



# Worcester Public Schools

## Hybrid Learning Plan

### Guidelines & Protocols for: **Vernon Hill School**

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#### **Vernon Hill School**

211 Providence Street  
Worcester, MA 01609

508-799-3630



Principal: Craig Dottin

Assistant Principal: Kelly Boyd

Adjustment Counselor: Rashedah  
Tatum

Nurse: Kayla Crisostomo

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#### Dear Families,

We are excited to have an opportunity to return to 5 day in-person instruction and remote model on May 3rd 2021. We have been planning the following to ensure all students and staff at Vernon Hill School are able to work in a safe and healthy learning environment. It is hard to believe that we will soon have students in our classrooms again who have not been inside a school for a complete year. It is time to get back to NORMALCY! Teachers and students will be adjusting to new procedures and protocols while adapting to a new model of instruction. Our teachers and service providers have been working really hard to deliver the best instruction and services to our students, and we thank you for your continued support of their work. We will continue to build on what we have learned, as we move to this next phase of our re-entry plan. Please know that, together with the support of our families and the community, we will work to ensure a successful and safe transition for all. If you have any questions contact Craig Dottin or Kelly Boyd by the phone number listed above. Below, I have explained how we will operate during remote instruction.

#### Remote Instruction?

- Students will continue to meet with their same teachers and classmates regardless of participating from home.
- Live instruction will continue day-to-day using the same school schedules (Monday-Friday 7:45-1:50) as our current virtual model. However, school start and end times will return to the traditional hours that are included below. This shift back to “regular” start times is due to transportation.
- In K-6, schools are running a “traditional” 4.5-hour schedule, during which students meet with their teacher(s) and receive instruction across all subjects each day.
- In Pre-K, schools will reopen with a 2.45 hour day AM and PM sessions.

- At all levels, one group of students will be present for in-person instruction while all other groups will follow the same schedule and attend live instruction from home through Google Meet.
- The remote students are expected to log on to their courses according to the regular bell schedule even though they are not physically present in school.

How will staff be prepared to instruct in this model?

- Throughout the course of this school year, WPS teachers have been provided hours of online professional development in preparation for the transition to a hybrid model of instruction.

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## Guiding Principles

### Healthy Educational Environment

We will ensure that appropriate measures to protect the safety and health of our students and staff is a top priority by:

- providing clean and sanitized buildings
- investing in equipment to ensure air quality improvements and safety
- prioritizing COVID-19 mitigation training for staff and students and school routines have been designed to minimize risk

### Robust Instructional Opportunities

We will provide high quality synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid instruction to students during remote and hybrid learning time by:

- ensuring students have access to a district issued device and internet
- modifying curriculum programs to support multiple learning models
- having continuous professional development integrating instructional technology
- providing modern research-based learning platforms

### Social-Emotional Supports for Students

We are mindful of the pandemic's impact on students and we are prioritizing student well-being through:

- biweekly student SEL and academic needs survey
- specialized and individualized SEL support
- structured schedules with time for check-ins and small group supports

### Equitable Learning Opportunities for Students

We will provide high-quality learning for all students through:

- ensuring that Students with Disabilities receive appropriate support and instruction
- Ensuring that English Language Learners receive appropriate support and instruction
- continuing to implement culturally responsive, learner-centered practices in all lessons
- providing varied accommodations in order to make learning accessible for all learners

## Transparent Communication

We are committed to providing timely information to families and community members regarding the shifts and changes associated with COVID-19 school procedures through:

- frequent updates to the website with translated information
- leveraging multiple ways to communicate with families including community forums, ConnectEd messages, text message, phone calls, social media, and website updates

*WPS is working closely with the Parabola Project to offer guidance, tools, and strategies to understand and minimize risks while maximizing learning and wellness during COVID-19.*  
*-Parabola Project*

## Student & Staff Safety

### District Guidelines

- Staff will receive comprehensive safety training including the viewing of a four-part school safety reopening video
- Students are requested to bring two masks to school each day
- Masks and gloves will be available upon requests for all staff and students
- Masks will be expected to be worn at all times, except during mask breaks
- Three to six feet of social distancing guidelines will be followed
- The number of people within a closed area will be limited to reduce exposure to Covid-19
- Transition and directional plans will be created for safe movements throughout the building
- Students and staff will be trained in hand washing.
- Hand washing schedules will be created
- Hand sanitizers will be placed in every classroom and other key locations at all schools.
- Additional PPE and cleaning supplies will be available at our schools including masks disinfectant wipes, shields, gloves, hand sanitizer, and gowns for all needs

## Classroom Setup

### District Guidelines

- Desks and tables will be three to six feet apart and will face the same way
- Unused furniture may be removed to allow for more space
- Students will have seating assignments for contract tracing if necessary

- Signage of protocols will be posted

#### **School Guidelines**

- Rugs will not be permitted in classrooms.

