



Spencer-Van Etten Central School District

Reopening Plan *Frequently Asked Questions*

Updated 4/28/2021

Please see below for answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) regarding plans to reopen our schools. Feel free to reach out by email at sveinfo@svecsd.org with any further questions you may have.

Our learning plans were created to be flexible and responsive. We will adapt throughout the year as necessary and communicate any changes with our stakeholders.

Communication: General Information

➤ **What is S-VE's approach to reopening?**

Due to the guidance from NYSED and NYSDOH, we established a Reopening Plan that allows families the opportunity to choose between two options to begin the 2020-2021 school year.

Two Options for Student Learning effective January 2021.

1. **Option 1: In-Person Learning**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday in-person learning; Wednesday will be distance learning

2. **Option 2: 100% Distance Learning**

Students will be distance learning Monday – Friday

We asked families to make their selection by Winter Break.

➤ **What is the criteria to return to 100% in-person learning?**

Some families have requested information regarding the district's potential return to 100% in-person learning. The district evaluated data at the end of September to see if we could still meet the mandates and allow all persons to return to 4 days a week. Unfortunately, at the same time, the COVID cases in our area began to escalate and the DOH indicated that it would not be a good time to implement the return to 100% in-person learning at that time. The district developed a committee to plan for students to return to daily instruction. We will continue to update our reopening plan as needed.

➤ **With the release of the new guidance on 4/9/2021, do parents still have a Distance Learning Option?**

The new guidance is designed to return all students back to in-person learning. Students that have documented medical concerns and can provide a medical note may remain as a distance learner. The district will work with all remaining distance learners to formulate a plan for their return.

➤ **What is the financial impact to the school district with not having 100% in school participation?**

Districts receive state and federal funding based on our enrollment; however, the distance learning plans count toward that funding.

Health and Safety

➤ **Will students be required to wear masks in school?**

Yes. Our policy is to follow the CDC recommendation for masks. 2-ply cloth face coverings that completely cover your nose and mouth and fit snugly but comfortably against the sides of your face without gaps will be worn at all times. Students may wear their own cloth mask. S-VE will also be providing each student with one cloth mask.

➤ **Will masks be required to be on while students are sitting at their desks?**

Masks must be worn at all times.

➤ **How can we ensure that students wear masks?**

Students may wear their own 2-ply cloth masks. S-VE will also provide one cloth mask to each student, upon availability. Students and staff will be frequently reminded not to touch their face coverings and to wash their hands frequently. Trainings will be provided to staff, students and families on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings. We will continue to stay current with the most recent guidance and let staff, students and families know of any updates.

- **How will school staff handle situations when students come close together or remove their masks?**
We will use such teachable moments to remind and retrain students on the current mandates. Insubordination will be handled according to the Code of Conduct.
- **How can physical distancing be maintained in bathrooms?**
We will train students in developmentally appropriate ways to stay socially distanced when in common spaces, including bathrooms. Bathrooms, as well as common spaces, will be monitored.
- **Will the district conduct health screenings of students?**
Regular health screenings are mandatory. It is strongly advised that this be done at home, before students report to school. Families of in-person learners are required to participate in the Cayuga Health Screening Program.
- **Will the district conduct daily health screenings of staff?**
Yes. S-VE employees will be required to submit a daily health questionnaire prior to entering the building. Employees are asked to record their temperature or provide any additional information beyond affirming or negating their status regarding testing, symptoms, exposures and travel.
- **Will staff be required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE)?**
Yes, as per the Governor's order, unless an individual is declared medically unable by our school physician.
- **Will personnel be trained to look for signs of illness in students and staff?**
Yes.
- **What if a student or employee develops symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 during the school day?**
Students or staff who show symptoms suggestive to COVID-19 during the school day will be evaluated by the school nurse and sent home immediately.
- **What if a student or employee tests positive for COVID-19?**
The Superintendent or designee shall immediately notify a local public health agency of any disease reportable under the public health law. The school nurse may make such evaluations of teachers and any other school employees, deemed necessary to protect the health of the students and staff.
- **What happens if there is a spike in COVID-19 cases in our community? Do you have plans in place for closure?**
Should we be forced to close, our learning plans should allow for a seamless transition to remote instruction.
- **How does traveling impact my child's learning?**
Please refer to the latest Department of Health guidance on travel advisory.
- **I have heard that parents will have to sign a paper stating that we cannot sue the district if our child contracts the virus. Is this true?**
No. We have heard that some businesses and schools outside of NYS have required such a waiver to be signed, but this is not the expectation for NYS at this time.
- **How will masks be sanitized since the kids are only receiving one mask? How will masks be kept from the kids mixing them up since they will all look the same?**
We are recommending that everyone have a minimum of two masks. Parents are responsible for cleaning their child's masks. We marked the inside of each mask to identify who it belongs to.
- **What are the steps for a child to return to school after an illness? Will they need to get tested for COVID-19?**
If test results are pending or the child does not have a release note from the doctor within 48 hours, all members of the household must quarantine and not return to school until the results are obtained and the student is cleared. If the choice is made to not see a doctor or get tested, the DOH will be notified, and the district must follow the guidance of the DOH.
- **What happens to the class/teachers if someone comes down with symptoms of COVID-19? If it's not certain that's what they have, does that class continue as normal while the person gets tested and waits for the results, or do they immediately quarantine until results come back?**
Only a positive COVID test initiates the contact tracing process, which the DOH will guide the district through.

