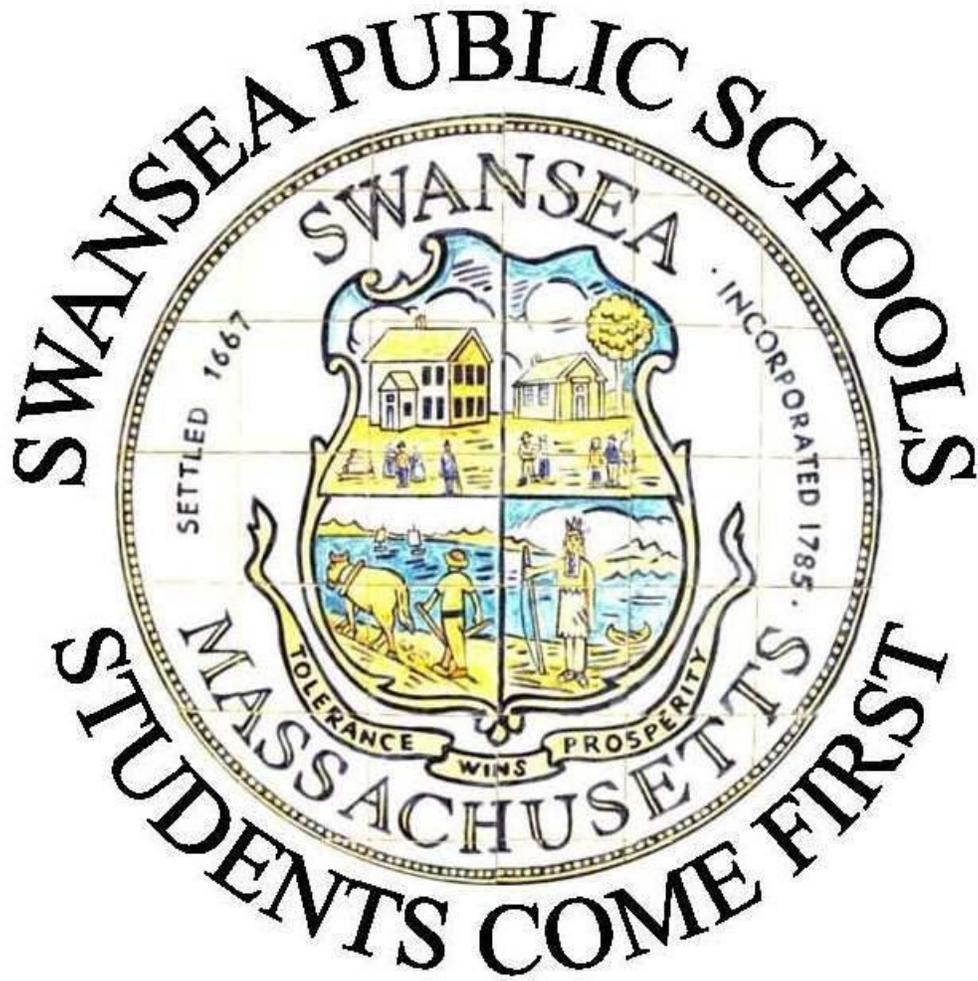


**Swansea Public Schools
Comprehensive Reopening Plan
August, 2020**



A Message from Superintendent Robidoux:

Dear Swansea Community,

These past few months have been frustrating and anxiety-producing times. As we continue to navigate the health crisis, patience, collaboration and attention to the health official's guidance are key to moving forward in the safest way possible for our students and staff. We have established a plan that encompasses the ways we will educate our students in the months to come. We are moving forward with a Hybrid model of learning that maximizes in-person learning while balancing health and safety of both our students and our staff by following the medical professional and state guidelines.

Any plan that is developed during a time when there are still many unknowns, has to be one that is fluid, while establishing a baseline for how we operate. I realize that this plan may not be everyone's first choice, however, we need to keep the health and safety of all stakeholders in the forefront of any process we undertake to educate our students.

Given the directives from the state, the health officials, the Department of Education, and in collaboration with staff, administrators, community members and the school committee, the plan that is outlined here is one that has been thought out and incorporates aspects of teaching and learning that are balanced with the health and safety of all involved.

I appreciate the input, feedback and efforts that have been put forth on behalf of our students, as it is imperative that they be back in schools as much as feasible in order to continue to make social, emotional and academic growth.

