



August 17, 2021

Dear Duanesburg Central Schools Community:

Although we had all hoped for a return to normalcy this fall, recent increases in transmission rates of more contagious variants of COVID-19 across the country, state, and our area, have led the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, the New York State Education Department (NYSED), and Schenectady County Public Health Services (SCPHS) to recommend a series of mitigation strategies that schools should follow in the fall. Most of these strategies will seem familiar. As we have done throughout the pandemic, we will follow these recommendations to the extent practicable to be able to keep our students and staff safe, healthy, and in school. To do this, we will continue to rely upon our partnership with you and other DCS families.

For the time being, our district will use a layered mitigation approach based on weekly COVID-19 transmission rates in Schenectady County published by the CDC. These transmission rates can be found online at <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>. There are fluctuations in transmission rates from day to day, but we will set protocols for the week based on rates for Sunday. Protocols will not change until the following week unless we are advised otherwise by public health officials. We will post the color corresponding to the transmission rate at the entrance of each school building and on the school website.

It is possible there will be changes to these protocols as the year progresses, but we wanted to provide you with an update as we know you and your family are beginning to prepare for the fall.

Mask Wearing: As you will see on the chart, mask wearing will be an important part of our transmission control efforts. This decision is not one that we make lightly. There is data to suggest that new variants of COVID-19 are extremely contagious and even vaccinated individuals, while protected from serious illness themselves, may be able to transmit the virus to unvaccinated people, who have no such protection.

Students who are medically unable to comply with mask-wearing protocols should provide documentation from a doctor to allow them access to remote education (see below). Face masks may be worn by anyone at any time, during any activity. Bullying, harassment, or discouraging of mask wearing will not be tolerated.

We understand the toll mask wearing may take on students and look forward to reducing mask wearing again when transmission rates come down. The quickest way to get to this point as a community is for all people above the age of 12 who are medically able to get vaccinated to do so. Vaccines are now widely available and vaccination locations can be found at vaccines.gov.

Remote Learning: It is our expectation that all students who are medically able to do so will attend school in person for the 21-22 school year. DCS will not stream all classes as it did last year and remote instruction will only be an option for students with documented medical needs. These students will participate in a fully-remote, full year instructional program through the BOCES digital learning network. This model will provide instruction aligned to the New York State Learning Standards to students from multiple school districts and will be taught by New York State certified teachers with experience teaching in a remote environment. Parents interested in this option should submit medical documentation to the appropriate school office as soon as possible.

1:1 Devices: We will continue with the practice of assigning Chromebooks to each student so they are prepared if phasing in and out of remote learning becomes necessary. MiFi devices will also be available for those who need them to access the internet at home. Please email [Joe O'Neill](#), our Management Information Systems Director, if you need one of these devices. Distribution of devices will take place on the first day of school.

Quarantining: Should there be infections within the district, there may continue to be a need for contact tracing and quarantining, especially of unvaccinated individuals. Communication for these events will occur immediately to families of students impacted and to everyone in the school community as soon as practical.

Illness: While a daily attestation of wellness is no longer required this year, we ask that you continue to keep your children home if they are unwell and especially if they are exhibiting any [symptoms of COVID-19](#). Symptomatic students can end isolation and return to school with a negative test result and a resolution of the symptoms OR by meeting the following conditions:

- 10 days out from the start of the symptoms, AND
- Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication, AND
- Resolution of symptoms

Social Distancing: The CDC and SCPHS has recommended that districts continue to maintain three feet of physical distance while in classrooms and in hallways when practicable. This reduced distance will allow all students to be present everyday and will eliminate the need for “overflow” classrooms.

Changing classes, using common space, and lockers: Students in the Elementary School will again be using special area classrooms and the library. Students in the Jr/Sr High School will change classes and use the library normally as well. Lockers and classroom cubbies will also be used this year.

Extracurricular activities: We anticipate running our full complement of extracurricular activities and late buses this year.

