beginning on Tuesday, September 29th.

District Social Distancing Protocols and Procedures:

* Rotating in-person student schedule for grades 7-12
* Push in model of instruction will be utilized wherever possible
* One way traffic pattern with signage delineating direction
* 6 feet separation markings in hallways and entrances/exit routes
* Maximum occupancy has been established for all in-person learning spaces and rooms will be labeled with maximum occupancy signage.
* All classroom desks will be facing one direction
* Staggered transitions will be implemented wherever possible
* Additional entry points for student arrivals and dismissals

Face coverings will be required to be worn by staff and students throughout the majority of the day, whether indoors or outdoors. This includes during instruction, supervision, and in common areas even when social distancing is available, as well as when riding the school bus, working in outdoor instruction areas, and walking in the hall. Students will be allowed to remove face coverings during meals and for mask breaks so long as they maintain appropriate social distance. Students who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering will not be required to wear one.  For those students/staff who are medically unable to wear face coverings, the district will provide face shields.

Face coverings will be provided to students and staff, if needed, at no cost. Acceptable face coverings for COVID-19 include, but are not limited to, cloth-based coverings and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose.

An employee is allowed to wear their own acceptable face covering if they choose. Employees with healthcare provider documentation stating they are not medically able to tolerate face covering will not be required to do so.

Face coverings may be challenging for students (especially younger students) to wear in all-day settings such as school, so there may be periods of time when masks are not worn.

Face coverings should not be placed on:

* Children younger than 2 years old
* Students where such covering would impair their health or mental health, or where such covering would present a challenge, distraction, or obstruction to education services and instruction
* Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
* Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance

The district will instruct students, parents/guardians and staff, contractors and vendors on:

* The proper way to wear face coverings
* Washing hands before putting on and after removing their face covering
* Proper way to discard disposable face coverings

**Infection control strategies**

* Students will remain in cohort pods for as much of the day as possible, with teachers rotating to those cohort learning spaces in an effort to limit students’ contact with others.
* Any space that is used by multiple classes of students will be cleaned and disinfected between groups.
* Students will be assigned work spaces within the classrooms, and travel between different parts of the school will be minimized to avoid cross contamination. In addition, students will eat in classrooms.
* Student classrooms will be at roughly 50% capacity. Desks will be spaced 6 feet apart and approximately 12 to 15 desks will be in each room.
* Student supplies will be individually assigned.  Items will be disinfected between student use.
* Alcohol-based hand sanitizer stations will be provided in areas of congregation and in classrooms.
* Students will be 6 feet apart during instruction as per guidance from the CDC
* Students and staff will wear masks throughout the day.

**Facility Alterations and Acquisition**

To increase instructional space during the school day, cafeterias, large group instruction areas (music instruction rooms, technology rooms, etc.) the auditorium, school gymnasiums, etc will be reconfigured to hold classes following the social distancing requirements per CDC and DOH.

**Plumbing Facilities and Fixtures:**

* Drinking fountain spouts should not be used for mouth use. Students are to use paper provided cups that will be at fountain stations and dispose of the cup in the receptacle at the station.  Drinking fountains will be cleaned frequently.
* Students will be encouraged to bring personal water bottles and use the water bottle filler application when possible.
* Distance markers will be placed on walls and floors to delineate appropriate social distancing.
* Restroom capacity will be reduced to provide for proper social distancing.

**Space Expansion**

The district has not ruled out the use of outside building use, such as a lease or community partnership.

**Tents for Additional Space**

The district is exploring the possible use of tents during the warmer months for instructional purposes.

**Ventilation**

The district currently uses MERV 8 filters.  These filters have a 90 percent efficiency on particles that are 3 to 10 micrometers in size. The district is evaluating areas within the district that can receive MERV 13 filters.  Areas that have large air handlers are most likely able to handle MERV 13s.  An example is a large and small gym at the elementary, the middle school wing, the PAC, High School gym.  This information is subject to change dependent on the current review process.

The district’s procedure for changing filters is as follows:

* Filters will be changed every three months.
* Staff will wear masks and gloves during the filter changes.  The old filter will be bagged and the gloves used will be discarded with the bag.  Hand sanitation will occur and a new filter will be installed.

Additional ventilation procedures:

* The district will begin the year with 100 percent fresh air being brought into all areas in the district. This program will continue until the outside temperature reaches 50 degrees.  When the temperature reaches 50 degrees the computer program will incrementally follow the temperature drop until the unit hits manufacturing settings near 40 degrees. When the temperature goes below 40 degrees, fresh air intake will range between 20% and 45% dependent on the code requirements and the date of installation.
* The 100% fresh air being brought in goes through the heating and cooling systems that are a part of the univentilatros or air handlers.
* Building Exhaust fans will be at 100% when the building is occupied.
* Classroom doors will be partially or fully open to increase airflow and exhaust effectiveness.
* Classroom windows will be partially or fully opened.

**Management of ill persons, contact tracing and monitoring:**

The district requires students, faculty, or staff members who develop COVID-19 symptoms during the school day to report to the nurse’s office. If there are several students waiting to see the school nurse, students must wait at least 6 feet apart. The district has designated areas to separate individuals with symptoms of COVID- 19 from others until they can go home or to a healthcare facility, depending on severity of illness. One area will be used to treat injuries, provide medications or nursing treatments, and the other area will be used for assessing and caring for ill students and staff. Both areas will be supervised by an adult and have easy access to a bathroom and sink with hand hygiene supplies.

**VCSD Elementary Campus:**

* Covid-19 symptom isolation area: **Room 203**
* Treatment/medication area: **Room 209 (interior office will be a clean room)**

**VCSD Secondary Campus:**

* Covid-19 symptom isolation area: **HS Conference Room**
* Treatment/medication area: **Nurses Office**

PPE requirements for school health office staff caring for sick individuals includes both standard and transmission-based precautions. In areas with moderate to substantial community transmission, eye protection (e.g., goggles or face shield) should be added. When caring for a suspected or confirmed individual with COVID-19, gloves, a gown, eye protection, and a fit-tested N-95 respirator will be used, if available. If an N-95 respirator is not available, a surgical face mask and face shield will be used.

School health office cleaning will occur after each use of cots, bathrooms, and health office equipment (e.g., blood pressure cuffs, otoscopes, stethoscopes). Health office equipment will be cleaned following manufacturer’s directions.

Disposable items will be used as much as possible (e.g., disposable pillow protectors, disposable thermometers, disposable thermometer sheaths or probes, disposable otoscope specula).

**Aerosol Generating Procedures**

Respiratory treatments administered by nurses generally result in aerosolization of respiratory secretions. These aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) potentially put healthcare personnel and others at an increased risk for pathogen exposure and infection. The district requires the following PPE to be worn during AGPs: gloves, N-95 or a surgical mask with face shield, eye protection and a gown. PPE will be used during the following procedures: suctioning, administering nebulizer treatments, or using peak flow meters with students who have respiratory conditions.

Treatments such as nebulized medication treatments and oral or tracheostomy suctioning will be conducted in a room separate from others with nursing personnel wearing appropriate PPE. For nebulizer treatments, if developmentally appropriate, the nurse will leave the room and return when the nebulizer treatment is finished.

Cleaning of the room will occur between use and cleaning of the equipment should be done following manufacturer’s instructions after each use.

**If Students or Staff become Ill with Symptoms of COVID-19 at School**

The district requires students or staff with a temperature, signs of illness, and/or a positive response to the questionnaire to be sent directly to a dedicated isolation area where students are supervised, prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home. Students will be supervised in the isolation area while awaiting transport home and will be separated by at least 6 feet. Students will be escorted from the isolation area to their parent/guardian. Students or staff will be referred to a healthcare provider and provided resources on COVID-19 testing.

