

Unatego Opening Plan—August 17, 2021

The following is a summary of Unatego’s plan for safely opening schools this fall and is based on directives from the Centers for Disease Control, the New York State Education Department, and the Otsego County Department of Public Health. This plan is subject to change as we monitor local transmission rates, positivity rates, and new or additional guidance that may be released. The plan is premised on two overriding goals; first, we are committed to a return to full-time in-person instruction and second, we must do it as safely as possible. This plan will help us do both.

Mode of Instruction: Instruction for the 2021-2022 will be full-time and in person when possible. If directed by state or county authorities to close to in-person instruction, we are ready to move to a remote instruction model on short notice.

Remote Learning will NOT be an option for students unless there is a medically-documented condition which would prevent a return to full-time in-person instruction. Remote learning will require, in addition to medical documentation and district approval, a one-year commitment to that mode of instruction. Instruction will be provided by a third-party organization, likely through ONC BOCES. Fully-remote students will NOT have the opportunity for extracurricular activities, including interscholastic athletics.

More information on remote learning is available by contacting Sheila Nolan at 607-988-5038 or by email at snolan@unatego.stier.org.

Face Coverings: At this time, based on CDC, NYSED, and County DPH guidance, all persons, regardless of vaccination status, will be required to wear an approved face covering at all times when in a school building, except when on authorized mask breaks or when eating or drinking. Masks will NOT be required when outdoors.

Social Distancing: Based on recommendations from the CDC, three feet of distance shall be maintained between students and staff whenever practical, except in Physical Education classes, Band, or Chorus, or when at lunch, where six feet of distance shall be maintained.

Local Monitoring of COVID-19: The District will continue to collaborate with the Otsego County Department of Public Health on a regular basis as outlined in the District Plan for Reopening Schools. We will also continue to monitor the local transmission and positivity rates in accordance with the CDC and NYSED recommendations.

Transportation: Based on the latest guidance from the CDC and NYS Education Department, we will follow the CDC recommendations for public mass transit. Students riding on school transportation will no longer require social distancing between students, but masks will continue to be required of ALL persons on buses, including students, staff, and drivers.

Health and Safety: All classrooms and common areas in school buildings will be disinfected at least once daily. High touch surfaces will be cleaned several times per day. Hand washing, social distancing, and proper respiratory hygiene will be practiced and encouraged for all stakeholders.

Screening: Daily screening for all students, staff, and visitors to the school building will no longer be required, as per the NYSED memo. Any student or staff member experiencing COVID-like symptoms

should remain at home until cleared by the school, County Department of Public Health, or a licensed health care provider. Parents no longer need to complete a daily screening form. Students and staff who become ill with COVID-19 like symptoms during the school day will go to the school nurse for evaluation.

Contact Tracing, Quarantine, and Isolation: We will continue to cooperate and collaborate with the Otsego County DPH in contact tracing. Students and staff who are fully vaccinated and exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual will NOT need to quarantine as long as they remain asymptomatic. Unvaccinated individuals MUST quarantine as outline in the update School Reopening Plan and may NOT return to school or work until cleared by the NYS Department of Health or Otsego County DPH.

All individuals who become ill with COVID-like symptoms while in a school building will be held in an isolation room until they can safely leave the building.

Ventilation: All classrooms and most common areas will make use of a commercial quality HEPA air filtration system which effectively traps virus particles and is 99.9% effective in this regard. Windows should be open in classrooms and on school transportation, to promote better ventilation.

Child Nutrition: Free breakfast and lunch will be provided for ALL students on a schedule designated by the appropriate building principal. All efforts will be made to maintain six feet of social distance during meal times. Cafeterias and other common areas will be used for meals in order to maintain appropriate distance.

Schedules: Children will attend their appropriate building full-time in-person on days when school is in session, unless circumstances necessitate a shift to fully remote or hybrid instruction. All three buildings (Elementary, Middle, and High) will start instruction at 8:00 am. The Middle and High School will dismiss students at 2:45 PM and Elementary at 2:50.

All content areas, including PE, Music, Band, and Chorus will be included in the schedule for in-person instruction. For PE, Band, and Chorus, every effort will be made to maintain six feet of social distancing.

Interscholastic Athletics: At this time interscholastic athletics will be offered at all levels. Indoor higher risk sports will follow indoor masking rules/guidance, i.e. masks worn at all times in school buildings. This will apply to athletes, coaches, and spectators. Masks for outdoor sports are optional for athletes but strongly encouraged for coaches and spectators. Social distancing should be practiced both indoors and out.

Visitors: Schools serve an important function as centers for their communities, and we will do our best to accommodate requests for both school groups and outside organizations to be allowed use of school facilities in a safe manner. Visitors to Unatego buildings will be expected to comply with COVID-19 protocols in place at the time of their visit.