

Questions for Week ending July 31st

Thank you for all of your questions and feedback! I have answered many of the questions and combined others since some were very similar. Please continue to send them!

Busses:

Will buses be running to the high schools on schedule?

As of now our high school bussing will begin and end of time as best as we can, however, we are still waiting on two high school's plans. There will be a lot of coordination with seven high schools at this point. For any high school parents watching, please look for a survey to be sent out about your student and available on our facebook page regarding transportation.

If extra bus runs are needed to accommodate the yellow plan, how will this impact high school busing needs?

Our elementary runs happen after our high school runs, which could delay elementary runs. That still needs to be assessed based on enrollment and the seven high school plans.

Face Coverings:

Are any types of masks or face coverings allowed?

A face covering or mask must cover the nose and mouth. If a bandanna and gaiter cover the nose and mouth, yes those can be worn. I would be cautionary to younger students with bandanas and if they need it to be tied during the day.

Special Services:

Can special arrangements be made for students receiving Special Services?

Yes, currently we are working with individual families of students that may need a different learning plan, whether in-person, or remote. Please email myself and Dr. Johnson so we can discuss plans.

Attendance:

If my child returns to school, is there a modified attendance requirement or will the limits on absences remain as before COVID?

We have not been notified by the State Department of Education of any changes as of yet to attendance requirements. Once we do we will notify families and make an adjustment. I would anticipate that attendance requirements will be different.

Distance Learning:

What will distance learning look like?

As of right now we are working out the details of our distance learning plans, as noted in our reopening plan we will provide plans aligned with in-person instructions for families to use. We are also looking at providing support to assist students with remote learning through VES. We will have a clearer picture of what our remote learning will look like in the coming weeks.

Is remote learning all online or you have to pick up papers?

For grades 3-8 it will be online, with the possibility of paperwork that they will keep at home.

For K-2, our survey in June indicated many families liked the blended approach with paper work and an online component. I would anticipate that we would mail or deliver paper as needed to families.

Will students remain at the same pace as in class?

Remote learning will be a shared responsibility of students and their family as well as the support of staff. Parents will

need to provide guidance, direction and instruction for their student to be successful. Teachers will be working with students in-person and supporting at home in some capacity. This piece is being worked out as of now with more to come.

Does the school have enough laptops/wifi hot spots for students and families?

We have placed orders for additional Chromebooks 3-8 and trying out new technology for K-2. We installed a hotspot in front of our school this past Spring to support families with the internet. This is still available to families.

How will the school assess educational equity on an ongoing and regular basis?

We will ensure that we review the opportunities of students in school in regards to learning progress and those who will be remote learning. We hold meetings regularly with grade levels and staff. With remote learning there will be differences in opportunities because of the nature of remote learning, however, we will work to provide students at home with similar learning experiences.

Sports:

Do you think the kids will be able to play Fall soccer?

At this time we are not anticipating playing fall soccer. However if that changes we will notify those students asap. Please make sure physicals are up to date for the season, incase changes are made to move forward with soccer.

Illness:

What is the school's plan to address concerns due to teachers being in a high risk category (age), concerns they have about access to childcare, or care for elderly/high risk family members?

We will work with our faculty and staff members on an individual basis in supporting their concerns about returning. Our staff members can communicate with myself or our superintendent at any time about their needs because they may change over time. Support has been provided by the State Department regarding childcare for staff members, and information about employees returning.

How will the school handle multiple teacher shortages from illness?

During the school year, we review all substitute needs on a daily basis to ensure proper coverage. We have an intern again this year that is committed to our building and will support any absences. Any additional needs will be reviewed as changes happen. We will have to continuously adapt to the changes and needs in our building.

Healthcare workers can report to work even after a COVID exposure as long as they are asymptomatic. Does the CT Department of Health have a similar "waiver" for teachers?

We will follow guidance from UNCAS health district and State regarding asymptomatic exposure.

How is the school sourcing PPE?

We have purchased and will continue to purchase PPE (masks, gowns, gloves, shields). We have also received donations from UNCAS health district, both masks and touchless thermometers.

How will the school handle it when a child or staff member is sick or has a fever?

