



1227 CR 25, Canton, NY 13617

Tel. 315-379-9474

steve@littleriverschool.org

Director: Steve Molnar

Little River Community School's Reopening Plan

August 2021

Little River Community School's Reopening Plan 2021-2022: Policies and Procedures to Mitigate the Risk of the Spread of COVID-19.

Key ideas - The health and safety of students and staff are of the highest priority. Some of the key areas to ensure safety and minimize risk include vaccination, screening, distancing, masks, ventilation, hygiene, and sanitation. Below are the specific mitigations Little River will be taking for COVID safety.

Designated Staff Person

The Little River Community School Director will serve as the Designated Staff Person (DSP) who will be the point person for all issues related to the school and COVID-19. As such, he will be responsible for engaging with students, parents, and staff to answer questions or concerns about health and safety requirements regarding COVID-19 and maintain contact with the local public health departments and other officials. Staff will be assigned key support roles for COVID-related work including screening, training, and monitoring students, and disinfecting. However, the DSP will ultimately be responsible for the safe operation of the school in accordance with this reopening plan.

Vaccinations

Little River strongly encourages all staff, students, and family members to become fully vaccinated. The CDC states that “vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The school will distribute educational materials promoting vaccines and information about clinics and opportunities to become vaccinated.

The guidance from the CDC in many instances varies based on the vaccine status of individuals.

The school will ask for and keep COVID-19 vaccination records on file.

Screening and Entry to the Building

Pre-screening - Parents are required to inform the school if the student or anyone that lives with them has:

A.) experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.0°F in the past 14 days.

B.) tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

C). knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19.

D.) traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days.

If any of the answers to these items are affirmative, then the student may not be allowed to come to school following Public Health recommendations. Parents must keep sick children or children showing symptoms of COVID-symptom at home.

Parents of bus-transported students should also take the temperature of their child before they get onto the bus.

Only students and staff will be allowed to enter the building. We will not receive any non-essential visitors.

Parents will hand off and pick up their children at the door or specified locations. For the fall, students will be greeted at the top of the driveway. In the afternoon they will be sent down the driveway as busses and cars arrive.

Before entering the building, the students will be given a temperature check using a non-contact thermometer. No one with a temperature over 100 degrees or showing signs of illness may enter the building. There will also be screening questions listing COVID symptoms and inquiring if the person is positive for COVID, has been in contact with someone that tested positive for COVID, or has traveled outside of St. Lawrence County to a place of widespread community transmission in the past fourteen days. If any of the answers to any of these questions are affirmative, then the person will not be allowed into the building.

Students not admitted will return home with their parents. If a student is awaiting pick up and cannot wait outside, we will follow the procedures outlined in the section entitled "Management of Ill Persons".

The teachers will maintain a record that confirms which individuals were screened and the pass/fail results of the screening.

As needed, parents will be allowed into the building by appointment.

Staff, parents, and visitors will use the same screening procedure as the students.

Masks

Face masks, covering the nose and mouth, will be worn in the building at all times, except for meals and designated mask breaks with appropriate physical distancing.

All students and staff will wear masks outside on the grounds at all times during moderate and high community spread (as defined by the CDC).

We will have mask breaks, as needed, outside with appropriate physical distancing.

All individuals in the building and on the grounds must be prepared to put on a mask if another person unexpectedly cannot socially distance.

Students that are unable to medically tolerate a mask are not required to use a mask. Face shields will be an alternative option.

Families should send a mask from home and wash them as needed.

Masks are available at the school for anyone without a mask.

The staff will provide instruction on the proper use of masks.

Physical Distancing

A physical distance of three feet will be maintained between students, both inside and outside.

Classroom seating will have students at least three feet apart.

Six feet is the required distancing between adults and between adults and students.

There may be some situations, like one-on-one instruction, medical care, or student comfort or support, where a physical distance of six feet is not possible. In such cases, both teacher and student will wear a mask.

At least six feet of distance is required between students when eating or drinking. Lunch and snack will happen outside, or inside with the windows open.

Individuals participating in activities that require projecting the voice, or doing an aerobic activity resulting in heavy breathing must be six feet apart from one another.

The students will maintain a three-foot distance while waiting for their turn to use the sink or bathroom. There are marks on the floor to show the spacing.

Cohorts

The students will be kept in cohort groups and kept apart as Youngers, Middles, and Olders in groups of 7-12 students for all indoor activities.

Breaks will be staggered so that the hand-wash sink area is not crowded and cohorts can wash hands at separate times.

When the county sustains a low or moderate risk of transmission (as determined by the CDC), we may do some activities with the groups together, like our morning meetings, with students spaced three or more feet apart.

Hand Hygiene

Students are required to wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer upon arrival at school, before eating, after using the bathroom, after playing on outdoor equipment, and before leaving the building.

Students will dry their hands with disposable paper towels.

Students will be provided with hand sanitizer and a bulk bottle of sanitizer will be available in each classroom. Younger students will only use sanitizer under teacher supervision.

