

2021-2022 | ELMIRA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ELMIRA
EXPRESS



LOOKING
FORWARD
TO A HEALTHY
FUTURE

2021-2022 RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

ELMIRACITYSCHOOLS.COM

FAMILY, SCHOOL, COMMUNITY: TOGETHER WE SUCCEED



SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE | LOOKING FORWARD

August 2021

Dear Elmira City School District Families,

We look forward to welcoming students across the Elmira City School District to the 2021-22 school year. The challenges we faced together in the last year has strengthened our staff, students and systems. As we are again facing more health and safety planning for this year, I wanted to first express my gratitude to you for your fortitude, patience, and thoughtful concern.

As we prepare for the 2021-2022 school year, our objective is to return all students back to five days weekly of in-person instruction. The District will continue following guidance set forth by the New York State Education Department, as well as the New York State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In the following pages, you'll find a range of health and safety protocols the District is implementing. Please note that this is a living document that will be updated as new guidelines and guidance is recommended from health officials. The last year has taught us that as public health conditions change, we quickly need to update our robust health and safety planning.

District leaders of the Elmira City School District will continue its efforts to work closely with state and local agencies. It is our goal to continue to make health and safety, high quality instruction, family engagement, social and emotional supports, and strong communication the forefront of our District planning.

We **LOOK FORWARD TO A HEALTHY FUTURE** with our strong Express community! #GoExpress

Thank you and be well,

Hillary J. Austin
Superintendent of Schools
Elmira City School District



OVERVIEW | LOOKING FORWARD TO A HEALTHY FUTURE

This plan is designed as a dynamic document, changing as new health information is provided by federal, state, and local officials. In conjunction with the NYSED guidance document for re-opening schools for Fall 2021, the Elmira City School District has partnered with the Chemung County Health Department, the County Executive's office, the District Physician and other area school superintendents to develop policies that respond to health and safety concerns.

The CDC recommends a layered approach to mitigation strategies in schools, based on levels of community transmission, such as wearing masks, COVID-19 screening testing, cohorting, improved ventilation, handwashing and covering coughs and sneezes, staying home when sick with symptoms of infectious illness including COVID-19, and regular cleaning to help reduce transmission risk. The Elmira City School District is planning for all contingencies in order to be prepared to pivot to remote instruction as necessary.

This document is posted to the District website at www.elmiracityschools.com.

Health and safety updates will be added to the district website under the section “Superintendent Updates” throughout the 2021-2022 school year.



MASKS

Effective immediately, in accordance with the Commissioner's Determination issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.60, any person over the age of 2 (including all students, personnel, teachers, administrators, contractors, and visitors) must wear masks at all times indoors in P-12 school buildings, regardless of vaccination status.

Based on the Commissioner's Determination, beginning Monday August 30, 2021, The Elmira City School District will require universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to all school buildings regardless of vaccination status and/or community transition rates.

People do not need to wear masks when eating, drinking, singing, or playing a wind instrument. When masks are removed for this purpose, the CDC recommends a 6 feet social distance when at all possible.

BUS INFORMATION – (CDC January 2021)

The CDC's Order regarding masks, issued in January 2021, requires that "all passengers on public conveyances ... traveling into, within, or out of the United States ... regardless of their vaccination status, are required to wear a mask over their nose and mouth." It applies to all forms of public transportation, including school buses. Passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses, including on buses operated by public and private school systems, regardless of vaccination status.

All drivers and passengers of any ECSD school bus, regardless of vaccination statuses will be required to wear a mask.

ATHLETIC CONTESTS and SCHOOL EVENTS

Masks will be required, regardless of vaccination status, at all indoors athletic contests, school events, plays, open house, etc.

Elmira City School District COVID Procedures for Visiting Teams

- Visiting teams will not have access to locker rooms at EHS gymnasium, EDA Gymnasium, EDA Fieldhouse, or Broadway Academy Fields.
 - Teams are to come prepared for the game, with extra clothes for before and after the game.
 - There will be access to restrooms in the lobby of each school, and/or the EDA fieldhouse bathrooms or Broadway Academy (Jeff's Portable)
 - For indoor contests, please enter through the main lobby entrance for each building, maintaining 3' social distancing and masks are required all times once inside the building.
 - For all games, opposing teams are to arrive no earlier than one hour prior to start time.
 - If a game completes sooner than anticipated, or bus arrives late for pick up, we will have an area or classroom for the team to wait for the bus.
 - If there are travel issues, and two teams have to travel on the same bus, we will find a classroom, or place for team to wait for the other game to end, or bus to get to facility
 - Teams are to bring their own water bottles. There are hands free filling stations for the players to fill up their own water if necessary
- There will be areas behind the bench area for players to take their "mask breaks"
- Teams and coaches will have chairs placed on the sideline, using social distancing where players can keep their belongings during the game.
- SPECTATORS ARE ALLOWED AT THIS TIME (HOME AND AWAY SPECTATORS)
 - For Indoor Contests
 - Visiting team spectators will enter through the main lobby of EHS gym or EDA gym.
 - Spectators may sit with member of their household only, sitting at least 3' apart from other spectators at game.
 - For Outdoor Contests
 - No limit on spectators
 - Masks not required