For more information for staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 and when to return to work please see the following link from DOH: [Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work  Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure](https://drive.google.com/file/d/19f0ryp_QQSH_Ew8M6BC7WfTltbBurpfw/view?usp=sharing)

**Return to School After Illness**

The district has established 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 protocol includes:

1. Documentation from a health care provider following evaluation
2. Negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result
3. Symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation

The district will refer to DOH’s [“Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure”](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/06/doh_covid19_publicprivateemployeereturntowork_053120.pdf) regarding protocols and policies for faculty and staff seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after the faculty or staff member had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19.

The district requires that individuals who were exposed to the COVID-19 virus complete quarantine without experiencing any symptoms before returning to in-person learning. The discharge of an individual from quarantine and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the local health department.

**COVID-19 Testing**

In the event of a positive COVID-19 test of a student or faculty member, parents in the building will be notified with a letter sent home with their student. An alert will also be issued to parents on the district website and dispersed through district electronic communication tools.

Relevant Covid-19 updates will be provided on the District’s website. The superintendent will provide weekly or as needed, updates via SNN.

In the event that a large-scale testing will need to be conducted at the school, the district administration will work with the following providers:

* Access Health Systems
* Albany County Health Department
* Center for Disease Control

**Contact Tracing**

The district will notify the state and local health department immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result by an individual within school facilities or on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors of the district.

Contact Tracing for the district will begin once the Albany County Department of Health as a confirmed positive test from the lab.  The DOH will then start the process of notifying the school district and working with all individuals. The district has been advised not to begin any contact tracing or quarantining until the district has had a conversation/confirmation with the Department Of Health.

If a community member/ staff member states that they have a confirmed case and the district was not notified by the Department of Health.  The district is to contact the Department of Health immediately to notify/look for confirmation. Albany County Department of Health (518) 447-4580.

To assist the local health department with tracing the transmission of COVID-19, the district has developed and maintained a plan to trace all contacts of exposed individuals in accordance with protocols, training, and tools provided through the New York State Contact Tracing Program.

Districts may assist with contact tracing by:

1. Keeping accurate attendance records of students and staff members
2. Ensuring student schedules are up to date
3. Keeping a log of any visitor which includes date and time, and where in the school they visited
4. Assisting the local health departments in tracing all contacts of the individual in accordance with the protocol, training, and tools provided through the NYS Contact Tracing Program

If/when COVID-19 cases are discovered in the school, in consultation/notification with the local health department, the district will do the following:

* If there is a confirmed case, by DOH, and they have been on premises, the impacted building may close/ move to virtual for at least 24 hours in consultation with DOH. According to current regulations, DOH of health will consult with the district and provide guidance to reopen fully or partially dependent on the possible spread of the virus.
	+ If this notification occurs while school is in session, the district will do an early dismissal.  Parent notification will occur through SNN, use of One Call Now, local media outlets, and the district website.
* The district will close the room(s) where the infected individual spent time until the room has been sanitized and reviewed by the facilities director.
* Building health staff will manage students and staff who report symptoms of COVID-19.  A list will be provided to the Albany County Department of Health with timely updates of any positive cases in staff/students.
* Students and staff with symptoms consistent with those of COVID-19 and who may have had contact with the original carrier,  will be isolated in an area, with adult supervision, until they may be signed out by a parent/guardian.  If a person presents with a temperature, they will be sent to a dedicated area to wait for pick up or immediate medical care.

The district has requested guidance on percentage thresholds for closure/ move to full virtual for the county and at the community level. As of August 12, 2020,  The Department Of Health is currently compiling guidance for local school districts and is creating a flow chart of how contact tracing/communication will occur.

Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state laws and regulations. School staff should not try to determine who is to be excluded from school (due to possible contact) without guidance and direction from the local health department.

For more information about how COVID-19 containment efforts will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit the [Communication/Family and Community Engagement section](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#comm) of our reopening plan.

**School Closures**

A closure refers to contingency plans, protocols, and procedures for decreasing the scale or scope of in- person education and/or closing the school. The district will collaborate with the local health department to determine the parameters, conditions or metrics (e.g., increased absenteeism or increased illness in the school community) that will serve as early warning signs that positive COVID-19 cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level.

At a the minimum, the following conditions may warrant reducing in-person instruction or closing the school:

* All aspects of reduction and closure will be in consultation with state and local health department,
	+ Schools will close if the regional infection rate rises over 9% after Aug. 1.
	+ Schools will close if the 7-day rolling average of the infection rate is above 9%.
		- Schools in regions in Phase 4 can reopen if the daily infection rate remains below 5 percent using a 14-day average, unless otherwise directed from the Albany County Department of Health.
		- If the infection rate rises about 9%, schools must wait until the 14-day average is below 5%
		- Once schools open at Phase IV below 5% for a 14-day rolling average, schools can remain open even if the rate continues to rise about 5% until it reaches 9% for the 7-day average.
		- School will be notified by the Albany County Department of Health  on the situation.
		- School administrators will monitor  absentee rates and if they  impact the ability of the school to operate safely.
		- The district may  modify operations prior to closing to help mitigate a rise in cases. If infection rates are rising above 5%; modifications may occur with rotating days of instruction for or a reduction of grade levels for in-person instruction.
		- All decisions will be made with consultation of the District Medical Director and Albany County Department of Health.
	+ For more information about how school closure information will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit the [Communication/Family and Community Engagement section](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#comm) of our reopening plan.

**Health Hygiene**

The district will emphasize healthy hygiene practices for students and staff by providing initial and refresher education in hand and respiratory hygiene, along with providing adequate supplies and time for frequent hand hygiene. Signs will be posted throughout the school (e.g., entrances, restrooms, cafeteria, classrooms, administrative offices, auditorium, custodial staff areas) and regular messaging will be shared with the school community. Signage will be used to remind individuals to:

1. Stay home if they feel sick.
2. Cover their nose and mouth with an acceptable face covering when unable to maintain social distance from others or in accordance with any stricter policy implemented by the school.
3. Properly store and, when necessary, discard PPE.
4. Adhere to social distancing instructions.
5. Report symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19.
6. Follow hand hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection guidelines.
7. Follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

**Hand Hygiene**

Students and staff must carry out the following hand hygiene practices.

* Wash hands routinely with soap (any kind) and water for at least 20 seconds.
* Dry hands completely after washing. Use paper towels to dry hands if available instead of a hand dryer.
* If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizer should be rubbed on the hands until it is completely absorbed. DO NOT dry hands if sanitizer is used.

Hand washing should occur:

* Before and after eating (e.g. snacks and lunch)
* After going to the restroom or after assisting a student with toileting
* After using a tissue
* Before and after using shared materials
* Before and after putting on or taking off face masks
* After coming in from the outdoors
* Anytime hands are visibly soiled

**Respiratory Hygiene**

The COVID-19 virus spreads from person to person in droplets produced by coughs and sneezes. Therefore, the district will emphasize the importance of respiratory hygiene.

Students and staff must carry out the following respiratory hygiene practices.

* Cover a cough or sneeze using a tissue. If a tissue is used, it should be thrown away immediately.
* If you don’t have a tissue when sneezing or coughing, sneeze into your elbow.
* Wash your hands after sneezing or coughing.
* Face coverings are protective. Wearing a face covering will keep the respiratory droplets and aerosols from being widely dispersed into the air.

For more information about how hygiene information will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit the (we are in the process of developing website links and training videos).

**Cleaning and disinfecting**

The district will ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH, including “Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19,” and the “STOP THE SPREAD” poster, as applicable. Cleaning and disinfection logs will be maintained and include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection.

A list of what is sanitized nightly will be given to staff.  Items possibly touched during the day that are not on the list should be wiped down by staff or noted to custodial staff.

Examples of facility types where cleaning and disinfection frequency will be distinguished include

* Bathrooms
* Athletic training rooms, locker rooms
* Health offices, isolation rooms
* Administrative offices (main office, reception area)
* Frequently touched surfaces in common areas (door handles, elevator buttons, copy machine keypads, etc.)
* Breakrooms
* Cafeterias/Kitchens
* Computer labs
* Science labs
* Classrooms
* Maintenance offices and work areas
* Bus Garage
* Buses, school vehicles
* Libraries
* Large meeting areas (auditoriums, gymnasiums, music rooms)
* Playgrounds (cleaning only)
* Outdoor seating areas (plastic or metal)

Students, faculty, and staff will be trained on proper hand and respiratory hygiene, and such information will be provided to parents and/or legal guardians on ways to reinforce this at home.

