



RSU 16

Return to School 2021-22

Introduction

For our schools, the COVID-19 pandemic began on March 14, 2020. In a matter of days, our support staff, teachers and leaders switched from a 100+ year old traditional model of face-to-face teaching to teaching in a fully virtual environment. It wasn't perfect, but between March 14, 2020 - June 13, 2020 RSU 16 operated in a fully remote learning model that provided the skills needed for our students to successfully complete the 2019-20 school year.

In the fall of 2020, RSU 16 was tasked with reopening school facilities and providing classroom-based instruction and school-based programming in the wake of and in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Students in grades K-12 attended school throughout the course of the 2020-21 School Year under our hybrid learning plan which offered 2-3 days per week of face-to-face instruction for all students as well as fully remote learning for students who were at severe risk of illness from COVID-19.

For the Fall of 2021, RSU 16 is tasked to open in a full five day per week model across grades K-12 even as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic as a community, state, nation, and globally.

In order to ensure the safety and well-being of all students, staff and visitors to the schools, this 2021-22 Return to School Plan will be used to guide decisions regarding the opening of our schools and how our educational models may adjust throughout the course of the year to address the continued, and often unforeseen, pandemic related issues as they arise.

This plan was approved by the RSU 16 School Board on August 9, 2021.

Planning Assumptions

1. The virus that causes COVID-19 will remain in circulation during the 2021-22 school year.
2. Adults and children ages 12+ have the ability to become vaccinated prior to the beginning of the 2021-22 school year.
3. Approximately 82% of RSU 16 Staff are vaccinated from COVID-19.
4. Children under 12 years of age will not have access to COVID-19 vaccinations until after the 2021-22 school year begins.
5. Improvements in understanding the virus and in testing will allow public health officials to act with greater precision when taking steps to slow the rate of infection.

6. Schools will remain one of the safest places for children and staff to be to prevent the spread of COVID-19 due to continued emphasis and enforcement of key safety protocols such as:
 - a. Parents/families and staff will complete the [pre-screening health screening tool](#) each morning before boarding buses or being dropped off at school.
 - b. Frequent hand washing and sanitizing practices.
 - c. Maintenance of physical distancing rules when possible.
 - d. Pooled Testing - Pooling can test 25 people using one test. All students in a class, pod, or cohort swab their own noses and place their swabs in a single tube (that's the pooling step). The samples in that tube are then run as a single sample, using one test. [See it in action here.](#)
7. [Current Maine](#) Department of Education (MDOE) guidance will be utilized this fall. It is anticipated that changes will be made to these guidelines by the MDOE over the course of the summer.
8. The School Board will revisit the plan at their monthly School Board meeting.
9. COVID-19 vaccine remains widely available across the state. To find a vaccination location, go to www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines/vaccination-sites or call the Community Vaccination Line at 1-888-445-4111. *“Vaccination is our best shot to slow the spread of COVID-19, including variants that continue to cause serious illness and death,” said Jeanne Lambrew, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, and Nirav D. Shah, Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. “We continue to strongly urge all Maine people to get their shot to protect themselves and keep people safe. As the U.S. CDC has noted, vaccination is our best route out of this pandemic and this new guidance serves as a reminder that we must continue to take the threat of this virus seriously.”*

This plan was developed with the overarching goal of providing engaging and rigorous instruction to all RSU 16 students.

- RSU 16 believes strongly that the **best instructional environment for students to learn is offered in our classrooms.**
- We are planning for all schools across grades PreK-12 to open with 5 days a week of instruction (4 half days as usual for our PreK program) for all students following our normal school hours per the [approved calendar](#).
- RSU 16 will be offering a fully remote learning program (ReeL) to only those students in **K-6** who are determined to be medically unable to attend school in person due to the risk of exposure to COVID 19 because a vaccine is not yet available for children age 2-11. RSU 16's remote learning program will only last the 2021 - 2022 school year. It will not extend beyond that.
- We will continue to follow all current and future Maine Department of Education and Maine Center Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance by updating our Return to School plan.
- Physical distancing of 3 feet is strongly recommended when possible for PreK-12 schools and adult education programs.
- Schools will be strongly encouraged to participate in the pooled testing program to protect those students for whom a COVID-19 vaccine has not yet been authorized. RSU 16 will participate in pooled testing in the fall. More details about pooled testing, including how parents give consent, will be in future updates.
- We will continue our social-emotional, academic and instructional focus for accelerated student

learning, with hiring 7.5 additional staff using ESSER 3 funds. Also, given we are unable to predict the future, we want to make sure we continue to be prepared to meet whatever changing conditions may occur until we are sure the pandemic is finally over.

- The State of Maine will follow the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (U.S. CDC) updated [face covering guidance](#), which **recommends** that: all people, regardless of vaccination status, wear face coverings in indoor, public settings in areas with “substantial” or “high” levels of community transmission ([map](#) to show transmission); and all teachers, staff, and students in K-12 schools wear face coverings, regardless of vaccination status or community transmission level. Consistent with Maine’s recent approach to COVID-19-related policy and the expiration of the State of Civil Emergency, these changes are recommendations, not requirements.
- All staff and students in grades PreK-12 will be required to wear a mask. This requirement will be reviewed each month at the School Board meeting. (School Board - December 13, 2021)
- Per the US CDC [order](#) related to transportation, **all people** on public or private school-provided transport, including buses and vans, are required to wear a mask regardless of vaccination status. [How to Wear and Take Off Your Mask](#) and [Your Guide to Masks](#)
- Vaccinated staff or students who are deemed a close contact to a positive case and who are asymptomatic (showing no symptoms) are not required to quarantine. Please make sure your vaccination record is on file with the school nurse.
- We anticipate that our youngest students, ages 4-11, will not have access to approved COVID-19 vaccine(s) until Fall.
- The Maine CDC’s Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for responding to COVID-19 cases in schools will continue to be required for schools to follow. As updates are made, we will notify the community at large and the updated document will be available on the same website, [found here](#).
- Under the Department of Health and Human Services Declaration of Public Health Emergency (July 28), RSU 16 will comply with the requirement for school administrative units to report the rates of COVID-19 vaccination among school staff serving students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12.