- Streaming Services Available
 - Games at EHS (Volleyball) – www.nfhsnetwork.com or TBD YouTube Channel
 - Games at Ernie Davis Academy Stadium – www.nfhsnetwork.com or TBD YouTube Channel
 - Games at Broadway Academy, EHS Pool and EHS Tennis (when possible)
 - <http://ideas.gstboces.org/elmira/sports1>
 - <http://ideas.gstboces.org/elmira/sports2>
- Masks (For Indoor Contests only)
 - Spectators must wear a mask at ALL times while in the building.
 - Athletes must wear a mask at ALL times (except when taking a mask-break in a designated area or when taking a water break. For water breaks athletes must be seated and remain socially distanced on the sideline).

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

The CDC recommends that schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing, to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

In the cafeteria students will be spaced no less than 3 feet while moving through the line and more than 3 feet while eating.

People do not need to wear masks when eating, drinking, singing, or playing a wind instrument; when masks are removed for these purposes, it is recommended individuals be spaced six feet apart. All mask requirements must be applied consistently with any state and federal law (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act).

TEMPERATURE and QUESTIONNAIRE SCREENINGS

The CDC no longer recommends temperature screenings. We will no longer require temperature screenings for staff, students, or visitors at any ECSD school building or on any school bus.

The ECSD will continue to utilize the "Stay Well Questionnaire" at home on-line screening tool. Parents or students will complete and submit the questions daily, monitoring key indicators of illness or risk and ECSD staff will complete and submit the questions daily, monitoring key indicators of illness or risk and ECSD staff will follow-up on "YES" responses to the questions.

A screening questionnaire determines whether the individual has:

- Knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 7 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19.
- Tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 10 days.
- Has experienced any symptoms of COVID-19 including a temperature of greater than 100.0°F in the past 7 days: and/or cough or loss of taste and smell.
- Traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New Travel Advisory in the past 14 days.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS AT HOME

The ECSD will ensure that parents/guardians will be provided materials to assist in observing for signs of illness in their child that require staying home from school.

We are asking parents to please monitor their child's temperature daily before school. Temperature check is only accurate when there has been no use of fever-reducing medications ie: Tylenol (Acetaminophen), Motrin, Advil (Ibuprofen).

A screening questionnaire will be provided to you by the school. Please make sure you are completing and submitting this questionnaire to the school as instructed.

HANDWASHING and RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE AT HOME



People should practice handwashing and respiratory etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes) to keep from getting and spreading infectious illnesses including COVID-19. Schools can monitor and reinforce these behaviors and provide adequate handwashing supplies.

- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Remind everyone to wash hand frequently and assist young children with handwashing.
- If handwashing is not possible, use hand sanitizer containing at least 6-% alcohol (for older children who can safely use hand sanitizer). Hand sanitizers should be stored up, away, and out of the sight of young children and should be used only with adult supervision for children under 6 years of age.

STAYING HOME WHEN SICK AND BEING TESTED

Students, teachers and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as influenza (flu) or COVID-19 should stay home and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care, regardless of vaccination status. Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keep COVID-19 infections out of schools and prevent spread to others.

STUDENT BECOMING ILL AT SCHOOL

Staff will be trained to identify potential COVID-19 symptoms. If your child develops symptoms during the School Day, they will immediately be isolated under supervision, assessed by health care personnel, and parent/guardian will be notified for pickup of student.

It is imperative that your child's school have updated contact information. Please notify school of change of address and/or phone number immediately.

In the event that a parent/guardian cannot be reached for pickup, designated school staff (2 staff members required) will make a home visit to advise need for pickup. If parent/guardian not home, home visits will be made to designated emergency contacts.

ASSESSMENT BY THE SCHOOL NURSE OR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

The Elmira City School District ensures that ill students and staff be assessed by the school nurse (registered professional nurse, RN) or medical director and that if a school nurse or medical director is not available, ill students and staff will be sent home for follow up with a healthcare provider.