The district will provide and maintain hand hygiene stations around the school, as follows:

* For handwashing: soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels.
* For hand sanitizing: an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical.
* Accommodations for students who cannot use hand sanitizer will be made.

Regular cleaning and disinfection of the facilities will occur, including more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk and frequently touched surfaces. This will include desks and cafeteria tables, which are to be cleaned and disinfected between each individual’s use. Cleaning and disinfection will be rigorous and ongoing and will occur at least daily, or more frequently as needed.

The district will ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms. Restrooms are to be cleaned and disinfected continually throughout the day, depending on frequency of use.

Cleaning and disinfecting will differ depending on whether the surface is frequently touched during daily use and depending on whether the surface is (hard or soft). Below are some of the areas that will need to be focused on in-depth during the cleaning and disinfecting of buildings. Each school day, sporting event or after school event has unique needs that will require different cleaning solutions.

Frequently touched surfaces:

1. Desks
2. Chairs
3. Door Handles
4. Countertops
5. Copy Machines
6. Computers
7. Telephones
8. Light Switches
9. Handrails
10. Elevator Buttons
11. Restroom Fixtures
12. Water Fountains
13. Sinks and Fountains in classrooms
14. Lockers and Cubbies
15. Teachers Stations
16. Microwaves
17. Coffee Pots
18. TVs/ Remotes

The district is exploring the efficacy of new products to help increase sanitization efforts and maximize resources including, backpack disinfectant sprayers, handheld sprayers and UV lighting.

For more information about how cleaning and disinfection information will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit the [Communication/Family and Community Engagement section](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#comm) of our reopening plan.

**Vulnerable populations/accommodations**

We recognize that some students and staff members are at an increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness, live with a person who is at an increased risk, or simply do not feel comfortable returning to an in-person educational environment. It is our goal that these individuals are able to safely participate in educational activities. Accommodation will be made where possible. The district will provide remote learning options when applicable.

**Visitors on campus**

No outside visitors or volunteers will be allowed on school campuses unless necessary for the safety and well-being of students. Parents/guardians will report to the front office and are not allowed in other areas unless it is for the safety or well-being of their child.  Both the elementary and secondary campuses will develop protocols for visitors.  The elementary school is in the process of creating a notification system for families to reduce traveling distance from the entrance to the main office. Essential visitors to facilities will be required to wear face coverings and will be restricted in their access to our school buildings. Building entrances and main offices will have computer stations available to conduct online screenings for visitors.

Visitors must follow all safety protocols as listed above.

**School safety drills**

The district will conduct fire (evacuation) drills and lockdown drills as required by education law and regulation and the fire code without exceptions. Schools must continue to conduct mandatory fire and lockdown drills according to the existing statutory schedule. Drills will be conducted in a manner that maintains social distancing at exits and gathering points outside the building, while still preparing students to respond in emergencies.

* Fire Code Section 404 requires that schools maintain Fire Safety, Evacuation, and Lockdown Plans and these plans include how lockdown and evacuation drills are conducted. Methods to promote and provide for social distancing during the evacuation drills are ultimately the district’s or other applicable school’s decision and responsibility. Those changes must be included in the Fire Safety plans.
* Education Law § 807 requires that schools conduct eight (8) evacuation and four (4) lockdown drills each school year. When planning drills, consideration should be given to how a school may modify their drill procedures to minimize risk of spreading infection. Conducting drills is an important part of keeping students and staff safe in an emergency; however, steps should be taken to minimize the risk of spreading infection while conducting drills. As such, it may be necessary for schools to conduct drills in the school year using protocols that are different than they are used to.
* Regardless of the modification used when conducting a drill, students should be instructed that if it was an actual emergency that required evacuation or lockdown, the most imminent concern is to get to safety; maintaining social distancing in an actual emergency that requires evacuation or lockdown may not be possible and should not be the first priority.

The school district modifications to evacuation drill protocols may include, but are not limited to:

* Conducting drills on a “staggered” schedule, where classrooms evacuate separately rather than all at once, and appropriate distance is kept between students to the evacuation site. Staggering by the classroom minimizes contact of students in hallways, stairwells, and at the evacuation site. If conducting drills using a modified procedure, it is required that the drill be conducted with all students in the school building on that school day, it may be necessary to do so during a class period that is extended for this purpose. (Evacuation drills at VES may need to be conducted by grade level or classrooms during an extended period of time to allow for appropriate social distancing)
* If schools reopen with a “hybrid” in-person model, as scheduled for grades 7-12, VCSD will be certain that all students are receiving instruction in emergency procedures, and participating in drills while they are in attendance in-person.

Modifications to Lockdown Drills may include, but are not limited to:

* Conduct lockdown drills in classroom settings while maintaining social distancing/using masks.
* Conducting lockdown drills on a “staggered” schedule with smaller numbers of students present to maintain social distancing, however, schools must be certain that all students are receiving instruction in emergency procedures and participating in drills while they are in attendance in-person.
* Conduct lockdown drills in the classroom without “hiding” “sheltering” but provide students with an overview of how to shelter or hide in the classroom.

**Understaffing**

School workers (teachers and faculty) who must gain entry to a school building for the purposes of providing remote instruction, preparing meals, and facilitating the effective operation of the school during remote instruction, are not required to receive a COVID test result prior to gaining entry to the building. While that is the best practice, it is not a requirement. Such workers are allowed to continue their activities in red, orange, and yellow zones while student instruction remains remote.

[*Top of page*](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#top)

**Facilities**

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection in the district, facilities operations will be geared toward meeting social distancing requirements and cleaning frequently touched spaces regularly. In carrying out projects or tasks supporting infection control, requirements will be met for changes associated with building spaces. Plans for changes or additions to facilities that require review by the Office of Facilities Planning (OFP), will be submitted to comply with the requirements of the 2020 New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (BC) and the State Energy Conservation Code.

The function, position and operation of stairs and corridor doors, which have closers with automatic hold opens (and are automatically released by the fire alarm system), will remain unchanged.

The district plans to meet the deadline for submission of Building Condition Survey or Visual Inspections on time. In addition, lead in water sampling will be carried out upon the reopening of school under conditions consistent with when the building is “normally occupied.”

Upon reopening, the district plans to increase ventilation, to the greatest extent possible.

* The district currently uses MERV 8 filters.  These filters have a 90 percent efficiency on particles that are 3 to 10 micrometers in size.
* There is a procedure for changing filters, which will happen, every three months. The procedure changing entails staff will wear masks and gloves during the changing.  The old filter will be bagged and the gloves used will be discarded with the bag.  Hand sanitation will occur and a new filter will be installed.
* When the outside air is at 45 degrees or higher, all uni-ventilators in the district will be set a t 45 % fresh air intake.
	+ When the temperature goes below 45 degrees, fresh air intake will range between 20% and 45% dependent on the code requirements and the date of installation.
* Building Exhaust fans will be at 100% when the building is occupied.
Classroom door will be partially/or fully open to increase airflow and exhaust effectiveness.
* Classroom windows will be partially or fully opened.
* When the outside temperature is between 65 and 75 degrees, fresh air intake will be at 100%.  When above or below 65 degrees, the system will revert back to 45%

Water systems will be flushed in buildings that have been unoccupied.

The district has contracted with Hillyard Inc. to secure all needed COVID-19 cleaning products, create an evaluation of staffing and current practices to increase the cleaning/sanitization programs from a Level 3 cleaning to Level 2 cleaning protocol.

