



# The YCPTA'S Frequently Asked Questions about the Reopening of Yonkers Public Schools

The YCPTA has compiled a list of frequently asked questions regarding the reopening of our schools. Answers are cited from the 2020-2021 School Reopening Plan.

## 1) What health and safety protocols will be place for hybrid learning?

Per NYSED guidance the District focused on preventive actions to ensure the health and safety of the staff and families. Schools will be required to: perform health checks and screenings, per DOH guidance, and recognize signs and symptoms of illness in students and staff; develop plans to maximize social distancing; develop plans to manage and isolate ill persons until they can be sent home; instruct students and staff in proper hand and respiratory hygiene; require wearing appropriate face coverings; and develop cleaning and disinfecting procedures for the school in accordance with CDC and DOH guidance.

Details are provided for each of the following:

- Health Checks and Screenings
- Social Distancing
- Health Hygiene
- Face Coverings and PPE
- Cleaning and Disinfection
- Arrival/Dismissal
- Hallways
- Classrooms/Instruction
- Cafeteria

### CAFETERIA

- Assess where meals will be served in accordance with social distancing protocols
- Schedule classes in the cafeteria as outlined by NYSED; consider escorting one class at a time to pick up food in PreK-5, 6, & 8 buildings and return to the classroom, if feasible or have food delivered to classroom
- Increase table spacing to maintain social distancing

■ [PLEASE SEE PAGES 19, 20 AND 21 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

## 2) How will children eat lunch? If so, what safety protocols are in place for children during lunch?

Nutrition Breakfast and lunch will be provided and students will eat in both the cafeteria and classroom to ensure following social distancing guidelines. Grab and Go stations may also be used to distribute meals. Students in the cafeteria will face the same direction and hard surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected between use. Sharing and family style meals are prohibited. Where applicable and appropriate, physical education classes will be provided outdoors. Every attempt will be made to stagger the use of restrooms while teaching students to follow proper social distancing and handwashing in bathrooms.

■ [PLEASE SEE PAGE 17 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

Details are provided for each of the following:

- In-Person Meals and Meal Distribution:

The school will ensure social distancing between individuals while eating in the cafeteria. If not feasible, meals may be served in alternate areas (e.g., classrooms) or in staggered meal periods to ensure social distancing and proper cleaning and disinfection between students.

- Health and Safety Guidelines
- Child Nutrition Program Requirements
- Family Communication
- YonkersPublicSchools.org. Food Service Employee Responsibilities
- Food Service Responsibilities

### SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Floor markers following social distancing guidelines will be placed on all kitchen floors indicating where each employee is expected to work
- All staff are required to wear PPE including disposable gloves and surgical masks
- All staff are required to change PPE when soiled

■ [PLEASE SEE PAGES 32 AND 33 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

## 3) Will children be allowed to have recess? If so, what safety protocols are in place for children during recess?

- Suspend activities that do not allow for social distancing, including assemblies not limited to in-person field trips and large group use of playground equipment simultaneously
- Limit the size of groups participating in playground activities simultaneously, through cohort scheduling mechanism.

[PLEASE SEE PAGE 20 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

#### 4) Will desk dividers be installed in classrooms?

YPS will design space utilization to comply with the recommendations on social distancing to maintain the optimal six foot distance from others. Classrooms will have their desks and/or tables rearranged and or marked in some fashion to indicate to students where to sit. All students will face the same direction. The number of students able to meet in a classroom and maintain distancing will be determined on a classroom by classroom assessment considering usable square footage, doorways, windows and room shape. The principal will conduct such assessments with the facilities staff.

##### **PLASTIC SEPARATORS**

Clear plastic sheeting and panels (sneeze guards) are being installed in locations where social distance or mask requirements cannot be applied and in select places of heightened public interaction. – Such locations include but are not limited to: separation of individual lavatory sinks from each other, the front desk in the school offices, welcome and/or security desks, some nurses' offices, food services and other locations as may be desirable in each school. Their use in classrooms is logistically problematic is not being considered at this time due primarily to concerns for exiting in an emergency. All such plastics do conform to 2020 BCNYS (Fire) Section 2606.