Stay safe and be well

Executive Summary:

The Swansea Public School District's motto is "Students Come First" and as such we are committed to providing a high quality education for all of its students in the safest and most appropriate way possible. This plan outlines the three learning models requested by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) as possible options during the 2020-2021 school year; full time in-person learning, a hybrid model that blends in-person and remote learning and a fully remote model of learning. The social, emotional and educational well-being of our students, coupled with their health and safety are paramount to how we move forward in the fall. Medical experts are being relied upon to provide the most recent, factual and up-to-date information so that we can try to plan accordingly. Given that this guidance is ever-changing based upon the trajectory of the virus, it makes planning for the fall, and beyond, very challenging. All plans have pros and cons so reliance upon the health professionals has helped dictate how we move forward. Having all students and staff back into our building at 100% capacity would be ideal. However, given health constraints for transportation (ie. mandatory mask wearing for all, one student per seat (except siblings) and having windows open for circulation), in and of itself poses the greatest challenge to getting all students back into the building everyday. To that end, a hybrid model, where student cohorts are established, allows for splitting of students into smaller groups where buses, classrooms, lunch, drop-off/pick-up, passing in the halls and general appropriate distancing can occur, really is the best indicated course of action at this juncture. A fully remote model would be implemented only if there is an uptick in the general health crisis that indicates a wide shutdown of schools. Any large scale shutdown would be in conjunction with health and DESE officials. Students who reside in a situation where there is an individual, or individuals, that are at high risk, may opt for a full remote option. The caution here is that this does not become the 'norm' but rather when it is a necessity as having students in-person as much as feasible is the goal. Given all of the above information, Swansea Public Schools will be operating under a hybrid model for the upcoming school year. This model, consisting of Cohort A and B, will be divided with siblings in mind and then by sheer numbers to ensure classroom settings can support students where we strive for six feet distance with a minimum of three feet as indicated by health officials as being appropriate. Within our cohort model, students who are classified as 'high need' will attend on all days that students are present in the buildings. The 'high needs' students include; students receiving special education who, determined by their individual education plan, are serviced in substantially separate programs and those who are partially included, English Language Learners, students who are in DCF custody, homeless students and preschoolers. You will receive cohort assignments from your child's building principal.

Descriptions of the Three Models of Learning for Swansea Public Schools

In-Person Learning Model with Health and Safety Precautions

For this learning model, students would receive in-person instruction full time in school environments that have been appropriately modified to address health and safety requirements issued by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). In this model, some students' families may decide to engage in a remote learning model, provided by the school district, while the rest of the school returns in-person full time. **At this juncture, a full in-person model for learning is not indicated given that the health and safety of our students and staff are paramount and this model, although having all students back in school, poses greater risks than a hybrid model where students can be spread out at a greater distance.**

While all students would be at school in this model, the school day and environment would be vastly different in order for the Swansea Public Schools to minimally comply with the DESE requirements. For example:

- Desks must be spaced a minimum of three feet apart with a recommended spacing of six feet. The classroom size and class sizes across all six Swansea schools would barely allow for the minimum space requirements to be met.
- Given the spacing requirements, students would need to remain seated for the majority of the day as there would not be adequate space for movement around the classroom while maintaining social distancing.
- Arrival and dismissal of students would involve entering and exiting the building while practicing social distancing which would likely result in unsafe situations for students.
- Protocols such as students needing to eat in their classrooms would need to be in place due to the number of students present at school, however, the classrooms cannot accommodate the six feet of required space when students remove their masks to eat.
- Bathroom use and sink use for hand washing would be time consuming and possibly involve long wait times for students due to the number of children present.
- Student learning would be drastically different than what students are accustomed to as they will not be able to engage in group work, partner work or move freely about the school.
- Regular cleaning and sanitizing protocols will be in place according to the procedures required by the DESE

Hybrid Learning Model with Health and Safety Precautions

The Hybrid Learning Model is a blended approach between in-school learning and remote learning. **The hybrid model is what Swansea Public Schools will be implementing for the fall as it allows for the greatest number of students to attend school in the safest manner possible.** In this model, students attend school two days per week in person with safety requirements and three days per week remotely. Every student will have the opportunity to attend school, in person each week. Swansea Public Schools will employ a Cohort Model for this option. Students assigned to **Cohort A** attend school in-person on Monday and Tuesday and learn remotely through teacher provided videos and assignments on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Students assigned to **Cohort B** learn remotely through teacher-provided videos and assignments on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and attend school-in person on Thursday and Friday. Students in the same family will be assigned to the same cohort. In this model, some students’ families may decide to engage in a remote learning model, provided by the school district, while the rest of the school returns in a cohort model.

