

Salem School Reopening 2020-2021
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
Updated 8/4/2020

What concessions/arrangements might be made for students who will have issues wearing a mask all day?

Guidance on masks comes from two different State Departments: the New York State Education Department and the New York State Department of Health. The basic guidelines require students over the age of 2 to wear a mask in situations where students are unable to social distance, unless wearing the mask would impair their physical or mental health. Students and staff are required to wear cloth face coverings: whenever they are within 6 feet of someone; in hallways; in restrooms; and in other congregate settings, including buses. Students may remove masks during meals, instruction, and short breaks unless social distancing cannot be maintained. However, the recommendation of the Department of Health is that masks are worn at all times.

For school purposes, students won't be wearing masks all day. Masks may be removed in situations stipulated by the guidance. They will be required to wear them at times where social distancing cannot be maintained. Cases where wearing masks may be impractical will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the classroom teacher. It is important to note that personal choice or inconvenience are not acceptable reasons to not wear a mask at school when social distancing cannot be maintained.

What happens if individuals refuse to wear a mask?

Refusal, for our purposes, is the willful choice to not wear a mask when individuals are unable to socially distance or at the direction of an employee of the school district or health department official in the school. Any individual who refuses to wear a mask will be educated on why the mask is required and provided the opportunity to comply with the regulations.

Students who refuse the mask may be subject to disciplinary measures (e.g. insubordination or endangering the health and welfare/safety of others) per the Code of Conduct. Continual refusal may result in altering the student's educational setting from the hybrid model to remote learning. Each situation will be handled on a case by case basis.

Employees who refuse to wear a mask may be subject to disciplinary measures as outlined by the respective Collective Bargaining Agreements, state legislation, and Department of Education regulations.

Visitors who refuse to wear a mask may not be allowed to enter the school premises. If guests are already in the building, they may be escorted out and not allowed reentry.

What if I forgot/don't have a mask?

The district will maintain a supply of masks for those who forgot to bring a mask. For school employees, the district is required to provide a mask for use. We are requesting and encouraging everyone to procure their own masks and wear those for your own comfort, convenience, and protection. If a family is having a challenge in securing a mask, please reach out to your respective building principal for assistance.

Is there any guidance in place for printed and/or personalized masks?

There is no guidance from the NYSDOH or NYSED regarding personalized or printed masks. Their requirement is that masks get worn when social distancing isn't possible, and their recommendation that masks get worn throughout the day. Masks are considered a part of a student's clothing. As a result, the dress code, as outlined in the student handbook and Code of Conduct, will apply. If you have a question about whether or not a mask or face covering is appropriate, please contact your child's building principal.

Is there a protocol in place for regular testing of teachers and staff?

At this time, there is no requirement for schools to test teachers and staff on a regular basis. Faculty and staff may be required to get tested if they exhibit signs and symptoms of COVID-19 as determined by a healthcare professional. The district will follow the directions of the Washington County Health Department and NYS protocols for any faculty and staff member who tests positive for COVID-19.

If a teacher tests positive for instance, or an aide etc, what is the notification process for the community and families in that classroom? etc.

Individuals who are diagnosed with COVID-19 fall under HIPAA protections, ensuring their privacy. The district has obligations to report cases of COVID-19 to the health department. Individuals who have come in close proximity to a COVID-positive person may hear from the health department about possible exposure. The district will maintain appropriate records and procedures to accurately account for the location of individuals while in school.

The district will let families know of a COVID-19 related case in the school in events where we are required to close the school or move instruction to remote learning for a longer period of time as a result of a case of COVID-19.

What happens if families do not complete health screenings at home?

Please know that we haven't fully decided this is the route we are taking, and that it is the recommendation in the guidance. We will also have stations set up in other strategic locations to screen students prior to entering the building. Our hope in having home checks is to help expedite the process at the doors and keep social distancing/density concerns at a minimum. We are also contemplating doing temperature checks during the school day as a verification process. Again, this is still a work in progress.

Will families have access to technical help from the school?

Yes, we are working on having some type of technical help available for families. It's likely to be a multi-pronged approach with some of the help hosted on our school website or paper-based guides sent home to do some troubleshooting with more 'intensive' support being live with either some of our staff or our technical staff at BOCES. More details to follow.

Is Pre-K being held this year?

Yes, the Pre-K is being held this year, though the program may be altered. We are reaching out to interested and registered families on their intent to send students to school so we have an accurate count of students who plan to attend. We will make any adjustments to the program in order to maintain social distancing and keep students safe.