■ PLEASE SEE PAGES 26,27,28 AND 29 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

#### 5) Will there be synchronized live learning?

School-Day Schedule and Learning Time Collectively, instruction shall be designed to facilitate the student's attainment of the learning standards. At minimum, schools will schedule students for 36 minutes of instruction in all content areas. The educational program should utilize all available methodologies and modalities to maximize learning. These learning experiences include, but are not limited to: synchronous and asynchronous instruction, completing online modules or tasks; viewing instructional videos; responding via Microsoft Teams, Zoom or Seesaw to teachers and/or peers; conducting research; doing projects; or meeting in-person. All schools will clearly communicate instructional schedules following the District's communication plan found in the Communication/Family and Community Engagement section of this plan.

##### **KEY TERMS:**

- **Asynchronous Learning** – a series of learning events that are not happening at the same time (e.g., a student completing research independently while a teacher provides phonics instruction to a different group of students)
- **Synchronous Learning** – a series of learning events that are happening at the same time (e.g., reading as a group and engaging in a discussion about what is being read)
- **Hybrid Instruction** – instruction that includes both in-person learning with teachers and peers and remote instruction outside of a school building with or without a teacher and peers
- **In-person Instruction** – instruction that takes place in a school or on school grounds with a teacher and peers
- **Remote Instruction** – instruction that is fully delivered outside of a school building and requires use of a technology device (e.g., laptop, notebook, iPad) and Internet

■ PLEASE SEE PAGE 16 IN THE REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

#### 6) What safety protocols are in place for children who take a bus to/from school?

##### **FAMILY COMMUNICATION**

Communication of information for transportation will follow the process outlined in the Communication/Family and Community Engagement section of this plan, which notes comprehensive information is available [www.YonkersPublicSchools.org](http://www.YonkersPublicSchools.org). All transportation inquiries can be emailed to [YonkersTransportation@YonkersPublicSchools.org](mailto:YonkersTransportation@YonkersPublicSchools.org)

Please see pages 35, 36, 37 and 38 for details on the following

- Cleaning and Disinfection
- Social Distancing at Stops, on Bus, at Unloading/Loading
- Face Coverings
- Staff Training
- Protocols Once Students Disembark for Transportation
- School Bus Staff Mandatory Requirements
- Students on Transportation Mandatory Requirements
- Student on Transportation Considerations

■ PLEASE SEE PAGES 35, 36, 37 AND 38 IN THE REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

#### 7) If we have hybrid learning, what accommodations will be given for siblings in different schools?

All siblings will be following the same rotation schedule for hybrid learning.

■ PLEASE SEE PAGE 49 IN THE REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

## 8) What are the protocols if a Student/Teacher/Staff/Administrator gets sick with COVID-19?

Contact Tracing in Coordination with Local Health Authorities Immediately upon being informed of a positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result of an individual within school facilities or on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors, the District will notify the NYS and Westchester County Health Departments. By utilizing the New York State Contact Tracing Program, the District will also assist the local Health Department with tracing the transmission of COVID-19.

The District will assist in tracing all contacts of exposed individuals in accordance with protocols, training, and tools provided by relevant agencies.

This assistance includes:

- a. keeping accurate attendance records of students and staff members,
- b. ensuring student schedules are up to date,
- c. keeping a log of any visitors (date and time, and where in the school they visited) and
- d. aiding the local health department in tracing all contacts of the individual in accordance with the protocol, training, and tools provided through the NYS Contact Tracing Program.

Confidentiality, as required by state and federal laws and regulations must be maintained. Employees should not attempt to determine who is to be excluded from school, based on contact without following guidance and direction from the local health department. For more information about how COVID-19 containment efforts will be communicated to all stakeholders, visit the District website and review our Reopening Plan (<https://bit.ly/YPS-Reopening-Plan>).

Should large-scale testing need to be conducted at schools, District administration will work with St. John's Riverside Hospital and St. Joseph's Medical Center, in close consultation with the Westchester County Department of Health.