*“Getting all students back in **classrooms** full time this fall will be possible with vaccination progress and tools like pooled COVID-19 testing,” said Jeanne Lambrew, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services.*

*“Schools have worked tirelessly all year to safely provide for the academic, nutritional and social emotional needs of their students, and will welcome these next steps toward a **return to business as usual**,” said Pender Makin, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Education. “While we still have students who will return to school this summer or in the fall who are not yet eligible for vaccination, the lessons learned from this school year, along with additional safety options such as pooled testing, will ensure a healthy and joyful return to the classrooms.”*

*“**Classroom instruction** is critical for the social and mental development of our kids,” said Governor Janet Mills. “School administrators and teachers have worked hard all year to protect their students from the virus, provide them with a good education, and meet many of their other needs. With the progress we’ve made in vaccinating Maine people, we want to make sure that there are no barriers to getting our kids **back into the classroom full-time**.”*

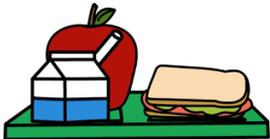
*“We can and we must open schools this fall, full time,” President Biden said in remarks from the East Room of the White House on combating the pandemic. “It’s better for our children’s mental and emotional well being, and **we can’t afford another year out of the classroom**. Every school should be open, and we’re giving them the tools to be able to do so safely.”*

RSU 16’s Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services/Return to School Plan

This plan is available on our website, www.rsu16.org

Transportation	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity will be two students per seat to the greatest extent possible. - All buses and vans will operate daily for regular morning and afternoon runs across grades PreK-12. - Electronic forms will be sent by email to families, July 30, to enable students to opt into RSU 16 transportation. Only those students who opt into RSU 16 transportation will be assigned to routes. - Daycare/Alternate Transportation Request Forms are available from school offices and from our transportation director, Fred Barlow (fbarlow@rsu16.org). This hard-copy form must be received on or before August 6, for all transportation that will begin on the first day of classes. All forms from previous school years have expired. (Link to form) - Important: Submitting an online form for opting into transportation is mandatory. Choosing to request a Daycare/Alternate Transportation location and submitting that hard-copy form is optional. - Full schedule of co-curricular trips. - Multiple windows will remain open on each school vehicle (two up front, 2 in back). If inclement weather, several windows can be cracked open (1-inch) to maintain air flow. - Students must sanitize hands when boarding the school vehicle. - Parent Pick up and Drop off procedures (such as DriveLine at the elementary level) will be established and communicated by the school. - Per the US CDC order related to transportation, all people on public or private school-provided transport, including buses and vans, are required to wear a mask regardless of vaccination status.
Facilities Sanitization	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasis will be placed on students/staff sanitizing hands when entering/leaving spaces frequently. Proper handwashing guidelines - Common touch surfaces will be treated as they were in the previous school year. - Emphasis will be placed on students/staff sanitizing hands when going to and coming from the playground.
Facilities	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lockers and cubbies may be used. - Water fountains may be used. - All regular facility use may resume. - Individuals/Organizations using school facilities must follow all applicable and up to date safety protocols as required by Maine Department of Education and

	<p>Maine Center for Disease Control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students/staff will sanitize hands upon entering rooms. - Physical distancing will not be required, although when eating physical distancing will be strongly encouraged.
Facilities Maintenance	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain PPE, Cleaning and Sanitizing inventory. - Continue to improve and maintain ventilation and air circulation. - Maintain appropriate signage at all schools as needed for hand sanitizing, traffic flow, etc. - Plexiglass barriers may continue to be used as needed or requested.
Classrooms and Teaching Spaces	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As long as these hard-surfaced items have a direct tie to teaching and learning: kidney tables and easels may be returned. - Classroom manipulatives and books do not need to be cleaned, quarantined and/or sanitized after every use. Ensure that students use hand sanitizer before use. - When it is possible, students should maintain a physical distance of 3 feet; therefore classrooms should prioritize spacing of desks.
Technology	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Redistribute appropriate 1:1 devices to all students across grades PreK-8. Grades 9-12 already have their devices. - Devices will be assigned 1:1 to students so sharing of devices will be discouraged. - K-6 devices will remain at school until 4 snow days have elapsed or special permission has been given by the school principal. - <u>Policy Code: IJNDB-R</u>: <i>Students and their families are responsible for the proper care of technology devices at all times, whether on or off school property. Due to the high cost of repairs, Regional School Unit 16 requires a non-refundable, annual technology device use fee of \$20.00. This use fee is not insurance. This fee will cover replacement costs and/or repair costs for damages not covered by the technology device warranty with the exception of negligence. Negligence is defined as failure to exercise the care that a reasonably prudent person would exercise in like circumstances. Students that would qualify free and/or reduced lunch will pay \$10. Repair fees incurred due to negligence* will be billed to the parent at \$100 per incident. The repair fee is not insurance. *The principal will make this determination after investigating how the damage occurred.</i>

School Nutrition	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School meals (breakfast & lunch) will be provided at no charge to all students. - Ala carte will be available at WMS/PRHS. Ala carte items (WMS/PRHS) can be purchased with either cash or money in the students account. Ala Carte items can not be charged. - Salad bars at all schools and sandwich bar (WMS/PRHS) will be phased in during the school year. - School cafeteria will be open. Seating charts will be maintained. - Trays will return. Silverware will be wrapped and real silverware will be phased in. - ReeL students will have access to a five day meal plan that will be picked up by a family at PRHS. Date and time to TBA. - www.SchoolLunchApp.com - opens 7/30/21 <p>Why are we asking all families to complete the Meal Application Form if meals are no charge?</p> <p>By completing the Meal Benefit Application, you are directly investing in your child’s education and the children and families in your community.</p> <p>Specific programs that are funded by the data collected from Meal Benefit Application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Title 1 schools ● Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA) ● Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) ● Essential Programs and Services (EPS) funding allocated directly to Maine Schools through the Maine Department of Education (State funding) ● Before/After School Programs ● Summer School Programs ● Special academic programming, and grant opportunities initiated by the Maine Department of Education (DOE) ● Teacher student loan forgiveness

Online Platforms



- There may be times during which individual students, classrooms, or entire teams may need to quarantine due to close contacts. The school principal will communicate next steps when/if this occurs.
- The following communication tools/platforms will be utilized to communicate expectations & assignments to students and families:
 - Seesaw - PreK-6
 - Google Classroom - 5-12
 - Google Meets and/or Zoom will be used for video conferencing as needed.

