

Valley Central School District



2021 -2022
Back To School Plan

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Communication/Family and Community Engagement.....	4
Health and Safety.....	5
Facilities.....	16
Child Nutrition.....	18
Transportation.....	19
Social-Emotional Well-Being.....	20
School Schedules.....	22
Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism.....	22
Technology and Connectivity.....	23
Teaching and Learning.....	24
Career and Technical Education (CTE).....	25
Athletics	25
ExtracurricularActivities.....	25
Special Education.....	25
Staffing.....	27
Key References.....	28

Introduction

At Valley Central our primary commitment is to the students and families we serve. Our priority is providing a robust education while keeping students, staff and families safe and healthy. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has been emphatic in stating that children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), remote learning highlighted inequities in education, was detrimental to the educational attainment of students of all ages and exacerbated the mental health crisis among children and adolescents. Therefore, returning to full-time in-person learning is a priority for the Valley Central School District.

Valley Central will return to 100% in-person learning in September 2021. Our Back to School 21-22 plan will define clear guidance for the operation of our six schools and ALC. Our plan will align with the regulations developed in collaboration with the CDC, NYSDOH, the NYS Education Department and the American Academy of Pediatrics. The State Education Department has advised that at this time school districts use [the CDC's Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools and the American Academy of Pediatrics' COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools](#) as resources for opening schools in September. As suggested by the CDC, Valley Central will monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide our decisions on the level of layered prevention and strategies. [Percentage Positive Results by County Dashboard | New York Forward/ Vaccine Demographic Data | COVID-19 Vaccine](#)

Our plan retains a strong focus on academic instruction to enhance student performance and address learning loss, as well as an emphasis on the social-emotional needs of our students, which is a priority Marianne Serratore, Assistant Superintendent, (marianne.serratore@vcsdny.org) will continue to serve as the District's COVID-19 Coordinator. She will serve as a central contact for schools and stakeholders, families, staff and other school community members and will ensure the District is in compliance and following the best practices per state and federal guidelines. Of course, as with every plan being developed throughout New York State, this document is fluid and will change as necessary based on guidance from the state, CDC, and NYSED and in consideration of our families and our staff. This plan includes procedures that will be followed in the following schools:

Berea Elementary School

<https://www.vcsd.k12.ny.us/berea-elementary/>

946 State Route 17K, Montgomery, NY 12549

Phone: (845) 457-2400 ext. 11510

John Solimando, Principal

john.solimando@vcsdny.org

East Coldenham Elementary School

<https://www.vcsd.k12.ny.us/east-coldenham-elementary/>

286 State Route 17K, Newburgh, NY 12550

Phone: (845) 457-2400 ext. 12510

Dan McDonald, Principal

daniel.mcdonald@vcsdny.org

Montgomery Elementary School

<https://www.vcsd.k12.ny.us/montgomery-elementary/>

141 Union Street, Montgomery, NY 12549

Phone: (845) 457-2400 ext. 14510

Matthew Canino, Principal

matthew.canino@vcsdny.org

Walden Elementary School

<https://www.vcsd.k12.ny.us/walden-elementary/>

75 Orchard Street, Walden, NY 12549

Phone: (845) 457-2400 ext. 15510

Gregory Heidemann, Principal

gregory.heidemann@vcsdny.org

ALC at Maybrook

<https://www.vcsd.k12.ny.us/alc-at-maybrook/>

120 Broadway, Maybrook, NY 12543

Phone: (845) 457-2400 ext. 18138

Georgia Patchen, Administrator

georgia.patchen@vcsdny.org

Valley Central Middle School

<https://www.vcsd.k12.ny.us/vc-middle-school/>

1189 State Route 17K, Montgomery, NY 12549

Phone: (845) 457-2400 ext. 16510

Jayme Ginda-Baxter, Principal
jayme.baxter@vcsdny.org

Valley Central High School

<https://www.vcsd.k12.ny.us/vc-high-school/>

175 State Route 17K, Montgomery, NY 12549

Phone: (845) 457-2400 ext. 17511

Russell Burns, Co Principal, russell.burns@vcsdny.org

Michael Conklin, Co Principal, michael.conklin@vcsdny.org

Communication/Family and Community Engagement

The District remains committed to communicating all elements of our 21-22 Back to School plan to students, parents and guardians, staff and visitors. The plan is available to all stakeholders via the District website and will be updated throughout the school year, as necessary, to respond to local circumstances.

All necessary information will be communicated to District staff, students, parents/guardians, visitors, education partners and vendors via our existing communication modes, which include the District website, Facebook and School Messenger.

Valley Central's Communication Goals:

- To provide regular updates about health and safety, scheduling, and all other information faculty, staff and families should be aware of.
- To provide information to families through a wide array of platforms including email, telephone calls, text messaging, social media and website postings.
- To provide information on how families can access technology and receive technical support to assist with utilization and maintenance of equipment.

Clear messaging will be prepared, in multiple languages as needed, and consistently communicated throughout the year. Minimum monthly communication will provide information on the following topics:

- Who to contact with questions, concerns or suggestions.
- The facts as we currently know them (NYSDOH, CDC).
- The importance of social distancing, monitoring symptoms of COVID-19 and when to stay home.
- Set protocols for entrance (screening) and the review process for staff calling in sick. Constant reminders for staff to stay home if they feel sick.

