

## Oxford Township School District Fall 2021 Reopening Plan Frequently Asked Questions

(This document will be updated as new information and questions arise.)

**As of August 30, 2021**

### **Will my child have to wear a mask in school to begin the 2021-2022 school year?**

Yes. As of this date, Executive Order 251, states that all students, staff and visitors will be required to wear a mask while in school. We are also extending the mask requirement to the school buses. There will be mandatory mask breaks, every grade level, and every period.

### **What type of mask will staff and students be wearing during the day?**

- *What we do not wish to see worn are gaiters, scarves, handkerchiefs and other face coverings that do not serve to protect from transmission of the virus.*
- Make sure you can breathe through it
- Your nose and mouth should be covered
- Make sure your mask fits snugly against your face. Gaps can let air with respiratory droplets leak in and out around the edges of the mask.
- Pick a mask with two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric to keep your respiratory droplets in and others' out. A mask with layers will stop more respiratory droplets getting inside your mask or escaping from your mask if you are sick.
- To add layers, wear one disposable mask underneath a cloth mask. The second mask should push the edges of the inner mask against your face.
- Wash the face covering after use

### **My child is having difficulty wearing a mask. Any suggestions?**

This website link has a very helpful article on this topic:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Cloth-Face-Coverings-for-Children-During-COVID-19.aspx>

### **I do not want to have my child wear a mask at school. What are my options?**

No one here at OCS wants students and staff to wear a mask, but Executive Order 251 clearly states that this is a requirement for the school year. Parents may choose to homeschool their child. This requires a formal letter to the Chief School Administrator stating your intention to homeschool.

### **Where can I find updates on the mask requirements?**

We will send home to all registered students the most up-to-date information we have about masks. The State of New Jersey maintains the following website information as well:

<https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/reopening-guidance-and-restrictions/are-schools-open-what-are-the-safety-requirements>

**Will the District be offering child care?**

OCS will offer Child Care, both the Before School Care program and the After School Care Program. These two programs are available Monday-Friday.

Before Care will begin at 6:30am and After School Care will begin at dismissal (3:00pm). After School Care will end at 6:00pm Monday-Friday, unless otherwise advertised. Due to space limitations, students must be pre-enrolled in either program. The 2021-2022 application is available on our website:

<https://www.oxfordcentral.org/admin/files/After%20Care.%20Before%20Care%2020-21%20Application%20%20v2.pdf>

**Will there be a remote learning option for the 2021-2022 school year?**

No. Instruction will be in-person at the Oxford Central School.

**When will we know that the district may shift to full remote instruction?**

If the NJDOH Regional Risk Matrix were to shift to Red (Very High Risk) or the NJDOH determines that we have an outbreak of COVID-19, we will shift to full remote instruction. If we were in the Orange (High Risk) Level, we would shift to remote if, after consultation with the NJDOH, the case rate in Warren County was high enough to warrant a move to remote instruction.

**How does the NJDOH define an outbreak of COVID-19?**

According to the NJDOH, an outbreak is defined as two or more laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases among students or staff, with onsets within a 14-day period. The cases must also have an “epidemiological link,” meaning that in both incidents, the individual has either been exposed to a confirmed case, or has had the same exposure as a confirmed case, as defined by the CDC and the World Health Organization.

Furthermore, if the students or staff who test positive do not share a household, and were not identified as close contacts of each other in another setting during standard case investigation or contact tracing, they are part of an outbreak.

**What will the role of paraprofessionals be during the school year?**

Our dedicated paraprofessionals will be in-person during the school year. Student IEPs that include paraprofessionals will be implemented to the maximum extent possible in the context of current State guidelines for re-opening schools. Program paraprofessionals will be assigned to classrooms based on State requirements.

**Will there be a hybrid option for this school year?**

At this time, there is no plan to begin the school year with a hybrid schedule. All students will be expected to attend in-person, five days a week. The school day will begin at 8:20am and will end at 2:50pm.

**How are you maintaining social distancing? Are there barriers between the desks?**

Seating arrangements have been re-configured to ensure social distancing is achieved during instruction (i.e. spacing of desk, tables, and other furniture, transitions in the classrooms and the school will have specific traffic patterns that limit the amount of students transitioning between activities and throughout the building. Individual student desk barriers will be used in classrooms where it is appropriate.

