

RSU 9 - Mt. Blue Regional School District
Return to In-Person Instruction
September 28, 2021

In RSU 9, our primary goal is to keep our students, staff, families, and community safe. Adherence to recommended guidelines from the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Maine Department of Education (DOE), and Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will allow us to proactively put measures in place to limit school and community spread of COVID-19.

Superintendent Christian Elkington and Director of Curriculum Laura Columbia held a series of community input sessions at six of our schools during August:

- August 17, 2021 - Academy Hill School, Wilton and W.G. Mallett School, Farmington
- August 18, 2021 - Cascade Brook School, Farmington and Mt. Blue Middle School, Farmington
- August 19, 2021 - Cape Cod Hill School, New Sharon and Mt. Blue High School, Farmington

Our Return to In-Person Instruction is based on the following:

- As of July 20, 2021, the recommendation is to return to school for “Full In-Person Learning” to maximize the learning experiences for all RSU 9 students.
- Per Maine and US CDC recommendations, individuals should wear masks when indoors because of the highly transmissible rate of new Covid-19 Variants.
- Per the US CDC recommendations, masks are required of all students and staff when on school transportation.
- Unless medically necessary (documented) or required by a student's present (as of June 2021) IEP/504 Plan, remote learning will be offered to RSU 9 students through the Western Maine Remote Academy per the slots purchased by RSU 9.
- As of Sept. 1st, 2021, athletics for grades 6-12 will follow the guidelines provided by the Maine Principals Association and will be modified to meet the needs of our students and district.
- Following the most up-to-date guidance and recommendations from Maine and US CDC when any staff or student tests positive for COVID.

Below is a synopsis of the plan detailed in the [RSU 9 Return to School Handbook](#).

Mitigating Strategies

- Universal indoor masking
 - Required on all school buses and in all indoor spaces
- Daily Health Screener: must be completed prior to getting on the bus/ arriving at school
 - [Student Health Screener](#) --[Staff Health Screener](#)
- Handwashing
 - Handwashing and disinfecting will be at all entrances
- Vaccinations
 - Staff and students eligible are encouraged to vaccinate
- Pooled Testing
 - Staff and students are able to opt into pooled testing. Opting in to pooled testing may exempt you from multiple quarantining situations *if exposed at school*.

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Classroom

- *Spacing*
 - Grades K-5 3ft expectation
 - Grades 6-12 up to 3ft to the extent possible

Breakfast and Lunch

- *Spacing*
 - Grades K-5 3ft when eating indoors (including snack) and all students facing in the same direction
 - Assigned seating
 - Grades 6-12 up to 3ft to the extent possible
 - Encourage eating outdoors

Hallways

- One way hallways

Cohorting (grouping of students)

- Recommend cohorts of students for recess, mornings, and dismissals, when possible

Student Contact Tracing

Exceptions to quarantine:

- Fully vaccinated
- Previous positive COVID-19 result (within 90 days)
- Participates in weekly school pooled testing (for school exposure only)
- The school has a mandatory masking policy, and the student was at least 3 feet away, and no direct physical contact occurred (classroom exposures only)*

**Lunchroom, snacktime, transportation, and sports do not count towards the mandatory masking policy and students may be required to quarantine based on distance.*

Continuum of Instruction Models

Level 1 (Our Current Level as of 9/2/2021)

- *All instruction is delivered in-person except for families enrolled in the Western Maine Remote Academy.*

Level 2

- *Instruction continues to be delivered in-person by expanding large space use where possible. Virtual class access may be expanded depending on direction or recommendations from Maine DOE and/or parent requests.*

Level 3

- *Instruction continues with alternative schedule options possible as directed or recommended by Maine DOE. An increase in Virtual class access may be offered to reduce overall class sizes.*

Updates to the Plan

As COVID-19 data is updated, this plan will be reviewed, and the Superintendent may ask the Board of Directors to reconsider any portion of the plan on an ongoing basis, with the first review occurring no later than October 12, 2021. Standing meetings with the district Administrative Team, School Nurses, and our school district physician will review the effectiveness of strategies and make adaptations based on updated guidance and/or requirements from the Maine CDC and Maine DOE.