* Fully disinfect tables and desks daily using Arsenal -1 Re-Juv-nal allowing for 10 minutes of dwell time. Wipe dry
* Clean and disinfect horizontal surfaces with trigger sprayer using QT 3 disinfectant daily
* Wipe down all light switches, push plates, door handles, and knobs with QT 3 disinfectant on a per use basis.
* Clean and disinfect chairs using Arsenal -1 Re-Juv-nal allowing for 10 minutes of dwell time. Wipe dry
* Clean restrooms prior to building being occupied on a daily basis with Arsenal -1 Re-Juv-Nal 10 minute dwell time and wipe dry. Disinfectant will be sprayed with  Electrostatic sprayer to ensure complete disinfection.
* Use QT-3 disinfectant on all restroom surfaces. All restrooms will have  QT-3 disinfectant and will be used on all surfaces including doorknobs, handles, and faucets with a 10 minute dwell time and then wiped dry. This will be done a minimum of 4 times per day.

Additionally, the following protocols will take place:

* The district has purchased multiple ElectroStatic Sprayers that will be utilized to sanitize large areas and the hallways/stairwells/lobbies each evening.
All students and employees will be trained on back to work and back to school procedures through BOCES.
* Commonly used surfaces (e.g. keyboards, desks, remote controls) will be wiped down before and after each use, followed by hand hygiene.
* Water fountains will be shut off and only the bottle fill stations will be available.
* Leaving doors open: We will follow the recommendation of NYSED to leave classroom doors (and other doors that do not have closers on them) open to reduce the spread of the virus from touching door levers and knobs.
* Disinfection and cleaning of the building will be more frequent for high risk areas such as frequently touched surfaces including desks and cafe tables. These surfaces will be disinfected between each use.
* Heavy cleaning and disinfection will be done immediately following a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case.
* Purchase/Construct barriers to separate staff that must interact with visitors including secretaries, counselors and administrators, etc.
* District is working with Engineered Solutions to assess the ventilation systems. This will inform the district of air exchanges and the district will then be able to know how much the fresh air dampers can be opened to increase the flow of fresh air to the buildings
* Soft items such as rugs and inflatable chairs will be removed from buildings. These items are too difficult to clean and sanitize.

Community use of indoor facilities is currently postponed.  When further guidance is released through the CDC, DOH, and NYSED, the district will reevaluate this position.  Community organization use of school parking lots for food drives or enrichment events will have to be approved through the district use of facilities process.  All requested activities must adhere to CDC, DOH, and School Health and Safety protocols.

[*Top of page*](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#top)

**Child Nutrition**

School meals will continue to be available to all students, including those attending school in-person and those learning remotely.

For information about how meal information will be communicated, visit the [Communication/Family and Community Engagement section](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#comm) of our reopening plan.

**Meals onsite**

For students onsite, meals will be provided while maintaining appropriate social distancing between students. Students do not need to wear face coverings when seated and eating so long as they are appropriately socially distanced.

The district will ensure social distancing between individuals while eating in the school cafeteria. If not feasible, meals may be served in alternate areas (e.g., classrooms) or in staggered meal periods to ensure social distancing and proper cleaning and disinfection between students.

The sharing of food and beverages (e.g., buffet style meals, snacks) is prohibited, unless individuals are members of the same household. Adequate space will be reserved for students, faculty, and staff to observe social distancing while eating meals.

**Objectives:**

* Make provisions for student access to school meals for those who are learning remotely or are in attendance at school
* Address all applicable health and safety guidelines for child nutrition
* Create measures to protect students with food allergies when meals are provided in spaces outside the cafeteria
* Describe protocols and procedures for students to perform hand hygiene before and after eating, to promote appropriate hand hygiene, and to discourage sharing of food and beverages
* Describe protocols and procedures that require cleaning and disinfection prior to the next group of students arriving for meals, if served in the same common area
* Ensure compliance with Child Nutrition Program requirements
* Adhere to Board of Education’s Policy for, Charging School Meals and Prohibition Against Shaming

**Elementary School:**

* Teachers/staff will need to take orders for lunch meals from the students daily and have them sent to the Kitchen by 9:00 am.
* The Kitchen will prepare meals in a safe environment, and to the proper temperatures, pack safely in a hot holding box with milk in an insulated cold container, and deliver meals according to a predetermined schedule.
* Choices on the line will be reduced, as many items as possible will be pre wrapped or bundled together
* Students will wear face coverings while in the hallway and while in the serving line.
* Social distancing will be maintained with markers on the floor. (6’ apart)
* Once seated students may remove face covering to eat.
* Foods will be distributed on disposable earth friendly trays.
* All food from the Kitchen is Nut and Peanut Free.
* Staff will have to supervise proper hygiene along with discouraging sharing, and maintaining social distancing.
* All Food items will be charged directly to the Student’s account, NO CASH will be accepted. This will prevent contaminated money from circulating throughout the school and spreading possible contaminants.
* We encourage parents to use myschoolbucks, an online payment system or checks only; in order to eliminate the use of cash. All lunch money, checks that are brought to school should be sent to the kitchen in the morning before serving times happen.
* To open a myschoolbucks account, you will first need your child’s Student ID. Please contact Paul Franchini for this at pfranchini@voorheesville.org. You can use the myschoolbucks page with or without credit card charges.
* Myschoolbucks does charge a fee per transaction. It may be used only to monitor your child’s account. To avoid a fee, families can send in a check to the school to apply to the account as needed. Low Balance alerts can be set up at this page for your convenience.

**Middle School:**

* Teachers will need to take orders for lunch meals from the students daily and have them sent to the Kitchen by 8:30 am.
* The Kitchen will prepare meals in a safe environment, and to the proper temperatures, pack safely in a hot holding box with milk in an insulated cold container, and deliver meals according to a predetermined schedule.
* Meals will be delivered to a “new” satellite kitchen based in the “ticket office”.
* Foods will be distributed on disposable earth friendly trays.
* All food from the Kitchen is Nut and Peanut Free.
* Choices on the line will be reduced, as many items as possible will be pre-wrapped or bundled together
* Students will wear face coverings while in the hallway and while in the serving
line.
* Social distancing will be maintained with markers on the floor (6 feet apart)
* Once seated students may remove face covering to eat.
* Teachers/staff will have to supervise proper hygiene along with discouraging sharing, and maintaining social distancing.
* Students will receive food by groupings
* All Food items will be charged directly to the Student’s account, NO CASH will be accepted. This will prevent contaminated money from circulating throughout the school and spreading possible contaminants.
* We encourage parents to use myschoolbucks, an online payment system or checks only in order to eliminate the use of cash. All lunch money, checks that are brought to school should be sent to the kitchen in the morning before serving times happen.
* To open a myschoolbucks account, you will first need your child’s Student ID. Please contact Paul Franchini for this at pfranchini@voorheesville.org. You can use the myschoolbucks page with or without credit card charges.
* Myschoolbucks does charge a fee per transaction. It may be used only to monitor your child’s account. To avoid a fee, families can send in a check to the school to apply to the account as needed. Low Balance alerts can be set up at this page for your convenience.

