

Sherman Central School District
Return to School
September 2021

Since the start of the pandemic and school closures in the Spring of 2020, our main goal has been to bring all students back to school, five days a week, for in person instruction. For the 2020-21 school year we practiced flexibility and understanding while working to minimize the spread of disease. To help assist in our decision making we have consulted with and been following the guidance and recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AA), the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the Chautauqua County Department of Health (CCDOH). Their expertise has allowed us to create a layered approach to ensuring the health and safety of our students and staff.

The knowledge that we gained from last school year is allowing us to create a template for this year. The implementation of the safety measures will assist in allowing us to stay open for in-person instruction for all students. This is a fluid document that will be revised as needed based on recommendations from the agencies listed above. Success of this plan's implementation will take cooperation from students, staff and families, as well as our multi-leveled prevention strategies.

The strategies listed below are the recommendations from the CDC. The CDC shared that "Many schools serve children under the age of 12 who are not eligible for vaccination at this time. Therefore, this guidance emphasizes implementing layered prevention strategies (e.g., using multiple prevention strategies together consistently) to protect students, teachers, staff, visitors, and other members of their households and support in-person learning." These strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Physical distancing
- Consistent and correct use of masks
- Promoting vaccination
- Routine cleaning with disinfection
- Proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Staying at home when sick and getting tested, if needed
- Improved ventilation
- Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine

Physical Distancing

Many of our classroom spaces can be staged to maintain a distance of 6 feet between individuals. Areas that cannot meet the 6 foot requirement will be set up so that there is a maximum distance between students and staff, but no less than 3 feet. Prioritizing physical distancing with the use of seating charts will assist in minimizing isolation/quarantine in the

event of an exposure in the classroom. Social distancing will also allow staff to provide regular mask breaks to our students.

Masking

- Anyone entering the school building (students, staff, vendors, visitors) are required to wear a mask while moving throughout the building regardless of vaccination status.
- Properly worn masks cover the nose and mouth. Such masks are required in all shared spaces in the school building including but not limited to hallways, restrooms, auditoriums, offices, gyms and locker rooms.
- Students and staff may remove masks during meals while maintaining physical distancing. The district has a staggered lunch schedule allowing for maximum use of the cafeteria by students. Students in grades preK-6 will rotate between eating in the cafeteria and eating in the classroom under supervision of an aide. Students in grades 7-8 have enough space to physically distance themselves. Students in grades 9-12 will have the option to eat in the cafeteria or in two other rooms in the building to maintain a safe physical distance during meals.
- Mask wearing outdoors is not required, but it is recommended
- Bus drivers, staff and students must wear a mask at all times when on a school bus, regardless of vaccination status
- Students in classrooms that are staged with 6 feet of physical distancing will be allowed mask breaks when seated
- Students in classrooms that cannot maintain 6 feet of physical distance will be allowed staggered mask breaks so that students within 6 feet of each other are not taking mask breaks at the same time.

Cleaning and Sanitation

- All areas of the school building will be disinfected each night by our maintenance staff.
- High touch areas will be cleaned nightly and periodically throughout the day.
- We have installed more bottle filling stations in place of drinking fountains that are readily available throughout the building.

Health Screenings

- We will not be requiring daily health screenings done by staff this school year. However, it is the family's responsibility to assess their students' wellness at home before sending them to school. If a student or staff member is demonstrating signs of illness, STAY HOME.
- If a child presents with any symptoms of COVID-19 or any other illness, please contact the school nurse.
- Any student showing symptoms of illness will be referred to the health office for evaluation. The nurse will contact families for immediate pick up of their student.

Ventilation

Over the past year we have been working with the NYS guidance to increase fresh air intake as much as possible. So far we have increased our HVC system and upgraded our filters to have a higher MERV rating to better filter out virus particles. We have also increased fresh air intake for HVAC systems whenever possible. We also encourage opening of windows and doorways, when appropriate.

Isolation/Quarantine

- The CDC defines a close contact as: “someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, *three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes*). **Exception:** In the **K–12 indoor classroom** setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. Additional guidance for wearing masks is available from the CDC. **This exception does not** apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.
- According to the CDC, people who are fully vaccinated do **NOT** need to quarantine after contact with someone who had COVID-19 unless they have symptoms. However, fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even if they do not have symptoms, and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.
- The Sherman Central School District will be working with the CCDOH to identify and isolate an infected individual to prevent further spread within our school community.

Remote Instruction

Remote instruction will not be provided while the District is fully open for full-time, in-person instruction. If your child is diagnosed with an illness requiring an extended (more than 2 day) absence, we will work with your family to provide instruction.

Resources:

<http://www.nysed.gov/back-school/health-and-safety-guide-2021-2022-school-year>

<https://chqgov.com/public-health/covid-19-information-schools-and-childcare-programs>