- Encourage and implement social distancing in bathrooms, break rooms, hallways, etc. Installing social distancing markers on the floors, etc.
- Practice proper hand hygiene. Staff and students are allowed to use hand sanitizer, but hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is still more effective. Hand sanitizer works best on clean hands.
- Encourage and practice proper respiratory etiquette (i.e., coughing or sneezing into your elbow if a tissue is not available).
- Encouraging personal responsibility for yourself and your work area. Educating the school community on district policies/procedures, including how to properly wear and dispose of a face mask/respirator.

Health and Safety

Connie Griffin (constance.griffin@vcsdny.org) is our District Nurse Coordinator and oversees the health and safety aspects of our 21-22 Back to School Plan. Collaboration with school nurses is essential and Valley Central will involve school health services staff and consider collaborative strategies that address needed health services for our students.

The CDC has recommended the following 8 prevention strategies, which the Valley Central School District will adhere to:

- ★ *Promoting Vaccination*
- ★ *Consistent and Correct Mask Use for Unvaccinated Individuals*
- ★ *Physical Distancing to the Best of our Ability*
- ★ *Screening*
- ★ *Improving Ventilation*
- ★ *Encouraging Hand Washing and Respiratory Etiquette*
- ★ *Reminding students and staff to stay home when sick and to get tested.*
- ★ *Continuation of Contact Tracing and Quarantine when Necessary*
- ★ *Continuation of High Standards of Cleaning and Disinfection*

1. Promoting Vaccination

- Valley Central will promote vaccination among teachers, staff, families and eligible students by providing information about COVID-19 vaccinations and establishing supportive policies and practices that make being vaccinated as easy and convenient as possible.

2. Consistent and Correct Mask Use for All Individuals

- As recommended by the CDC all Valley Central teachers, staff, students and visitors will wear masks regardless of vaccination status.
- Everyone must wear a mask while on a school bus, regardless of vaccination status.

- Masks do not need to be worn outdoors.
- Each classroom, main office, and health office will have a supply of masks as needed.
- Masks can be manufactured or homemade.
- All nurses will have surgical masks and medical grade fitted N95 masks available for when they encounter a sick student or staff that are showing signs and symptoms of COVID-19. In addition, they will have face shields, gloves, and a gown to protect themselves and the students.
- Fact sheets on proper usage and cleansing of masks will be posted on the District website, in health offices and throughout each building. Cleansing of cloth masks should be done daily. Surgical masks should be discarded daily. If the mask is soiled, wet, or torn, it will be changed.
- Face shields and/ or other accommodations, including frequent mask breaks and social distancing, will be considered for those who **cannot medically tolerate** a face covering.

3. Physical Distancing to the Best of our Ability

- The recommendation is to maintain at least 3 feet of distance between **students** within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing.
- Cohorting will be utilized as much as possible.
- For lunches, Valley Central will maximize physical distancing as much as possible when moving through the food service line and while eating (especially indoors). Valley Central will use additional space as we are able to help facilitate distancing.

4. Screening and Testing

- When community transmission is at moderate, substantial, or high levels, Valley Central will follow the CDC, NYSDOH, and local health departments' recommendations for screening and testing in schools if required.

5. Ventilation

- Valley Central is aware that improving ventilation is an important COVID 19 prevention strategy. We will bring fresh outdoor air into the buildings to help keep virus particles from concentrating inside.
- Multiple inside doors and windows will be kept open as much as possible.
- Child-safe fans will be used to increase the effectiveness of open windows.
- Windows on buses will be cracked to improve air circulation.

6. Hand Washing / Hand Sanitizing

- All entrance areas will have hand sanitizer available to accommodate any staff, visitors, and/ or students as they enter the buildings.
- All nurses' offices will have sinks for hand washing with soap and water and hand sanitizer.
- Students will be given time to use the bathroom and hand wash/hand sanitize throughout the day, in particular when coming to school, before lunch, after lunch, and at the end of day at a minimum.
- All teachers and staff are recommended to use hand washing or use hand sanitizer throughout the day
- Hand washing with soap and water is still the gold standard for prevention of disease. Hand washing should be done with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Any hand sanitizer used in Valley Central Schools will have a minimum of 60% alcohol. When using hand sanitizer, hands should be rubbed together with sanitizer until completely dry. Hand sanitizer will be in areas where students may use it under supervision.
- Students and staff must practice good hand hygiene to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Schools will plan time in the school day schedule to allow for hand hygiene. To ensure all faculty, staff, and students comply with daily screening requirements, Valley Central will do the following:

★ Hand hygiene includes:

- Signage encouraging hand washing and correct techniques; Traditional hand washing (with soap and warm water, lathering for a minimum of 20 seconds), which is the preferred method. This can be accomplished by singing or humming the happy birthday song twice;
- Adequate facilities and supplies for hand washing including soap and water;
- Use of paper towels or touch-free paper towel dispensers where feasible (hand dryers are not recommended as they can aerosolize germs);
- Use of no-touch/foot pedal trash can where feasible;
- Extra time in the schedule to encourage frequent hand washing/sanitizing

