

T Outline of the TPS Re-Opening Plan

During this time of uncertainty, Torrington Public Schools is eagerly anticipating moving forward into the 2020-2021 school year with a full re-opening of our schools. Based on guidelines provided to school districts from the Connecticut State Department of Education and the State of Connecticut, we continue to plan for engaging and challenging learning experiences for our students in spite of any necessary modifications that need to be made to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff. The Commissioner has continued to remind all of us to remain flexible and fluid throughout this unprecedented time as we begin a new year. The plan includes 3 risk designations for the phases of this plan: low, moderate and high. These levels will be determined by our local, regional and state health professionals. Plans to move into these levels as needed will be outlined in the plan.

All aspects of the plan adhere to the requirements and guidelines from the State of Connecticut, the CDC, the local health officials (Torrington Area Health District), and other community sources that will be in place to ensure that the schools' environments support learning during this time of COVID 19.

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

1. Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff;
2. Allowing all students the opportunity to return to school full time starting in the fall; (however, a distance learning option will be available as well)
3. Monitoring the school, students and staff 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 that 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, social-emotional well-being, and the mental health needs of our students when they are not in school.

The Plan will contain 3 Phases:

Minimal Spread, **Moderate Spread**, and **High Spread**

Schedule for Teaching and Learning: Fall 2020 Model for Learning

Minimal/No Spread of Virus (or Virus Contained)

Based on the current lower levels of transmission of COVID 10, all students return to school in person as part of a full reopening. Heightened health & safety protocols will be in place, which can be reduced or increased up as appropriate throughout the year.

In-Person Learning: This will be a traditional schedule with Health & Safety expectations with ALL students attending every day. Students and teachers attend every day with all State guidelines and expectations in place. Classroom learning and instruction will be adjusted to provide the safest possible environment. Staff will explicitly teach students how to follow the required safety protocols: mask wearing, social distancing, thorough and frequent handwashing, etc.

Concurrently, the District will run a **Remote Learning Parallel Track** for students choosing to learn from home with support from parents. Students opting for this model will participate in a distance learning experience that mirrors In-Person. These students will follow the regular school day schedule, but join class in an online format rather than in person. Students and parents engage in remote learning with materials and support from the school. Students on this track may choose to return to school at any time.

Homeschooling is a model for parents who elect to keep their students home with NO support from the school district. Families choosing to Homeschool are responsible for developing their own instructional materials. This model is appropriate for families who do not wish to continue with the computer based Distance Learning provided by the District. Families choosing this option should be aware that this model does not necessarily prepare students for a return to school without gaps in learning.

Moderate Spread of the Virus

Hybrid Learning Plan: A surge in the infection rate will require an adjusted schedule. Should this happen, Torrington Public Schools will shift to a Hybrid Learning Model during which time, smaller groups of students will attend in-person on an alternating schedule (yet to be determined). Students would attend in-person 50% of the time, and attend remotely the remaining 50% of the time. This will allow all students physical access to the classroom half of the time and provide greater opportunity to maximize social distancing.

High Spread of the Virus

Distance Learning: A high surge in the infection rate will require all students to quarantine. In this situation, no students will attend in-person. Instead, all students will participate in Distance Learning. Schools will be closed and bus transportation will be suspended. Instruction will be conducted remotely through contact with the teacher.

The District will proactively plan and be prepared at any time to transition to a Distance Learning model, with each student able to access the necessary technology.

T District Focus Areas

1. Safety of students, staff and families:

- Cleaning and disinfecting of all district buildings will occur every day, throughout the day.
- Students in grades K-8 will be assigned to cohorts. Students in grades 9-12 will be assigned to cohorts when possible. A cohort is a group of students who stay together as much as possible throughout the day.
- Social distancing will be maintained:
 - throughout the classroom, based on each room's square footage;
 - in the hallways through directional walkway signs;
 - on busses with no more than 2 students per seat; masks required
- Masks are required of all students and staff throughout the school day with scheduled mask breaks (unless unable to wear masks due to documented medical reasons.)
- In addition to masks, teachers have access to other PPE as needed.
- Access to the buildings by visitors/parents will be very limited for the safety and health of our students and staff. PPTs will be held virtually as much as possible. PTOs will be able to meet via zoom. Fundraising opportunities will be limited to contactless options, with shipping directly to families. In-person volunteer programs will not be allowed this year, but may be done virtually.
- Lockers will not be used at any school. Backpacks should contain minimal supplies. Each student will receive a chromebook or retain the chromebook they received during the 2019-2020 school year.

2. Educational Opportunities:

All instruction will be provided based upon the school day, class period structured schedule. For example, students arrive at 8:30am and dismissal occurs at 3:30pm. Whether at home or in-school, students will need to attend class on time during that period or lesson for the day. The structure will help our students return to a sense of normalcy. Normalcy and structure provides calm and reassurance for our students. All students have the opportunity to return to school to receive in-person instruction. However, a remote learning option is being provided for those families who are not comfortable sending their children back to the schoolhouse.

