



ICHABOD CRANE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHATHAM • GHENT • NASSAU • KINDERHOOK • STUYVESANT • SCHODACK • STOCKPORT

Department of Health

*INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AT PRE-K-12
SCHOOLS DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY*

April 13, 2021

Purpose of Guidance

- Original guidance document (August 2020) provided all elementary, middle, and high schools with precautions to help protect against the spread of COVID-19
- April 2021 update intended to align guidance with the most recent recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



Notable Changes from August

Physical Distancing:

- **May reduce physical distancing requirements to a minimum of three feet between students in classroom settings, subject to adherence to certain mitigation measures**
 - The CDC recommends that physical distancing requirements differ by grade level and community transmission risk - lower susceptibility and incidence of COVID-19 among younger children than compared to teenagers; therefore, in-person instruction represents less risk of on-site transmission in elementary schools compared to middle and high schools.
 - At some levels of community transmission, cohorting is recommended/required if a school is using less than six feet of physical distance in classrooms.



CDC Indicators

CDC Identified Four Levels of Indicators & Threshold for Community Transmission of COVID-19 (Table 1 CDC Guidance):

Indicator	Lowest risk of transmission in schools	Lower risk of transmission in schools	Moderate risk of transmission in schools	Higher risk of transmission in schools	Highest risk of transmission in schools
New cases per 100,000 population in the last 14 days	<5	5 to <20	20 to <50	50 to ≤ 200	>200
(For comparison to new thresholds, equivalent new cases per 100,000 in 7-day period shown in parentheses)	(2-3 in 7 days)	(3-9 in 7 days)	(10-24 in 7 days)	(25-100 in 7 days)	(>100 in 7 days)
RT-PCR diagnostic test result positivity rate in the last 14 days	<3%	3% to <5%	5% to <8%	8% to ≤ 10%	>10%



CDC also provides requirements for physical distancing (3 feet) and cohorting for elementary, middle, and high schools at each level of transmission as summarized below (Table 2: CDC Guidance):

- In counties with low and moderate risk of transmission, elementary, middle, and high schools can maintain physical distancing of at least three feet between students in classrooms.
- In counties with substantial risk of transmission, elementary, middle, and high schools can maintain physical distancing of at least three feet between students in classrooms and cohorting is recommended when possible. Columbia County is currently in the substantial risk category (<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>).
- In counties with high risk of transmission, elementary schools can maintain physical distancing of at least three feet between students in classrooms and cohorting is recommended when possible. However, in middle and high schools, three feet between students in classrooms is recommended only when schools can use cohorting. When schools cannot maintain cohorting, middle and high schools must maintain physical distancing of at least six feet between students in classrooms.



The CDC no longer recommends physical barriers for mitigation where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Exceptions Where A Minimum of Six Feet of Distance Must be Maintained:

- Six feet is always the required distancing between adults and between students and adults.
- Six feet of distance is required when eating meals or snacks, or drinking, or other times masks must be removed.
- Individuals participating in activities that require projecting the voice (e.g., singing) or playing a wind instrument must be six feet apart and there must be six feet of distance between the performers and the audience during performances.
- Six feet of physical distance must be maintained in common areas and outside of classrooms (e.g. lobbies, auditoriums, gymnasiums, cafeterias, and hallways), where possible.
- Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (March 25, 2021)



Also Included in the Updated DOH Guidance:

- Consistent with prior guidance, face masks that meet guidelines are required for all people in school "at all times, except for meals."
- Districts must give opportunities for the school community to provide input and feedback prior to making any change to reduce physical distancing to less than six feet between students during academic instruction.
- Districts are required to work with the school community to propose and adopt changes as decision to move to shorter physical distances will come down to a local community's risk tolerance based on its unique circumstances.
- Once developed, new plans must be posted online and sent to Local Health Departments and the State Education Department.



CDC Recommends Screening Testing Based on Feasibility and Community Transmission Levels.

- “Districts moving to physical distancing of less than 6 feet should strongly consider implementing screening testing protocols to ensure monitoring.” Additional guidance re: testing supply support forthcoming.

Testing Recommendations by Level of Community Transmission			
Low Transmission¹ Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
No screening testing for students	Screening testing for students: expanded screening testing of students ⁴ offered at least once per week		
Testing for high-risk sports: ⁵ for schools conducting routine testing for sports, testing is recommended at least once per week Testing for low and intermediate-risk sports: for schools conducting routine testing for sports, testing is recommended at least once per week	Testing for high-risk sports: for schools conducting routine testing for sports, testing is recommended twice per week Testing for low and intermediate-risk sports: for schools conducting routine testing for sports, testing is recommended at least once per week		



Next Steps & Considerations

- Monitor Impact from April Break and Increased Numbers of New Strains
- Columbia County in Substantial Risk Category Currently - HS/MS Must be in Cohorts for Less than 6 Feet at Next Higher Risk Level
- Community Input and Feedback Required
- Columbia County Department of Health Input Required
- Transportation Guidance and Clarification Needed
- Testing/Screening Recommendations: Considerations and Planning
- Current Space Issues - Lunch, Special Areas, Buses
- Scheduling Implications - 7-12 Built on a Hybrid Schedule
- Identified and Returned Approximately 100 At-risk Students Currently
- Grades 3-8 and Regents Assessments Administration
- End of Year Event Planning Pending - New Guidance Released 4/12
- Dive Deeper into the Guidance with Administration & CCDOH



Additional Updates

Updated Interim Guidance for End of Academic Year Celebrations

- Must follow strict health and safety protocols including face masks, social distancing, health screenings and collection of contact tracing information
- Events exceeding the social gathering limits of 100 people indoors/200 people outdoors, must notify the local DOH & require proof of a recent negative test result or proof of completed immunization prior to entry

Outdoor events:

- Large-scale ceremonies of more than 500 people will be limited to 20% of capacity.
- Medium-scale ceremonies of 201 to 500 people will be limited to 33% of capacity.
- Small-scale ceremonies of up to 200 people or two attendees per student will be limited to 50% of capacity. Proof of recent negative test result or proof of completed immunization is optional.

Indoor events:

- Large-scale ceremonies of more than 150 people will be limited to 10% of capacity.
- Medium-scale ceremonies of 101 to 150 people will be limited to 33% of capacity.
- Small-scale ceremonies of up to 100 people or two attendees per student will be limited to 50% of capacity. Proof of recent negative test result or proof of completed immunization is optional.



Additional Updates

International Travel Update:

- Asymptomatic travelers entering New York country, U.S. state, or territory) are no longer required to test or quarantine as of April 10, 2021. Quarantine is still recommended for travelers not fully vaccinated or have not recovered from lab confirmed COVID-19 during the previous 3 months.
- All travelers must complete the [Traveler Health Form](#) (unless less than 24 hours or from a contiguous state including Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont)
- Strongly encouraging all travelers to monitor symptoms daily and immediately self-isolate if develop any symptoms and seek medical care and testing