WRITTEN PROTOCOLS FOR SIGNS OF ILLNESS – STUDENTS AND STAFF

The Elmira City School District has a written protocol requiring students or staff with a temperature or signs of illness, shall be sent directly to a dedicated isolation area where students are supervised.

A School Nurse will escort student outside to parent/guardian for pickup. We ask that you do not enter the building unless otherwise directed.

RETURN TO WORK AND SCHOOL AFTER ILLNESS

The Elmira City School District has written protocol that complies with DOH and CDC guidance for the return to school of students and staff following a positive screen for COVID-19 symptoms, illness or diagnosis of confirmed case of COVID-19 or following quarantine due to contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Return to school will be coordinated with the local health department.

The school District will contact The Chemung County Department of Health with contact name, phone number, and known address. The County will then coordinate with the District to conduct contact tracing and verification of COVID-19 testing measures. Per the Chemung County Department of Health, "the county publishes our county's hospital capacity on the county website". The Department of Health will collaborate with the school District to provide guidance on closures based on hospitalization rates and capacity.



Schools must follow CDC, NYSDOH and local Health Department guidance for allowing a student and staff member to return to school after being diagnosed with COVID-19 or exhibiting symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19. Following Guidance and Protocols

SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 BUT DOES NOT HAVE COVID-19

If a person has symptoms of possible COVID-19 illness, but is determined NOT to have COVID-19 by a healthcare provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant), they can return to school when:

- There is no fever, without the use of fever reducing medicines, for at least 24 hours;
- They have been diagnosed with another condition (not COVID-19) and have a healthcare provider written note stating they are clear to return to school.
- They are allowed to return to school based on existing school District illness policies / protocols.
- Per Chemung County Health Department, vaccination status does not impact this protocol.

SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 & IS DIAGNOSED WITH COVID-19

If a person has symptoms of COVID-19 and has been diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider either based on a positive test result or just based upon their symptoms, they should remain at home and not return to school until:

- It has been at least ten days since the individual first had symptoms, AND;
- It has been at least 24 hours since the individual has had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); AND
- It has been at least three days since the individual's symptoms improved, including cough and shortness of breath.
- Repeat COVID-19 testing is NOT required prior to reentering school.
- Per Chemung County Health Department, vaccination status does not impact this protocol.

NO SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 & IS DIAGNOSED WITH COVID-19

If a person has tested positive for COVID-19, but has no symptoms of COVID-19, they should remain at home and not return to school until:

- 10 days have passed since test was done (if they continue to have no symptoms of COVID-19).
- Repeat COVID-19 testing is NOT required prior to reentering school.
- However, if a healthcare provider advises a person to be COVID-19 test negative prior to school reentry, they can reenter school when they have no fever, their respiratory symptoms have improved, and they have received two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart.
- Per Chemung County Health Department, vaccination status does not impact this protocol.

COVID-19 ILLNESS & PEOPLE WITH WEAKENED IMMUNE SYSTEMS

People with conditions that weaken their immune system (immunocompromised), who acquire COVID-19 illness, might need to stay home longer than 10 days. This would be determined and communicated to the school District by a medical professional.

VACCINATION AND TESTING INFORMATION

We are still learning more information on vaccination and testing from New York State and will update as we know more. The Elmira City School District has partnered with the Chemung County Health Department to host county vaccination clinics for students and staff at school sites. If you are interested in learning more about the clinics or want to know the dates for the next clinic, please contact the Chemung County Health Department.

DAILY SCHOOL CLEANING

Frequent cleaning and disinfection will support a healthy learning and work environment for students and staff.

- Each classroom will be cleaned and disinfected daily.
- All high-touch areas will be disinfected throughout the day.



- Custodians will be expected to wear PPE (masks and gloves) during work hours.
- Cafeterias will be disinfected between lunch periods.

• Staff and students will have access to disinfecting items to sanitize working surfaces, shared objects, and high-touch areas after use and during breaks in instruction.

• High frequency areas will be placed on a daily schedule with multiple cleanings performed in each designated area. Examples of high frequency areas are but not limited to; tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets and restrooms and faucets and sinks.

IMPROVING VENTILATION

Proactive HVAC ventilation and filtration is a critical first step to help ensure a safer indoor environment for increased occupancy in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The District plans to ventilate each room at or above the designed minimum outdoor air requirement for each piece of mechanical equipment. We will increase the number of hours the equipment runs in the occupied, ventilating state beyond actual occupancy time ranges. The district has installed Merv-13 filters in mechanical units designed to serve multiple spaces to reduce transmission of potential threats between spaces.