**Co-Curricular,
Field Trips,
Volunteers,
Classroom
Speakers**



- All co-curricular activities will fully return in the fall.
- All guidelines and recommendations will be followed.
- Given the uptick in COVID-19 cases in the state and regionally, it is premature to allow field trips at this point in time. No field trips should take place at this time.
- Volunteers, who are an integral and regular part of school operation (café/recess monitors, office helpers, classroom volunteers with a regular, defined academic role), can be allowed, as long as they provide one of the following: 1.) proof of full vaccination, 2.) participate in weekly pooled testing at the school or 3.) provide a negative antigen or PCR negative test result done within 24 hours prior to their volunteering. Home tests are not accepted. Volunteers are required to comply with the masking, social distancing, and hand sanitizing requirements. They will sign in and out of buildings and rooms as they may be identified as a close contact. Volunteers that are not an integral and not a regular part of the school's operation (drop-ins, one-time visits) are not allowed at this time, during school hours. (School Board - November 8, 2021)
- Classroom speakers can be an important classroom augmentation to everyday instruction and can be essential to the continued development of our children. Classroom speakers will be allowed in our school, as long as they are vaccinated, are complying with the schools masking, social distancing (preferably 6ft) and hand sanitizing requirements. It is preferred, not mandatory, for the classroom speaker to deliver the presentation outdoors.
- The above guidance will be reviewed at a later date or when conditions change requiring a revisit of the guidance.

<p>School Nurse and Health Services</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medical Isolation rooms will continue to exist and be utilized as needed for students/staff who may be experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. - Nurses will monitor return to school processes for students/staff who are returning to school after having been out due to illness associated with COVID-19. - Nurses will provide guidance to school administration in identification of close contacts when positive cases associated with the school are identified. - Health Services will continue to provide all other typical services to students such as distribution of approved medications, monitoring of student health, etc. - Parents/families and staff will complete the pre-screening health screening tool each morning before boarding buses or being dropped off at school. - The Maine CDC’s Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for responding to COVID-19 cases in schools will continue to be required for schools to follow. As updates are made, we will notify the community at large and the updated document will be available on the same website, found here. <p><u>SARA ALERT:</u></p> <p>What will I see when I get a Sara Alert notice?</p> <p>Sample Script for Obtaining Sara Alert Consent</p>
<p>Pooled Testing</p>	
<p>In RSU 16, we seek to maintain a safe environment for employees, students, families, and the community. To support those goals, we have partnered with Concentric by Ginkgo to provide an optional and free pooled testing program.</p> <p>The Goal: Keeping children in school full-time, safely and successfully in the fall of 2021 requires that we know about and respond to the potential spread of COVID 19 in schools. While vaccines are the best protection, more Maine people must get vaccinated to reach herd immunity, vaccines are not yet available to all children, and variants make COVID 19 unpredictable. Pooled testing offers the most efficient way to know about and limit COVID 19 in schools.</p> <p>The Tool: What is pooled testing?</p> <p>Pooled testing combines a whole group’s tests (5-25 individuals) into one ‘pool’ instead of testing everyone individually. Because pool participants get tested for COVID 19 weekly, they do not need to quarantine <i>from school</i> even if they are considered the close contact of another, school-related COVID-positive case. The whole process takes about 15 minutes per week.</p> <p>If all individuals in the pool are negative, the pooled PCR test will come back negative and nothing further is required. If an individual in the pool is positive, the pool test result will be positive and pool members will be tested with Binax NOW Antigen tests to follow up. Meanwhile, pool members do not need to isolate unless their individual tests return positive or they are symptomatic. On average, about 1% of the pools require follow up because of a positive result.</p> <p>Pooled testing will also cut down on the number of individuals involved in contact tracing. Students who do not participate in pooled testing who are identified as close contacts must be quarantined.</p>	

How it works: Pooled COVID-19 testing offers school staff, students, and families more certainty about their school and work schedules because participants do not have to quarantine. Pooled testing also increases confidence in children’s safety at school because it provides a better understanding of COVID-related risks.

- Unlike other COVID-19 tests, pooled testing offers less disruption from in-person learning and on-site work. (Non-participating students still have to quarantine when exposed to COVID-19.)
- It reduces the likelihood of school transmission by supporting prompt isolation of any positive individuals
- It maintains the confidentiality of participating students (pooled samples are not labeled with student names)
- Having testing in place ahead of potential COVID-19 surges will help a school cope more effectively with community transmission

Adult Education	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adult Education follows the guidelines, recommendations and safety protocols of the district.

Staff Procedures for Sick Leave	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It will be expected that staff who wish to get vaccinated will become vaccinated against COVID-19 before the start of the school year. - There will be no additional leave granted for COVID quarantine time or COVID illness time. Staff will be required to utilize their existing sick leave. If you run out of sick leave, then it will be unpaid (sick bank is not available). - If staff/students are vaccinated they do not need to quarantine for 10 days if they are a close contact. - If staff are asked by a supervisor to work from home, they will be paid for hours worked. This time must be approved by a supervisor.
<u>Expectations For Those Traveling Out of State:</u>	<p>Please follow any current state guidance regarding travel out of state using the link provided:</p> <p>https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus/travel.shtml</p>

RSU 16 will continue to make summary information related to COVID-19 publicly accessible every two weeks, including opportunities for vaccinations. If you would like daily information, our COVID-19 dashboard will be updated daily. It is located on our website or go to this link <https://www.rsu16.org/about/covid-dashboard>. The dashboard data is only able to be seen using a computer or tablet.