Students will receive training on handwashing.

Respiratory Hygiene

It is important that students and staff cover their mouths or noses with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and dispose of the used tissue appropriately. A supply of tissues and trash cans will be available throughout the school.

When tissue is not available, the use of the inside of the elbow (or shirtsleeve) to cover the mouth or nose will be required, as will performing hand hygiene after sneezing, coughing, and handling dirty tissues or other soiled material.

Training will include the proper processes and procedures for ensuring respiratory hygiene. Messaging will include the information that the COVID-19 virus spreads from person to person in droplets produced by coughs and sneezes.

Education on COVID and safety procedures

Staff will be trained in the COVID policies and procedures in August. Together they will discuss the implementation of the plan and the practical logistics. Staff will be trained for their special roles in screening, identification of illness, training and monitoring students, and disinfection.

The students will have direct training in the first days and week of school. These lessons will cover healthy hand and respiratory practices, coping and resilience skills, and all of the school's new procedures as outlined in this plan.

We will teach directly, at the appropriate age level, what COVID is, and how we keep ourselves safe.

Students will sign a document agreeing to abide by the school's safety procedures including masking, distancing, and hygiene.

We will discuss our procedures at morning meetings and listen to feedback from the students.

From day one we will start into our new routines and work with the students on these steps until they become second nature. Teachers will model best practices with each activity.

Parents will be trained in the school's new procedures both through email and Zoom calls. Parents are encouraged to provide their feedback and suggestions. Families are requested to support their children to understand the changes.

Ventilation

Many activities will take place outside in the fall and spring using tents for classrooms.

On days that weather permits breaks will take place outside.

Windows and doors will be left open or slightly cracked as feasible.

The school will have an air purifier with a HEPA filter running in each classroom.

Management of Ill Persons

Students and staff showing symptoms of illness will be sent to the DSP who will meet with the person in a designated isolation area. The DSP will evaluate if there are symptoms of COVID that are not explained by a chronic health condition or another

condition that the school has already received notification with documentation from a medical professional. If there are COVID symptoms, the DSP will arrange for the student to be picked up or have the staff person go home.

Hygiene supplies and PPE will be available.

The student will be monitored by a staff person and escorted using a mask and appropriate physical distance to the parent/guardian who will be instructed to call a health care provider.

After use, the isolation area will be disinfected and then re-opened for use.

Staff will be instructed to observe for signs of illness in students and staff and require symptomatic persons to be sent to the DSP.

Ill students and staff must follow up with a health care provider and get tested for COVID.

Return to School After Illness

The school will follow the guidance of the Public Health Department for the return of a student or staff member that has tested positive for COVID or has been directly exposed to someone with a confirmed case of COVID.

Vaccinated students/staff, without COVID-like symptoms, should stay home for 3-5 days and then get tested if they were in close contact (as defined by the CDC) to someone that tested positive for COVID-19. Please inform the school if there has been an exposure.

Anyone who is ill with COVID-like symptoms or has a fever over 100 degrees is required to take a COVID test and is recommended to see their doctor. They may return to school when they present proof of a negative test, and are symptom-free.

Anyone who tests positive for COVID is required to be in touch with the Public Health Department and isolate. They can return to school after they present a release from isolation notice from the Public Health Department.

If anyone has been exposed to a person with COVID or if a family member has COVID, has a fever, shows COVID symptoms, or traveled out of state to a COVID hotspot, we would seek and follow through on the guidance of the Public Health Department before they can return to school.

Contact Tracing

The school will log and keep accurate records of student and staff attendance and any visitors, and assist and cooperate with local health departments with contact tracing.

Testing

Individuals in need of COVID testing are recommended to see their doctor to get a COVID test. Kid-friendly rapid tests are available at the Potsdam Urgent Care (261-5525) and Canton Urgent Care (386-3300) Centers, no appointment is necessary. There are drive-in centers in Potsdam and Massena with the deep nose test and results in 24 hours - you can call the St. Lawrence Health System testing center at 315-261-6240 to make an appointment. Kid-friendly rapid tests are available at the Community Health Center of the North Country at 379-8132 or 386-8191 ex 8168. You can call the St. Lawrence County Board of Health at 315-261-6240, or the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department 315-229-3448 for other testing options.

Quarantine, Isolation, School Closures

If there is a student/staff member or household member of a student/staff member in the school who tests positive for COVID-19, the school will immediately coordinate with the local health department and follow their instructions which will supersede the below policies.

When a student/staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the school will be closed for the remainder of that school day (if applicable) and the following day (minimum--1 full day though a weekend day would be sufficient), so that staff can clean the building. School will then resume.

Unvaccinated students and staff who have had direct, prolonged contact with someone known to have COVID-19 (not simply exhibiting symptoms) will be required to leave school and not return to the building until they have completed 14 days of quarantine without developing COVID-19. If this would require too many members of a cohort group to leave school or if it would require too many staff to leave school that would make school teaching and supervision too limited (at the determination of the director in collaboration with the teachers), that cohort group may be directed to temporarily switch to distance learning.

