

Dear Weston School Community,

As we enter the final days of summer, I would like to provide you with the latest health and safety guidelines for our opening schools for students on September 1, 2021. After a year and a half of the COVID-19 pandemic, we unfortunately continue to face public health challenges. Our top priority is to safely open schools in the fall for all students and employees and maintain full in-person educational and extracurricular programming for the entire 180 day school year.

For the safety of all of our children and employees, following the guidelines set forth by the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) and the [American Association of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#) and per order of the [Weston Board of Health from Wednesday, August 18, 2021](#):

- **There will be mandatory masking for all students and adults while indoors in schools and school buildings, beginning August 19, 2021.** This protocol will be revisited regularly by the Weston Board of Health, working with other Town officials, the School Committee and the school administration. [Please review our detailed mask policy here.](#)
- Per federal guidelines, masks will be required for all students and staff while riding the bus or district vehicles. You can find the current [2021-22 Transportation Protocols here.](#)
- Social distancing of **at least three feet or greater** will be in place, per the [CDC guidance.](#)

[Click here for additionally important public health information for the return to school this fall:](#)

- We strongly encourage **COVID-19 vaccination** for all eligible individuals as a primary tool to prevent getting sick from or spreading COVID-19. Click here for [COVID-19 vaccine FAQ.](#)
- All individuals are asked to **check for symptoms before coming to school each day.** For all students under 18, parents/families are asked to check students daily for symptoms.
- Our COVID-19 testing program and protocols includes routine COVID safety checks (formerly known as pooled testing), as well as rapid-result tests for symptomatic individuals, and tests for asymptomatic close contacts. These plans align with the current state guidance for providing each of these different forms of COVID-19 testing.
 - More information about testing will be shared in another comprehensive guide.
- Close contacts of individuals with COVID-19 are identified and contacted by Weston's local Board of Health, typically defined by close exposures for longer than 15 minutes.
 - Unvaccinated close contacts will need to immediately begin a 7-9 day quarantine.
 - Vaccinated close contacts, if asymptomatic, may still attend school each day if using the "test-to-stay" method of taking a rapid antigen test daily before school.
- Only students and school personnel will be allowed in school buildings for the beginning of the school year.
- School lunches will continue to be served at no cost for all students for the 2021-2022 school year. We will start the school year with grab-and-go meals as we did in the Spring.

- There will no longer be corrugated plastic desk dividers in classrooms at the elementary schools. There will be dividers on desks in the cafeteria in the lower elementary schools, due to unmasking.
- Per order of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), there will be no Remote Learning Academy (remote model) offered this year.
- If a family decides to extend a vacation, or otherwise are not currently living in Weston, they will not be able to access school through remote learning. The only students who will be accessing learning remotely are those who are actively being required to quarantine due to their close contact with another individual infected with COVID-19.
- If a student or staff member feels sick, we strongly encourage those individuals experiencing symptoms to stay home, rest, recover, and await testing as needed.

Although these safety precautions are a sobering reminder that we have a long path ahead before putting this pandemic behind us, I cannot emphasize enough how excited we are to resume full in-person schooling this September. We are gearing up for a fantastic school year! Our custodians are hard at work preparing our buildings for staff and student arrival, and many teachers are returning to their classrooms preparing for the new school year. We remain optimistic and are looking forward to the first day of school, Wednesday September 1st. Enjoy the next couple of weeks and we will be reaching out with further communications soon.

Best,

Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent