

REOPENING 2020 - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. When and how will Port Jefferson Union Free School District (PJUFSD) schools reopen?

First day of school for our students is on Tuesday, September 8th. In preparing this reopening plan on how to best facilitate a safe return to school for students and staff, we carefully considered group size limitations, social distancing requirements, and availability of personal protective equipment (PPE). Based on our assessment of those and other factors, our reopening plan is structured as follows:

Elementary School

Kindergarten - 5th grade students are scheduled to attend in-person at the start of the 2020-2021 school year. Our elementary students will return to school with strict social-distancing, sanitizing protocols and health procedures in place. While movement will be limited, these practices will take place during transportation and within all instructional and non-instructional areas of the building. Students and staff will be required to maintain social distancing and wear masks at all times. Pre-kindergarten and SEAL classes will be suspended for the duration of the school year.

Secondary Schools

Due to the limitations of classroom space and the shared teaching staff at the Middle School (MS) and High School (HS), PJUFSD cannot safely return all secondary students and staff to the buildings at the start of the 2020-2021 school year. For this reason, the hybrid model will be implemented for students in grades 6-12. In order to maintain a safe and healthy environment, we have adjusted the HS/MS bell schedule to allow for more time to transition between classes. Additionally, we have assigned students to an alphabetical cohort to reduce the number of students in the buildings. Students whose last name begins with A-L are assigned to the "Purple" cohort, and students whose last name begins with M-Z are assigned to the "Grey" cohort. This will ensure all family members are attending school on the same days should a hybrid model be implemented district-wide. Secondary students and staff will adhere to strict social distancing and wear a mask at all times while in school. Additional sanitizing protocols and health procedures will also be in place.

2. What time will school begin?

All students will have the same arrival and dismissal times, which are noted below. Transportation routes may make multiple runs in order to ensure proper social distancing on buses. The Transportation Office will notify families regarding approximate bus stop arrival times.

Elementary School 9:00 a.m. - 3:35 p.m.

Middle and High School 7:30 a.m.- 2:25 p.m.

3. When do students and staff have to wear masks?

Students and staff are required to wear masks at all times; on the bus and during the school day, except when they are eating or drinking. Mask breaks will be scheduled throughout the school day, when students are six or more feet apart.

4. How will students be safely transported to school?

On large buses a total capacity will be reduced to 21 people; and on vans a total capacity will be reduced to 7 people. All passengers will be required to wear a mask. The bus driver will have extra

masks on hand should a passenger not have a mask with them prior to boarding the bus. This reduction may result in staggered arrival times for students who travel to school by bus.

5. What entrance should my child go in when they arrive?

High School

High school students will be assigned one of three following entrance points based on their last name: the 1st and 3rd main entrance doors (outside the gym lobby; and the entrance door at the end of the girls' locker room hallway. All entrance points will be clearly labeled as to which door students will enter. Students who arrive after the start of the first period, will enter through the visitor's entrance outside the gym lobby.

Middle School

Middle school students will be assigned one of two entrance points based on their last name as follows: the 5th and 7th main entrance doors (outside the gym lobby). All entrance points will be clearly labeled as to which door students will enter. Students who arrive after the start of the first period, will enter through the visitor's entrance outside the gym lobby.

Elementary School

Elementary students taking the bus will arrive through the doors by the 100, 200, 300 and 400 wings. Students will be directed by school staff as to which door they enter as they exit the bus. Elementary students being dropped off will enter through the "crayons" outside of the gym. Fifth grade students can enter through the 500 wing door via the parking lot on Myrtle Avenue. Younger siblings are welcome to be dropped off with their fifth grade students. Students who arrive after the start of school will enter through the main entrance.

6. What cleaning and disinfecting protocols have been put in place?

After thorough nightly cleaning, all high touch surfaces will be disinfected often throughout the day using disinfectants from the EPA ListN: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (Covid 19). All products on this list meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS- CoV-2 - the virus that causes Covid 19.

7. Will students need to have their temperature taken when they arrive?

Parents/guardians will complete a temperature screening at home before coming to school. The students will bring a paper attestation that they are fever free. This will permit students to enter the building. Students who do not have the attestation, will have their temperature taken by school staff prior to entering the school building.