★ Students and staff should wash/sanitize hands as follows:

- Upon entering the building and classrooms;
- After sharing objects or surfaces;
- Before and after snacks and lunch;
- After using the bathroom;
- After helping a student with toileting;
- After sneezing, wiping, or blowing nose or coughing into hands;
- Anytime hands are visibly soiled;
- When handwashing is not available use a hand sanitizer

★ Hand Sanitizer - At times when hand washing is not available, students and staff may use a hand sanitizer containing a minimum of 60% alcohol. It should be noted the sanitizers are flammable and students must be monitored and supervised when using these. Using hand sanitizers will include:

- Signage placed near sanitizer dispensers indicating soiled hands should be washed with soap and water;
- Placement of sanitizer dispensers located near entrances and throughout common areas.

7. *Reminding students and staff to stay home when sick and to be tested.*

- Staff will be told to stay home if they are sick. If they have a fever or have signs and symptoms of COVID-19, they will contact their health care provider.
- Parents will be told to keep ill students home.
- Any student or staff with a temperature of 100 or above will be told to stay home.
- People with a fever will be told to stay home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicines, such as acetaminophen.

8. *Continuation of Contact Tracing and Quarantine when Necessary*

- The Orange County Health Department will provide guidance on who is to quarantine or isolate.
- QUARANTINE keeps an unvaccinated individual who was in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 away from others. If you had close contact with a person who has COVID-19:
 - Stay home until 14 days after your last contact.
 - Check your temperature twice a day and watch for symptoms of COVID- 19.
 - If possible, stay away from people who are at higher-risk for getting very sick from COVID-19 and who are unvaccinated.

- ISOLATION keeps someone who is sick or tested positive for COVID-19 without symptoms away from others, even in their own home.
- Health office staff will communicate with the Orange County Department of Health on positive cases of COVID-19 and will assist in tracing for possible quarantine orders for students or staff that were in contact with a positive COVID-19 person.
- The communication person for the Orange County Department of Health is Heather Boss, RN, Director of Patient Services. Phone number is 845-360-6600
- Fully vaccinated people who have a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID -19 do not need to be tested or be quarantined, as long as they are not exhibiting symptoms.

9. Continuation of High Standards of Cleaning and Disinfection

- All nurses' offices will be cleaned and disinfected regularly with attention to the high traffic areas, including doorknobs and handles, by the custodial staff. In addition, nurses will be supplied with an approved disinfectant that they can use between each student visit.
- All classrooms and buildings at large will be cleaned in accordance with NYS Guidelines.
- All high traffic areas will be cleaned and disinfected regularly by the custodial staff.

Other COVID 19 Health Related Protocol

Sneeze Guards

- Sneeze guards will be used at desk locations in the health office to protect from germs and bacteria.

Signage used to notify visitors and staff at entrance

- Signs will be posted that states that all teachers, staff, students and visitors must wear masks regardless of vaccination status
- Signs will be posted to encourage best practice use of masks, socially distancing, stay at home if you are sick, stopping the spread of germs, and hand washing, to be posted around each school.
- We will use standardized posters created by CDC, NYSDOH, or NYSED for a consistent message.

Glove Use

- Gloves will be used by health office staff for all physical contact with students and staff and for all treatments and procedures. Hands will be washed and gloves changed between students and staff.
- Glove usage is only necessary for staff, other than the nurses, when they are cleaning off an area for usage, cleaning equipment after use, and in food service.
- For routine daily work, gloves are not recommended for use.
- Hand washing is the best defense against exposure, and the use of gloves requires hand washing before and after the use of gloves.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Gloves, face coverings, masks, face shields, safety goggles, N95 Respirators and gowns will be available in every health office and used per CDC, NYSDOH, and SED guidelines.
- All nurses will have proper fit tested N95 masks. Fit testing will be done by Orange Ulster BOCES Risk Management Department.
- If N95 masks are unavailable, a surgical mask and face shield will be worn when needed.
- PPE will be disposed of properly, according to CDC, NYSDOH, and OSHA guidelines.
- Information on use and disposal of PPE will be available to all staff.

Caring for non-sick students or non-COVID-19 suspected illnesses

- Staff will be trained on signs and symptoms of illness and send any students with signs of illness or complaints of illness to the school nurse. Symptoms to be observed, per guidance from the CDC and NYSED, are flushed cheeks, rapid or difficulty breathing without recent physical activity, fatigue and/ or irritability, and frequent use of the bathroom.
- Students that require treatment for injury or chronic conditions will be assessed and treated in a separate location from sick students.
- Students that have non-COVID-19 symptoms of illness may be treated in the same area as students receiving treatment or care.
- Students requiring a nebulizer treatment will be treated in a separate room with nursing personnel wearing PPE. Health care providers and parents will be contacted by the school nurse on whether or not a student may use a prescribed metered dose inhaler with spacer in lieu of a nebulizer treatment.
- Diagnostic equipment will be cleansed between students and if available, disposable equipment will be used.
- Areas will be disinfected after each student and staff by custodial staff or health office staff wearing appropriate PPE.
- Confidentiality will be maintained.