**High School:**

* Students will come to the Kitchen to purchase food at a set time.
* Lines will be spaced appropriately for safety at 6’ using floor stickers.
* A monitor will be placed at the door to keep the line spacing and keep students moving in and out of the kitchen.
* Students will be seated by class
* Tables and chairs/benches will be sectioned off in 6 foot increments and marked for safe seating
* Staggered enter and leave times will be maintained.
* Signage will be posted on not sharing food and proper hand washing
* Monitors and maintenance staff will disinfect between each class using a proper sanitizer.
* Students with allergies will be placed in assigned seating at allergy free tables
* The kitchen line will have Acrylic guards hanging from the line, wherever food is present.
* All food items will be placed on a tray by Kitchen Staff. This includes milk, entree, fruits, condiments, and utensils.
* The cash registers will be surrounded in Acrylic and Students will only state their name or use their student ID to swipe. Keypads will not be used.
* Choices on the line will be reduced, as many items as possible will be pre wrapped or bundled together.
* Students will wear face coverings while in the hallway and while in the serving line.
* Social distancing will be maintained with markers on the floor (6 feet apart)
* Once seated, students may remove face covering to eat.
* All food will be placed on compostable trays and discarded.
* All Food items will be charged directly to the Student’s account, NO CASH will be accepted
* The entire food line will be sanitized at the end of each tray line period by Kitchen Staff.
* All areas outside of the Kitchen will be maintained by Custodians and Teacher Aides.
* There will be hand sanitizer stations throughout the Commons for Students to use as needed.
* All meals will follow the Child Nutrition guidelines set by NYS Child Nutrition programs.
* All meals will include: Entree, Whole Grains, Vegetables, Fruits, and Milk. Appropriate ounces of each will be based on grade levels.
* All Food items will be charged directly to the Student’s account, NO CASH will be accepted. This will prevent contaminated money from circulating throughout the school and spreading possible contaminants.
* We encourage parents to use myschoolbucks, an online payment system or checks only in order to eliminate the use of cash. All lunch money, checks that are brought to school should be sent to the kitchen in the morning before serving times happen.
* To open a myschoolbucks account, you will first need your child’s Student ID. Please contact Paul Franchini for this at pfranchini@voorheesville.org. You can use the myschoolbucks page with or without credit card charges.
* Myschoolbucks does charge a fee per transaction. It may be used only to monitor your child’s account. To avoid a fee, families can send in a check to the school to apply to the account as needed. Low Balance alerts can be set up at this page for your convenience.

**Further Information**

**Employees:**

* District will provide training to staff before school begins (personal hygiene, face cover removal, sanitizing surfaces, proper hand washing and social distancing, along with surface contamination information).
* Staff will participate in temperature checks and screenings upon entering the school building through main entrances.
* Staff will wear a face covering and gloves during their work period when students and co-workers are within 6 feet.
* Extended work periods will be implemented to bundle bag and individually wrap items.
* All employees will wash their hands with soap and water following NY State Health Department guidelines. Only when soap and water is not available will they use hand sanitizer.
* Staff will sanitize each serving line with a proper sanitizing solution after each class has been served, changing wash buckets between each line.
* Staff will place student choices on tray and hand to the student.
* Monitors, TAs, Teachers must assist and guide students through the lunch line.
* Food and milk deliveries will be accepted at the back kitchen door. Delivery personnel will not be allowed to enter further into the kitchen area.

**Meals offsite/remote:**

* All Students choosing remote instruction have the right to a meal.
* Meals can be picked up through the back door of the kitchen during regular meal times, daily. Check the schedule for your building.
* Students can call the kitchen to place a food order. This can be done when they arrive at their designated school building.
* Elementary School #: 518-765-2382 x511
* High School #: 518-765-3314 x120. Entrance is from Martin Road.
* Pickups will be at the Receiving/Kitchen Door, at each building.
* An employee wearing a mask and gloves will deliver a meal to waiting students.

[*Top of page*](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#top)

**Transportation**

The district will conduct transportation activities that are consistent with state-issued public transit guidance and NYSED School Reopening guidelines. Students and school staff must wear acceptable face coverings at all times on school buses (e.g., entering, exiting, and seated) and should maintain appropriate social distancing to the extent practicable. All staff will wear acceptable face covering and socially distance from students.

The district has created a district routing request form for parents/guardians to tentatively request transportation needs or to acknowledge that they will not need transportation.  If and when possible, families are encouraged to transport their household to accommodate routing needs.  The parent letter and request form can be found here: Transportation Request Form

Students who are able, will be required to wear masks and social distance on the bus to the extent practicable; however, students whose physical or mental health would be impaired who are wearing a face mask are not required to do so, but must be appropriately socially distanced. Members of the same household may be seated within 6 feet of each other. Parents and legal guardians are encouraged to drop off or walk students to school to reduce density on buses.

Students who do not have a facemask will be provided one by the bus driver upon arrival to the bus. If the student refuses to wear a mask, and is able, they will be considered insubordinate. If a parent is available at the stop, the child will be counseled and if still refuses, they will be remanded to the parent. The parent is then to contact building administration for follow up. If a student refuses and the parent is not at the stop, the child will be seated in the front of the bus 6 feet apart from other individuals.  Upon entry into the building, the child will be brought to administration for counseling/reprimand.

It is imperative that students follow school bus protocol such as remaining in their assigned seat, not engaging in horseplay and following protocols in order to maintain the health and safety of everyone on the bus.

Students will load back to front, 1 student per seat or siblings together.  Students will unload at school front to back. Families will be encouraged to transport students if possible.  Bus loading and unloading on school property will be staggered to limit the amount of student interaction/crossing.

All buses that are used every day by districts and contract carriers will be cleaned/ disinfected once a day. High contact spots will be wiped down/disinfected between the two morning and the two afternoon runs per building/cohort. The district will utilize COVID-19 cleaners approved through CDC.

School buses shall not be equipped with hand sanitizer due to its combustible composition and potential liability to the carrier or district. School bus drivers, monitors and attendants must not carry personal bottles of hand sanitizer with them on school buses.

Wheelchair school buses will configure wheelchair placement to ensure social distancing of 6 feet.

Whether school is in session remotely or otherwise, pupil transportation will be provided to nonpublic, parochial, private, charter schools or students whose Individualized Education Plans have placed them out of the district whose schools are meeting in in-person sessions. The district is currently creating the routes for all nonpublic, parochial schools, private, charter schools or students whose Individualized Education Plans have placed them out of the district.  The district is exploring shared transportation options with neighboring districts and working on methods to most efficiently transport students while adhering to guidelines.

All students are entitled to transportation by the district to the extent required by law. Transportation departments do not have the ability or the right to deny transportation for children who are in foster care, homeless or attend private or charter schools. Parents who may have missed the due date to request out of district transportation due to a reasonable excuse may file a 310 appeal with the Commissioner of Education.

Deadlines for transportation requests have been extended. Families that have registered for transportation last school year were emailed and contacted by telephone to inquire about their transportation needs in June 2020.

There will be no bus passes allowed, student pick-up and drop-off will only be allowed at predetermined locations in order to better record keeping for contact tracing.

**School Bus Staff**

School bus drivers, monitors, attendants and mechanics are required to perform a self-health assessment for symptoms of COVID-19 before arriving at work. If personnel are experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19, they will notify their employer as per the reporting policies and seek medical attention.  Staff are required to follow the district protocols in self temperature taking and completion of the safety questionnaire found here: <https://entry.neric.org/vcsd>

School bus drivers, monitors, attendants and mechanics must wear a face covering along with an optional face shield.

Transportation staff (drivers, monitors, attendants, mechanics and cleaners) will be trained and provided periodic refreshers on the proper use of personal protective equipment and the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.  Staff have to complete a training on sanitation, mask usage and COVID prior to transporting students.  For staff that have not completed the training, they will be trained at the annual transportation meeting scheduled for the end of August.

Transportation departments/carriers will need to provide Personal Protective Equipment such as masks and gloves for drivers, monitors and attendants in buses as well as hand sanitizer for all staff in their transportation locations such as dispatch offices, employee lunch/break rooms and/or bus garages.

Staff are supplied with appropriate PPE if they are not utilizing their personal cloth face covering. Hand sanitizer is available in locations within the transportation office/garage as well as locations to wash hands with soap.

Drivers, monitors/attendants who must have direct physical contact with a child must wear gloves in addition to face covering. Disposable gloves will be provided to Drivers/School Bus Monitors that are in direct contact with students.

Protocols for bus drivers, monitors and attendants include the following:

* Daily Submission of the COVID Screening Attestation
* The driver, monitor, and attendant may wear gloves if they choose to do so but are not required unless they must be in physical contact with students.
* Transportation staff should wash their hands with soap and water before and after am and pm runs to help prevent the spread of respiratory and diarrheal infections from one person to the next.
* Participation in training as available in order to have knowledge of the current guidance regarding reducing the spread of COVID-19.