8. When should I keep my child home from school?

If your child has a temperature of 100 degrees or higher or displays two or more signs of illness such as a cough, diarrhea, severe headache, vomiting, shortness of breath, body aches, fatigue or loss of taste or smell, they should not come to school. Additionally, if your child has had close contact to an individual with a confirmed COVID-19 case within the last 14 days, traveled internationally or to a state with a widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the NYS Travel Advisory (see link: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>), tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days or have been requested/directed to self quarantine by a medical or public health official, they should not go to school.

9. What happens if my child gets sick at school?

If your child feels sick at school, they should report to the illness room to be assessed by the school nurse. If a student displays a temperature, or two or more symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, diarrhea, severe headache, vomiting, shortness of breath, body aches, fatigue or loss of taste or smell), parents will be contacted and the child will be sent home. Students who are waiting to be picked up due to illness will be in a quarantined area within the illness room. Students who are ill but do not meet this criteria, will receive medical assessment and attention as per traditional health office procedures.

10. What happens if the District has a positive case of COVID-19?

The School District will contact the local health department with full confidentiality. The local health department will provide guidance on contact tracing and who/if anyone needs to be quarantined. A letter will be sent home to notify parents and guardians of a positive case within the school district. Information pertaining to which individual has the confirmed case of COVID-19 will remain confidential.

11. How can we ensure all parents and students are receiving up-to-date information?

Parents can sign into the Powerschool Parent Portal to update their email and phone numbers. School Messenger takes contact information from PowerSchool in order to generate District calls. There are directions on our website on accessing your Parent Portal account. For up-to-date information, families can check our website www.portjeffschools.org, or follow our social media platforms; Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. Please see the links below for information regarding the Parent Portal.

- i. [Creating an Account in the Parent Portal](#)
- ii. [How to Access the Parent Portal](#)

12. Where can I read the District's full reopening plan?

The full reopening plan can be found here:

<http://www.portjeff.k12.ny.us/download/PDFs/Reopening/PortJeffersonReopeningPlan.pdf>

Any and all information in this plan is subject to change based upon ongoing guidance from including, but not limited to, the New York State Education Department, the New York State Department of Health and the New York State Governor's Office.

13. What measure is the District taking to ensure social distancing?

Edna Louise Elementary School

Student groupings at the Elementary School will be as static as possible to ensure social distancing can be maintained.

- Cohorts of students in each classroom will be approximately 15 students and maintain 6 feet social distancing.
- Students will use multiple entry and exit points for both buses and parent drop offs.
- In-school movement will be reduced as much as possible by keeping each cohort of students in their classrooms throughout the day.
- Special area teachers (e.g., music, art, physical education) will push into each class.
- Whenever possible, physical education and music classes will be held outside and students will be required to spread out.
- Classrooms have individual bathrooms so that students can remain in their cohort.
- Student and teacher desks will be turned to face in the same direction.
- Windows will be open when possible to improve ventilation.
- Student belongings will be kept separated, either in their desks or chair pockets.
- Shared equipment will be cleaned between cohorts of students.

- Visual aids (e.g., painter's tape, stickers, posters, cones etc.) will be used to illustrate traffic flow and appropriate spacing to support social distancing.
- Students will eat lunch in their classrooms.
- Students will exit their exterior classroom doors for recess.
- The use of classrooms and other places where students, faculty, and staff gather (e.g., lockers, cubbies, entryways, hallways) will be restricted so that individuals can be socially distanced.
- Gatherings in small spaces (e.g., elevators, faculty offices) will be limited to no more than one individual at a time.
- The large group room will be used by staff as a prep room during breaks and lunch so they may maintain proper social distancing.
- Playground use will be staggered rather than allowing multiple classes to play together.
- Activities where multiple groups interact will be limited.
- Visual cues will be incorporated that demonstrate physical spacing.
- Student assemblies, athletic events/practices, performances, school-wide parent meetings will be canceled and/or limited as needed.
- Visitors will be limited to the building.
- Onsite, in-person extracurricular activities are suspended.