Caring for students / staff with symptoms of COVID-19

- Students or staff exhibiting signs of illness or signs of COVID-19 will immediately notify the school nurse and be sent to the school health office for assessment by the Registered Nurse.
- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19, as per the CDC, will be shared with all staff and updated if needed.
- Health office staff will wear appropriate PPE when assessing and caring for students/ staff of suspected COVID-19.
- If staff or students show signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and there is no other explanation for their illness, they will be isolated in a supervised separate area and sent home.
- Health office staff supervising the isolation room will have appropriate PPE as per CDC, NYSDOH, and NYSED.
- The parent/ guardian will be called to pick up the student with suspected symptoms of COVID-19. When they arrive at the school, they will call the health office and the ill student will be brought out to the parent/ guardian.
- The parent/ guardian will be instructed to call their health care provider, local clinic, or urgent care center.
- If any student or staff member exhibits emergency warning signs such as trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to arouse, or bluish lips or face, 911 will be called and the operator will be informed that the person may have COVID-19.
- The isolation room and any other areas that were used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 will be cleaned and disinfected before it can be reopened for use.
- School staff will be aware of the symptoms of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) associated with COVID-19, which is a serious condition associated with COVID-19 in children and youth. Parents/ guardians will be told to look for symptoms of MIS-C and they will be told to immediately follow-up with their healthcare provider should any of the symptoms be present:
 - Fever, abdominal pain, diarrhea, neck pain, rash, bloodshot eyes
abdominal pain, feeling extra tired
- 911 will be called if any student exhibits signs and symptoms of MIS-C.
- Confidentiality will be maintained.

Returning to school after illness

- CDC guidance will be followed for allowing a student or staff member to return to school after exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
- **If a person is not diagnosed by a healthcare provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) with COVID-19 they can return to school:**
 - Once there is no fever, without the use of fever reducing medicines, and they have felt well for 24 hours;
 - If they have been diagnosed with another condition or have a healthcare provider written note stating they are clear to return to school.
- **If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider based on a test, or their symptoms, or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, they should not be at school and should stay at home until:**
 - It has been at least ten days since the individual first had symptoms;
 - It has been at least three days 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.

Visitors and Facility Entry

To ensure all staff, and students comply with building entry and exit procedures, Valley Central will do the following:

- Limit nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations during the school day.
 - All visitors must be wearing proper face covering prior to entering any building and it must be worn at all times. All visitors must check in at the greeter's desk for temperature screening and to fill out the COVID-19 Check-In Health Screening. Visitors will have restricted access to the building.
- Where feasible, entry and egress in and out of all buildings will be limited to a single location, except for the arrival and dismissal of students. If applicable, a single point entry and single point egress will be identified to minimize cross traffic. All other visitors entering the buildings will occur through the main entrance to a check-in point at the greeter station.
- A face covering must be worn by all individuals, students, staff, and visitors upon entry to Valley Central property.
- All individuals, students, staff, and visitors must wear a face covering.
- Proper face covering includes, but is not limited to, a surgical mask, cloth mask, balaclava or bandana and must completely cover the individual's mouth and nose.
- A plastic face shield alone is not an acceptable face covering.

- All individuals may choose to utilize their own face covering, however face coverings can and will be provided by Valley Central.

Daily Health Screening

Parents, caregivers, or guardians will be strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs and symptoms of infectious illness every day through home-based symptom screening. Students who are sick or exhibit symptoms of any illness should not attend school in-person and their health care provider should be contacted.

Staff will take their temperature and monitor themselves for any signs and symptoms of illness daily. Any staff member who has any signs of illness will notify their administrator and stay home. Staff members who have not self-screened prior to coming into the building will immediately report to the health office for screening before starting their workday.

Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 may include but are not limited to

- Fever or chills (100.0 or above)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Children and adolescents with the virus that causes COVID-19 may experience any, all, or none of these symptoms.

Vendor Practices

- All vendors must be wearing proper face covering prior to entering any building and it must be worn at all times.
- Vendors will access the entry designated by administration and have restricted access to the building. No vendor should access the building unless it is necessary for the completion of his or her job.

Training

Valley Central will train all personnel on new protocols and frequently communicate safety guidelines. Training material is designed to be easy to understand and available in the appropriate language and literacy level for all workers.

Valley Central will ensure all students are taught or trained how to follow new COVID- 19 protocols safely and correctly, including but not limited to hand hygiene, proper face covering wearing, social distancing, and respiratory hygiene. Additional training will be provided in:

- Prevention of the spread of disease by staying home when they are sick.
 - Proper respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
 - Avoiding the use of communal objects. If communal objects must be used, provide information on proper disinfection procedures between uses. Examples of communal objects include, but are not limited to, other workers' phones, desks, offices, computers or other devices, other work tools and equipment.
 - Provide employees and students with up-to-date education and training on COVID-19.
 - Risk factors and protective behaviors (i.e., cough etiquette and care of PPE).
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

Training for Screeners

Valley Central will identify individuals familiar with CDC, OSHA protocols, and DOH guidelines in each building who will be a trained screener. Screeners will wear appropriate employer-provided PPE.