- **If a child misplaces their mask while at school, do you give them another mask, or should parents send them with extras?**
If a child is without a mask, a disposable mask will be issued. The district will be providing one cloth mask per child and we encourage families to have more than one mask on hand per child.
- **What steps will be taken if a child all of a sudden says they are too hot and can't breathe with their mask on and they pull it down off their nose/mouth? Will they get in trouble or will staff be able to give them a mask break?**
If a child needs assistance, they should see a nurse.
- **Will my child be required to perform a COVID swab test to attend in-person learning?**
Testing of staff and students is mandatory should the district be placed in a Yellow, Orange or Red Zone. Families must provide parent permission for their child to be tested. The actual test performed will be contingent on test availability. More information will be provided should this happen.

Before and After Care

- **Will children be able to stay for afterschool programs?**
The PAVE program and after school activities and academic help with teacher permission are currently available.

Facilities

- **What are the district's cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing protocols?**
The S-VE School District will clean and disinfect its educational programs following CDC guidance.
- **When will deep cleaning take place?**
Cleaning/disinfecting will take place daily. Deep cleaning will take place in the evenings and on Wednesdays.
- **I don't feel a large amount of chemicals are needed to kill this virus nor is it what our children need to be added to their already over stressed bodies. Can you tell me the chemicals that will be used and how they will be used?**
Chemicals procured are EPA approved for use in schools. They will be used according to the labeled requirements. All ventilation systems meet current ASHRAE and SED air exchange requirements and guidelines. Equipment is maintained according to established protocols. Filters are changed regularly and meet equipment specifications.

Visitors

- **Will visitors be allowed in the building?**
No. Visitors will be met at the entrance or visitors may call the main office upon arrival and a staff member will provide assistance. Only "emergency" visitors will be permitted within the building in a limited capacity. Volunteers will not be utilized in order to limit exposure.

Signage

- **How can we ensure that students stay physically/socially distanced in school?**
Signage will be posted in the following areas: entrances, hallways, restrooms, cafeteria or other dining areas, classrooms, administrative offices, auditorium and janitorial staff areas.

Food Service

- **Will S-VE provide meals for students who are engaged in distance learning?**
Yes! The district will continue to provide school meals to families that qualify for free and reduced meals.
- **Where will students eat school meals?**
Students will eat in the cafeteria or alternate location as necessary while social distancing.
- **How will breakfast be served to kids?**
Breakfast will be served as a bagged meal similar to lunch.
- **Are there hot lunch options?**
There will be a variety of lunch options. On days where students are taking lunch home, there may be a frozen meal to cook.

- **The fact sheet states, “breakfast and lunch will be provided for all students who receive free and reduced meals, as organized through our Food Service Department.” This statement infers that students who might purchase lunch or breakfast at full cost would not have the option to buy meals at this time. Is that correct?**

At this time, student meals are free.

Transportation

- **Will students be required to wear masks on the bus?**
Yes. Students who are medically and physically able are required to wear masks at all times when on the bus.
- **What is the plan to keep children socially distanced on the bus? How can you ensure children’s hands are clean when they get on the bus? Will hand sanitizer be provided and required to use before getting on and possibly even when getting off the bus?**
Students will be socially distanced as best as possible with family members seated together. Per NYS DOT, hand sanitizer is not allowed. Students should wash hands prior to boarding the bus and upon entering the school. Buses will be sanitized after every run during the day and at the end of the day.
- **If we start the school year transporting our child, but our work schedules change, can we be added to the school’s bus routes?**
These types of issues will certainly come up and we will be very flexible in assisting you in this process. All requests of this nature should be directed to the transportation department.

Social Emotional Well-Being

- **How will S-VE support students’ social-emotional well-being when school begins?**
Our mental health team is available to support our staff and students.

School Schedules

- **Will students be allowed to play on school playgrounds?**
We will limit the size of groups on the playground. All students will be required to wear masks at all times.
- **Will students get time in the library to check out books?**
Students will use hand sanitizer upon entering. Books will be quarantined for 72 hours and sanitized prior to recirculating.
- **Will students be allowed to do jumping jacks or something by their desks for the teacher to keep them alert and not falling asleep from staying in the same spot?**
Teachers are trained in observing student engagement and will provide “brain breaks” in classrooms as a best instructional practice.

Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

- **How will the district monitor student attendance?**
The District will collect and report daily student engagement/attendance regardless of the learning plan, in-person or distance learning, and input the data in SchoolTool.