With the Hybrid Model, approximately half of the student body would be present at school on each of the in-person learning days. As such, spacing of desks in classrooms would allow more than the minimum requirements of the DESE. The decreased number of students in each classroom would allow for some opportunities for students to learn in different areas of the classroom safely and while complying with the guidelines of the DESE.

SPS Hybrid Model Schedule		
Cohort A In School	<p>Wednesday is a remote learning day for both cohorts of students. This will provide the opportunity for extra cleaning of the school buildings between cohorts and provide time for teachers to engage in preparation and professional responsibilities to ensure a robust in-person and remote learning experience for students.</p>	Cohort B Remote Learning
Monday		Monday
Tuesday		Tuesday
Cohort A Remote Learning		Wednesday
Wednesday		Cohort B In School
Thursday		Thursday
Friday		Friday

Special Note for Preschool Families: Due to the small class sizes that are maintained at the preschool level, the preschool program will operate on its normal am/pm schedule for all students on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Social distancing and health and safety guidelines will be maintained. Full cleaning will take place between all sessions.

Hybrid Model Considerations for Special Education and High Need Students: In compliance with the recommendations of the DESE, special education students and high need students (*as outlined in the 'executive summary' section of this document*) will be invited to participate in 4 days of in-person learning.

Remote Learning Requirements: During the remote learning days, each student will engage in academic lessons and related assignments along with itinerant classes to the extent feasible.

Support for Remote Learning: Swansea Public Schools will support students and families during remote learning times in many ways. All students will have a platform for remote learning which will streamline the manner in which videos and assignments are received and work is returned. Utilization of the Google platform will be the main vehicle for remote learning and supplemented by many other virtual platforms by teachers to enhance the remote learning experience. Additionally, Chromebooks will be lent to families who may be in need of internet-ready devices.

Virtual Meetings: In addition to in-person learning and remote learning experiences, students will have virtual meetings regularly with their teachers.

With approximately half of the students present at school on in-person learning days, the Swansea Public Schools can better comply with the DESE requirements. For example:

- Desks will be able to be spaced well in excess of the three foot minimum and closer to the recommended spacing of six feet.
- The decreased number of students in each classroom will allow for limited flexibility for classroom experiences other than remaining seated at student desks. While this plan will not allow for full movement due to health and safety requirements, this model provides greater flexibility than the full return to in-person instruction model.
- Arrival and dismissal of students will involve significantly smaller numbers of students entering and exiting the building while practicing social distancing. This will enable school staff to better ensure students safety at these times.
- Lunch shifts at all schools will be easier to manage as students will be able to be spread out between the cafeteria and classrooms given the distancing.
- Bathroom use and sink use for hand washing would be more manageable due to the smaller number of children present.
- Student learning opportunities, while still observing social distancing, will be able to be more varied due to the physical space available in the classrooms.
- Student cohorts will be more manageable for PE, music, art etc
- Regular cleaning and sanitizing protocols will be in place according to the procedures required by the DESE.

- Teachers will provide information during in-person learning that is needed for remote learning days.
- Assessment of student work will take place in accordance with the MA Curriculum standards for both in class and remote learning products.
- Students' work will be graded and report cards will be issued accordingly

Full Remote Learning Model

In this learning model, remote learning is the default mode of instruction for all students only if there is an ‘uptick’ in the virus that would indicate a global shut-down of schools. **A fully remote model of instruction is not indicated at this time given the ability of Swansea students and staff to attend school in a hybrid model.** Structured learning time requirements apply to remote learning. While there will be some variability in the way that remote learning is presented at various grades across our district, the overall goal is to provide a balanced presentation for all students. The general parameters for this plan will be as follows:

Teacher Directed Learning

All students will receive a combination of 'live' and video recorded lessons with related assignments each week in each content area. The lessons will follow the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and will include robust learning experiences for students. Participation is required for all learners and will be tracked through assignments turned in via the online portals for each grade level. Attendance will be taken at all virtual class meetings and lessons. Lessons presented will be designed to be accessible for all learners, and special care will be taken to address students with special learning needs.

Special Educators will ensure that students receive all services and interventions specified on each child’s IEP. They will also work with grade level teachers to determine the best way to meet student needs.

Itinerant teachers will continue to provide the most appropriate academic lessons possible via remote learning

Grading of student work/participation will be done in accordance with school policies and procedures. Feedback on work products will be provided to all students. Students will receive report cards as they normally would at the end of each trimester/quarter/term.

Virtual Meetings/Check In’s: In addition to remote learning experiences, students will have regular virtual meetings with their teachers. During these meetings, teachers may engage in instruction, social opportunities for students, or provide help to students on content being covered.