Procedures for transportation of students:

* Bus roof hatches and windows will be open in order to provide increased air flow unless weather is inclement or below 45 degrees.
* Voorheesville Central School District does not typically utilize contract carriers. As routing issues are realized, we will consider the use of add/delete clauses if contractor transportation becomes necessary as well as submitting addendums to the Pupil Transportation Unit when increased costs are anticipated.
* Our transportation department is in discussion with neighboring districts to determine how best to utilize shared transportation opportunities in order to maintain the health and safety of our students and staff.
* School bus routing will accommodate 1 student/siblings per seat. Students will be encouraged to keep as much distance as possible between them. Guidance for families will be provided with instructions on how to make their wait at the bus stop and ride to and from school as safe as possible. Buses will have disposable masks available for students. Families will be encouraged to transport children in order to accommodate reduced busloads.

Protocols of how students will disembark from transportation vehicles:

* Parents/guardians are encouraged to walk or drive their child to school whenever possible.
* Student or their parent/guardians must submit  the COVID Screening Attestation
* All Extra Trips and late buses are cancelled until further notice.
Students will have assigned seats.
* Members of the same family will be seated together.
* Students will not be allowed to eat or share materials on the bus
* When students embark and disembark the bus, they should follow social distancing protocols. This will increase the time required to load and unload buses at schools in the morning and afternoon.
* The district is developing procedures for the reconfiguration of loading and unloading locations for students who are transported by bus, car or are pedestrians.
* Since hand sanitizer is not permitted on school buses, buildings will have hand sanitizer available upon arrival.  This will include classroom teacher disbursement, sanitization pumps at high traffic areas.  Building specific plans are under development. This section will be updated as procedures develop.

For more information about training protocol for students and staff and how transportation information will be communicated, visit the [Communication/Family and Community Engagement section](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#comm) of our reopening plan.

[*Top of page*](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#top)

**Social Emotional Well-being**

We recognize that the social emotional well-being of our students and staff during these challenging times is critically important. The district has made resources and referrals available to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional needs of students, faculty, and staff when school reopens for in-person instruction.  The counseling department will provide updated resources to families via the district website, as well as through monthly newsletters and their personal counseling pages.

The Counseling department will meet to review the current K-12 counseling plan and add components to address return-to-school needs (i.e., anxiety re: being safe, loss, fear of loss, separation and change: why do things/people look different re: space, masks, class size.) Our K-12 counseling department consists of school counselors, school psychologists and a school social worker. Through the Elementary School’s School Based Intervention Team, the Middle School’s Pupil Study Team and the High School’s Instructional Support Team,  the counseling department will use a multi-tiered approach to identify and support students’ social emotional needs as they transition back into the school setting. The district will lessen content the first few weeks of school to address social emotional well-being. The district is exploring the idea of utilizing our physical education teachers to support social emotional learning in the classroom.

The counseling department’s current advisory council will meet in August to review the updated counseling plan and obtain feedback regarding ongoing planning, specifically how it relates to supporting students’ social emotional needs with the transition back to the school setting. The role of the advisory council is to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to review, advise on, and support the implementation of the program. It consists of parents, a member of the board of education, a school building and district leader, a local mental health professional, a teacher, a student, certified school counselors, and a professional for higher education.

The district will provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff on how to talk with and support students during and after the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency, as well as provide support for developing coping and resiliency skills for students, faculty, and staff. The professional development will include, but is not limited, to presentations conducted by members of the counseling department, videos and scripts provided to staff to use with students who are struggling.

The district will provide increased support to students who have anxiety or difficulty transitioning back to in-person instruction. A wide array of resources will be posted on the website, shared with families through district communication tools, and provided to students in a format at their age level.  Student organizations/district sponsored organizations will assist with the social emotional well being of students, one such organization, Sources of Strength located at the High School.

The district understands that adults will also be facing many of the same struggles and concerns that students may feel while transitioning to in-person instruction.  The district has had and will continue to create opportunities for staff to meet (virtually) to communicate and rebuild together.   Professional development opportunities are being developed to focus on a wide array of topics.  Staff will have the opportunity to enter into the building prior to meeting and will work together collaboratively throughout the process understanding that these are difficult times and that with support we can succeed.

[*Top of page*](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#top)

**School Schedules**

For information about how school schedule information will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit the [Communication/Family and Community Engagement section](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#comm) of our reopening plan.

**Elementary grades K-6**

* K-5 will be housed on the elementary campus. The student day will begin at 9:30 a.m. and students will be dismissed at 3:00 p.m. as they normally do.
* In-person instruction will occur daily with students maintaining a minimum of 6 foot social distancing in all instructional spaces.
* Special area class will be provided through a push-in model. and it will be provided on a 10-week rotation.  PE will be provided in the 1st and 4th quarter.  Music will be provided in the 2nd quarter and Music and Library will be provided in the 3rd quarter.
* Students will continue to receive approximately 23 minutes for lunch and 23 minutes for recess time.  Recess will be provided while safely maintaining social distancing.
* Classroom instruction will be facilitated through the Google Classroom platform. In-person instruction will be provided to students in two small group cohorts of approximately 12 students or less due to 6’ social distancing guidelines.  This instruction will be provided in a half-day model.  One cohort will receive morning instruction from their classroom teacher in the core content areas.  The opposite cohort will be receiving supplemental instruction with another instructor at this time.  In the afternoon, the teacher and the alternate instructor will switch cohorts and the classroom teacher will provide the core content area instruction to the other cohort.  Students will rotate morning and afternoon instructional time based on odd and even days.
* The district is continually exploring instructional options to maximize student learning.
* As of August 13th, the elementary school day is structured (with a start time of 9:30 to 3:00 in order to maximize learning and minimize staffing issues.
Remote learning opportunities will be available for families.
* Remote instruction will be synchronous in nature (if not provided through a BOCES program).  Live instruction from the teacher will be provided through Google Meets.

**Secondary School Grades 7th-12th**

* Grades 7-12 will be on a three day rotating schedule.  The rotation will be grades 7/11, 8/9/ and 10/12.
* When students are not in in-person instruction, they will be participating in synchronous, structured learning activities throughout the traditional school day time schedule. Students will participate through Google Classroom.
* The secondary school schedule will contain a traditional schedule model and offers students the majority of courses that were available in the program of studies.
	+ Choir and Instrumental Ensembles are being evaluated based on room use and the social distancing requirements of 12 feet apart.
* The district will facilitate remote learning for families that request it.  Remote learning will be scheduled semester by semester.
* Building administration will communicate regularly with families the schedule and plan throughout the summer.
* There may be times when it is necessary to close school completely. In this situation, students will continue to have instruction through “virtual instruction days.” Students will be required to participate in classroom work remotely and/or complete assignments. Student expectations on virtual days will be determined by the teacher based on what will work best for the specific class and what is being learned.

[*Top of page*](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#top)

**School Activities**

**Extracurriculars**

The District will resume extra curricular activities that can be conducted virtually. The resumption of any virtual and or in person extra curricular activity/ athletic activity must be authorized by The Building Principal or Athletic Director. Refer to DOH’s “[Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/SportsAndRecreationMasterGuidance.pdf)” to assist in development of these policies.

* Field Trips will be postponed until deemed safe for attendance.
* School assemblies will be completed virtual or live streamed.
* Interscholastic athletics is governed by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association and Section 2.  The district will follow the current guidance.
	+ Note: Interscholastic Athletics are currently under A New York State Public High School Athletic Association pause until September 21, 2020. Fall Sports starting dates will be evaluated by NYSPHSAA prior to September 21st.
* All fundraising opportunities will be evaluated by the Building Principal to determine the adherence to CDC, DOH, and NYSED guidelines.

**Childcare**

The district does not have a district run aftercare program.  The district has a contract with The Kids’ Club Inc. to rent district facilities to offer before and after care to the school community.  Current plans are being discussed on how to best provide this service to the community while being able to sanitize/safeguard health and safety in a timely fashion.

Policies regarding before and aftercare programs include social distancing, PPE usage, cleaning and disinfection requirements, as well as risk of COVID-19 transmission. Protocols in how to maintain cohorts, if applicable, or group members of the same household will be considered.