Fully Remote Instructional Program will be called ReeL

Remote eLearning School (ReeL)

2021-2022 School Year



RSU 16 believes strongly that the **best instructional environment for students to learn is offered in our classrooms**. We are excited about our ability to open schools in the Fall of 2021 to full 5 day per week in-person programming for our students across grades PreK-12. RSU 16 recognizes, however, that there will be a few students who will not be able to access in-person learning for the 2021-22 school year due to not having access to a vaccine because of age and a compromising medical condition(s) that warrants minimizing exposure to COVID 19. Because of this, we will be offering a fully remote learning program to only those students in **K-6** who are determined to be medically unable to attend school in person due to the risk of exposure to COVID 19 because a vaccine is not yet available for children age 2-11. RSU 16's remote learning program will only last the 2021 - 2022 school year. It will not extend beyond that.

This consideration will be made through either the hometown school's Response To Intervention (RTI) team, 504 Team, or Special Education (IEP) Team after a referral for consideration is made by the parent/caregiver to the school principal by the deadline of August 10, 2021. A referral for consideration will not be accepted after the deadline. Once a referral packet is received, the appropriate team will convene to discuss the concerns for the student, and determine if there is a need for additional accommodations or whether a fully remote program is in their educational best interest. Again, **the district always has the goal of having students attend in-person instruction as the least restrictive environment**.

Families who are considering referring their child(ren) for full remote programming for the Fall of 2021 should first review the "Virtual Learning Programming Overview". In order for a referral to be considered, the following will need to be completed prior to meeting so that the team has the appropriate full information to consider:

Step 1: The parent/caregiver of the student(s) completes the "[Referral Form](#)".

Step 2: The parent/caregiver of the student(s) reaches out to their licensed physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant to complete the "[Remote Instruction Consideration by Physician Form](#)"

Step 3: The parent/guardian of the student(s) completes the “Release of Information”. Please ask the school for this form.

Step 4: The parent/guardian of the student(s) returns the forms found under steps 1-3 to the School’s Principal.

Step 5: The school’s nurse may reach out to the student(s) licensed physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant to discuss possible accommodations that may be preferred to full remote instruction.

Step 6: The school’s nurse, school counselor, principal/dean/assistant principal or the student’s case manager may reach out to schedule a meeting of the school-based team and family to discuss the referral, considerations, and impacts to make a decision on the need for remote instruction and develop a plan as needed. *Note: These meetings will take place August, 2021.*

Step 7: After approval for virtual learning, the adult who will oversee the learning daily will attend a training session. An adult is needed to supervise and direct the learning of the virtual student from 9AM - 2PM daily. Just like in our school buildings, students are supervised and directed by an adult at all times during the school day. This should be no different at home for virtual learning.

ReeL Program Overview

***Parents and students must sign a contract about attendance and work completion. Parents/Caregiver must sign up for a Seesaw Parent account and agree to check notifications daily.**

Parents/Caregivers confirm that an adult will be present to oversee and direct the learning at home during school hours, 9AM - 2PM. *Oversee can include ensuring students are in their designated learning spot, dressed for school, hair brushed, teeth brushed, ensuring that the student is on ExactPath, Seesaw, Zoom or other educational apps during school hours, frequent checks that assignments are completed by due date, providing help and support to their child. It is strongly recommended that the adult overseeing and directing the learning watch the Exact Path lessons with the child and provide assistance. It is not recommended that the adult send the child to their room to watch the lesson on their own - just like in our school buildings, students are supervised and directed by an adult at all times during the school day. This should be no different at home for virtual learning.*

A parent/caregiver will attend a meeting when the student is considered chronically absent. Chronically absent is defined as missing 10% or more of days (both excused and unexcused). **Once a student is considered truant, the student will be placed for in-person learning.**

Students are expected to complete 100% of their assignments by the due date, to grade level standard. Using a Seesaw or Exact Path report, percentages will be checked and parents notified if 100% are not completed. After three times of not completing 100% of assignments, a parent will be notified to attend a meeting to determine next steps.

It is expected that the ReeL student will spend time working on activities and completing assignments in Exact Path and Seesaw due by the end of the day. Daily minutes are approximately: Kindergarten = 120 minutes; Grades 1 and 2 = 180 minutes; Grades 3-6 = 240 minutes.

***Transition back to in-person dates** - 2nd and 4th Monday (or Tuesday if a Monday holiday) of each month. When a family is ready to transition their ReeL student back to in-person, they will contact the hometown principal.

***No assemblies, no whole group activities, no daily announcements**

***Materials Pickup:** Once every 6 weeks. Materials must be picked up by the end of the week that they are ready. Materials will be ready on Wednesday and must be picked up by Friday at Central Office by entering Central Office to obtain the Materials Bag.

***IEP, 504, RTI, Counseling, Title I, GaTE:** is serviced by hometown school, based on team determination of appropriate services during remote learning.

*ReeL students will use courseware that will tailor their education to their individual needs based upon results from a diagnostic test.

Other notes for School Personnel and Families/Caregivers:

- ReeL will begin Tuesday, September 7 and will follow the same holiday and vacation schedule as the buildings. September 1 and 2 are for materials/device pickup and September 3 is for diagnostic testing.
 - There is no early release schedule Wednesday for ReeL students.
 - All work due that day must be turned in by 2:00PM.
 - Each ReeL student will have a homeroom assigned in their hometown school.
 - If a ReeL student needs to miss school due to an excused absence, an adult will call the hometown school by 9AM. Doctor's appointments and pleasure activities should not be scheduled during school hours, 9AM - 2PM.
 - A parent/caregiver will attend a meeting when the student is considered chronically absent. Chronically absent is defined as missing 10% or more of days (both excused and unexcused).
- Once a student is considered truant, the student will be placed for in-person learning.**
- ReeL students will not receive a traditional report card, instead progress will be communicated through Exact Path reports.
 - Each hometown school counselor will conduct a bi-weekly (every two weeks) check-in with hometown ReeL families. The format of this check-in will be decided by the hometown school counselor and/or Principal/Dean/Assistant Principal.
 - Students may come into the building for screeners and State assessments, as requested, preferably testing in their hometown homeroom assignment.
 - Since there are no ReeL teachers, if a student needs support or help beyond the adult at home, then the parent/caregiver will reach out to the hometown Principal or Principal designee.
 - The hometown principal will be the point of contact for attendance, work completion and behavior of their hometown ReeL students. There is no ReeL principal.

