https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Digest/Superintendents-Digest


www.ct.sde/sde/schoolnurse

https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/School-Nursing/School-Nursing/Documents
The following is an executive summary of the plan to be provided for Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) as they begin planning for the fall.

Due to positive containment efforts in Connecticut, reopening schools in person can be successfully achieved based upon current data. Connecticut has determined it is appropriate to plan a consistent approach to the operating model (schedule), but be prepared to modify plans as necessary. Maximizing in-person instructional time after the current period of disruption is critical. However, given the uncertainty planning for reopening months from now, schools must be prepared to modify their reopening model to support a partial reopening if the public health data changes.

FALL REOPENING MODEL:
LEAs should plan to have all students, in all districts, return to schoolhouses for full-time instruction at the beginning of 2020-2021, so long as public health data continues to support this model. This model will be supported with more intensive mitigation strategies and specific monitoring, containment and class cancellation plans.

As Connecticut schools plan to reopen, the guidance and considerations outlined in this document are grounded in six guiding principles:

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

Main Operational Considerations

Cohorting:
Emphasize grouping students by the same class/group of students and teacher (into a cohort) so each team functions independently as much as possible. Consider this methodology by grade levels. Placing students in cohorts is strongly encouraged for grades K-8, and encouraged where feasible for grades 9-12.

Social Distancing and Facilities:
Review building space and reconfigure available classroom space, such as gymnasiaums and auditoriums, to maximize social distancing, consistent with public health guidelines in place at that time.

Transportation:
Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) should plan for buses to operate close to capacity with heightened health and safety protocols, including requiring all students and operators wear face coverings. Plans must be developed to activate increased social distancing protocols based upon community spread.

Face Coverings:
All staff and students will be expected to wear a protective face covering or face mask that completely covers the nose and mouth when inside the school building, except for certain exceptions including when teachers are providing instruction.
Connecticut State Department of Education

Adapt, Advance, Achieve:
Connecticut’s Plan to Learn and Grow Together

@EducateCT
@CTDepartmentOfEducation
We are in a health pandemic and education emergency

Health and safety, as well as access and equity must inform our efforts

Developing a plan required input
- Over 23,000 citizens
- Over 16,000 students
- ReOpen Task Force
- Regional Advisory Teams

What we consistently heard:
- Emotional well-being must be considered
- Schools are a structured, safe place in many cases
- Students missed school
Guiding Principles

• Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff;

• Allowing *all students* the opportunity to return into school *full time* starting in the fall;

• *Monitoring the school, students, and staff* and, when necessary, potentially canceling classes in the future to appropriately contain COVID-19 spread;

• *Emphasizing equity, access*, to support the students and communities who are emerging from this historic disruption;

• Fostering *strong two-way communication* with partners; and

• Factoring the *physical safety, social-emotional well-being, and the mental health needs* of our students when they are not in school.
Operational Considerations

- Districts should plan for fall reopening with in-school return for all students, every day.

- Health and safety guidance protocols and infection mitigation strategies will be emphasized:
  - Maximize Social Distancing
  - Frequent hand washing/use of hand sanitizer
  - Face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth
  - Enhanced cleaning/disinfection of spaces/surfaces

- Plan subject to change based on developing health conditions
CLASSROOMS
• Cohorting
  - Strongly encouraged, Grades K–8
  - Encouraged where feasible, Grades 9–12
• Maximize social distancing
• Facial coverings – mandatory for staff and students during school day when inside the school building
• Frequent handwashing
• Enhanced cleaning

BUSES
• Facial coverings – mandatory for drivers and students
• Monitors encouraged for fall, particularly for younger grades
• Social distancing activated based on COVID community spread
  ▪ No Spread
    Full Capacity
  ▪ Minimal Spread
    Full Capacity, Heightened Health & Safety Protocols
  ▪ Moderate Spread
    Reduced Capacity and Social distancing
Ramping Up, Ramping Down

- **CT data trends positively**: we can plan optimistically for fall reopening
- Districts should prepare plans for **full reopening**
- Alternative plans should be prepared (hybrid model with fewer students and enhanced remote learning) in the event of future increases in community spread
- COVID-19 **Community Spread** will determine Ramp Down to promote health and safety regionally and throughout CT
• This is the **first step** to reopening
• Plans will change based on **COVID spread** (or developing health conditions)
• **Flexibility** will be the only constant
• **Comprehensive Plan details** will be publicly released Monday
• **Updates & supplements** will be informed with input from partners

**CT students deserve the best opportunity for success!**
June 17, 2020

Dear School Superintendents, Medical Advisors, School Nurses and Supervisors:

Even as the Covid-19 pandemic continues, immunizations remain critical in protecting students from vaccine preventable diseases. The purpose of this letter is to underscore the need for all students to be up to date on their immunizations when school starts in the fall of 2020.