[*Top of page*](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#top)

**Attendance & Chronic Absenteeism**

Teachers will take attendance daily both in an in-classroom and virtual setting.  Those students who are chronically absent will be contacted, through multiple methods, by the district.

Teaching staff, counselors, and administrators will continue their outreach to students who exhibit at-risk attendance behavior. Letters will be mailed home and phone calls made as needed.

At the secondary campus, per-period attendance will be taken for all students, whether they are on campus for in-person learning or logging on for synchronous learning.

[*Top of page*](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#top)

**Technology & Connectivity**

During the mandatory school closure in March 2020, the district directed multiple communications to families (parent and student surveys, phone calls, SNNs, letters to the community) and collected information from staff to identify students who did not have access to a device, had multiple children sharing a device and needed an additional device, and/or needed high speed internet access. The district provided a chromebook(s) and/or hotspot for these families and set up free wifi in the parking lot of the high school. The district also allowed for families that requested to retain their Chromebooks for summer enrichment through the library or other means to do so.  These measures will be continued so that all students may participate in learning for both hybrid or completely remote learning models.

* Google Classroom will be the standardized format utilized by the district.
* A Google Classroom subcommittee is creating protocols, structure, and training for staff and families to standardize the technology platform.
* The district has increased its broadband capabilities by 50%.
* The district provides students that do not have internet service with “Verizon Hotspots.”
* Additional Chromebooks have been purchased for students.
* 30 Meraki Gen. 5 Wireless access points are being installed to ensure the entire middle school high school campus internet signal is accessible and strong.
* Document cameras have been purchased to allow teachers to show demonstrations virtually.
* District is working with NERIC to assess and identify any areas within each building that have weak or no wireless internet signal. District can relocate Wireless access points to strengthen signals.
* All of the district servers will have new batteries installed to ensure that power a power outage and/or brownout will not cause a negative impact.

[*Top of page*](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#top)

**Teaching & Learning**

The school calendar typically includes one or more staff-only days before students arrive at school. Acknowledging the challenges that our teachers and staff have faced this spring delivering remote instruction under stressful circumstances, the district will focus these in-service days on providing support to staff in the areas of social-emotional health and technology integration. As of July 31st, the district is evaluating the school calendar in anticipation of pushing back the start date for students by 1 or 2 days to front load professional development days for staff.

The first few weeks of the school year will focus on the social emotional needs of the students. Teachers will be encouraged to spend time building relationships, creating a sense of community, and supporting students with the transition back to school. This time will allow students to develop the relationship necessary for a successful school year. During this time, students will learn social distancing etiquette at developmentally appropriate levels.

When a remote or hybrid learning model is necessary, certain groups of students will be prioritized for in-person learning to the greatest extent possible. This includes, but is not limited to, special education students, English language learners, students who did not engage in remote learning during the spring of 2020, and students with technology or connectivity needs.

Assessing student learning gaps or areas of need will be critical. Formative assessment before a unit of instruction to assess student understanding of pre-requisite skills will be common practice.

Acknowledging that the typical content in a given grade level or course may need to be adjusted, content will be prioritized to ensure that students receive instruction for the prioritized learning standards, key understandings, and skills necessary for students’ success in future study.

Grading practices will be designed to provide direct feedback regarding students’ mastery of course content. Grading at the elementary level will  follow a standards-based framework. The district is currently investigating equitable practices for secondary feedback, evaluation and grading. Secondary students may return to a numeric system based on a 100 point scale.

For information relating to teaching and learning in BOCES special education and Career and Technical Education programs, [please see the BOCES website](https://www.capitalregionboces.org/).

Parents/Guardians will be asked to make a decision on the mode of instruction for their children **by the end of the business day on August 10th if possible**. Choices include In-Person (K-6) and Hybrid Learning (7-12) or Completely Remote Learning (7-12). The commitment will be for the trimester (elementary)/semester (secondary). The district is gathering data to assess if we can restructure resources to meet the needs of the students utilizing district staff or if we would have the need to outsource instruction to a BOCES run program.

**In-person Instruction**

Upon reopening, the number of students in each of our classrooms will be reduced to adhere to CDC guidance regarding proper social distancing. Class size will reflect the need to ensure that students’ desks/seats are positioned no less than six feet apart. Accommodating a six-foot radius around students will necessitate the identification of additional rooms and common-area spaces that can be converted into elementary classrooms.

Current staffing levels may be insufficient to accommodate the expanded number of classrooms needed to ensure social distancing. For common branch classrooms (K-5), where large group instruction spacing is not available, students will be grouped into smaller cohorts and provided a classroom teacher and a supervisory staff person.  The classroom teacher will provide direct instruction to one cohort, while the other cohort is completing independent work under the supervision of the staff person.  The district is currently exploring the option of live streaming instruction between the two locations. In this case, a teacher would livestream his/her teaching from one learning space to the other so that all students receive instruction from the classroom teacher at the same time. The classroom teacher would alternate his/her location for the  livestreaming between the two rooms, with math being broadcast from one location and language arts streamed from the other location during the same day.  In this way, students will be engaging with, and receiving instruction from, their classroom teacher daily in reading, writing, and mathematics.  Sixth grade students will also be able to receive daily in-person instruction. Students will be grouped in a cohort and core teachers will rotate into the classrooms to provide instruction. Special area teachers will use a push-in model where possible. With these schedules, all students will be able to interact with, and receive feedback from, their individual teachers.

Full in-person instruction will not be available for students in grades 7-12. Grades 7-12 are planning for a hybrid model that includes a 3-day rotation of students by grade level (cohort). The 3-day rotation is dependent on facilities, health and safety, and staffing.

All instruction will continue to be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards.

Our schools will minimize the movement of students. This potentially means having students eat lunch in their classroom instead of the cafeteria and eliminating assemblies, field trips and other large-group activities. Special-area subjects (e.g., art, music, physical education) may be pushed into the classroom.  Whenever possible students will utilize outside space for physical education instruction. The district will adhere to the guidance of 12 feet between students when engaging in physical activity.

To the extent possible, students will remain in small cohorts if/when leaving the classroom, such as for recess or any necessary transition, so as to reduce their exposure to additional students.

For information on school schedules, [visit the School Schedules section of our reopening plan](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#schedules).

For information about how in-person instruction information will be communicated to students and families, [visit the Communication/Family and Community Engagement section of our reopening plan](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#comm).

**Remote/Hybrid Instruction**

Given the possibility that communities may experience spikes in COVID-19 cases at any point during the school year, which may prompt short or long-term school closures, our district has developed a hybrid/blended learning model and schedule that can continue as is in a fully remote environment.

Instruction will not focus only on “core” subject areas to the exclusion of elective courses. Consideration has been given to prioritizing hands-on and lab-based activities while students are onsite in school buildings. All instruction will continue to be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards.

As noted previously, student schedules will remain the same whether instruction is in person or remote so that students do not encounter conflicts wherein synchronous lessons for different subjects are offered simultaneously.

Remote learning opportunities for secondary students will include a greater emphasis on synchronous instruction, with teachers finding ways to provide live instruction and lessons to students. While recording of live lessons is still essential for students unable to attend at a scheduled time, teachers will ensure that their students are directly engaged with them and their class peers in experiential learning on a regular basis.

To ensure high-quality remote learning experiences, we will standardize the use of a single online learning platform, Google Classroom,  to the greatest extent possible, and develop a common, coordinated set of guidelines for teachers to follow when using the platform with students.

Grading practices will be designed to provide direct feedback regarding students’ mastery of course content. The elementary school will follow a standards-based framework. The district is currently investigating equitable practices for secondary feedback, evaluation and grading. Secondary students may return to a numeric system based on a 100 point scale.