Online Learning Platforms and Video Communication

RSU may use online learning platforms and video communication with our students and families. Please remember these guidelines to ensure that we are safely and appropriately following expectations with regards to federal laws, user agreements from specific programs, and protocols set up by our district. All applicable RSU 16 [policies](#), procedures, and rules, including but not limited to student computer, [phone policy](#) and internet use policies/procedures and bullying and harassment policies and procedures, apply to virtual instruction.

- Students and Families are not permitted to record any live or pre-recorded sessions as it is a violation of policies and laws.
 - If a teacher has an approved circumstance to record a session, the student caregiver/guardian will be notified.
- Student devices are intended for educational purposes and should only be used for completion of assignments and school related activities. The device deployed to students will be loaded with all required software.
- While using RSU 16 devices, all [policies](#) and procedures related to technology must be followed.

FERPA

- FERPA (The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) Laws apply at all times
 - Recording your video conferencing sessions or recorded sessions is forbidden.
 - Posting pictures to social media of video conferencing sessions with teachers and/or students is forbidden.
 - Parents and students are not allowed to record any portion of a lesson or session at any time.
- For more information about FERPA, please visit:
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

COPPA

- COPPA (Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act) applies to companies to limit the amount of personal information collected from children under 13 years old. RSU 16’s use of information is solely for educational purposes and will not be shared with any outside party.
- For more information about COPPA, please visit:
<https://www.ftc.gov/enforcement/rules/rulemaking-regulatory-reform-proceedings/childrens-online-privacy-protection-rule>

VIDEO CONFERENCING/LIVESTREAM TOOLS

- All students Pre-K through Grade 6, if participating in a video conferencing session will be encouraged to have a parent present in the room as they do so.
- Pre-K through Grade 6 Teachers/Educational Technicians will send links for video conferencing sessions to the parent email address whenever possible.
- All [school policies](#), procedures and rules, including but not limited to student internet and computer usage policies, as well as bullying and harassment policies apply to virtual lessons/sessions.
- Zoom: Zoom specifically states that no one under the age of 13 is eligible for an account. It is acceptable for teachers to share a Zoom session with students under 13, as students do not need an account to access a Zoom session.

Be Aware of Your Surroundings

Treat your virtual surroundings as a classroom. The same practices, policies and procedures are to be in place. Adhere to the same standards of behavior during a virtual/video class that you would in your regular classroom.

RESOURCES

[Parent’s Guide to Google Classroom](#)

[Parent’s Guide to Seesaw](#)

FACE COVERINGS/MASKS:

- All PreK-6 students are required to wear a face covering/mask that covers their nose and mouth when indoors at an elementary school.
- RSU 16 will provide training for PreK-6 students on: correct mask use, choosing the correct face mask, putting on and taking off, cleaning, and storage. [How to Wear a Cloth Face Covering](#)
- Cloth face coverings should have multiple layers (2 or 3 ply) of cloth appropriately following [CDC guidelines](#)
- Face coverings must be worn when entering buildings, while traveling in hallways, and when moving about the school. Exceptions may include, but are not limited to:
 - While eating
 - While sitting at their desk in the classroom when a staff member has directed a mask break during class time during pre-determined mask break times.
- All students will need [face coverings](#) (age appropriate design and size) provided by the family. If disposable, these should be replaced daily. If cloth, these should be [washed daily](#). Face coverings are subject to meeting current dress code standards in regards to the appropriateness of language/images, etc.
- Extra/spare face coverings for students will be made available by the school on an as needed basis.
- Masks with exhalation valves or vents are not permitted.
- Any Parent/Guardian/Visitor needing to enter the building for a scheduled meeting or other important business will need to be screened and should utilize the reception window. If allowed into the building, parents/guardian/visitor:
 - Must wear a face covering while in the buildings.
 - Must use the sanitizing station upon entry.
 - Must attend to their specific business and leave immediately following.
- Face shields may be an alternative for those students with medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear face coverings. An exemption for use of a face mask must be made using the process outlined below under “When requested that a student cannot wear a mask”. Face shields worn in place of a face covering must extend below the chin and back to the ears.

When requested that a student cannot wear a mask:

1. An IEP or 504 meeting is scheduled (referral made to 504 if needed)
2. Documentation required from a medical provider (i.e., MD, NP, PA, D.O., SW, psychologist) with reason why
 - a. Need to know reason so that goals can be developed to help student learn to tolerate face covering and/or to determine appropriate accommodations
 - b. IEP/504 team reviews need for accommodation for face shield to provide FAPE
 - i. If a referral is being made to 504, the school team can accept the medical providers request for accommodation as part of RTI response while the referral is being processed (as the process can take some time)
3. Develop plan to increase compliance for facial covering and add to goals (may fall under a compliance goal that is already on plan)
 - a. Could consider partial day plan to work on building tolerance to facial covering (following partial day procedures of follow up meeting at 45 calendar days and every 20 school days thereafter until full return)

4. Student would then need to wear a face shield as they learn to wear a mask
 - a) Must stay 6 feet away from all other students
 - i) Plan needs to address how to accomplish this so student is clear on expectations, such as may need to leave class a few minutes early to avoid being near students in the hallway
 - b) Must have self-regulation to be able to maintain that distance

If cannot maintain distance or wear a shield,

1. Conduct a manifestation determination meeting to determine if behavior is connected to the disability.
 - a. If manifestation, student would need to be in separate room from all other students (if available) or access services remotely while learning to increase tolerance and self-regulation
 - b. If not a manifestation, develop a plan with the team for increasing compliance and self-regulation and deliver services remotely