Teacher/Student Check-Ins

Teachers will check in regularly with their students. In addition to the virtual meetings/check-ins teachers may check in with phone calls, notes, and/or emails.

Support for Remote Learning: Swansea Public Schools will support students and families during remote learning times in many ways. All students will have a platform for remote learning which will streamline the manner in which videos and assignments are received and work is returned. All teachers utilize Google Classroom along with other supplemental virtual platforms. Parent information and information and instruction for students, as appropriate, will be provided. Chromebooks will be lent to families who have indicated a need.

Logistical Information for In-Person School Days:

Class Sizes: Every effort has been made to ensure the smallest classes possible, striving for 6 foot distance, with a minimum of 3 feet between desks.

Bus Transportation: **All** students, PK-12 must wear masks while riding on the school bus. Seating is in accord with social distancing guidelines. Windows will remain open and students must face front.

Student Arrival/departure: Specific drop-off/pick-up procedures will be outlined by the principal for your child's building. The procedures will take into account social distancing and with only students entering the buildings

School visitors: Visitors to the school, other than dismissal of a student during the day by parent/guardian, are **not allowed** given the current health crisis. Parents/guardians are asked to proceed directly to the office, leave name and phone number (for contact tracing purposes) and dismiss their student as expeditiously as possible.

Mask Breaks: It is vital that students and staff have breaks from wearing their masks, therefore times will be scheduled throughout the day and in compliance with 6 foot distancing.

Floor Markers: Floor markers will be placed strategically in school buildings to ensure social distance is maintained while waiting in line.

Hand washing Procedures: School staff will ensure that students engage in effective hand washing techniques. The school nurses will provide education for students on proper hand washing techniques. Hands need to be washed, at a minimum, before and after snacks/meals/bathroom breaks

Hand Sanitizer: Hand sanitizer will be provided upon entry to each building, in classrooms as well as in common areas. The use of hand sanitizer is encouraged, especially when a sink is not readily available.

Birthdays and Other Special Activities Involving Celebrations with Food: No treats may be brought from home for birthday or other celebrations at this time.

Recess Procedure: During recess at the elementary school level, students will play in designated areas with appropriate social distancing

Student Classroom Materials: Student supplies may not be stored communally. Each grade level will provide a list of requested classroom learning supplies that will be used only by that student.

Use of Outdoor Spaces for Learning: Teachers will be encouraged to utilize outside spaces for instruction as appropriate for their class.

Attendance Incentives: Due to the severity of COVID-19, the foremost focus is on student health and safety, therefore, there will be no attendance initiatives during the 2020-2021 school year.

Lunch: School provided lunches will be prepackaged to comply with safety guidelines and the ability to ‘grab and go’ to allow for appropriate social distancing while eating. Students **will not** be allowed to share food.

Health & Safety Information:

Masks: All students in grades 2-12 and all staff of the Swansea Public Schools are required to wear masks at all times if you are in the presence of others. Masks must be worn over the nose and mouth at all times. While students in PK-1 are not required to wear masks (**except while riding on the bus**), mask use is strongly encouraged. Masks will be provided by students’ families, and an extra mask should be placed in each child’s school bag. Masks should be washed daily. The school has a supply of masks for student or staff use in the event one is forgotten, damaged, etc.

Social Distancing: The Swansea Public Schools will follow all recommendations from the DESE regarding social distancing. This includes observing a six foot social distance when students are waiting in lines, etc. Desks will be placed as close to six feet apart in classrooms but no less than three feet apart.

Nursing Services: All schools are each staffed by a full time school nurse. The nurses in each building are knowledgeable about the Coronavirus and well-versed in the policies of the DESE regarding the pandemic.

Students/Staff Presenting with COVID-19 Symptoms: Students or staff who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 will report directly to the Nurse’s Office. Each school has established a COVID-19 isolation area for assessment of COVID-19 symptoms. The school nurses will strictly follow the guidance about exclusion from school for Coronavirus symptoms. (see *COVID-19 Guidelines for Handling Illness* section below for further details)

Screening of Students for COVID-19: Parents are asked to screen their child(ren) daily for symptoms of COVID-19 before sending the child(ren) to school. Parents are advised to keep children home if they exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19.

Cleaning Protocols: Classrooms will be sanitized daily by the custodial staff in accordance with the requirements of the DESE.

