

August 7, 2020

RSU 16 Staff, Families and Community,

This week we highlight the **third required health and safety measures for all schools:** [Masks/Face Coverings](#). You can download the full document, [Required Health and Safety Measures for All Schools](#), or visit the Maine DOE website at <https://www.maine.gov/doe/framework/part-I>

As the primary route of transmission for COVID-19 is respiratory, masks/face coverings are among the most critical components of risk reduction. Face coverings help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people or surfaces when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice.

1. Adults, including educators and staff, are required to wear a mask/face covering.
2. Students age five and above are required to wear a mask/face covering that covers their nose and mouth.
3. Masks/face coverings must be worn by all students on the bus.

EMPLOYEES

- RSU 16 will provide employees with two [face covering/masks](#) and one [face shield](#) and employees must [wash them daily](#) after use.

STUDENTS

- 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. Face coverings will be 2-ply (layers) or greater. A single layer neck gaiter is not acceptable.
- All students are required to wear a face covering/mask that covers their nose and mouth when in the presence of others or maintain six (6) feet of distance--about two arm's length-- at all times throughout the day. [See CDC guidance on social distancing](#). Maintaining three (3) feet of distance is acceptable between and among students when combined with the other safety measures.
- Face coverings must be worn when entering or exiting buildings, while traveling in hallways, and generally when moving about the school and classroom. Exceptions may include, but are not limited to:
 - While eating
 - While sitting at their desk in the classroom when more than 6 feet apart, only when the teacher or staff member has directed a mask break during class time
 - While on the playground or outdoors, if social distancing allows
- Face shields may be an alternative for those students with a medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear masks/face coverings. Face shields worn in place of a face covering must extend below the chin and back to the ears. The use of a face shield as an alternative will need building administrator approval.

OVERVIEW of Hybrid Model - Reduce the time students spend in the physical classroom (though not the amount of work overall).

- K-12 Students will have instruction five days a week. It will be referred to as 2:3 (2 days in-person, and 3 days in remote).
 - In some instances, some students will be 4:1 (4 days in-person, and 1 day in remote)
 - The Special Education Director or Superintendent will determine this placement
 - PreK students will be 4 days a week, AM session only, with the exception of one PM session at PCS. No remote learning will be provided on Wednesday for PreK students.
- Students will be divided into two cohorts, Cohort A and Cohort B using a Family Plus sorting principle

- Family Plus means family members and/or daycares will be grouped together
- Students in Cohort A
 - Attend school on Monday and Tuesday
 - Attend school remotely on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
- Students in Cohort B
 - Attend school on Thursday and Friday
 - Attends school remotely on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday

PARENT SURVEY

As our community approaches the Reopening of Schools, we recognize this is challenging for staff and families. Our Return to Instruction for this fall maximizes in-person, on-site learning as much as possible. This is a new survey. We ask you to make your intent known for learning and transportation. [Click here for the survey.](#) Please consider one child at a time when responding to the following questions. The survey should only be responded to once per child. Take the survey again for each child in your household.

This has been a stressful time for everyone in the RSU 16 family. The school district's approach to slowly returning to in-person instruction using a hybrid model (2 days of in-person, 3 days remote) has been a massive undertaking. What has been evident over this last week is there is much passion behind everyone's beliefs about how education should be delivered during the COVID-19 era. The decision to have a hybrid model includes the largest population of students allowing them to slowly reintegrate back into in-person instruction. Our hope is as conditions improve we will be able to open our school doors wider and increase the numbers of students that will be involved in face-to-face instruction. Unfortunately, we do have limits on what we can accomplish under the COVID-19 health and safety restrictions. Please know that this whole process of returning students and staff back to school is changing everyday and we are all doing our best to adjust with the changes and implement them as best we can. We would also like to thank all those who have reached out to thank us for our efforts around bringing our students and staff back to school and we are grateful for your patience and grace as we get closer to starting the new school year.

Sincerely,

Amy Hediger and Ken Healey