Port Jefferson Middle School/ Earl L. Vandermeulen High School

- Classes of students in each classroom will be approximately 15 students to maintain 6 feet of social distancing.
- Arrival and dismissals times will be staggered to allow increased social distancing on buses, parent drop-offs, as well as in classrooms.
- Students will enter through multiple entry points near the Main Lobby to limit the amount of close contact between students in high-traffic situations .
- Building staff will be assigned to monitor student arrivals while following all safety requirements to ensure that all entrances are monitored and are locked after use.
- All visitors/parents must enter through the front lobby security vestibule for emergency purposes only. Limiting visitors to the school building will ensure the health and well-being of all occupants of the school.
- Modified school bell schedule will be implemented with extended passing time between class periods to reduce the number of students in the hallways and classrooms.
- All large instructional areas (Auditorium, Gymnasium, Library, MultiPurpose Room) will be used as instruction spaces for academic and special area classes to ensure appropriate social distancing amongst students in the classes. Whenever possible, classes will be held outside to encourage students to spread out.
- Stagger the use of restrooms to limit the number of occupants. Bathrooms will be monitored by staff.
- Tables will be replaced with desks in all classrooms.
- Desks will be turned (including teachers) to face in the same direction.
- Classroom windows will be opened to improve ventilation. Windows will not be opened if there is a health or safety risk (e.g., allergies, or potential fall) for a student.
- Students will keep belongings with them in their backpacks throughout the day.
- Visual aids will be used (e.g., painter's tape, stickers, posters, cones etc.) to illustrate traffic flow and appropriate spacing.
- Hallways will be split and made directional so students are facing the same direction while traveling from one classroom to another.
- Limited number of Middle School students will eat lunch in the MultiPurpose Room (MPR).
- Lockers will not be assigned for the school year; however, students will not carry an unreasonable number of books or materials throughout the day.
- Gatherings in small spaces (e.g., elevators, faculty offices) will be limited by no more than one individual at a time.

- There will be limitations placed on activities where multiple groups interact.
- Visitors will be limited to the building.
- Onsite, in-person extracurricular activities are suspended.

14. How will fire and lock down drills be conducted?

Fire drills will be conducted as usual, in accordance with the NYS Department of Education. Extra measures will be put in place to ensure social distancing. An overview of lockdown drill procedures will be given by each classroom teacher.

15. Will there be clubs and extracurricular activities?

All clubs and extracurricular activities have been suspended until at least September 21, 2020.

16. Are all students getting devices?

All students, K-12, will be provided a Chromebook.

17. Will there be a Back to School Night?

Back to School will be held virtually for the 2020-2021 school year. Please check the school calendar for the dates. More information will be forthcoming from each building.

18. What measures are being taken to ensure proper hand hygiene?

Healthy hand hygiene practices will be taught and re-taught in school settings for both students and staff. Schools will plan time in the school day schedule to allow for hand hygiene. Additionally, signs will be posted throughout the school reminding staff and students of proper hand hygiene.

19. Who can I reach out to for mental health support as we return to school?

We are committed to providing mental health support for you and your child as we prepare to reopen. We recognize there may be anxiety, loss, or fear as they return to a “new normal”. Please feel free to reach out to the following individuals via the email addresses listed below. If there is a crisis or an immediate psychiatric emergency, please contact your nearest emergency room or any of the community resources we have provided below. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us as we are here to help.

Elementary School

School Psychologist: Allyson Carlson acarlson@portjeffschools.org

School Social Worker: Jessica Peterson jpeterso@portjeffschools.org

High School/Middle School

School Social Worker: Kristin Britt kbritt@portjeffschools.org

School Psychologist: Kristen Wendel kwendel@portjeffschools.org

Outside Resources:

DASH - Crisis Care for Children, Adults and Families

90 Adams Avenue, Hauppauge, NY 11788

(631) 952-3333 Available 24/7 365 days

Mather Hospital

75 North Country Road, Port Jefferson, NY (631) 473-1320

Response Crisis Hotline: (631) 751-7500
[COVID-19 Mental Health Resource Hub](#)
[Beacon Health Options](#)

Domestic Violence Hotline: New Yorkers in need of help or assistance can text 844-997-2121 or go to the new confidential online site to reach a professional at www.opdv.ny.gov.

20. What if a family doesn't have internet access?

Many of the learning platforms including Google are accessible through a smartphone using cellular data. Some local wifi providers have options for free internet access during the health crisis, but may charge a fee after the initial trial period. Individuals without access, should contact their classroom teacher or support service personnel for alternate assignments.