Training topics for all staff and substitutes

- Proper hand washing: proper hand hygiene. Promote frequent and thorough hand washing by providing employees, the school community, and visitors with a place to wash their hands. If soap and running water are not immediately available, provide alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% alcohol. Provide training on proper handwashing and hand sanitizer use <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>
 - [Hand washing video](#)
- Proper cough and sneeze etiquette
- Social distancing
 - Provide training for faculty/staff on how to address close contact interactions with students as part of everyday job tasks.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

- Operating procedures (various by building)
 - Entrance into the building
 - Cleaning procedure
 - Sick child pick up
 - Staff who are sick or suspected to be sick <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>
- Proper cleaning techniques
 - Cleaning and disinfecting <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html>
- Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces,
 - Businesses, Schools, and Homes

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/Reopening_America_Guidance.pdf

- Hazard Communication – Right-To-Know
 - Proper use of chemicals and Safety Data sheets
 - ❖ <https://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/>
 - No chemicals from home
 - Transfer of hand sanitizer in smaller containers
 - List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)
 - ❖ <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>
- Exposure Control Plan – with a focus on Pandemic/COVID-19
- Personal Protective Equipment - PPE
 - Proper type, use, and size
 - Cleaning and sanitizing of the face covering (if applicable)
 - Provide training for staff and students on wearing, putting on, removing and discarding PPE, including in the context of their current and potential duties
 - ❖ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- Use of face coverings (donning/doffing) (cloth vs. surgical)
 - ❖ [Face coverings don/doff video](#)

❖ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQxOc13DxvQ>

- Respirator Protection (N95 - required for identified employees per NYS)
 - Inclusive into your existing Respirator Protection Program or can be a separate Respirator Protection Program for medical staff only
 - Training provided for identified personnel only
- <https://oshareview.com/2020/04/osha-requirements-for-occupational-use-of-n95-respirators-in-healthcare/>

Signs and Messages

Signs will be posted in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) in various languages that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to effectively stop the spread of germs by properly washing hands and properly wearing a face covering.

When Students Eat in Classrooms

- We will train all staff on food allergies, including signs and symptoms of allergic reactions.

Facilities

Ryan Schmidt (ryan.schmidt@vcsdny.org) is our Director of Facilities and oversees the facilities operations aspects of our Reopening Plan. In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection in the District, facilities operations will be geared toward meeting social distancing requirements and cleaning frequently touched spaces regularly.

Classrooms, Cafeterias and Other Instructional Spaces

- Valley Central will ensure that all social distancing of 3 feet is possible to the best of our ability in all spaces throughout the buildings.
- Social distancing and face coverings will be required.

Nurse Stations

- All students and staff are required to wear appropriate face coverings.
- N95 Respirator use for nurses should be limited to situations of suspected COVID-19
- Nurses must receive proper training and fitment of N95 Respirators prior to use.
- Where applicable, nurse stations have been reconfigured to:
 - Maintain social distancing of no less than 6ft.
 - Create “sick” and “well” zones.
- Students that receive daily medication should be treated separately from students presenting with symptoms of illness.

- Nebulizer treatments should be conducted in a separate isolated space with adequate fresh air circulation.
- Physical separation will be achieved by utilizing:
 - Individual exam rooms
 - Polycarbonate barriers
 - Retractable dividing curtain walls.
 - Isolation Room/s
- Individuals presenting with symptoms representative of COVID-19 will be immediately isolated to reduce risk of transmission.
- A separate room will be utilized where applicable.
- Reference the Isolation Room/s section for additional information.

Isolation Rooms

- Where applicable, separate, independent rooms with a door in close proximity to the exterior will be utilized for quarantining individuals who present with symptoms representative of COVID-19.
- Where excess space is not available, nurse's stations will be equipped with dividing curtains allowing for both a physical divide and at minimum six feet of separation.
- These rooms have been identified in each building.

Greeter Stations

- Greeter stations will remain at all entrances of each building.
- Greeter stations will serve as the primary location for accounting for all individuals entering and exiting the building.
- Polycarbonate barriers will be installed to protect all individuals.
- Frequently touched materials have been removed.

Computer Labs

- Cleaning and disinfection of computer labs and keyboards will be frequent.
- Keyboards will be wiped and disinfected before and after each use.
- Keyboard covers may be utilized to aid in the cleaning and disinfection process.
- Students will be instructed to wash/sanitize hands prior to and after touching the keyboards along with other frequently touched surfaces.

Library Spaces

- All soft covered surfaces that cannot be properly cleaned and disinfected have been removed.
 - Bean bag chairs
 - Upholstered couches or chairs
 - Area rugs

Water Fountains

As required by New York State Code, a potable water supply will be provided per 150 occupants, but not less than 1 source per floor.

- Additional bottle filler stations will be installed where necessary.
- These appliances will be routinely cleaned and disinfected as described in the Cleaning and Disinfection Section.

Floor Demarcations

- All corridor floors and stair treads have been fitted with markings to indicate directional traffic flow and social distancing.
- Corridor doors will all be affixed open using electromagnetic hold-open devices to minimize the need to touch doors.

Child Nutrition

Eleanore Mills (eleanore.mills@vcsdny.org) is our School Lunch Manager and oversees all aspects of child nutrition in our Reopening Plan. All schools in Valley Central will follow SFA policies when communicating about school meal services, eligibility, options and changes in operations. All communications will be provided through a variety of communication methods including website, social media, emails, robo calls, newsletters, and regular mail and translated into the languages spoken by families.