Technology and Connectivity

- **Will the district be providing devices for students in PreK-1st grade?**
School devices will be loaned to students for in-person or remote learning in grades PreK – 12. Families are responsible for their device.
- **How will my child be successful with Distance Learning if they don’t have access to the internet?**
The district has extended Wi-Fi access to all school parking lots and has been awarded a grant through NYS Department of Education to provide internet to those without internet or intermitted internet. We thank our partners Haefele, AT&T, and Verizon. If families are still struggling with internet access, they should contact the district office.

- **Will you allow students to bring their own device and connect it to your network?**
No. We cannot allow students to bring their own devices per the 2d law.
- **What kind of devices will students be using?**
Elementary School students will receive iPads. Middle and High School students will receive laptops.

Teaching and Learning

- **What learning options does my child have?**
At the beginning of the 2020 academic year, families were given a survey to choose a learning plan. With the release of the new guidance in April, the focus is on the return to in-person instruction. All students will be expected to return to in-person learning unless they have a documented medical reason.
- **Will my child still be able to attend the CTE BOCES program?**
Yes. BOCES will align with the S-VE schedule.
- **What are the expectations for Distance Learning?**
The expectations for distance learning are still being discussed and finalized. Depending on the Governors decision. However, we know that distance learning will require students to connect to teachers virtually at times and students will have to access Schoology daily to get assignments, view videos and post completed tasks. Students may have to access the class at the scheduled time. Expectations include being on the tech device daily.
- **What exactly will the distance learning look like? Is there a schedule? How long do the kids have to be logged in per day?**
High School and Middle School students will need to be available every day during school hours. Elementary School students may complete their coursework in the evenings when they have support from their families.
- **On the distance learning days, I'll most likely be working, so my oldest child will be watching my youngest. Will they be able to do their work at any point of the day? For example, when I get home from work so that there is still a younger child being supervised instead of one being on zoom while the other is unsupervised?**
There may be days or times when students may have a scheduled video conference or meeting with a class or teacher. If the student is unable to fulfill the requirement, the student must communicate it with the teacher and make arrangements to make up the time/work. The most optimal plan is to be proactive and make arrangements prior to the missed class.
- **How will science experiments be conducted for fully distance learners?**
Our teachers are always collaborating with others to find creative ways to teach concepts remotely. Several of our teachers have participated in professional development opportunities that focused on remote learning.
- **Will lessons be recorded so that students can log on after parents get home if they miss a live session?**
Parents are encouraged to log in to their child's Schoology account for all assignments, including recordings as teachers are required to post all materials on the Schoology platform.
- **How do I locate supply lists?**
Supply lists are located on our website.
- **Is there a supply list for 100% distance learners?**
All supply lists are available on our school website. Whether in person or remote learner, please refer to your grade level for specific supplies. <http://www.svecsd.org/studentsupplylist.cfm>
- **Will there be packets for learning?**
Due to safety concerns regarding COVID, as best as possible, a contactless approach will be utilized through the Schoology platform.
- **How will teachers know that children are progressing/gaining the knowledge that the teacher is teaching for 100% distance learning students?**
Ongoing assessments will occur throughout the school year. Frequent deadlines for assignments will allow teachers to continuously monitor student learning and progress.

- **If we do not have reliable access to the internet, will my child be provided with materials to complete their schoolwork at home?**
While they are in person, opportunities will be provided to download and save materials that they will need for later. If they are 100% distance learning, they will be able to come to our Wi-Fi locations to download and save materials needed.
- **Will there be assistance available if my child needs one-on-one help to understand their assignment?**
Yes. Please contact the teacher and set up a time to assist your child.
- **Will teachers be available for after school help on in-person learning days?**
After school assistance is currently available. Please contact your child's school.
- **How and to whom are parents expected to communicate with if we struggle with the availability of a teacher?**
Our teachers are fabulous and when there is a concern/issue, they will respond. If they do not respond in a timely manner, please contact the building Principal.
- **Will college level courses still be available for students? Have any courses been cut due to COVID?**
All courses are still offered. TC3 and CCC are still working with us to meet the needs of our students.
- **How will you track student engagement?**
Teachers will be completing student contact logs on a regular and ongoing basis.

Professional Development

- **When will staff receive professional development (PD) and how will this work?**
The district will identify the major professional development needs and implement a PD plan accordingly. This may take place virtually or in person following all socially distanced protocols.
- **How will substitutes receive professional development?**
A training will be provided to all substitutes regarding our safety protocols and practices.

Extra-Curricular Activities

- **Will fine and performing arts and extra-curricular activities continue?**
Yes. Extra-curricular and fine and performing arts are expected to continue at the same time following socially distance guidelines and other safety protocols. Should we have to close our facility, these activities will be reviewed to determine if they can continue.
- **Will children be able to stay after school for any activities, such as PAVE?**
PAVE is currently available to students in grades 3-8.

Athletics

- **Will athletics continue?**
We will follow the guidance from NYSPHSAA and Section IV.
- **Do any of the learning choices not allow students to participate in athletics?**
Athletes in both the in-person and distance learning plan will be allowed to participate in S-VE athletics. 100% distance learning student athletes will be responsible for transportation to and from the school for practice and contests. Homeschool students will not be able to participate in S-VE athletics.