## **School Supplies**

#### **District Guidelines**

- Each student will have their own school supplies
- Personal belongings will be separated and not shared with others
- For shared supplies, there will be a cleaning protocol for disinfecting between uses
- Lockers will not be used during this phase of reopening; coats and backpacks will be allowed in the classrooms
- Students will be required to bring their chargers, earbuds, and district-issued device fully charged to school each day
- Students should not bring their hotspot into school
- Students will not be able to use a personal device in school

#### **School Guidelines**

- Students will hang backpacks and coats on the backs of their chairs. Hooks in hallways and classrooms will not be utilized.

## **Student Transitions**

#### **District Guidelines**

- Signage will be posted throughout the entire building to direct students' transition and maintain six feet distance.
- Hallways and stairways will be assigned as exit and or entrance points to avoid students passing each other face to face and crowding.
- When students transition staff will monitor the transition to ensure Three (3) feet distance.

#### **School Guidelines (video displaying signage in the hallway)**



## Arrival

### District Guidelines

- All students/families should complete a symptom self check via the health portal daily before leaving for school
- Arrival will have staggered times to avoid large groups entering the building at the same time
- Social distancing will be maintained while entering the building with staff monitoring
- Students will go directly to classrooms when entering the building

### School Guidelines

- **Student entrances will be assigned by classrooms.**



## Dismissal

### District Guidelines

- Staff and students must maintain social distancing when preparing for dismissal
- Dismissal time will be staggered to avoid large groups exiting the building
- Students and staff must wear masks during the entire dismissal process
- Students walking home should maintain social distancing and mask-wearing

School Guidelines (video displaying parent pick up in the rear) and walking parent pick up

- Walker exits will be assigned by classrooms.



- Parents picking up students by car will drive up the side driveway to the rear parking lot and remain in their car. Students will be called from the auditorium as parents arrive.





- Parents picking up students on foot will walk to the rear playground. Students will be called from the auditorium as parents arrive.



## Breakfast and Lunch

### District Guidelines

- All water bubblers and fountains will be shut off
- Food service will be providing water during the school day
- Breakfast and lunch will be grab and go or delivered to the classroom
- Breakfast and lunch will be eaten in classrooms or school cafeteria
- Students will maintain six feet distancing while eating

### School Guidelines

- Students will have the opportunity to eat breakfast in the classroom.
- Kindergarten and STEP students will eat lunch in the classroom.
- There will be three lunch sessions for students in grades 1 through 6 in the gym.

## Recess

### District Guidelines

- All elementary schools will have scheduled recess breaks
- Students will wash their hands after recess
- Students will be required to keep their masks on and maintain social distancing
- Playgrounds will remain closed during winter months
- Students can take mask breaks during recess maintaining social distancing

### School Guidelines

- **Masks will be worn covering the nose and mouth the entire time at recess, excluding a requested mask break.**
- **Mask break locations will be identified to students prior to the start of recess.**
- **1 student will be permitted at each mask break location.**
- **3ft distancing will be required to participate in recess.**
- **A 1-minute whistle warning will be used to signal the ready to end recess.**
- **30-sec mask break (included in 1-minute warning) will be used prior to lining up students.**

## Mask Breaks

### [How to wear your mask](#)

#### District Guidelines

- There will be scheduled mask breaks for students
- The breaks will be based on the students' age and needs
- Mask breaks will be conducted outside whenever possible

#### School Guidelines

- Mask breaks will be scheduled by classroom teachers on an as-needed basis.

## Hand Washing

### [Hand Washing](#)

#### District Guidelines

- Students and staff will be required to wash their hands frequently
- Handwashing with soap and warm water for 20 seconds is the recommendation
- Hand sanitizer will be available in every school

#### School Guidelines

##### Students will clean their hands

- Upon arrival to their classroom
- Before and after eating and handling food
- After using the restroom
- Returning to classrooms from recess
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

## Bathroom Procedures

#### District Guidelines

- Safety protocols will be established at schools based on bathroom location and capacity
- Bathroom breaks will be carried out as they would during normal school times
- Students waiting for the bathrooms will be six feet apart and wear masks
- Signages will be posted to remind students to wash their hands
- Soap dispensers will be filled on a regular basis

#### School Guidelines

- Wearing masks covering nose and mouth at all times
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Wait at the 6ft distancing marker set outside the bathroom door
- No more than 3 students will be allowed to occupy the bathroom at any given time.

# School & Systemwide Staff Protocols

## District Guidelines

- All school-based and systemwide staff will be required to sign in at a designated area
- When visiting school buildings, masks will be worn by all staff and social distancing will be maintained
- Workspaces in the building may be utilized for specialized instruction
- Congregated work settings will be prohibited (such as teacher's lunchrooms)
- Teachers and staff will take breaks and eat in designated areas of the building as decided by the principal or supervisor
- Staff meetings will be held virtually
- Professional development will be held virtually

## School Guidelines

- **Staff will sign-in in the main office**
- **Teachers will eat lunch in their classrooms**
- **Staff meetings will be held virtually**
- **Professional Development will be held virtually**

# Visitor Access to the Building

## District Guidelines

- Visitors should call ahead and arrange a time to come into the building
- Visitors will be required to sign in with their name, purpose, and phone number
- Visitors must wear masks at all times
- Visitors must maintain six feet social distance upon entering the school
- Only one visitor at a time will be allowed in the office
- Staff will assist visitors in their needs
- There will be no visitors volunteering in classrooms

