



Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

August 20, 2021

Version 1.1

The Ellington Public Schools are prepared to meet the 2021-2022 school year head on. The update to this plan reflects changing dynamics of the COVID-19 pandemic and corresponding changes to requirements and guidance since our previous publication in June.



The good news is the Ellington Public Schools has a strong foundation on which to build upon as we move to meet the challenges of a new school year. The community we serve, our amazing staff, our partnerships with community agencies such as the North Central District Health Department and the Town of Ellington, and practices and protocols established in the 2020-2021 school year are the building blocks of our continued success. Our collective efforts during last year led to amazing accomplishments for our students and their families. We know this year will be no different.

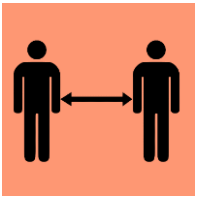


Some of the guidance has changed from last year as, despite recent trends in cases, we are in a different phase of pandemic response. We know more now. Certain elements of our practices and protocols (e.g. sanitization of surfaces) can be scaled back based on our knowledge of how COVID-19 spreads.


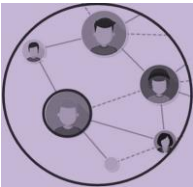
Of course, as we have throughout, the Ellington Public Schools will continue to communicate effectively and make appropriate and measured decisions on best course of action for the holistic safety of our students, staff, and their families.




I. Health and Safety Strategies

The Ellington Public Schools adopted its Reopening Plan 2020-2021 in July of 2020 which provided the broad framework for a successful school year operating in-person. However, the details of policies and procedures implemented during the school year needed to follow changing guidance from Governor's Executive Orders, CSDE/DPH, CDC, and our local public health agency. EPS will continue with the same methodology, using this as a broad outline, but adapting as needed as conditions change.

	Mitigation strategy	EPS Plan
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Universal and correct wearing of masks</p> 	<p>Through Governor Lamont's Executive Order 13A, the Commissioner of Public Health has extended an order for masks to be worn by everyone entering in a school. This order remains in place currently through September 30, 2021. Ellington Public Schools will follow this requirement, with all students, staff, and visitors required to wear masks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are required to wear masks when utilizing bus transportation per CDC orders. • In places where students cannot mask (e.g. cafeterias), schools will work to provide additional layers of mitigation strategies, such as physical distance, use of outdoor areas such as tents among others. • Masks are not required outdoors if students can appropriately distance. • Responsible mask break opportunities will be provided throughout the day. <p>Further evaluation of continued guidance and requirements will come over the next month and if changes occur they will be communicated to the broader public.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Handwashing and respiratory etiquette</p> 	<p>The Ellington Public Schools will continue to encourage and allow for the use of proper hand-washing and sanitization for the 2021-2022 school year.</p> <p>Hand sanitizing stations remain throughout the buildings for use by students and staff.</p>

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts /podding)</p> 	<p>The Ellington Public Schools will encourage the use of physical distancing for the 2021-2022 school year and provide flexibility for teachers to determine the best classroom layout and pedagogical approach to accomplish this task.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In classrooms, teachers should strive to provide a minimum of 3 feet of physical distancing when possible. • Large assemblies can occur if physical distancing can be maintained
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Visitor Policy</p> 	<p>During the school day, visitors will be limited to essential items only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPTs are encouraged to be in a virtual format • Volunteers will not be permitted in classrooms to start the school year • Meet and Greets and Open Houses may be in-person, provided care is taken to allow adherence to mitigation strategies • PTO activities during the school day will be reviewed case by case <p>Outside of the school day, community groups may request to use spaces, provided they follow safe COVID-19 practices.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Specials & Extracurricular Activities</p> 	<p>The Ellington Public Schools will provide for in-person extracurricular activities throughout the school year to the extent possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music participation for coursework lessons and extracurricular activities shall follow the same guidance from the 2020-2021 school year. This includes added spacing, mask-wearing. • CIAC Guidance for each sport will be followed • Spectators will be limited to a number that allows for appropriate physical distancing

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation</p> 	<p>The Ellington Public Schools will continue enhanced cleaning procedures for high traffic areas such as bathrooms and nurses' suites. General classroom spaces and other settings will be cleaned daily.</p> <p>HVAC systems will be checked regularly with filter changes and other maintenance as required. Program settings from the 2020-2021 school year, such as higher fresh air ratios and longer occupancy settings, will remain in place.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with health departments</p> 	<p>The Ellington Public Schools will follow the protocols developed for contract tracing, isolation and quarantine used during the successful 2020-2021 school year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A definition of a contact remains those who were within 6 feet of a confirmed COVID-19 case for a cumulative time of 15 minutes. • Vaccinated individuals who provide verification do not need to quarantine if identified as a contact. • Those who have tested positive for COVID-19 and since completed their 10 day isolation period in the past 90 days, and provide verification, do not need to quarantine if identified as a contact. • Student to student contacts in classroom settings, where both students are masked and distance was greater than 3 feet apart, do not need to quarantine.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Diagnostic screening and testing</p> 	<p>The Ellington Public Schools will follow the protocols developed for screening and testing used during the successful 2020-2021 school year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families will be asked to perform daily health screens • Students with symptoms of COVID-19 may be subject to required testing before returning to school. <p>The Ellington Public Schools are working with State officials to offer voluntary, weekly diagnostic screening testing for interested families with students K-6. Details have not been finalized and will be communicated separately.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible</p> 	<p>Vaccines are an important mitigation strategy for reducing COVID-19 in school settings as recommended by the CDC, and State and Local Health departments. Ellington Public Schools worked during the spring to provide eligible staff and students the opportunity to receive a vaccine. Health benefits to vaccines include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced case rates • Milder illness if breakthrough infection occurs <p>We encourage all families to consult with their medical providers to see if vaccination is in the best interests for their children, if eligible (currently ages 12+).</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies</p> 	<p>The Ellington Public Schools will follow federal and state laws, regulations, and guidance with respect to appropriate accommodations for children that qualify under this section.</p>

II. Continuity of Services

The Ellington Public Schools will continue to operate full in-person for the 2021-2022 school year. Remote options provided in the 2020-2021 school year (Silver) will not be available for families. Currently, the State Department of Education does not allow for a remote learning option with limited exceptions.

The district will continue, as it has, to provide non-congregate meal access during the summer of 2021 and will participate in the Summer Seamless Option for the 2021-2022 school year. **This provides free breakfast and lunch to all students regardless of household income.**

III. Public Comment

The Ellington Public Schools will continue to provide opportunity for broad public input on this plan by providing it on our website along with a comment form. It will also be shared with key stakeholder groups for additional feedback. Such feedback shall be considered during the review process, or as needed.

IV. Periodic Review Process

The Ellington Public Schools are required to periodically review and, as appropriate, revise their Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan at least every six months through September 30, 2023. Each scheduled review must include seeking public comment on the plan and developing the plan after considering the public comment. Interim versions based on developing guidance will be published as needed.

Review/revisit Dates:

- Version 1.0 - June 23, 2021
- *Version 1.1 - August 20, 2021- Interim based on changed guidance*
- Version 2.0 - December 23, 2021
- Version 3.0 - June 23, 2022
- Version 4.0 - December 23, 2022
- Version 5.0 - June 23, 2023

V. Understandable and Uniform Format

Federal regulations require that this plan be in an understandable and uniform format, to the extent practicable; is written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable, orally translated; and upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.

If the Ellington Public Schools is aware of any need regarding accessibility of this document, we will provide individual or broad accommodations to ensure all have access to the contents contained within.