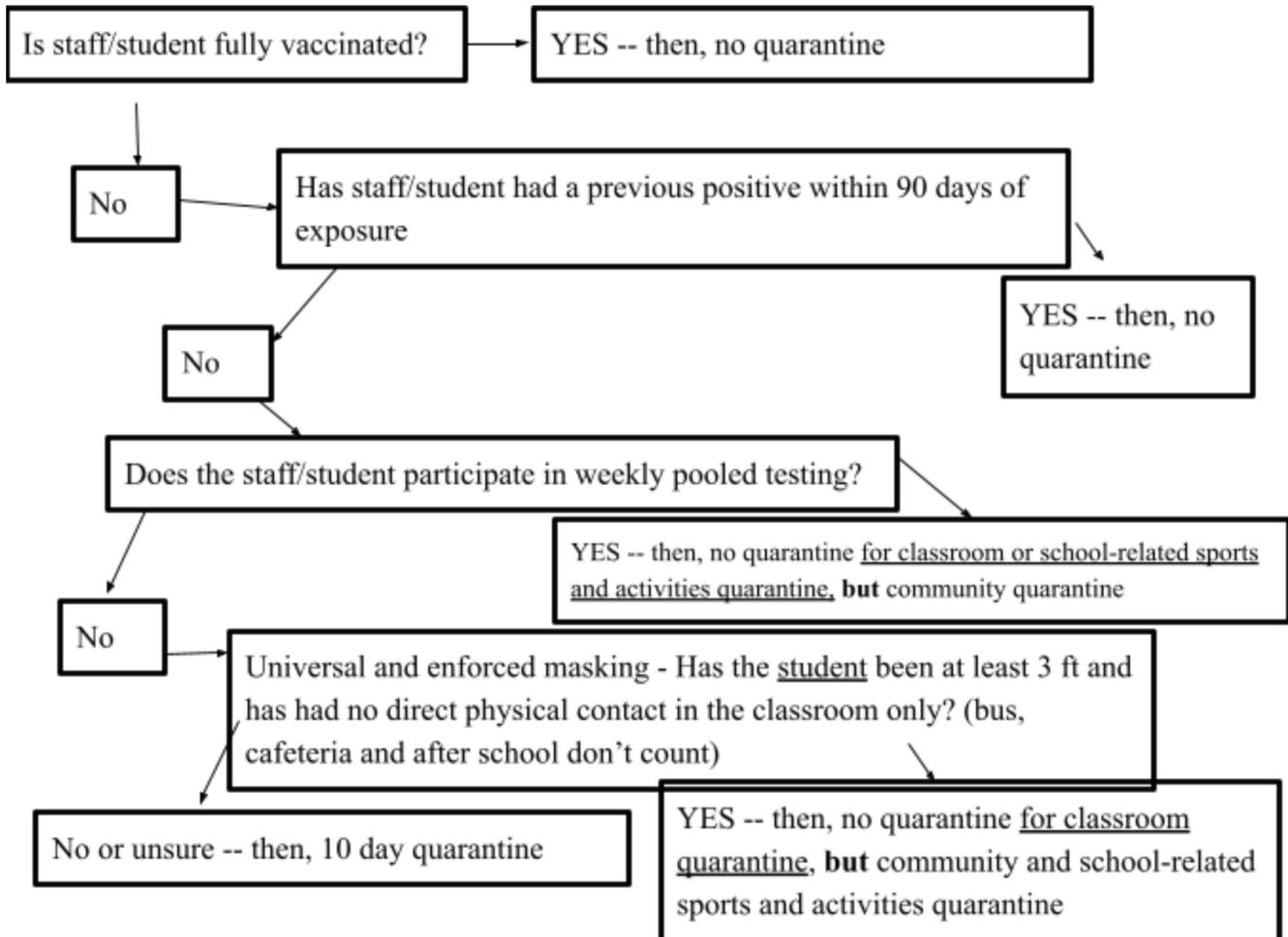
Has wearing a mask for extended periods been shown to have any negative impacts on children’s health or emotional well-being?

“Since the implementation of mask mandates, some concerns have arisen about possible negative impacts of masking, though two studies shared by the U.S. CDC this year – one among adults and the other among children – found no indication of decreased oxygen or increased carbon dioxide levels in the blood of participants, or any clinical signs of respiratory distress. The CDC also has reviewed dozens of other studies on mask wearing and found community masking is an effective way to reduce transmission of COVID-19 with no clinically significant impacts on respiration or gas exchange.” (Source: *Portland Press Herald* 8.18.21 article:

<https://www.pressherald.com/2021/08/19/qa-will-my-children-be-safe-at-school-this-fall/>

Close Contact Quarantine Flow Chart for School Exposure

Close contact definition is exposure within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes within a 24-hour period or any direct physical contact. (page 5 of SOP)



Close contact with a Quarantine

Quarantine at home for 10 full days from last exposure to individual

A negative test does not remove the quarantine requirement, testing is recommended.

Unvaccinated close contacts should test as soon as possible after the exposure. If that test is negative, the close contact should be re-tested 5-7 days later.

Close contact with an Exemption

Vaccinated - no community, classroom, or school-related sports and activities quarantine

Within 90-days positive - no community, classroom, or school-related sports and activities quarantine

Pooled testing - no classroom or school-related sports and activities quarantine, **but** community quarantine

Masking - no classroom quarantine, **but** community and school-related sports and activities quarantine and

A negative test does not remove the quarantine requirement, testing is recommended. Frequency of pool testing allows for greater assurance. A one-test at the doctors office does not allow for that assurance.

Vaccinated close contacts should test 3-5 days after exposure.

Unvaccinated close contacts should test as soon as possible after the exposure. If that test is negative, the close contact should be re-tested 5-7 days later.

All close contacts should be masked until a negative test or until the end of a 10-day period or if participating in pooled testing until the next negative pooled test.

[Close contact letter with exemptions](#)

[Close contact letter with no exemption](#)

[Positive Letter to Family of Positive Student from School](#) (Click File → Make a copy → put on own letterhead)

Close contacts during lunch will be determined by a 6 ft. radius around the positive individual since they are universally unmasked during that time. This will be the same regardless of whether the student eats in the cafeteria or their classroom. **The only exemptions that would get the student out of quarantine would be fully vaccinated, had a positive test within the last 90 days or pooled testing.**

In districts conducting pooled testing, why can't a note from a doctor be used to exempt students like the pooled test participation can? The frequency, quality, and regularity of the surveillance testing provides a greater assurance of the results, rather than a one-time test.