## School Guidelines

- **Visitors must wear masks at all times including entering the building.**
- **Only one visitor at a time will be allowed in the office**
- **Visitors will remain six feet apart while waiting outside the office**
- **There will be no visitors allowed in classrooms**

*Decisions about when and how to reopen schools during COVID-19 need to be based on a strong set of principles, grounded in best available evidence, informed by context, and oriented towards each community's highest aspirations for student learning and well being.*

*-Parabola Project*

## Air Quality and Cleaning Protocol

### District Guidelines

- We upgraded all of the buildings to improve airflow
- HVAC assessments were conducted in 59 locations
- Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization systems were installed in all locations to improve air quality
- Misting machines have been purchased for all schools and will be used each night
- Custodians will clean rooms, empty trash, and disinfect high touch points regularly
- Each classroom will be provided with disinfectant wipes to use on desks and materials for frequent washing; the wipes are made from the safest disinfectant available on the market approved by EPA for Covid-19
- Hand sanitizer has been purchased for all schools and will be replenished when needed

### School Guidelines

- **Every classroom and hallways have a Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization system to improve air quality**
- **Hand sanitizer will be readily available in each classroom**

## Transportation

### District Guidelines

- Students must maintain six feet distance while waiting and boarding the bus
- Students should face forward at all times and refrain from eating, singing, shouting, or sharing items while in transit
- Buses will be cleaned and disinfected between all runs
- Windows will stay open for the duration of the ride
- Students, drivers, and monitors must wear masks at all times
- Seating plans for all students will be made for each bus route in accordance with DESE Transportation Guidelines
- Students will be assigned seats and will be required to stay in them

### School Guidelines

- **Buses will pick up and drop off students on Providence Street directly in front of the building.**

## Food Services for Families

### District Guidelines

- School-wide food services will continue for all families
- Breakfast and lunch will be served in school to all students
- Breakfast and lunch will be grab and go style
- Food Trucks and food pantries will be ongoing throughout the city

### School Guidelines (Location changed to Quinsigamond Elementary starting April 26, 2021)

- Monday through Thursday 3 pm-6 pm
- Fridays 10am-1pm

## Covid-19 Medical Waiting Room & Nurse's Office

### District Guidelines

- WPS will clearly distinguish between the Nurses' Office and a Covid-19 safe space
- All schools will have an established Covid-19 medical waiting room separate from the nurse's office
- The Covid-19 medical room will be used for students presenting with Covid-19 symptoms
- Every school will have a nurse and a Covid-19 point person
- There will be disinfection after each student who visits the nurse's office

## Students and Staff Exhibiting Symptoms

### District Guidelines

- We will respond promptly and effectively when there is possible exposure to Covid-19
- An individual who is symptomatic at home should stay home and get tested
- If a student or staff member is positive, notify the building principal
- If a student is Covid-19 positive, home with symptoms, or quarantining, they can participate in remote learning
- A student that is symptomatic on the bus will immediately be brought to the nurse's office or the Covid-19 medical waiting room for assessment
- A student that is symptomatic while in school will wait in the Covid-19 waiting room until they can be picked up
- Symptomatic students will require a pickup and will not be allowed to ride the bus home
- A staff member who appears symptomatic at work will discuss coverage with the principal and follow district protocols
- A student or staff member who tests positive must notify the school, assist with the district procedures on close contact and covid-19 positive status procedures, and follow CDC guidelines for quarantining or isolation

# Protocols for Potential School Closures

## District Guidelines

In the event of multiple cases of Covid-19 in the school or building, we will:

- consult with Worcester Regional Dept. Public Health Department
- review of the specific COVID-19 public health metrics for the city of Worcester
- determine if it is necessary to shut down a classroom, wing, or entire building for a short time by consulting with necessary stakeholders and WPS administration for a final decision
- inform the community
- communicate building reopening plan

## District Contacts

Superintendent: Maureen Binienda- 508-799-3117

Deputy Superintendent: Sue O'Neil-508-799-3644

School Safety Director, Covid-19 District Coordinator: Rob Pezzella-508-799-3472

Chief Financial and Operations Officer: Brian Allen-508-799-3401

Elementary Schools Managers: Marie Morse, Ellen Kelley-508-799-3264

Secondary School Manager: Tim Sippel-508-799-3264

## Resources

- Planning for these guidelines were created in collaboration with the Parabola Project:  
<http://parabolaproject.org>

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- [DESE Guidance on Remote Learning for English Learners](#) (Released April 24, 2020)
  - [Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance](#) (Released June 25, 2020)
  - Guidance on Fall 2020 [Special Education Services](#) (Released July 9, 2020)
  - Fall Reopening - - [FAQs](#) (Released July 10, 2020)

- [Fall Reopening Facilities and Operations Guidance](#) (Released July 22, 2020)
- [Fall Reopening Transportation Guidance](#) (Released July 22, 2020)
- [Fall Remote Learning Guidance](#) (Released July 24, 2020)
- [Guidance for Courses with Additional Safety Requirements](#) (Released July 24, 2020)