Anyone with a fever of 100.4 or greater will be sent home. Our nurse will evaluate all students who do not feel well or have other symptoms and determine the next steps for them.

If someone at the school does test positive how are you going to let us know, preserving their privacy and our concerns about our kids?

All of our notifications will be in accordance with the UNCAS Health district. Notification is based on contact tracing and

the health district's guidance. We will have details on students whereabouts during the school day, as well as staff, so we can pinpoint any necessary points of contact.

What data is the school monitoring on a daily and weekly basis? What criteria is used to move from green to yellow, yellow to red, and vice versa?

All of our monitoring, positive cases and infection rates, is monitored in conjunction with UNCAS Health District, the Town Selectmen's office and the State of Connecticut. We will hold meetings with UNCAS Health weekly, if not more, to review information.

Will you hold interactive meetings with parents such as a parent/family advisory board, listening tours, etc to seek feedback/input?

Yes, in the coming weeks we are working to provide more information with additional ways to solicit feedback and discussion regarding reopening with parents and family members. Our reopening committee is composed of individuals who have provided input into each of their departments according to the State Guidelines. As we move forward, we will look to engage in more discussions based upon the State Department of Educations recommendations about our plan.

Other:

How will gym class work? Will the other grades still use the locker rooms?

No other grades will use the locker rooms. Grades 7 and 8 would use these restrooms as their own. Grades 5 and 6 will use the bathrooms in the junior high hallway. We will not be changing for PE. Mr. Racicot will pick-up his class in their classroom and they will head outside. Outside is the best place to be. If the weather is lousy, then Mr. Racoicot will use the Gym for his class and be able to space out from the locker rooms should 7 and 8th graders need to use them.

For the junior high, will the teachers now be switching classes instead of the kids?

The JH teachers will be switching classes. They will be operating in teams of two for grades 5-8. This will ensure we are keeping the smallest cohort possible with students and staff.

Will there be band and/or chorus this year?

For the first six weeks band and chorus will be available through Google Classroom. Students will be able to access music and information there with Mrs. Gould. During the day, Mrs. Gould and myself are working on a plan to have individual students who need help in band to see her, whether it is for reading music or playing notes. For singing, students must be 12ft apart and our chorus is so large that at this time it does not lend itself to safely be started. We want to keep our students in band and chorus and hopefully setting it up this way we will be able to start it again in person.

Can we see pictures of what the rooms will look like with desks spread apart?

Yes, definitely! Once our rooms and hallways are completed we will share classroom spaces. We will also be sending out some videos of our spaces and new procedures.

Will there be desk shields used for lunch time when the students have to eat inside without masks?

Our student desks will be at six feet in our classrooms due to the size of our classes and will be able to eat lunch at their desks without masks. I am hoping that we can eat lunch outside as often as possible.

We will review the purchase of desk shields with our committee.

How can I send in medication for my child?

Our nurse Mrs. Santiago will return to work on August 17th. Ideally, I would prefer all medication to be brought in to her from August 17th- August 28th. Just make sure it is labeled with their name and with the Dr. order.

If you can't make it before in-person school begins on August 31st, please contact our nurse when she returns and she can take the medication from you when we are in session. Please don't send medication in with students.

If my child wants to attend a tech program can you assure them that a Distant Learning track would not prohibit their acceptance?

I have not had any technical school reach out to say distance/remote learning will be a problem if a family choses that path for the year prior to 9th grade. The Governor has ordered, as of now, remote learning for the full year to be offered. Students who are at home learning will be provided with the same or similar assignments, as well as grading and assessments for their grade level.

Will lunches have requirements for allergies?

Some classrooms might be designated as "nut free" due to severe nut allergies of some students. If your child is in a "nut free" classroom, a notification will be sent home and students will not be allowed to bring any food containing nuts in the classroom at any time. I know this can be hard for some students who like certain items, but in the case of a severe allergy we must make sure all kids are safe, especially since we will be eating in our classrooms for now.

Will children have increased recess time and longer time to eat lunch?

We are finalizing our schedule for in-person learning. With an increased number of recess and lunch times, we have to ensure to have the right amount of supervision of students, as well as areas for recess to occur throughout the day seeing as cohorts will remain playing together.