- Parents may choose to have their children remain home for distance learning. Teachers will be instructing the class virtually. Parallel instruction will occur through distance learning.
- When inside the school building, all students and staff will wear masks and face shields as necessary. Students and staff who are unable to wear masks due to

medical reasons will need to provide the school with medical documentation for this exemption. Students will take staggered mask breaks throughout the day/class.

- Teachers will have the option of using clear barriers on their desks or face shields during instruction, as well as other PPE as needed.
- Unified Arts instruction will occur. Art, Music and Physical Education will take place, however the curricula and instructional delivery models will be adjusted to align with minimum health and safety standards.

3. Social Emotional Well-being:

- The District will prioritize student and staff wellness when planning for educational experiences to establish a positive, safe, and supportive learning environment.
- The social emotional learning of students will be a focus as we return to school. Student growth in this area will be supported through intentional planning and curriculum.
- Students and families will be able to access school staff and receive guidance on extended emotional supports and community resources as necessary.

4. Technology:

- All students will have individual Chromebooks or laptops assigned to them, or retain the one given to them during the 2019-2020 school year.
- The District will work on an individual basis with families who require assistance with connectivity.
- The District will support staff, students, and families in the use of district issued technology.

5. Transportation:

- Students will be assigned one bus this year, in order to keep the bus cohort consistent. Pick-up and drop-off will only occur from one location per student this year. If other drop-off or pick-up locations are necessary, parents will need to make personal arrangements for those transportation issues. Parents are encouraged to drive their child/children to and from school.

6. Food Service:

- All students will have access to breakfast and lunch whether they are in school or participating in distance learning. The time and location of the distance learning food service will be determined over the coming weeks.
- To the greatest extent possible, K-8 students will eat in the classrooms and/or with their respective cohorts. Students in grades 9-12 will be socially distant during breakfast and lunch.

7. Heat related closures:

The Superintendent will closely monitor the weather in terms of the heat inside the buildings. Due to the fact that we are not able to use fans during this time, we may need to call early

dismissals or perhaps close school if the temperature is excessive. On these days, classes will continue via the distance learning format.

8. Monitoring Spread of the Virus:

In accordance with “Adapt, Advance, Achieve”, the Torrington Public Schools will follow a traditional schedule of school while monitoring the level of transmission of COVID 19 with the assistance of the Torrington Area Health District. It is our hope that Torrington will not see a rise in community transmission. However if infection rates do increase, daily school schedules and protocols may need to be adjusted. If there is a significant surge in local cases, based on guidance from the State of Connecticut and/or the Torrington Area Health District, the District will return to a Distance Learning Model similar to the spring of 2020.

9. In School Transmission (A confirmed case in the building)

Assess risk with local health officials.

Plan for short (2-5 days) or longer (10 days) closure to clean and disinfect.

Immediate consultation with the Torrington Area Health District.

10. Compliance Liaison: The Superintendent has appointed the Assistant Superintendent to serve as COVID-19 Health & Safety Compliance Liaison and COVID-10 Response Leader. The Liaison, along with the Superintendent, will engage with students, parents, faculty, staff, and administrators to answer questions about the health & safety requirements established in this document and address questions about compliance. The Compliance Liaison, along with the Superintendent, will support the implementation of these requirements, as well as the implementation of other school health & safety measures relating to COVID-19 and any additional guidance provided by the State of Connecticut and the Torrington Area Health District.

11. Communication:

The District will maintain a website dedicated to all information (English and Spanish) pertaining to COVID-19 and potential impacts to the school schedule. Information will also be shared through Power Announcements and via the District and Facebook page.

T COVID-19 Cases in School

<p>If a student, staff member or visitor has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID- 19 after having been at school, the School Nurse and the building Principal contact the Superintendent or Compliance Liaison. Confidentiality in accordance with FERPA, privacy expectations, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) will be maintained.</p>
<p>The Superintendent or Compliance Liaison will notify the local health officials (Torrington Area Health District) immediately.</p>
<p>The Torrington Area Health District will assess risk of further transmission in the school.</p>
<p>Decisions are made concerning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health and safety of our students and staff ● Closure ● Cleaning ● Continuity of education ● Reopening of school
<p>The decision to suspend or close a school (or the entire school district) will be made by the Superintendent or Compliance Liaison based on information and recommendation from local health officials (Torrington Area Health District). Board of Education members and town officials will be notified of the closure as well as the State Department of Education.</p>
<p>Schools will implement a short-term closure (2-5 days) or longer (10 days) if an infected person has been in a school building. The CDC recommends dismissal of students and most staff for a minimum of 2-5 days. This initial short-term dismissal allows time for the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school. The Superintendent or Compliance Liaison, in consultation with the local health officials, will determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended closure is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19.</p>
<p>All Covid-19 related communication to staff, families and the community will be issued from the Central Office.</p>

A confirmed case in the school building:
Assess risk with local health officials.
Plan for short (2-5 days) or longer (10 days) closure to
clean and disinfect
in consultation with the Torrington Area Health District.