- District Protocols
- Accommodations for At-Risk Students and Staff
- Isolation Management Protocol
- Emergent Illness
- Isolation Details
- Contingency Plan
- Medical Crisis

■ PLEASE SEE PAGES: 22, 23 AND 24 IN THE REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

## 9) What platform will be used for remote learning?

Professional Development (PD) for our pedagogical staff has been ongoing since the onset of school closures in March 2020 focused on improving Microsoft Team proficiency as well as incorporating all of our programs found on Clever that support specific content areas across all grade levels. During the 2020-2021 school year, PD will be delivered in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) format. PLCs are a recognized research-based format by NYSED for engaging in professional development that also allows groups of practitioners to identify areas for adult learning that are specific to school settings. Content for professional development will focus on creating engaging instructional environments using Microsoft Teams, accessing standards aligned resources found on Clever, implementing a new reading program Benchmark Advance, and a Multi-Tiered System of Support.

In addition, YPS developed the Power Standards from the state learning standards for grades K-8 across the four major content areas (ELA, math, science, and social studies). The YPS Power Standards are a blueprint to assist teachers in the reintegration of students by focusing on conceptual understandings and skills necessary for each grade level. Used alongside the new Benchmark reading program, and the inquiry-based science and social studies programs, Power Standards provide guidance for teachers to develop interdisciplinary project-based learning that can be easily applied to remote asynchronous instructional settings.

■ PLEASE SEE PAGE 46 AND A CHART ON PAGE 50 IN THE REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

## 10) Will classrooms and school spaces be properly ventilated?

YPS will provide adequate, code required ventilation (natural or mechanical) as designed. Upgrades to existing systems are being pursued using in-house and several HVAC contractors and consultants. This is to optimize the functioning of the existing ventilating systems. Work scope that is beyond the level of repair such as replacement systems or parts of systems will be submitted to the NYSED office of Facilities Planning for review and approval.

Work is under way and it is planned that classrooms windows are operable. Spaces without operable windows or suitable mechanical ventilation will not be used as classrooms.

NYSED, DOH and CDC do not specify Minimum Efficiency Reporting Values (MERV) for mechanical ventilation filtration. School Facilities is working with its HVAC services contractor and consultants in determining the viability of upgrading existing mechanical systems.

■ PLEASE SEE PAGE 30 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

## 11) Has professional development started for teachers on tools to use for remote learning?

PD and training have taken both a holistic and tiered approach. Over 60 trainings on use of Microsoft were accessible and provided to all district teachers and administrators from March and continuing through the summer. Student training has occurred virtually in classrooms both during the school year and the summer programs offered at the high school and elementary/middle school levels on Microsoft Teams. Additional trainings for parents began in July.

PD has also been tiered to meet the needs of new users as well as those who are more advanced. Trainings have ranged in size from large scale (100 participants) to individual meetings that have been held both in person and virtually, depending on the size of the group. Individual school technology liaisons and administrators have also provided PD through the use of a variety of school based 'how to' videos posted on individual websites and various social media platforms. The majority of the PD has taken place using the Microsoft platform as well as on accessing the Instructional Management System, Clever.

Professional development will continue to build teacher, administrator, student and family digital knowledge and competencies as we continue to pursue the acquisition of additional devices and Internet access for all families. PD will transition to:

- Building digital fluency for all learners, PK-12
- Continuing to increase the number of teachers and administrators that have digital mastery and who are tech savvy to provide ongoing and expanded support
- Expanding the creation of a video library that provide tech tutorials for students, teachers, administrators and families
- Streamlining the number of platforms in the district so that there is uniformity and consistency
- Designing lessons and units that are more flexible, allow choices, and account for the varied levels of technology access

■ PLEASE SEE PAGE PAGE 55 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

## 12) Are staff/teachers/administrators being trained on safety protocols?

### TRANSPORTATION

- School bus drivers, monitors, nurses and students must not carry personal bottles of hand sanitizers with them on the school buses.
- Provide social distancing training and training about the health and safety guidelines to bus monitors and drivers
- Train 1:1 Aides to work with more impaired students
- Make training videos from bus companies available to parents by posting on the schools' website
- Develop training video addressing issues generally covered in First Time Riders/Practice Run
- Implement Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) practices on vans, to help maintain positive behavior