When a member of the unvaccinated student/staff's household tests positive for COVID-19 or has a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 from a licensed healthcare provider, any students/staff living in or visiting that household (with direct, prolonged contact) will not be able to attend school until they have completed 14 days of quarantine without developing COVID-19 at the advice of Public Health.

Students and staff who are required to leave school but are healthy enough to do work will be required to participate in distance learning (whether as the student or the teacher).

If asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts do not need to quarantine at home following an exposure – they can continue to attend school in-person and participate in other activities. However, they must be tested 3-5 days after exposure, regardless of whether they have symptoms.

Field Trips and Transportation

We will be significantly reducing the number of field trips. Our primary limits are associated with indoor spaces and transportation where distancing is not possible.

Any trips would need to be with cohort groups to outdoor spaces and involve little contact with people who are not a part of the school. Transportation will need to be provided by individual families.

A possible exception would be to have a vaccinated cohort group together in a car with windows open/cracked and permission from the parents.

As a practical matter, most field trips will be to Birdsfoot Farm.

Disinfecting

The school will follow CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfecting.

High use surfaces will be disinfected daily after school and at least once during the school day, and as needed, utilizing spray bottles containing an EPA-approved disinfectant. A 2% bleach solution is one option.

High use surfaces include tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, desks, phones, copy machines, bathrooms and toilets, sinks and faucets, handrails, and other high use areas.

Staff will keep a log of each cleaning.

Commonly held educational materials will be disinfected between uses.

Computer keyboards are difficult to clean due to the spaces between keys and the sensitivity of their hardware to liquids. Students and staff will have or be provided their own computer for individual use. For shared computers, students and staff will use proper hand hygiene before and after use.

Desks will be disinfected before snack and lunch and if students change desks.

Staff will do the disinfecting (not students).

In the event of a confirmed COVID case, the school will use CDC guidelines and the recommendations of Public Health and disinfect all areas used by the person with COVID. Once the area has been appropriately cleaned and disinfected, it can be reopened for use.

The same kind of procedure will be used to clean the isolation room after use.

Educational Materials

Students will be asked to have and maintain their own pencils, notebook, and water bottle. Students will bring their lunch and not share food with others. They should also have warm clothes to be outside or in a ventilated room. Educational materials such as Cuisenaire rods, crayons, and markers, and other items will be set aside for individual students. Students that use school computers will use the same one each day.

We will have limited use of common materials and those materials will need to be cleaned or disinfected after use.

Signage

Signs that encourage distancing, masks, hand washing, and other COVID safety practices will be posted and visible.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The school will maintain a supply of the following PPE: face masks, N95 masks, face shields, and gloves. Additionally, the school will have hand sanitizer, spray disinfectant, disinfectant wipes, paper towels, tissues, a Tyvek suit, and no-touch thermometers.

Social and Emotional Well-Being

The social/emotional health of students, families, and staff is a high priority. We will support our school community to develop coping and resilience skills.

Staff will have professional development training in August to care for the mental health and emotional needs of the students, parents, and themselves.

Social and emotional concerns of students and families will be raised at the individual curriculum meetings.

Student concerns and needs will be addressed in morning meetings held several or more times each week.

Mental health resources and referrals will be available.

Safety Drills

Safety drills will continue to be held in accordance with NY State guidelines. In order to support social distancing, the meeting area for these drills will be separate for each cohort group.

Distance Learning

The school plans to offer in-person learning and will only offer 'distance learning' in special circumstances.

The school will be ready and have the flexibility to switch to distance learning if circumstances make that necessary.

The staff will prepare printed material and books that can be used at home.

Even with in-person classes going on, some families may choose to continue to learn at home or do a satellite program. The school will support these families academically.

Attendance

Staff will collect and monitor attendance regardless of the instructional setting.

When students are absent, the parents should send an email or a message noting the absence and the reason for the absence.

Students should arrive at the building between 8:00 am and 8:10 to allow for screening. Students arriving late may find there is no one to screen and allow them into the building unless they have set up a later arrival time in advance.

Communication

We will communicate with families on an ongoing and regular basis. Parents are encouraged to write or call with questions, concerns, or suggestions.

We will email families the COVID safety procedure and have a Zoom call in August and provide an opportunity for feed-in and feedback.

We request families to communicate with us if their child is ill or if anyone in the family is or has been sick.

We will send a written concrete list of expectations to the families and a list of items their children need.

Students and families are encouraged to contact their teacher with any academic or technology needs or questions.

We will add our COVID safety procedures to our website.

In the event of a confirmed COVID case in the school, all families will be informed and will be additionally informed of the Public Health recommendations.

In the event of a school closure, everyone will receive an email and a follow-up phone call as needed.

In a lengthy closure, families will receive regular emails and periodic phone calls.

Updates to Policies

The school's COVID safety policies and procedures will be revised or updated, as needed, upon the guidance or direction of the local or state health departments.