21. Will there be a remote only option for my child who has a medical condition or lives with a vulnerable family member?

Yes, the District is now offering a full remote option for students. Please contact your building administrator for detailed information regarding this program.

22. Are students still able to take field trips?

Field trips are not planned for the 2020-2021 school year. Staff will explore opportunities for virtual field trips.

HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL REOPENING QUESTIONS

1. How does the hybrid schedule work when there is a holiday or scheduled day off?

Students will be divided into two cohorts (purple and grey) based on their last name. If the purple cohort is in the building and the following day is a vacation or a scheduled day off, students would treat that as a non-instructional day. There is no change in the day-to-day rotation in the hybrid model if there is a vacation day.

2. What does lunch look like?

The High School cafeteria tables will be removed and replaced with student desks placed 6 feet apart. In the Middle School, students will sit two (2) students per cafeteria table (cafeteria tables are 8 feet wide). All desks and tables will face the same direction, so students can have a "mask break" while they eat their lunch. In addition, we are encouraging students and parents/guardians to enroll in MySchoolBucks. This cashless system will reduce the need to pass money from one person to another, and will further ensure the safety of students and staff. We are introducing an alternative "order ahead" app that can be downloaded to a personal device. Students will be able to order lunch ahead of time and simply pick up their items further reducing the need to stand on a lunch line.

3. Will students still have access to the library during school?

Students will have access to the library during the school day but space will be limited due to the current configuration of furniture. There will be a limit of one person per table. All students will face the same direction to avoid the spread of droplets while in the library. Students may access the library after school until 4:00 p.m. but must secure their own transportation home.

4. Will there be late buses?

Late buses are suspended until at least September 21.

5. What is happening with the January and June 2021 NYS Regents exams?

The New York State Education Department has not removed the January and June 2021 Regents exams. If these exams are suspended, we will update our families as soon as possible.

6. How will students complete the required Port Jefferson School District community service hours if we go to remote learning?

Adjustments will be made to the required community service hours based on the length of the school closure. Members of the Class of 2021 may have the requirement waived depending on the situation. Underclassmen will have their hours prorated according to their year of graduation.

7. Will there be a fall session of Drivers' Ed?

There will be no Driver's Education offered for the fall semester due to concerns regarding safely distancing in a vehicle. In July of 2020, Governor Cuomo and the NYS DMV offered accredited driving schools the ability to offer remote or virtual "pre-licensing courses" via Zoom, Google Meet, or other online platforms. The pre-licensing course is a 5-hour course that allows students with a valid learner's permit to schedule a road test upon completion of the course. This 5-hour course will not allow students who are under the age of 18 to be eligible for a Class D license, nor will your teen driver be eligible for a 10% car insurance discount associated with the successful completion of a NYS State Accredited Driver's Education program.

8. What is the schedule for students who attend a BOCES CTE program?

Students who attend a BOCES CTE program will be expected to attend their BOCES program on a daily basis. Students will follow their cohort hybrid schedule while attending Port Jefferson classes. On days where students are in the school building, students will be transported to their BOCES program. At the end of the day, students will be dropped off at home since there are no late buses at the start of the school year. On days when students are learning from home with their specified cohort, students will be picked up at home for their BOCES program. Students will be dropped off at home at the conclusion of their day.

9. Will students still have instrument lessons?

Yes, since students will have limited time in their ensemble rehearsals, small-group instruction will be essential for the continued development of technical skills required for student success on their instrument in grades 4-12 or voice-part in grades 9-12. All small group music instruction will remain limited to a reduced number of students and adhere strictly to our District's safety guidelines.

10. What are students expected to carry since there is no use of lockers?

Since lockers will not be used, we are asking students to carry a minimal amount of items. Students will be issued a District Chromebook to utilize both at home and in school. Teachers will primarily use Google Classroom to distribute assignments and materials. In some cases, teachers will provide paper materials. Students should carry a single binder with them for daily use. In order to remain organized, students can keep binders for individual classes at home and place their packets or work in the designated binder for each class. This will reduce the amount of items a student needs to carry. If possible, students will be assigned a textbook to bring home. This will avoid multiple students using the same textbook throughout the day.