Breakfast and lunch will be provided at no cost to all students. Breakfast will be grab and go in all buildings. There will be ala carte items available at cost.

Meals Onsite

For students onsite, meals will be provided while maintaining appropriate social distancing between students. Students do not need to wear face coverings when seated and eating as long as they are appropriately socially distanced.

The District will ensure social distancing between individuals while eating in the school cafeteria to the best of our ability. If not feasible, meals may be served in alternate areas or in staggered meal periods to ensure social distancing and proper cleaning and disinfection between students.

The sharing of food and beverages (e.g., buffet style meals, snacks) is prohibited. Store bought food in its original packaging will be allowed for social events.

Transportation

Brad Conklin (brad.conklin@vcsdny.org) is our Business Official and oversees the transportation aspects of our Back to School Plan. First Student is Valley Central's transportation services contractor. Valley Central and First Student will conduct transportation activities that are consistent with state-issued public transit guidance and NYSED School guidelines.

Students and First Student staff must wear acceptable face coverings at all times on school buses and should maintain appropriate social distancing. Parents or Guardians of students that are unable to wear masks must contact Connie Griffin; the District's Nurse Coordinator, prior to boarding a school bus and provide the appropriate documentation.

Parents and legal guardians are encouraged to transport students to school to reduce density on buses

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Buses will be disinfected twice a day

Bus protocols for a reported case of COVID-19 on a school bus

Brad Conklin will be notified. The COVID 19 Coordinator will then notify building administration and a plan will be implemented to contact parents of students on that bus.

Students on Transportation

- As was outlined in the Health and Safety section of this guidance, all parents/guardians will be required to ensure their child/children are not experiencing any signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and do not have a fever of 100 degrees or more prior to them boarding their method of transportation to school;
- Students must wear a mask on a school bus if they are physically able. Students who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering, including students where

such covering would impair their physical health or mental health are not subject to the required use of a face covering;

- Students who do not have a mask cannot be denied transportation and will be provided one by the bus driver

Required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – First Student

- Disposable gloves
- Face Covering/Mask
- Face Shield (if applicable)

Routing

- Student movement between bus routes will be limited.

Social Emotional Well-Being

Georgia Patchen (georgia.patchen@vcsdny.org) is our Director of Pupil Services and Special Programs and oversees the social and emotional aspects of our Back to School Plan. Valley Central is committed to prioritizing social emotional well-being - not at the expense of academics, but in order to create the mental, social and emotional space to access rigorous academic content with confidence. School Psychologists, Student Assistance Counselors and additional mental health professionals, provide student, family and staff support.

Student Supports

- The District is moving forward with the implementation of the Yale RULER approach to Social Emotional Learning. The District currently utilizes School Psychologists and Student Assistance Counselors to provide student support. To address the growing mental health needs of our students, the District will add four positions (high school, middle school, elementary schools, attendance). In addition to providing mental health support, these professionals will assist with attendance concerns, Yale RULER implementation and other SEL programming.
- Assist with facilitation of classroom guidance on social distance practices in school.
- Check in with emotionally fragile students as they return to school to assess level of functioning. The Valley Central School District will provide additional mental health support
- Home visits will be conducted as a means to check and connect with students and families. Staff will follow all guidance for social distancing and wearing of protective gear such as masks.

- Provide individual counseling to students who express fears, loss, anxiety and/or signs of depression by providing age-appropriate stress management and coping strategies. FOR SIGNS OF DEPRESSION, SUICIDAL THOUGHTS AND/OR PRESENTING AS DANGER TO OTHERS, PLEASE CONDUCT RISK ASSESSMENT AND FOLLOW NORMAL SCHOOL YEAR PROTOCOLS.
- Refer students to outside counseling as needed. If a student attends private outpatient counseling, obtain consent to coordinate services with outpatient providers to support students and their families.
- For students suffering from more severe anxieties, a plan may need to be developed with the families to have the student return to the building. This may involve being met by a mental health professional at the start of the day, check-in with mental health staff throughout the school day as well as a partial school day with clear steps as to when a full day of schooling will resume for the student.
- Provision of student engagement interventions, after school social emotional groups, and mental health programming through the physical education department.
- Identify student needs for food and shelter. Provide assistance through community resources and through Valley Central Programs (Backpack Snack Attack, Food Pantry). These services are to be coordinated with the Attendance/Homeless Liaison.
- As many students may be returning to in-person learning for the first time in over a year, it is important to begin the year with team building activities to create an environment of trust, safety and interpersonal relationships. Each building will be tasked to create/conduct activities. These activities will assist in returning to the daily structure of school and forming interpersonal relationships.

Family Supports

The District will utilize School Psychologists, Student Assistance Counselors and other mental health professionals to meet the growing needs of our students and their families. They will meet these needs by:

- Provide information to families on District and Building Reopening Plans.
- Assist families with fears about allowing their children to return to school. Share resources on signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression. Assist with referrals to community agencies as needed. The school and families may develop plans to assist with reentry to the building.
- Make contact with identified families that require assistance with obtaining outpatient appointments for their children, food, shelter and clothing.
- Conduct home visits following social distance guidelines and wearing protective gear such as masks.