■ PLEASE SEE PAGE 36 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

### SPECIAL EDUCATION

Professional Development (PD)/Training Needs (In-person and Hybrid Instruction, and Remote Instruction where applicable) District Protocols

- Provide PD for teachers, support staff, teaching assistants (TAs), 1:1 aides, and classroom aides to review IEPs and identify current students' needs
- Provide crisis training for staff working with children with self-regulation challenges
- Prepare students and families for the changes that will be occurring in their school/classroom
- Train CSE/CPSE staff on use of a uniform video platform
- Provide PD for all school personnel to raise awareness of bullying and the resultant socio-emotional issues
- Provide parent training to better supports students at home
- Provide PD for teachers and other staff on identifying the signs associated with Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other anxiety related disorders

■ PLEASE SEE PAGE 36 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

### TRAINING ON REOPENING PROTOCOLS

Roles and Responsibilities The effective reopening of schools is contingent upon the collaborative relationships from the administration, instructional staff and support staff. It is important that in addition to their daily responsibilities District departments assist with, provide guidance for and augment school buildings and their leadership team's logistics required to maintain the health and safety of all stakeholders

■ PLEASE SEE PAGES 72 AND 73 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

### 13) What screening protocols will be in place to temperature check before coming to school? What happens if a parent sends a child to school sick?

#### **HEALTH CHECKS AND SCREENINGS (HYBRID AND IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION)**

- Begin screening at home. Parents are responsible for checking their child's daily temperature and completing the health screening questionnaire. Schools will determine additional screening, as needed.
- Urge parents to assess their child(ren) daily for outward symptoms of COVID-19
- Require parents/guardians to complete COVID Survey/Attestation questionnaire for each child, and to contact the school in the event of health status changes
- Counsel parents that students are required to stay home, if they have a temperature at or above 100.0°, or are experiencing other COVID-19-related symptoms (e.g., shortness of breath or cough)

#### ■ **PLEASE SEE PAGE 19 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION**

More information can be found in these section:

- Management of Emergent Illnesses (Hybrid and In-person Instruction) Contact Tracing in Coordination with Local Health Authorities
- District Protocols

#### ■ **PLEASE SEE PAGE 22 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION**

#### **EMERGENT ILLNESS:**

Staff or students that present with symptoms of COVID-19, while at school/work will be evaluated by the school nurse. School Nurses will receive additional professional development on infection control practices, including:

- How disease spreads
- How to identify disease symptoms
- How to protect themselves
- Environmental cleaning and disinfection procedures
- Reporting processes to responsible parties

#### ■ **PLEASE SEE PAGE 24 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION**

#### **ISOLATION DETAILS**

If symptomatic, staff/student will be placed in a controlled, partitioned space, wherein he/she may be observed.

#### ■ **PLEASE SEE PAGE 24 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION**

### 14) What happens if a parent does not want to send their child to school? Is remote learning an option?

Continuity of Learning YPS designed three possible opening scenarios that includes the following models for delivering instruction: In-Person Instruction, Hybrid Instruction, and/or Online Remote Instruction.

At the center of these three models are the relationships that students have with their peers, teachers and community. YPS is committed to developing instructional experiences in all 3 models that are inclusive, culturally responsive and considers the academic and social-emotional needs of all students with a priority on high-needs vulnerable students. In all three models, a single platform, Microsoft Teams, is the lever for synchronous teaching. In addition, Clever houses a variety of applications and content specific programs to support teaching and learning in grades PreK -12.