11. What is happening with the 2020 Fall Athletic season?

After much discussion and consideration, Section XI has decided to postpone the fall athletic season for all levels until at least September 21, 2020. This decision was not an easy one to make; however, it was made in the best interest of the health and safety of all student-athletes, staff and community members. Please contact our Athletic Director, Mr. Sherrard at asherrar@portjeffschools.org with any questions.

12. Will there be Homecoming or other class activities?

A decision on Homecoming will be based on many factors. One factor being the guidelines regarding athletics which are given by New York State Education Department and New York State Public High School Athletic Association. There is no set date for Homecoming at this time.

13. How will students use the restroom facilities?

Bathrooms will be monitored to ensure that only one student uses the restroom at any given time. Once the student exits, the next student will be allowed to enter the restroom.

ELEMENTARY REOPENING QUESTIONS

1. How many students will be in an elementary classroom?

Cohorts of students in each classroom will be approximately 15 students and maintain six feet social distancing between workstations.

2. What will the elementary classrooms look like to ensure social distancing?

Student and teacher desks will be arranged six feet apart and face the same direction. Classrooms and other spaces will be cleared of any additional items (tables, flexible seating, storage cabinets, etc.) to the extent possible to allow for greater distancing.

3. How will students eat lunch at the elementary school?

Elementary students will eat lunch in their respective classrooms. Students will still have the option to purchase meals from the cafeteria if they choose. After lunch, classroom desks will be cleaned by our custodial staff.

4. How will elementary students have specials such as Art, Music and PE?

All Art, Music and PE in the elementary school will be conducted in individual classrooms with measures to limit the sharing of objects such as instruments, supplies and equipment. When feasible, special area classes will be held outside.

5. What is happening with the Spring 2021 NY State Assessments?

The New York State Education Department has not removed the spring 2021 exams. The schedules for the NY State Assessments can be found [here](#). Should the schedule be modified during the school year, parents will be notified.

6. Is there still before or aftercare at the Village Center?

Yes, Port Jefferson Village will be hosting the before and after care program with strict updated guidelines that are aligned with the NYSDOH. There is currently a waitlist for the program. Information about this program can be found by emailing brittnilonigro@yahoo.com.

7. Will students go outside for recess?

Students will continue to go outside for recess. Students will remain with their cohort (class) and will not mingle with other cohorts. There will be several recess areas that will be utilized on a rotating

basis. This includes the fields, blacktop, and playground equipment. Staff will supervise students to ensure proper social distancing.

8. Can I still come up to school to celebrate my child's birthday?

At this time, visitors to the school building are prohibited. Teachers will explore creative ways to celebrate students' birthdays, such as hosting virtual Mystery Readers.

9. How will elementary students use the restroom facilities?

Classrooms have individual restrooms so that students can remain in their cohort.

SPECIAL EDUCATION QUESTIONS

1. How will my child receive their related services of speech, OT, PT, counseling or resource room if we return to a full distance learning model?

Should the District be required to transition to a full-time distance learning model, students will receive related services in a live, virtual format via Google Classroom and Google Meet in a schedule that is consistent with the mandates on their Individualized Education Plan. If needed, flexibility in groupings and delivery manner as allowed in the NYSED guidance document, may be utilized.

2. How will the District conduct CSE, CPSE or 504 meetings for the 2020-2021 school year?

Committee on Special Education (CSE), Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) and 504 meetings will continue to be conducted virtually via Google Meets in order to comply with social distancing requirements and outside visitor restrictions. Parents and committee members will receive a traditional meeting invitation along with a Google Meet invitation. Meetings will continue to encourage meaningful parent participation in the development of the IEP and provision of services.

3. How can my child be scheduled for an evaluation?

To the greatest extent possible, a Committee on Special Education (CSE) evaluations (psychological evaluation, educational evaluation, classroom observation, and other appropriate evaluations such as speech-language evaluation, occupational evaluation, physical therapy evaluation etc.) will be conducted in person. The ability to complete in-person evaluations will be subject to Executive Orders regarding school opening and social distancing.

4. Will my special education student attend classes on the same schedule as other students?

A complete description of the schedule of services and programs is delineated by grade level and program type can be found in the Port Jefferson Union Free School District Re-opening Plan posted on the district website at <http://www.portjeffschools.org/our-district/reopening-schools>. Please see pages 24-28.