Staff Supports

Valley Central school psychologists, student assistance counselors and mental health professionals will:

- Assist the staff implementation of the Yale RULER approach.
- Assist with facilitation of professional development on signs and symptoms of anxiety, depression, and lack of student motivation.
- Assist with supporting readjustment period for new school schedule and social distance guidelines. Provide assistance and guidance with classroom behaviors.
- Visit classrooms to observe signs of stress and anxiety in the adults. Discuss concerns with administration. ADMINISTRATION SHOULD CONTACT HUMAN RESOURCES FOR REFERRAL TO EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AS NEEDED.

Valley Central employees have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which offers many free services including face-to-face and virtual counseling. Information about all social-emotional supports will be made widely available to the Valley Central community through our website. We are committed to developing/making accessible family/caregiver-appropriate social and emotional learning (SEL) content to be used during all phases of our re-entry.

School Schedules

Each building will provide families with schedules specific to their school. Information pertaining to schedules can be found in the student handbooks, as well as on the [Valley Central School District Website](#). Secondary schools post individual schedules on [Parent/Student Portal](#).

Calendar

The Valley Central 2021-2022 [Calendar](#) is located on our website.

Attendance, Attendance Reporting and Chronic Absenteeism

The District will continue to follow its established attendance policies. All schools will monitor daily attendance and/or required daily scheduled student contact and engagement regardless of the format of instruction being used throughout the school year. Attendance policies and procedures will be communicated with families and students prior to the start of the school year, or if the instructional model changes during the year, and will be recorded daily in SchoolTool. Reports will be generated to identify students who are absent and/or

chronically absent and contact will be made with their families to determine reasons for absence and needs or barriers the student may have to participate in school. The District will use multi-tiered strategies to proactively support attendance for all students, as well as differentiated strategies to identify and support those at higher risk for chronic absenteeism.

Valley Central is committed to collaborating with parents and guardians in addressing attendance issues and providing interventions to prevent chronic absenteeism. Valley Central has added a support person to address issues with attendance. An action plan is being created with a central emphasis on family engagement leading up to and through the start of school. With the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, plans will be in place for outreach to families of students who do not return.

Chronic absenteeism, which includes both excused and unexcused absences, is defined as missing 18+ days per school year. While we recognize that many factors will influence student attendance, it is the expectation that parents and guardians will keep the school informed of any circumstances impacting their child's ability to attend and/or participate in school, so that we may work together to develop solutions. It should be noted that the District is obligated to notify and collaborate with outside agencies when students are chronically absent.

Technology and Connectivity

Christopher Mohr (christopher.mohr@vcsdny.org) is our Director of Technology and oversees the technical aspects of our Reopening Plan.

Valley Central has been committed to ongoing planning and implementation of District technologies to ensure equitable access for staff and students. In the event that the District is forced to go to remote learning, the Valley Central Technology Department is fully prepared to ensure we are ready.

- Valley Central has increased its total internet bandwidth to continue to support the increased use of remote learning should the need arise. The team has initiated plans that are mindful of student home access to reliable internet and computers.
- Valley Central has purchased a sufficient number of new Chromebooks for students in order to support the remote learning if the need should arise.
- Valley Central has acquired a sufficient number of hotspots to assist families without internet access.
- Valley Central has procured, managed and/or maintained hardware, software, licenses, learning management systems, etc. to support and improve virtual instruction and student engagement.

- Valley Central will continue to identify professional learning needs for teachers and continue to support their development of skills and pedagogy in a virtual learning environment.
- Valley Central will maintain a “Helpdesk” system for parents/students/teachers to report technical issues that might be experienced during remote learning. Communicate protocols to these stakeholders to inform them in advance of how to gain assistance in such cases.
- The District will also schedule opportunities to connect with families to educate them on how to use the technologies and connect to the instructional activities.

Teaching and Learning

Marianne Serratore (marianne.serratore@vcsdny.org) is our Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. She, along with the building principals, oversees the teaching and learning aspects of our Back to School Plan.

- All classroom instruction for the 21-22 school year will be 100% in person unless mandated otherwise by the State.

Quarantined Students

If a student is quarantined due to COVID 19, he/she will be provided with **remote** instruction.

- This instruction will be a combination of asynchronous and synchronous instruction.
- When determining the correct combination of instruction it is always important to ask ourselves what is best for this student?
- Teachers will establish a Google Classroom for remote learning. All live instruction will be conducted through Google Meets and all instructions and digital learning material will be posted to the Google Classroom.
- All student will be provided with a district Chromebook.
- There should be regular streaming of lessons during the quarantine period to ensure the student stays connected and engaged. This applies to special areas, AIS and student support.
- Materials may also be sent home to the students.
- The District has created a list of approved programs and applications. In order to comply with State and Federal privacy regulations, teachers must not use technology that includes any student data (including login information) that has not been approved by the District.
- Teachers must use Class Link.