Transportation: Masking will be required for all bus riders. While buses will utilize a seating chart for contact tracing purposes, physical distancing will not be required on transportation. Although we will be able to transport all students who need to ride buses, we encourage parents who are able to do so to transport their children to and from school to decrease density. [If you will be transporting your own child please complete this online form.](#)

Please watch our School Reopening & COVID-19 Updates & Resources webpage for more detailed information and important news at: <https://www.duanesburg.org/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/>



Layered Mitigation Protocols: Fall 2021

	Low Community Transmission	Moderate Community Transmission	Substantial Community Transmission	High Community Transmission
Facemasks (indoors)	Encouraged for all	Encouraged for all; required for unvaccinated individuals	Required for all regardless of vaccination status	Required for all regardless of vaccination status
Social Distancing (indoors)	Not required	3' when practical	3' when practical	At least 3'
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks required. Seating chart used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks required. Seating chart used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks required. Seating chart used. Parent transport encouraged to decrease density. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks required. Seating chart used. Parent transport encouraged to decrease density.
Outdoor activity (e.g. recess)	No Restrictions (masks optional)	No Restrictions (masks optional)	Masks recommended	Masks recommended
Meal Times	No Restrictions	Physical distancing maximized while eating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical distancing maximized Cohorting and seating charts required for contact tracing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical distancing maximized Cohorting and seating charts required for contact tracing.
Performing Arts (e.g. singing, playing wind instrument)	No Restrictions (masks optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical distancing maximized. Bell covers required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical distancing maximized. Bell covers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical distancing maximized. Bell covers required

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for wind instruments. Masks required for unvaccinated singers and actors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> required for wind instruments. Masks required for unvaccinated singers and actors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for wind instruments. Masks required for unvaccinated singers and actors.
Physical Education	No Restrictions (masks optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks required for unvaccinated individuals during indoor activities. Locker Room may be used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks required for all. Locker rooms closed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks required for all. 3' distancing required for all. Locker rooms closed
Outdoor Athletics	No Restrictions (masks optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks recommended for athletes and spectators Screening testing for those who are not fully vaccinated up to 24 hours before the event. 3' physical distancing and contact tracing sign-ins required for spectators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks recommended for athletes and spectators Two spectators per athlete Screening testing for participants who are not fully vaccinated up to 24 hours before the event. 3' physical distancing and contact tracing sign-ins required for spectators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks recommended for athletes and spectators Two spectators per athlete Screening testing for participants who are not fully vaccinated up to 24 hours before the event. 3' physical distancing and contact tracing sign-ins required for spectators.
Indoor Athletics	No Restrictions (masks encouraged)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks required for athletes and spectators Screening testing for those who are not fully vaccinated up to 24 hours before the event. 3' physical distancing and contact tracing sign-ins required for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks required for athletes and spectators Two spectators per athlete maximum Screening testing for participants who are not fully vaccinated up to 24 hours before the event. 3' physical distancing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks required for athletes and spectators Two spectators per athlete maximum Screening testing for participants who are not fully vaccinated up to 24 hours before the event. 3' physical distancing

		spectators.	and contact tracing sign-ins required for spectators.	and contact tracing sign-ins required for spectators.
COVID-19 Surveillance	No Surveillance Testing	No Surveillance Testing	Surveillance testing through county pool testing (saliva swab test) with consent	Surveillance testing through county pool testing (saliva swab test) with consent
School Visitors	No Restrictions	No Restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No unnecessary visitors • Limited “outside group” use of school facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No unnecessary visitors • Limited “outside group” use of school facilities.
COVID-19 Vaccines	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged
Handwashing, Hand Sanitizer, and Respiratory Etiquette	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged
Daily Attestations	No	No	No	No
Staying Home When Sick (Staff and Students)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cleaning and Disinfection	Daily Routine Cleaning	Daily Routine Cleaning and Daily Disinfection of High-Touch Surfaces	Daily Routine Cleaning and Daily Disinfection of High-Touch Surfaces	Daily Routine Cleaning and Daily Disinfection of High-Touch Surfaces
Ventilation and Air Quality	N/A	Increased fresh air circulation (mechanical, open windows, open doors)	Increased fresh air circulation (mechanical, open windows, open doors)	Increased fresh air circulation (mechanical, open windows, open doors)

All Mitigation Protocols are based on information from

[American Academy of Pediatrics](#), [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention \(CDC\)](#), & [Schenectady County Public Health Services](#)