Barriers will also be set-up in the cafeteria for lunch periods.

**What will the school bus look like to and from school?**

Parents are expected to assess their children's health each morning and keep children at home if they exhibit any COVID-19 symptoms. Parents should remain at the bus stop with their children to ensure social distancing is followed. Face masks must be worn on the school bus. Parents may decide to drive their children to school.

**How should students load the bus each day?**

Students should sit together with family members. The bus should be loaded with the first students picked up moving to the back of the bus and buckling their seat belts. The bus should always be loaded from the rear to the front. Gone is the old ritual of older students getting the back of the bus. Loading rear to the front will cut down on student contacts. When the bus arrives at the school, students will unload from the front to the rear.

**What if my child is supposed to ride the bus, but I would rather provide my own transportation?**

Children who live at bussing addresses may ride to and from the school with their parents or supervising adult. If you live at a bussing address and you choose to provide your own personal transportation instead of the bus, there will be a form to complete. This will allow us to ensure those who should be riding the bus and in an emergency will help us to account for the students.

**Will students have separate entrances when they arrive at school?**

Yes, Students will be entering the building using different doors (the same doors we used last school year):

Preschool/ Pre-Kindergarten, Grades 4 and 5 students will enter via the main entrance.

Grades 1-3 students will use Door J, under the portico on the Church Street side of the building.

Grades 6-8 students will use Door K, along the Church Street side of the school.

**What happens when my child arrives at school?**

Upon entry to the school, students will have their temperatures checked by staff. Any student who has a temperature of 100.4 or above will be isolated until a family member can be reached. Students will also sanitize their hands.

**If a student is not able to wear a mask, what should I do?**

As of this date, New Jersey Executive Order 251 and current CDC guidelines specify cloth masks for all students and staff, unless there are stipulations where a cloth mask is not possible to wear. In that case a face shield should be worn!

If a student has a documented medical condition, a note from their physician and/or a disability, which excludes the student from the requirement of wearing a face mask, the parent should reach out to their case manager so we can make the appropriate exemptions and arrange for them to be in school in a safe manner.

**Will the school provide masks and hand sanitizer?**

OCS **will not** provide cloth masks for students. Just as we did last school year, we feel this will allow students to choose and wear their own masks that follow CDC guidelines and will be comfortable for them to wear when at school. A student who is medically excluded or whose disability excludes the student from wearing a cloth mask, will be provided with a face shield. Each classroom will have hand sanitizer and there will be five hand sanitizer stations for students when they arrive to school and before they depart for the day. All face coverings must follow our student dress code policy.

**Will there be mask breaks?**

Students will have mandatory mask breaks during the day. While seated during snack or lunch, they may remove their mask.

**Are there times when students will not wear masks?**

Yes. Students will not be required to wear masks during some components of Physical Education classes, recess and during mask breaks. Depending on the weather and temperatures, mask mandates could be modified; however, since we are a fully air-conditioned building, masks can be comfortably worn in school.

**If a student or staff member gets sick while they are in school, is there a place for them to isolate until they can be picked up?**

Yes. We will have a designated isolation area to keep anyone ill safe, and to keep others away from them. This isolation office will not be in the nurse's office, so that any other student needing services or assistance can still enter the nurse's office.

**Are the children and staff going to be asked if anyone in the household has COVID-19 or pending COVID-19 testing?**

Last year we required a daily health screening, however, this year we will not require this UNLESS conditions in Warren County and New Jersey get worse. Student and staff temperatures will be assessed upon arrival. It is vitally important to the safety of all individuals that any knowledge of potential exposure to COVID-19 be disclosed to the school. Please contact the school nurse, 908-453-4101, x2106.

**How will social distancing be maintained in the hallways and during arrival and dismissal?**

Student movement in the halls will be closely monitored and limited. We will mark hallways to provide guidance to students as they move in the hallway, as well as place signage, as appropriate, to assist with hallway movements.