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in sharp declines in outpatient pediatric visits and fewer vaccine doses being administered, leaving children at risk for vaccine-preventable diseases. The Connecticut Immunization Program surveyed pediatric vaccine providers to determine whether a grace period should be considered for immunization required for the start of school this fall. Based on the responses from the survey and from discussions with other state and federal partners, the Immunization Program has decided that it is in the best interest of all students to be up to date on their immunizations for the start of school, and that catch up of children who are overdue for vaccines is logistically feasible.

Ensuring that immunization services are maintained or reinitiated is essential for protecting students and communities from vaccine-preventable diseases and outbreaks and reducing the burden of respiratory illness during the upcoming influenza season. If parents and/or caregivers express concerns about potentially exposing their children to COVID-19 during healthcare visits, they may be reassured to know that many healthcare providers have made changes to routine immunization services to deliver vaccines more safely by minimizing the chance of exposures to ill children during immunization visits. Parents or caregivers of students who are in need of immunizations should contact their primary care physician, community health center, local health department, or school-based health center to schedule a visit, and discuss any concerns they may have with their healthcare providers.

Additionally, beginning July 1st, the State Immunization Program will be providing influenza vaccine to all children at no cost regardless of insurance status through age 18. Influenza vaccine is expected to begin arriving during August, and the Immunization Program is encouraging healthcare providers to begin vaccinating as soon as possible. This fall more than ever it is imperative that students and staff receive influenza vaccine. Infectious disease experts have warned of influenza and covid-19 circulating simultaneously this winter, which raises
Concern that healthcare resources could once again be overwhelmed. Influenza vaccine is one of the greatest tools we have to minimize the impact of this double threat.

At the end of this letter are some helpful links about the delivery of immunization services during Covid-19. Thank you for all the hard work you do to educate our children and your continued partnership to ensure their good health and safety.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please contact the Department of Public Health’s Immunization Program at 860-509-7929 or via email at dph.immunizations@ct.gov.

Sincerely,

Kathy Kudish, DVM, MSPH
Immunization Program Manager and Deputy State Public Health Veterinarian

- A collection of federal resources designed to guide safe vaccine planning during Covid-19: https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pandemic-guidance/index.html (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Commissioner of Education

DATE: June 26, 2020

SUBJECT: Health Assessments for 2020-2021 School Year

Local and regional boards of education must require each pupil enrolled in the public schools to have a health assessment (routine physical) prior to public school enrollment, as well as in either grade six or grade seven, and again in either grade nine or grade ten, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 10-206. The health assessment requirement is an important element in ensuring a healthy and safe school learning environment.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) understands that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, "well" child appointments with qualified health care practitioners have been subject to cancellation and may be limited in availability prior to and during the 2020-2021 school year. Due to the unavailability of appointments, there may be barriers for a child to obtain a required health assessment even if the child's parents or guardians make every attempt to schedule the health assessment.

Boards are permitted to deny attendance to a child who fails to obtain the required health assessments. However, during the 2020-2021 school year given the unavailability of appointments due to the pandemic, boards are encouraged to prioritize keeping students in school where possible. Being present in the classroom is especially important this year due to the cancellation of classes this spring. When appropriate, boards should work with parents and guardians to have an appointment scheduled as soon as possible rather than deny attendance. Boards should also review their internal policies and consult with board counsel regarding the flexibility allowed for in the statute, since it provides a range of grades during which assessments are required.

On June 19, the CSDE provided superintendents with immunization guidance issued by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) for the 2020-2021 school year. That memorandum, which includes information on the State Immunization Program and the availability of influenza vaccines for children, can also be found at: https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Digest/Superintendents-Digest.

If you have questions regarding any of the above information please feel free to contact Stephanie Knutson, School Nurse Consultant at stephanie.knutson@ct.gov.