REPORTING CLOSURES due to COVID 19 to the STATE

In addition, all Maine pre-k thru 12 schools are to report as soon as possible any partial or whole school closings due to Covid-19. This should include any closings (past, present or future) for the 2021-2022 school year. The reporting form can be completed by the superintendent or her/his designee. The school closing form can be located, [here](#).

LEARNING PLAN for Students in QUARANTINE:

POLAND REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

Any time a student must quarantine because they are a close contact, PRHS teachers will be sure to send students work through Google Classroom. Google Classroom is updated regularly and students should be able to keep up with missed work. Students can email teachers for help on any assignments.

WHITTIER MIDDLE SCHOOL

It is extremely unfortunate that quarantining has become part of the school experience over the past couple of years. As a school, we put tremendous emphasis on daily attendance and participation. Requiring students to stay home is disheartening, and every phone call we make to quarantine students is hard. However, ultimately, we are following the protocol provided to us to protect the health and safety of our school and community. We care about our kids, our staff, and their families.

When students have to be out, they should check Google Classroom for each of their classes each day. Now that they have laptops, much of their work is posted online. If they have questions about any work, they should email the teacher for help. Teachers are asked to respond to email within 24 hours (excluding the weekend).

All students are assigned to BARR Case Managers. For the most part, this is the teacher that your child sees for their academic support class. It may feel overwhelming for a student to coordinate with six different teachers, and the BARR Case Manager can be a central point of contact if communication breaks down with other teachers. You and your child are encouraged to use the BARR Case Manager as a resource to stay connected with school.

When you have questions or you are not hearing back, please reach out. Dean of Students Sam Chatto and I will help in any way that we can. We want to make sure that your child is part of Whittier Middle School even when they can't be in the building.

MINOT CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL

MCS has identified our Interventionist who was added through our ESSER funds as our Home Academics Coordinator. The coordinator has joined the MCS Covid-19 response team. When we have students who are out for quarantine, the coordinator will be collaborating with parents and the classroom teachers to provide academic support for students. We have a plan for students who will be out for both a short term quarantine (up to 10 days) or a long term quarantine (up to 21 days or more due to household exposure). Students who are out due to a short term quarantine will be provided packets of work, may have some activities pushed out to them on Seesaw, will be asked to learn using their individualized learning path on i-Ready, and will be encouraged to read daily at home. Students who are out due to a long term quarantine will be offered a seat in the Reel program for the time they are out for their extended quarantine. The Home Academic Coordinator will work with Jill Mathieu around the use of academic packets and the Reel program.

POLAND COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Ms. Rancourt-Thomas provides a virtual office hour for students in the Reel program and will be expanding her virtual support for students in quarantine. We have a plan for students who will be out for both a short term quarantine (up to 10 days) or a long term quarantine (up to 21 days or more due to household exposure). Students who are out due to a short term quarantine will be provided packets of work, may have some activities pushed out to them on Seesaw, and will be encouraged to read daily at home. Students who are out due to a long term quarantine will be offered a seat in the Reel program for the time they are out for their extended quarantine. PCS staff will work with Jill Mathieu around the use of academic packets and the Reel program.

ELM STREET SCHOOL

ESS will continue to work with our intervention team to provide support for students who are working as part of our Reel program, or who will be out for quarantine/isolation due to COVID-19. When we have students who are out for quarantine, the coordinator will be collaborating with parents and the classroom teachers to provide academic support for students. We have a plan for students who will be out for both a short term quarantine (up to 10 days) or a long term quarantine (up to 21 days or more due to household exposure). Students who are out due to a short term quarantine will be provided packets of work, may have some activities pushed out to them on Seesaw, will be asked to learn using their individualized learning path on i-Ready, and will be encouraged to read daily at home. Students who are out due to a long term quarantine will be offered a seat in the Reel program for the time they are out for their extended quarantine. The Home Academic Coordinator will work with Jill Mathieu around the use of academic packets and the Reel program.

Do I have to get a booster to be considered fully vaccinated? *(November 15, 2021)*

No. At this time, you are considered fully vaccinated once you are 14 days out from your final dose of your initial vaccine, whether that was the two-shot Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or your single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine. There is not any mandate for the booster shot at this time. Booster shots are highly recommended, not required. If you choose to receive a booster shot you are strongly encouraged to give a copy of your vaccine card with the booster shot to your supervisor.

Closing a classroom or school

Principal/Ken and/or Amy make the decision together after consulting with DOE, school nurse and Dotty and/or Lisa.

Principal will inform the impacted teacher(s) to activate their remote learning plan. Teacher will be expected to teach remotely from the school. If needed, teacher(s) may be given up to 3 hours during the next school day to prep materials and move technology/materials to a contactless pickup location before beginning remote instruction. If a family has extenuating circumstances preventing them from picking materials up, the teacher or principal will email Fred and Amy for next steps.

Jill Mathieu will be available to help with prep for materials pickup.

Principal will send [a letter](#) and robo call to those impacted families. Principal will inform their staff. Principal may inform all families.

Amy will notify other directors and principals.

Craig will be notified for a check of the ventilation system.

Teacher will contact families with Zoom/Google Meet schedule and expectations for school. Students will be marked as “present” for attendance if they participate in class and complete assigned work.

Ken will inform the School Board.

Amy will complete the required DOE form for school/classroom closure.

Official outbreak letter will be sent from Central Office upon communication from DOE Outbreak Coordinator.

QUESTIONS

How many positive cases? Staff or student?

Which classrooms? How many positives per classroom? (3 or more positive cases in a pool gets flagged).

Asymptomatic or symptomatic?

Any event or place tie them together? Who? When? How long?

By classroom: How many other cases within the last week or how many in the last pool?

Who? Teacher or student?

Asymptomatic or symptomatic?