**Will the bathroom be available for use and how will sanitary conditions be maintained?**

Our custodial team will have an increased rotation to enable higher frequency cleaning of bathrooms during the day. Students will need to maintain good hygiene, hand washing, and the wearing of face coverings to maximize safety. Additionally, hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms. All student bathrooms will be open for daily use and bathrooms will be inspected on a regular basis.

**How will wearing face masks be enforced?**

Face coverings have been mandated. We will need to teach students of all grade levels the importance of wearing a face covering. Parents will also need to teach their children the importance of wearing face coverings, as well as building up a student's capacity to wear them. Ultimately, students that fail to comply with requirements could result in loss of in-person instruction or disciplinary action. There may be individual student circumstances where medical, IEP or 504 Plan accommodations override the ability to wear a face covering. In such cases, a medical note from their physician will be required and accommodations will need to be considered.

**Will students change classrooms every period?**

At the middle school level (grades 5-8), we are currently planning for students to follow their typical schedule, however, movement between periods will be limited. Protocols such as hallway markings and monitoring the hallways will minimize student contact in the hallways. Middle school students will move to teacher's classrooms, following a schedule for movement in the hallways. The elementary grades will see much greater limitations in hallway movement due to the assignment to a specific classroom. Movement to special area classes will be allowed. Lockers will be utilized and student movement to the lockers will be scheduled and monitored. Locker use will be set up after the first week of school.

**We are concerned about the increased risk of COVID-19 transmission during any activity that elevates breathing rates. If you will be holding gym classes, and our children attend in person, can we opt out of gym?**

For all students, Physical Education class attendance will be required in all grades. Classes will be held in person and outdoors whenever possible. Students seeking a medical exclusion would be determined by a medical note from their physician. All Physical Education classes will be conducted with social distancing requirements and students will be utilizing hand sanitizer/hand washing both before and after class. There will be limited sharing of equipment and any shared equipment will be disinfected after use. Based on activities, masks may be warranted when physical distancing is less than six feet. Every effort will be made to structure activities and the PE environment to provide optimum class time without masks. However, students will be reminded of proper social distancing.

**What happens if a student in the class, teacher, or someone who has been in contact with our child tests positive? Does the school close? Are we instructed to quarantine?**

We continue to work closely with the Warren County Health Department to determine what actions are necessary if a student or staff member becomes ill with COVID-19. Contact tracing and safety protocols will determine the extent of closure and notification.

As of this date:

During Low and/or Moderate Risk Levels as measured on the NJDOH Regional Risk Matrix:

Vaccinated people who do not exhibit symptoms do not have to quarantine.

Non-vaccinated people should quarantine for 10 days

During High Risk Levels:

Vaccinated people who do not exhibit symptoms do not have to quarantine.

Non-vaccinated people should quarantine for 14 days.

However, due to the close proximity of students and staff and the reality that siblings and families could be impacted, the chance of a quick closure of classrooms and/or school to ensure safety is possible. Parents need to be prepared to have their children home on remote learning in the event a quarantine is advised.

**Is there a place I can look to find the most current information about school plans, COVID-19 updates and online remote learning?**

The Oxford Central School website links will provide the most current information.

Please see <https://www.oxfordcentral.org/corona-virus.php>

**Where can I find COVID-19 information from the state?**

**[Are Schools Open?](#)**

**Kids being kids, it is difficult to maintain social distancing, enforce wearing face coverings, and hand sanitizers protocols, etc. How will these situations be handled?**

We have a collective responsibility to one another to uphold and adhere to these requirements. Staff members will reinforce this responsibility in school and we are encouraging parents to help us reinforce these responsibilities as well.

**What precautions are taken to make sure the facility is well-ventilated as well as being sanitized?**

We are following the recommendations of the CDC and NJ Department of Health regarding ventilation and sanitation. Our facility team is currently updating our cleaning protocols and HVAC maintenance and filter schedules. Our HVAC systems are designed according to the standards of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) to provide proper ventilation and exchange of air. This may include the introduction of additional fresh air from the outside. We are

also upgrading the HVAC controls to help us continue to provide the best air we can breathe!

**What if I change my mind about homeschooling and decide to re-enroll my child?**

Students will be re-admitted at the start of the next marking period.