What is the opening plan for BOCES programming?

The reopening plan for BOCES is below. The district is working cooperatively with BOCES to ensure that students maintain their programs.

https://www.wswheboces.org/resources/views/Filing_cabinet/filing_cabinet_files/1596137120_WSWHEBOCESReopeningPlan-.pdf

Will BOCES students be able to earn their certificate to graduate?

At this time, all programs are being maintained by BOCES and students in those programs should be able to obtain their certificates to graduate. There are still some lingering questions that will be addressed later in the school year pending update guidance from the State.

Is Salem providing transportation to BOCES?

Yes we are. We are also considering having students drive themselves to BOCES, with parental permission. We'll have more information as it becomes available.

If BOCES isn't a possibility, can students make up credits to graduate?

There are no specific plans to this scenario at this time. If COVID-19 creates a situation where students are in danger of not graduating due to lack of credit, the district will take every measure to ensure that credits are available for students.

Can students attend BOCES the following year at no cost to make up for lost time/missed instruction?

Determinations on extending a students educational experience to complete a BOCES program will be decided if the situation arises at a later date.

How will CTE programs work with block scheduling?

As we work on the block scheduling build, we will take the BOCES schedules into account to allow students to get the classes that they need here in Salem and still complete their programs

at BOCES. This may mean getting creative in our instructional delivery, but we'll find a way to get the schedules to mesh. We'll have more details as we get closer.

How will hybrid learning work with CTE?

The hybrid approach will take some coordination between Salem and BOCES to allow students to get in-person time at the CTE program as well as meeting the other requirements. Like Salem, BOCES will have some remote learning included with their instruction.

Will there be MSDS available for parents to read, regarding the cleaning/sanitation products to be used in the school?

Yes, we are putting the packet of information together now. We will post this information with the remainder of the reopening plan information on the school website.

Will there be a way educators can record their lessons and place their videos within the course's Google classroom so students could download all videos at one time to be looked at and referenced at another time?

Yes, the district has made the investment into cameras and microphones for teachers for that purpose. We're also providing training to teachers to help facilitate these types of resources for our students and families when in the remote portion of hybrid learning.

Is there an option for virtual kindergarten or any grade level?

Yes, virtual learning is a possibility for any family that wishes to keep their students in remote learning environments. Please contact your respective principal to let them know of your intent.

The approach taken to remote learning will depend on the level of interest in remote learning at your child's grade level and staffing needs. Your child will receive the same content and standards as students in the hybrid model. However, please know the following about remote instruction:

- You may have a different teacher in the remote learning environment than you were scheduled to have at the beginning of the school year.
- If remote learning is chosen as an option you may opt back into the hybrid model. However, re-entry into hybrid-model will only happen at specific times during the school year (possibly at the end of each quarter). Also, you may have a different teacher than you did during remote learning.

Have Regents been cancelled for this school year also?

No. Regents Exams are still scheduled for the 2020-2021 school year. If this changes, we will let everyone know.

Will siblings be placed on the same days in school schedule?

Yes. We are reviewing the lists now to ensure that we've accurately assigned students by household into a common instructional group for the family unit.

With block scheduling, will there be finals for some courses in January?

We're still working on that schedule. The possibility may exist for semester classes but other courses will be looking at finals at the end of the school year.

Will it be possible to continue band/choir with the guidelines for social distancing?

Yes. We're working on how we can make that happen currently. Our goal is to retain as many of the electives, extracurriculars, etc. as possible.

The kids are asking if they will have lockers?

We intend to have lockers for students. Access to hall lockers will be limited during the day to maintain social distancing and reduce hall congestion. We are considering allowing the use of backpacks on a temporary basis during this period. In some cases, students may not have the same lockers that they had last year. To maximize social distancing within each grade-level instructional group, hall lockers may need to be reassigned. PE lockers will be assigned to maximize social distancing in the locker room within the class group. We will update you when we have more information about the details regarding locker use.

When will class schedules be available?

We're completely rebuilding the schedule in a short period of time. We will send out instructional groups and schedules for students as soon as we have completed them.

What if my child is medically vulnerable or in a high risk group?

Please contact the respective building principal so that we may discuss alternate provisions that may be necessary to work with you and your child's healthcare providers to accommodate the needs of your child at school and to protect his/her health and safety.