Any event or place tie them together? Who? When? How long?

What is the school vaccination rate? What is the school pooled testing percentage?

of close contacts, # of staff out

In the event a classroom or school is remote learning, a staff member may bring their own children into their classroom as long as the children are not close contacts. A staff member who has children who are close contacts and school is remote learning may request to teach from home.

The BinaxNOW is a type of test called an antigen test. Antigen tests are designed to detect proteins from the virus that causes COVID-19 in anterior nasal swabs.

If you have a positive test result, it is very likely that you have COVID-19 because proteins from the virus that causes COVID-19 were found in your sample.

A negative test result means that proteins from the virus that causes COVID-19 were not found in your sample. It is possible for this test to give a negative result that is incorrect (false negative) in some people with COVID19. This means that you could possibly still have COVID19 even though the test is negative. The amount of antigen in a sample may decrease the longer you have symptoms of infection.

There are different kinds of tests for COVID-19. Molecular tests (also known as PCR tests) detect genetic material from the virus. Antigen tests detect proteins from the virus. Antigen tests are very specific for the virus, but are not as sensitive as molecular tests. This means that a positive result is highly accurate, but a negative result does not rule out infection.

BinaxNOW offers a fast and accurate way to test for COVID-19 in symptomatic children and **asymptomatic children as part of a positive pooled test result.**

Across symptomatic and asymptomatic children, BinaxNOW consistently identifies those individuals with moderate/high viral loads who are the most likely to be infectious.

Compared to PCR tests, BinaxNOW provides results in 15 mins, allowing for rapid deployment of quarantine and contact tracing procedures.

Given the speed, accuracy, price, and widespread availability, **BinaxNOW is an effective way to test for COVID-19 in schools and the recommended follow-up test for the pooled test program.**

[DOE Clarifications on Following the SOP for school related cases ;](#)

What does our district have in place to monitor our testing? Only swab one student/staff member at a time and double check to see that their Antigen Card is labeled with their correctly identifying initials. Each test has its own timer that is never shared with another test running concurrently. When the 15 minute timer goes off, we always have two nurses look at any card that is showing a positive result. Joan Ryan is often the initial identifier of that positive test, but she does not make the call of a positive result, the nurses make that call. Hence, there are usually 3 sets of eyes who confirm a positive test before it is recorded as such.

Each new box has a control that is run prior to using the first kit from that box on a student/staff member's actual swab. If the control test does not run properly, a second control is run. If there is any doubt that those controls are not running accurately, the box is not used and a new box is opened with controls being run on the new box.

Contact Tracing of spectators at school events (sports, theater, concerts) is not a responsibility that schools are required to take on. Please respond to positive cases among your students and staff according to the [Standard Operating Procedure](#). You may consider posting an announcement at events to inform the public of your expectations and limited responsibility, including language such as this:

Spectators are entering at their own risk.

- We ask that anyone with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 not attend this function
- Masking is required at this event

- School staff will follow usual protocols for positive cases related to the players, officials and staff in this event
- School or facility staff will NOT be responsible for contact tracing or public notification if a positive case is identified in the stands

December 10, 2021

Dear RSU 16 Staff,

Thank you to everyone, for all you do. Every employee has continued to fulfill their primary responsibilities, while additionally stepping up to fill in where we have needs. You continue to serve our students and community with distinction, allowing RSU 16 to continue to keep our educational doors open, through the toughest school year ever.

We have two updates regarding **staff** returning to work after being symptomatic and answers to two frequently asked questions.

In order to keep our doors open and running safely:

For staff who were symptomatic and have stayed out of work for 24 hours and tested negative on a home test and can't find any Redcap* testing place. * Redcap are any organized testing site that gets reported to the State/CDC like Walgreens or your PCP

Symptoms must be improved/resolved, fever free for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medicine; the staff member can return to work after communicating with their supervisor.

If symptoms continue or worsen after 24 hours, then they would need to remain out of work.

This procedure will take effect on Monday, December 13.

For staff who were symptomatic, have tested positive on a home test, can't find any Redcap* testing place, and have communicated with their supervisor about not finding a Redcap testing appointment.

* Redcap are any organized testing site that gets reported to the State/CDC like Walgreens or your PCP

Employees who need testing and cannot find an appointment at a Redcap testing place, can call RSU 16 COVID tracker Pauline at 740-0791 to schedule an appointment for a BinaxNow test at Central Office. This is by appointment only, no walk-ins. Appointments will be 8:30 - 10:00AM. You will need to sign a consent form and your information will be entered into Redcap.

If symptoms continue or worsen after 24 hours, then they would need to remain out of work and cancel your appointment with Pauline.

As you know, we need a Redcap* test in order to begin your 10 days of isolation. Being tested at Central Office is now an option because testing is difficult to find in a reasonable amount of time. * Redcap are any organized testing site that gets reported to the State/CDC like Walgreens or your PCP

This procedure will take effect on Monday, December 13.

I am a fully vaccinated person and have a positive case in my home. What should I do?

The fully vaccinated person who is exposed to a positive case at home can come to work. We ask that you be mindful of additional mitigation factors to help reduce potential exposure to others. For example, you may

consider eating lunch alone or ensure extra spacing, wearing a mask even when students are not in the building and outside, extra hand washing/sanitizing, and ensuring a 6 foot distance when reasonably possible.

Do I have to get a booster to be considered fully vaccinated? (November 15, 2021) No. At this time, you are considered fully vaccinated once you are 14 days out from your final dose of your initial vaccine, whether that was the two-shot Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or your single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine. There is not any mandate for the booster shot at this time. Booster shots are highly recommended, not required. If you choose to receive a booster shot you are strongly encouraged to give a copy of your vaccine card with the booster shot date to your supervisor.

Brene Brown says, “Sometimes the bravest and most important thing you can do is just show up.” We have no control over what happens next with COVID-19. We anxiously await for pooled testing results and bravely pick up the phone every time it rings. All of this is so unpredictable and unknown, but what is predictable and known is you doing the best you can for our students. Thank you for being fully invested, brave and committed to our students and each other.

Sincerely,
Ken and Amy