**Will there be further guidance coming out about school and COVID-19?**

The NJDOE and the NJDOH are expected to issue guidance on isolation and quarantining in the next week.

**Will lunch be available?**

Yes! Lunch will be available FREE to every student who orders lunch. This option will be available every day that school is in session. This option will be available for the entire 2021-2022 school year. Students may still pack a lunch to eat at school.

**What about snack?**

In grades where we have historically had snack, this will continue. The classroom teacher will provide further details on appropriate healthy snacks and the snack time for your child.

**Will the water fountains be available?**

We will only be using water bottle filling stations. Students should come to school as they did last year with a refillable water bottle. This was a challenge for many of our middle school students last year.

**Is this plan for the entire school year?**

Yes, this is the current plan for the entire school year. However, the plan could change with a moment's notice. If the Governor decides to close schools, the entire plan will be re-evaluated. Determining what is working or what needs to be revised is a key element of the reopening plan.

**If students have to quarantine, what happens?**

If we are in a position where multiple unvaccinated close contacts need to quarantine, remote learning will be put in place.

**Do I have to quarantine my children if we travel outside of New Jersey?**

We will closely monitor the guidance from the NJDOH and the NJDOE. There are currently no travel restrictions.

Domestic Travel: As of this date, according to the CDC, unvaccinated individuals who do travel should get tested 1-3 days before their trip, 3-5 days after travel, and stay home and self-quarantine for 7 days after domestic travel. **With the Regional Risk Matrix in Yellow (Moderate Risk), OCS will use a 10 day quarantine period.**

For those traveling to New Jersey, domestic travel is defined as lasting 24 hours or longer to states or US territories *other than those connected to New Jersey, such as Pennsylvania, New York, and Delaware.*

International Travel: <https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/travel-and-transportation/are-there-travel-restrictions-to-or-from-new-jersey>

**Will there be clubs and other after school activities?**

Yes. We are still planning to continue with our clubs and activities.

**What about Chromebook insurance and Chromebooks?**

All students in grades 3-8 will be issued a district Chromebook. The annual insurance is \$20.00 and covers accidents. It does not cover student damage and misuse. Students in grades 3-8 should also have a Chromebook cover that covers a standard 11.5-inch Chromebook. Students in KG-2 will have in-class access to Chromebooks.

**Will students in grades 6-8 be changing for Physical Education classes?**

Yes. They will be changing. Gym uniforms will be worn and a link to order the uniform from Abilities was provided. The link is:

[http://www.abilitiesonlinestore.com/index.php?route=product/category&path=69\\_117](http://www.abilitiesonlinestore.com/index.php?route=product/category&path=69_117)

The cost will be \$18.25 for the uniform.

**Will the playground be used and will there be recess?**

Yes and Yes.

**We are planning a trip to South Carolina during school. What happened when we return?**

According to the CDC, unvaccinated individuals who do travel should get tested 1-3 days before their trip, 3-5 days after travel, and stay home and self-quarantine for 10 days after domestic travel.

Upon return, families should follow the guidance. Teachers will be in touch with activities and lessons that would be missed. *There would not be full, remote synchronous lessons during quarantine.* Lessons would be provided by the teacher to be completed while at home.

**What if my child has to quarantine?**

As of this date, a student who is forced to quarantine by directive of the school due to illness will be considered for home instruction and asynchronous lessons will be provided for the student. *Home instruction, when needed, will be conducted remotely.*

**Will there be benchmark/ state assessments this school year?**

Yes. Here at OCS we will utilize the New Jersey Start Strong assessments to start the school year. These assessments will help us identify weaknesses and strengths and allow us to modify programs for our students. The window for these assessments is



September 13 to October 22. They are given in grades 4-8. The assessments are scheduled as part of the typical Language Arts, Math and Science periods. Science assessments are given in grade six.

Linkit benchmarks will be completed in grade 3 to start the school year and all students will take a mid-year assessment so we can continue to monitor student progress.

Results will be shared with parents.

The New Jersey Student Learning Standards assessments will be given in the spring.

We will provide more information about these assessments during the school year.

**Will the classes be going on field trips this year?**

That is the plan as of this date. However, the availability of field trips may change based on restrictions imposed by museums, theaters, parks, etc....