**Elementary School:** The District is currently developing models for remote/hybrid instruction. One possible approach is to utilize the potential of live streaming.  Because common branch teachers may be livestreaming his/her teaching into a second location already during in-person learning, this instruction could also be streamed out to families who are in need of remote instruction on a temporary basis. This may also be recorded for asynchronous instruction for parents who are unable to have students log in as the lesson is being taught. If a mandatory closure is necessary for a class, an individual, or the school, the elementary teachers could continue streaming these daily lessons, and provide virtual follow up in small group sessions.

**Secondary Level:** A synchronous model of instruction will provide flexibility and equity to all students. Regardless of whether students have chosen to participate in the hybrid learning model or will remain at home for 100% Complete Virtual Learning (CVL), the synchronous streaming of lessons will allow students to receive the same high quality level of instruction and will transfer easily to a 100% Complete Virtual Learning experience should the need arise. Density and the risk of contact exposure will be greatly lessened by limiting the cohorts who are physically on campus each day; therefore, only one or two grade levels will be scheduled to attend on any one day. Students will follow their traditional nine period schedule while learning virtually or in-person. All courses will be aligned to current NYS standards and, where appropriate, the district will work to create new models to ensure that these standards are met. For example, a blend of hands-on and virtual science lab experiences are currently being developed by a district science team to ensure that all secondary students will have high quality opportunities to learn through application and meet lab practice requirements.

Teachers will have daily interactions with students, and synchronous learning will be a priority. One option the district is exploring provides a portion of time in each and every class for synchronous learning.  Teachers might begin class by stating the learning target, providing an overview of the lesson, and modeling examples of any expected student activities (10-20 min). After that, all students could begin their independent classwork. In this way, teachers are available for “office hours” during this class time, providing immediate feedback and support to their students.  By continuing to stream out through Google Classroom, students at home would have an opportunity  to ask follow up questions and receive immediate answers from the teacher. This model works for both the hybrid and 100% Complete Remote Learning. It ensures equity of learning opportunities for students who have chosen either method of instruction and allows for an easy transition to complete remote learning should that need arise.

For information about how remote/hybrid instruction information will be communicated to students and families, [visit the Communication/Family and Community Engagement section of our reopening plan](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#comm).

[*Top of page*](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#top)

**Special Education**

Students with Disabilities will follow the same model as their general education peers, with the support of their special education teacher. The district is exploring additional in-person instruction for students 7-12. Related services (speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, school counseling) will be scheduled and prioritized in accordance with each child’s individualized education plan.

Students’ educational teams will work together to provide all the necessary program accommodations/modifications to ensure equal access to the instructional material for both in-person and remote learning.

Staff will be in regular communication with students’ parents/ guardians in regards to their child’s engagement and progress. We encourage families to remain in close contact and communicate with the child’s special education teacher, related service providers, building principal, and PPS Director to ensure your child continues to participate and progress in the general education curriculum and make progress towards achieving individualized goals.

For those students who are receiving special education programs and services through BOCES, an approved school-age program at a private school or through approved preschool providers, we continue to remain in close contact with all educational agencies and municipalities regarding the planned activities, nature, and delivery of instruction and related services to identify shared resources, materials, and technology available as appropriate.

Individualized determinations will be made through the CPSE/CSE committees whether, and to what extent compensatory services are to be provided for any student with a disability who may have experienced a loss of skill(s) despite best intentions, efforts, and creative solutions when providing educational programs and services during the previous school closure. To the extent a student can not attend in-person instruction, remote learning will be provided.

If it continues to be necessary to communicate and share documents via email, the CSE/CPSE will obtain consent from parents. Whether services are provided in-person, remote, and or through a hybrid model parents we will continue to receive written progress towards students goals quarterly.

At this time 504/CSE/CPSE will continue to be held virtually. Parents have a legal right to be informed regarding identification, evaluation, educational placement, and provision of services. Please refer to the NYSED Procedural Safeguards Notice July 2017 at [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov/).

For all questions or concerns regarding Special Education contact: Karen Jones, Pupil Personnel Director KJones@voorheesville.org

[*Top of page*](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#top)

**Bilingual Education & World Languages**

The Voorheesville CSD works with itinerant ENL teachers from the Capital Region BOCES to provide instruction to district English language learners.  The itinerant teacher will coordinate with the Registrar and Director of Curriculum to schedule and complete the identification process in September for any recent or new enrollees who, due to COVID-19 school closures, were not previously able to be completed. Current and Former ELL students will continue to receive the same level of services (instructional units of study) they were allotted during the 2019-20 school year. It is of paramount importance to limit the number of students/classrooms with which the ENL educator comes into contact; therefore, the district will wait until the BOCES schedules have been finalized before determining the mode by which ELL students will receive services. If the itinerant teacher will be providing services in-person to multiple area school districts, the VCSD may choose to have ELLs receive their support virtually from the instructor. In either case, the ENL teacher and classroom teacher would be provided opportunities for coordination.

For information about regular communication and engagement with parents/guardians of English-language learners, [visit the Communication/Family and Community Engagement section of our reopening plan](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#comm).

[*Top of* page](https://www.voorheesville.org/about-us/covid-19/reopening-plan/#top)

**Staff**

**Teacher and Principal Evaluation System**

All teachers and principals will continue to be evaluated pursuant to the district’s approved APPR plan.

**Certification, Incidental Teaching and Substitute Teaching**

All teachers will hold valid and appropriate certificates for teaching assignment, except where otherwise allowable under the Commissioner’s regulations (e.g., incidental teaching) or education law.

**Key References**

* [State Education Department Issues Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools](http://www.nysed.gov/news/2020/state-education-department-issues-guidance-reopen-new-york-state-schools) (July 16, 2020)
* [State Education Department Presents Framework of Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools](http://www.nysed.gov/news/2020/state-education-department-presents-framework-guidance-reopen-new-york-state-schools) (July 13, 2020)
* [Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, NYS Department of Health](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Pre-K_to_Grade_12_Schools_MasterGuidence.pdf) (July 13, 2020)

**Additional References**

* [Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/SportsAndRecreationMasterGuidance.pdf) (June 26, 2020)
* [Interim Guidance for Food Services during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Indoor_and_Outdoor_Food_Services_Detailed_Guidelines.pdf) (June 26, 2020)
* [Interim Guidance for Office-Based Work during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/offices-interim-guidance.pdf) (June 26, 2020)
* [Interim Guidance for Public Transportation Activities during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/PublicTransportationMasterGuidance.pdf) (June 26, 2020)
* [New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/)
* [New York State Education Department Coronavirus (COVID-19)](http://www.nysed.gov/coronavirus)
* [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus (COVID-19)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)
* [Occupational Safety and Health Administration COVID-19 Website](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/)

Once finalized, reopening plans must be posted on the district’s website. By July 31, 2020, districts will need to complete a survey through the Portal, providing NYSED with:

* A link to the public website where each school plan has been publicly posted
* A set of mandatory assurances that the reopening plan includes all of the mandatory elements outlined in the NYSED guidance

NOTE: Information submitted through the Portal will not include detailed narratives or descriptions of specific actions to be taken by a school or district as part of their reopening Plan; those details must be articulated in the materials that are publicly posted on the school/district website.

Also by July 31, 2020, districts must complete a short companion [Department of Health survey that includes a link to the publicly posted plan on the district/school website](https://forms.ny.gov/s3/PK-12-Education-Reopening-Plan).

**Micro-cluster Information**

If in a red/orange zone and the school decides to “test out” per the Interim Guidance on COVID-19 Test-Out for Public and Non-Public Schools Located in Areas Designated as “Red or Orange Micro-Cluster Zones” Under the New York State Micro-Cluster Action Initiative, all school employees would be part of the testing requirements (both 100% and 25%) prior to the school reopening for in-person instruction. Any positive faculty or staff member would not be permitted to reenter the school.

**Understaffing**

School workers (teachers and faculty) who must gain entry to a school building for the purposes of providing remote instruction, preparing meals, and facilitating the effective operation of the school during remote instruction, are not required to receive a COVID test result prior to gaining entry to the building. While that is the best practice, it is not a requirement. Such workers are allowed to continue their activities in red, orange, and yellow zones while student instruction remains remote.