

SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN

School Year 2020-2021

PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT



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Mission Statement

The purpose of the Portsmouth schools is to educate all students by challenging them to become thinking, responsible, contributing citizens who continue to learn throughout their lives.



Members of the Portsmouth School Reopening Task Force

Steve Zadavec, Superintendent

George Shea, Assistant Superintendent

Tara Kennedy, School Board Vice Chair

Mary Lyons, PHS Principal

Phil Davis, PMS Principal

Lisa McAllister, PHS Teacher

Cynthia Young, PHS Teacher

Chris Burke, Wellness Coordinator

Kate Callahan, DON Principal

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Ken Linchey, Facilities Director

Kristin Shaw, City Health Officer

Ellie Nevins, NFS Paraprofessional, Union President

Jill Vinciguerra, NFS Special Ed Coordinator

Nicole Owens, STA, Bus Company

Nathan Lunney, Business Administrator

Joanne Allfrey, PEEP Case Manager

Erin Bakkom, PMS Teacher, Union President

Jocelyn Garganta, PMS Teacher

Gina Connolly, LHS Music Teacher

Laurie Lebar, LHS Teacher

Karen Conway, PHS Clerical, Union President

Karen Jacoby, NFS Teacher

Deb Riso, School Nutrition Director

Introduction

The coronavirus pandemic and its global spread in 2020 has been unprecedented and impacted schools around the world. It has forced reevaluation and changes to almost all our educational practices. Our students, families, staff and community have demonstrated incredible resilience during this time. With all we have learned and given the reality we are facing for the 2020-2021 school year, the district formed a School Reopening Task Force in early May. For the last 10 weeks, the Task Force has been meeting to plan for the coming school year. We know that any plan needs to be flexible given the changing conditions of this global pandemic. While the opening of school undoubtedly has inherent risks, the planning for this school year has been focused on mitigating those risks in multiple ways.

Our Reopening plan shares the work of its 26 task members, the principles that guided this work and the phases for re-opening the Portsmouth Schools.

Guiding Principles



- **Safety first.** The safety of our students, faculty, and community is our highest priority. Public health guidance and COVID-19 data will determine the movement between phases in this framework.
- **In-person instruction.** Remote learning is not equivalent to, or a replacement for, onsite teaching and learning and students deserve the best public education we can provide when it is safe to do so.
- **Community impact.** Schools reopening is an important factor to support economic recovery as parents need the ability to work and not continue providing childcare and remote learning supports during work hours.
- **Weighing the risks.** Reopening SAU52 schools comes with risk during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to establish precautionary measures to minimize risk where possible, including asymptomatic transmission during this highly dynamic public health crisis. It is also important that families assess the level of risk that they personally are comfortable/able.
- **Framework needs to be fluid.** That means having the ability to transition from a remote learning model off-site to a phased-in approach to safely reopen our schools as we progress through the phases. It may be necessary to progress or regress through the phases as public health conditions change.
- **Teachers' capacity.** Teachers cannot be expected to plan and execute remote lessons and in-person lesson and teaching at the same time. This would be unsustainable for our staff members.
- **Equity lens.** This reopening framework must support educational equity for all students, and ensure that our most vulnerable students receive the supports necessary for their success, particularly in a remote instruction environment.

Phases of Reopening

The following chart outlines four phases of reopening. Recognizing how conditions of the pandemic may change, the phases are designed to be able to move from one phase to another with the least disruption to the continuity of student learning. Given the current general conditions, we anticipate being able to open Portsmouth Schools in Phase 3. However, this recommendation will be revisited throughout the summer if general conditions change.

| PHASE | GENERAL CONDITIONS | LEARNING ENVIRONMENT |
|--|---|--|
| Phase 1 Full Remote Learning | <i>Governor’s Stay at Home order in effect</i> <i>Significant local escalation of the pandemic</i> | Four day student week All students are home Students access learning through remote instruction only |
| Phase 2 Low Density Partial Remote | <i>Infections rising with limited capacity recommendations</i> Social distancing requirement of 6+ feet Required limits on physical capacity of classrooms and buildings Little to no physical student interaction Face masks/shields required by all students and staff indoors Screening, Hygiene and disinfecting protocols | Four day student week Teachers deliver instruction remotely Pre K – 1 st Grade in school in small cohorts Vulnerable populations receive support services and interventions in school classrooms Students for whom home is not an option, access remote learning in open school space, such as the cafeterias All remaining students access remote learning at home |
| Phase 3 In-Person with Safety Requirements (Most likely recommendation given present conditions) | <i>Infections low but present in the seacoast area.</i> Social distancing recommendation of 3-6 feet Face masks/shields required by all students and staff indoors Screening, Hygiene and disinfecting protocols Masks/face shields may be removed outside with 6+ feet distancing | Five day student week Teachers deliver instruction in person Daily class schedules close to normal with some movement modifications Limited student interaction to comply with social distancing, i.e. students sit individually not in groups Scheduled use of outdoor or alternative space to allow for movement break Remote option given to parents not comfortable sending their student to school (See Phase 3 Remote Option) |
| Phase 4 Full Return with No Restrictions | <i>No new infections</i> No social distancing recommendation No PPE required | School schedules as normal Classroom instruction with no restrictions |

Phase 3 Remote Option

If schools open in Phase 3, a remote option will be offered to parents unable or uncomfortable sending their students back to school. The remote option will be complete at-home learning, similar to last spring. Due to scheduling limitations, stand-alone online platforms (such as VLACS) may be used for middle and high school classes.

If the remote option is chosen, the student must stay with that choice until the end of the first trimester for elementary students, and the end of the first semester for middle and high school students. This is necessary to ensure we are able to plan for the appropriate numbers of students and teachers in the fall. While we want to be as flexible as possible for all families, we are unable to move students in and out of remote learning.

A survey to parents will be released on July 16th. Parents will be asked to make a choice by August 1st.

Providing PPE

While the schools will provide all cleaning supplies, as well as hand sanitizer, we do ask that **parents provide** a mask for their child before school each day. If a child does not have a mask the school will provide a disposable mask.

*** School Year Start Date ***

There will be a significant need for additional staff training and professional development to ensure a successful start to the school year. In order to build in this additional time, the first student day of school will be moved to after Labor Day, on **Wednesday, September 9th**.

Ongoing Detail Planning and Preparation

There is intensive ongoing work throughout the summer by various groups to prepare for all the specific areas of a successful school opening. This work is well underway and informed by previous parent, student and staff surveys.



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| Teaching and Learning | <p>Common student and teacher expectations for remote and hybrid learning</p> <p>Essential competencies and curriculum elements for remote learning</p> <p>Additional professional development to staff (technology platforms, project-based learning, outdoor activities, remote assessment, etc.)</p> |
| Facilities | <p>Cleaning and disinfecting protocols</p> <p>Central PPE purchasing</p> <p>Classroom spacing set up for social distancing</p> |
| Health and Nursing Protocols | <p>Screening protocol for staff and students</p> <p>Quarantine protocols</p> <p>Specialized PPE needs</p> <p>Parent information resources</p> |
| Transportation and Food Service | <p>Bus schedules and guidelines</p> <p>Breakfast and lunch procedures</p> |
| School Schedules | <p>Plan for limited movement</p> <p>Arrival and dismissal procedures to limit congregations</p> |
| Communication | <p>Parent survey on reopening plan</p> <p>Parent and school responsibilities for safety protocols</p> <p>Student and staff training on safety requirements</p> |