#### ■ **PLEASE SEE PAGE 46 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION**

### 15) Will the schools be cleaned on a regular basis? If so, how?

#### **CLEANING AND DISINFECTION (HYBRID AND IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION)**

- Develop classroom routines where students wipe/sanitize their materials and desks at end of each school day
- Establish protocol for cleaning and disinfecting surface areas, desks, doorknobs, elevator buttons, bathrooms and computer/digital equipment including the associated record keeping process

#### ■ **PLEASE SEE PAGE 21 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION**

## 16) What accommodations will be given for children with IEPs? Receiving speech, OT, PT?

### *PROVIDING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES/IEP IMPLEMENTATION/ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS (HYBRID AND REMOTE INSTRUCTION)*

Whether services are provided in person, remotely and/or in a hybrid model, IEPs will be implemented to the greatest extent possible, providing a FAPE to SWDs, consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of both students and staff. Flexibility will also be employed regarding mode/manner, group or individual sessions, group size for related services, frequency, duration and location of related services and class size ratios. During In-Person instructional days, SWD with Resource mandates will receive their regular program in accordance with the school schedule. In collaboration with general education teachers, special education teachers will provide remote support through various video platforms, telephone conferences and multiple Apps during periods of school closure. School-level Pupil Support Teams (PST) will ensure SWD have access to the supplementary aids and services including assistive technology relating to IEP mandates. The following additional actions will be implemented:

- Adopt uniform video-enhanced platform to conduct IEP meetings remotely
- Follow up with students who have received CARs during Pandemic, by having support staff reconnect with families and inquire whether they require assistance
- Recommend, as resources permit, establishing more school-based satellite clinics

■ [PLEASE SEE PAGE 57 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

## 17) Will there be hand sanitizer available in the classrooms?

### *HEALTH CHECKS AND SCREENINGS (HYBRID AND IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION)*

Require hand sanitizing each time a student or staff member exits and re-enters a room

■ [PLEASE SEE PAGE 19 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

## 19) Will children be taken to wash their hands regularly? I.E. – before lunch and after recess?

- Hold physical education and music classes outside whenever possible
- Encourage participants to spread out during aerobic activities while following extended social distancing guidelines
- Use visual cues to demonstrate physical spacing when inside schools
- Implement use of floor spots for inside physical education classes adhering to the extended social distancing guidelines
- Rotate staff into classrooms, whenever possible, rather than rotating students out when scheduling permits
- Place markings on the ground to facilitate physical distancing at all school entry and exit points and crosswalks near the school
- Provide social distancing floor/seating markings in reception areas and gyms
- Reconfigure common areas by spacing out furniture to minimize crowding
- Close off common seating areas if social distancing would be compromised
- Suspend activities that do not allow for social distancing, including assemblies and not limited to in-person field trips and large group use of playground equipment simultaneously
- Utilize outdoor spaces whenever possible
- Limit the size of groups participating in playground activities simultaneously, through cohort scheduling mechanism

■ [PLEASE SEE PAGE 20 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

Frequent handwashing is a key component to avoiding the spread of COVID-19. It is important to maintain the number of sinks as well as soap must be available to building occupants.

■ [PLEASE SEE PAGE 30 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

## 20) Will extra masks/PPE be available should a child/adult forget or lose theirs?

Provide disposable face covering to students and staff if and when necessary

■ [PLEASE SEE PAGE 20 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

## 21) How will our kids use the restroom and water fountains?

YPS will not reduce the number of toilet fixtures (i.e., toilets, sinks, and urinals) in a building in order to facilitate frequent cleaning. It is important to maintain the number of toilet fixtures that must be available for use in a building.

The usual minimum requirement may be reduced under certain circumstances: (1) the building's aggregate number of toilet fixtures already exceeds the minimum amount required by the Building Code or (2) the building occupancy is reduced while schools are using Hybrid or Online Remote Instruction.

Frequent handwashing is a key component to avoiding the spread of COVID-19. It is important to maintain the number of sinks as well as soap must be available to building occupants.

The existing drinking water fountains in the school building will be turned off. YPS will replacing existing fountains with new filtered bottle filling units throughout the district. Until filling units are installed bottle drinking water will be supplied to occupants.

■ *PLEASE SEE PAGE 30 IN REOPENING PLAN FOR MORE INFORMATION*