Sudden School Closures

In the event that the Valley Central School District is fully closed due to COVID -19, the District is prepared for 100% online instruction. Guidelines for online instruction will be provided if such as need arises.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

While planning for CTE instruction, whether in-person, remote or hybrid models, Valley Central has collaborated with Orange-Ulster BOCES to ensure high school instructional plans are aligned. OU BOCES has developed models that ensure NYS Learning Standards, applicable industry certification requirements; clinical and work-based learning hours have been met. In addition, their plans follow all NYSDOH health and safety guidelines and social distancing.

Universal Pre-K

Tammy Coleman (tammy.coleman@vcsdny.org) is the Director of Data/Testing and UPK and oversees our Universal Pre-K program. As a District that provides half-day and full-day UPK, we attest that we have measures in place to ensure the CBOs we contract with will follow health and safety guidelines outlined in the NYSED guidance and required by the NYSDOH. Valley Central will also ensure that the CBOs with full-day classes have provided a Continuity of Learning plan to the District.

Athletics

Rich Steger (richard.steger@vcsdny.org) is our Director of Physical Education and Health. He oversees our Reopening Plan concerning athletics and physical education. Our fall season begins on August 23rd. Valley Central Athletics will follow all CDC and NYSDOH guidelines. Masks will not be required for outdoor sports; however, they will be required for indoor sports. Spectators will be allowed as per the guidelines provided by the State.

Extracurricular Activities

All extracurricular activities will take place in person and follow all CDC and NYSDOH guidelines.

Special Education

Barbara Butler (barbara.butler@vcsdny.org) is our Director of Special Education and oversees all aspects of Special Education in our Reopening Plan. The Valley Central Reopening Plan provides a framework to ensure that all students with disabilities continue to have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living in the least restrictive environment (LRE)

Special education programs and services of Valley Central provide equity and access for students with disabilities to be involved in and to participate and progress in the general education curriculum with access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of students Valley Central will document the programs and services offered and provided to students with disabilities, as well as the communications with parents in their preferred language and mode of communication.

The District will ensure access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of students.

Valley Central is committed to providing meaningful parent engagement in the parent's preferred language or mode of communication regarding the provision of services to his/her child to meet the requirements of the IDEA. Further, we will maintain regular communication with the parents/guardians to ensure that they are engaged in their children's education during the reopening process. Parent counseling and training will continue monthly and will be conducted via Google Meets.

Valley Central will plan and support collaboration between the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) and Committee on Special Education (CSE) and program providers representing the variety of settings where students are served to ensure there is an understanding of the provision of services consistent with the recommendations on individualized education programs (IEPs), plans for monitoring and communicating student progress, and commitment to sharing resources.

Valley Central will maintain records to document the implementation of each IEP. The documentation will include, but will not be limited to progress notes, progress monitoring, formative assessment, standardized assessment, attendance records and the provision of any mandated compensatory services during the 21-22 school year.

All CSE and CPSE meetings will be held via Google Meets unless otherwise arranged.

Vulnerable Students with Special Needs

Some special needs students who are medically fragile may not be able to maintain social distancing, hand or respiratory hygiene, or wear a face covering or mask. It is important for parents/ guardians to work with their child's healthcare providers and the school nurse located at the student's school so that an informed decision can be made on how best to meet the child's needs at school while protecting their health and safety. As these students transition back to the school environment, our school health personnel will plan and coordinate with the following so that a healthy transition is made:

- teaching/related service staff
- special education administration
- building administration

Additional PPE for staff caring for such students will be provided on a case-by-case basis. Staffing assignments will be examined to provide the lowest teacher-to-student ratios possible.

Staffing

William Miller (william.miller@vcsdny.org) is our Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and oversees all aspects of staffing for our Back to School Plan

Teacher and Principal Evaluation System

All teachers and principals will continue to be evaluated pursuant to the District's approved APPR plan.

Certification, Incidental Teaching and Substitute Teaching

All teachers will hold valid and appropriate certificates for teaching assignment, except where otherwise allowable under the Commissioner's regulations (e.g., incidental teaching) or Education Law.

Student Teachers

Student teachers from NYSED registered college or university programs can serve under the supervision of fully certified teachers in Valley Central. Student teachers will follow all of the social distancing, mask wearing, health status reporting, and other COVID-19 procedures that the teachers follow. Student teachers will serve under the supervision of our full-time certified teachers only. At no time will a student teacher be used as a teacher of record.

Vulnerable Populations

The unknown vulnerabilities of our faculty and staff will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Accommodations, where appropriate, will be provided when and where needed.

Key References

- [AAP Guidance Related to Childcare During COVID-19](#)
- [AAP Guidance on Providing Pediatric Well-Care During COVID-19](#)
- [AAP Guidance on Face Masks](#)
- [AAP Guidance on Testing](#)
- [AAP Guidance on Use of Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [AAP Guidance on Caring for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [AAP Guidance on Supporting the Emotional and Behavioral Health Needs of Children, Adolescents and Families During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [AAP Guidance on Return to Sports](#)
- [List of latest AAP News articles on COVID-19](#)
- [Pediatrics COVID-19 Collection](#)
- [AAP COVID-19 Advocacy Resources \(Login required\)](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)
- [US Department of Education: COVID-19 Resources for Schools, Students, and Families](#)
- Information for Parents on HealthyChildren.org: [Returning to School During COVID-19](#)