Ventilation System: The HVAC systems have been updated in each school. Filters have been changed and mechanical systems have all been serviced. In addition SPS is adding UV lighting to all of our systems which will ameliorate 97-98% of airborne viruses, bacteria and particulates.

Use of Safety Equipment: Staff that need to be in close proximity to students to meet individual educational, health, behavioral, emotional or hygiene needs will utilize Safety Equipment,

otherwise known as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided to. This equipment may include gowns, face shields, gloves, etc.

Surround Care: The Swansea Public Schools will offer before and after school care through the Surround Care program to students on their in-person learning days. The numbers in the program have been reduced for the health and safety of both staff and students.

COVID -19 Guidelines for Handling Illness

Screening procedures will *not* be required at the point of entry to the school. However, school staff (including bus drivers) will observe students throughout the day and refer students who may be symptomatic to school nurses. Temperature checks are not recommended due to false positives and false negative results (Asadian, Simon, et.al 2016).

Any student or staff member exhibiting COVID-19-like symptoms must stay home. Staff and students should not come to school if they become sick with COVID-19 symptoms, test positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with

COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case.

Staff and children with COVID-19 symptoms (such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath) at school will be separated from well students/staff. Individuals who are sick will be triaged by the school nurse and asked to either go home immediately or to a healthcare facility depending on the severity of the symptoms. Any individual who becomes sick at school will be triaged for further medical assessment and testing based on their symptoms. They will be asked to follow CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others who are sick.

As is recommended in the Commissioner's Initial Fall School Re-Entry Guidance, all of our schools will have a designated "sick area" where staff and or students will be placed and assessed and kept separate from 'well' students and staff.

School nurses and other healthcare providers should use [Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions](#) when caring for sick people. See also [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know](#), a protocol that explains what we need to know about caring for patients with confirmed or possible COVID-19 infection.

If a nurse/school personnel need(s) to call an ambulance they will alert the dispatcher that the person may have COVID-19

Families need to provide the school nurse with accurate emergency contacts, indicating individuals who will be able to come to the school and pick up their child if they become sick during the school day. Dismissing sick children (and staff) in a timely fashion (within 30 minutes) is imperative for the safety of all.

PreK, K, and Grade 1 students who are not wearing a face covering mask and are showing signs of illness will be asked to wear a face covering mask to reduce the spread of the illness until they leave the school premises

2020/2021 Swansea Public Schools Calendar

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k1yPWWjcTL1XqLRdi0ZLee12mFFFY8WP/view?usp=sharing>

COVID Resources and information:

In addition to the information and resources outlined in this plan below, please refer to the Swansea Public Schools' website; www.swanseaschools.org for further information

from the Commissioner's Re-Entry Group

Initial Fall School Re-Entry Guidance

“Schools do not appear to have played a major role in COVID-19 transmission. In a review of COVID clusters, only 4% (8 of 210) involved school transmission.[i] In a case study from New South Wales Australia, after 18 cases were found in schools (12 in high schools and 6 in primary schools), only 0.3% of student contacts were infected (1 in 695 individuals in 10 high schools and 1 in 168 individuals in primary schools). No teachers or staff were infected.

In general, rates of COVID-19 infection are lower for children than for adults. Based on an analysis of data from six countries, children under 20 are half as susceptible to COVID-19 infection than adults.[iii] Furthermore, although children under the age of 18 make up 22% of the U.S. population, they account for less than 2% of all cases of COVID-19.[iv] In Massachusetts, children under the age of 19 were about four times less likely than the population at large to be diagnosed with COVID-19.[v] Children are more likely to be asymptomatic, however, which underscores the importance of health behaviors for everyone (masks/face coverings, distancing, handwashing, surface cleaning).

If exposed, children may be less likely to become infected with COVID-19. A meta-analysis of studies from several countries found that children were only 44% as likely as adults to become infected after exposure (note: pre-print study).[vii] In China, in households with COVID-19 exposure, children under the age of 18 were infected at a rate of 4% compared with 17% for adults.

If infected, it appears children may be less likely to infect others with COVID-19. Most transmissions are from adults to children, rather than vice versa; this is different from

some other respiratory viruses (note: pre-print study).[ix] In a U.S. study of 15 households, 73% of transmission were from adult to child (the remaining were child-to-child or child-to adult).”

National Data from the Centers for Disease Control

<https://wellcomeopenresearch.org/articles/5-83/v2>

http://ncirs.org.au/sites/default/files/2020-04/NCIRS%20NSW%20Schools%20COVID_Summary_FINAL%20public_26%20April%202020.pdf

<http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6914e4>

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<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting>

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.05.20.20108126v1>