Seymour Public Schools
Frequently Asked Questions about Learning
for Fall Reopening 2021-2022

We believe parents and teachers may find this document helpful in better understanding the learning model for Seymour Public Schools for the 2021-2022 school year. These reopening questions, answers, and guidance take into consideration CDC guidance, DPH and NVHD guidance, and current COVID-19 rates in Seymour and across the state of Connecticut. Many operational and facility details and questions are covered in our fall reopening plan that was posted on our website in June of 2021, after obtaining stakeholder feedback. Specific building-level guidance will be provided by each building administration.

Below are questions and answers about student learning that reflect tweaks made to the June 2021 plan based on current guidance. Our learning model and mitigating strategies may change as guidance continues to emerge.

Is remote learning an option this year?
Seymour and the entire state of Connecticut will not be offering a remote learning option for students. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no provision in CT state law to allow for public schools to allow remote learning. However, if an entire class is quarantined, the teacher will move to synchronous remote instruction for the entire class. If the teacher is quarantined with the class, the teacher will be teaching students from home. If the teacher is not quarantined, they will be expected to come to the building to provide remote instruction to students from the school. Additional details are found below that address an individual student’s need to quarantine.

Research is clear, despite the tremendous efforts of educators, parents and students, that students were impacted in many ways during the closure and different schooling models from March 2020-June 2021. Seymour Public Schools is striving to ensure that we have as much uninterrupted in person learning as possible for the 2021-2022 school year.

What mitigation strategies should all staff and students use to help us achieve our goal?
- **Masks** - Masks are required to be worn inside of school buildings by all staff and students unless they are actively eating or drinking. Staff can remove masks if they are in a closed room by themselves for a mask break.
  - Masks are not required to be worn when outside of school buildings, unless people are close together for long periods of time.
- **Social Distancing** - We will continue to maximize distance between students as feasible and strive for at least 3 feet (6 feet for singing, wind instruments or activities with heavy exertions)
- **Handwashing and respiratory etiquette** - Frequent handwashing or use of sanitizer will be required. Covering coughs or sneezes with elbows and fabric or tissues followed by hand hygiene.
- **If your child is ill, keep them home** - If your child is symptomatic, please keep them home. If you are awaiting COVID test results, keep them home in the interim. If a family member is awaiting COVID test results, please consider keeping your family members home.
- In order to meet individual student needs, cohorting of classes is not recommended, however, seating charts must be kept to allow more accurate contact tracing.

What about athletics?
More information related to athletics will be provided to registered athletes/families by the Athletic Director. Currently, fall sports and extra-curricular activities are scheduled to proceed as close to the start of school as possible.
What happens if a student is quarantined - how do they access the learning materials?
If a student has a verified quarantine, the nurse, principal or principal designee will notify the teacher(s) of the verified quarantine dates and the teacher will work with the family and student to access materials on our district Google Classroom platform.

Once teachers have been notified of the verified quarantine, teachers will be required to continue using Google Classroom to provide students access to asynchronous learning activities should they have a verified quarantine by the nurse and/or principal. Teachers may utilize a combination of asynchronous and virtual live (synchronous) learning activities and will provide details for families as each situation arises.

For verified quarantines, teachers are asked to post assignments in Google Classroom within 24 hours of teachers being notified (school hours). For example, teachers will post Monday’s learning activities by Tuesday. NOTE: If an entire class is quarantined, the teacher will move to synchronous remote instruction for the entire class.

Classroom teachers will not be streaming live lessons to students at home for absent students. Teachers or support staff will contact students (or their parents) regarding questions they may have about the asynchronous learning assigned. (See later section for information related to students with IEPs)

Short term illnesses will be handled as they were prior to the pandemic, teachers will work with the individual student to make up missed work. The responsibility for the completion of missed work lies with the student. Unless a student has an extended illness, all make-up work should be completed within 5-10 school days.

If any student is out for three consecutive days we are requiring an doctor’s note or a negative covid test upon return on the fourth day.

How long is someone in quarantine?
Quarantining is not required for staff or students who have been fully vaccinated AND are asymptomatic. Quarantining is required for students seated within 3 feet of a positive peer in classrooms even if both students were properly wearing masks (this applies only to students and only to classroom settings). In all other non-classroom settings the range is extended to 6 feet. Individuals (students and staff), who receive positive COVID-19 test results, regardless of vaccination and symptom status shall be required to isolate and will be identified through contact tracing protocols. Unvaccinated students and staff will have to follow CT DPH quarantine guidelines.

Seymour will follow the guidance of NVPH and the Valley and will use the following quarantine process: We will require testing after day 7 and permit returning to school on day 10.

Will parents need to support learning at home during quarantine?
Depending on the age of the child, some students may need some assistance with their asynchronous learning should they be quarantined. However, most asynchronous assignments will be able to be completed by students independently. We understand that many parents work and supporting students during the day can be difficult. In the spirit of learning, we ask parents and students to do their best to complete the asynchronous assignments.

Can teachers use/ teach small groups?
Yes, we highly recommend small group instruction but staff should consider:

- Mitigation strategies such as masks and hand hygiene
- Social Distancing - Plan for at least 3 feet between students

Teachers and staff are **required** to keep seating charts and lists of small groups, with special attention to any interactions without masks (eating) or less than 3 feet apart. This information will be essential for contact tracing.
**Can elementary classrooms use rugs, centers, and rug time for learning?**
If students can maintain at least 3 feet apart from each other (in desks and on the carpet) carpets can be returned to the classroom. Consider staggering the number of students on the rug and/or in desks to ensure social distancing.

**Can students eat snacks in the classroom?**
Yes, students can eat snacks and take mask breaks inside, but we recommend staggering these breaks if you are inside to limit the number of students unmasked and in close proximity.

**Can students share materials?**
Yes, students can share materials as long as hand hygiene is reinforced. Students must wash or use hand sanitizer on a regular basis and preferably before and after sharing instructional materials. Books no longer need to be quarantined.

**Can students sing or play wind instruments?**
Similar to last May/June similar guidance is still in place found in [Addendum 7](Revised March 2021)

**How will attendance be taken?**
We are waiting on more specific information from CSDE, but we expect to continue with multiple attendance codes in the future. More information will be provided as we receive it.

**How will students receive services per their IEP if they are quarantined?**
Students who are absent from school due to being quarantined from a pandemic are not covered in IDEA under FAPE so teachers and related service providers will provide services to the greatest extent feasible. Additional guidance is forthcoming, however through collaboration with parents, case managers, and related service providers, teams will determine the model, mode, frequency and duration of learning opportunities to support students and families through the period of quarantine. Given the students' learning strengths and needs, learning opportunities may differ for each individual student, including asynchronous or synchronous learning options.

**Will all students continue to have a district-issued device?**
Yes, all students will be issued a district device. All learners will bring their Chromebooks (issued to them last year) back and forth to school. Devices should be charged every evening.

**Will we have virtual snow days in 2021-22?**
No, as of August 2021, the CSDE has not provided an option to count a remote snow day as a student day.

We are a Seymour family and we need to help each other stay healthy. Staff and students should stay home if they feel ill, or if they have tested positive or are showing COVID-19 symptoms.

Thank you in advance for your flexibility, positivity, and focus on our staff and students' well-being. This year continues to be “unprecedented” and we recognize that guidance will continue to change throughout the year. In partnership, we will work together to stay safe and achieve our goal to have as much uninterrupted in person learning as possible.