



# Amesbury Public Schools

## Reopening Plan Addendum: Spring 2021 Full In-Person Return

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Dear Amesbury Community,

This plan to return to full-time in-person learning for all students is presented as a substantial update to the original reopening plan and any updates posted at <https://schools.amesburyma.gov/Page/8240>. This year has been an incredibly challenging year. However, as the number of cases continues to drop and the number of people receiving vaccines continues to increase, I am optimistic that we are on our way back to “Pre-COVID normal”. As we plan for this next step, it is important to keep in mind that we may hit bumps along the way that may cause us to slow our forward momentum. We will continue to take all precautions and implement all of our current mitigation measures to keep our students and staff safe.

Our goal of returning to full in-person is to begin restoring a sense of normalcy and routine for our students. As might be expected, this change will be exciting for many, while, at the same time, it may heighten the anxiety for others. At each school, staff is planning for a range of reactions including excitement, anxiety, and anything in between. Should your child need additional support when making this transition, please reach out to his/her teachers, counselors, and administrators to assist you. We sincerely want this to be a successful transition for all students; however, we fully understand that the transition will occur at different speeds for different students. It is imperative that you communicate with us should your child find this transition challenging. We are here to help.

In this plan, we have attempted to capture as many details about the return to full in-person as possible including the timeline for our return and information about what the remote option at each level will look like. Details for remote learning are included on page 14. We will begin full-time, in-person learning on Monday, April 5th for students in Pre-Kindergarten through grade 4, with PK students enjoying an additional half hour within their assigned half day timeframe. Both the middle and high school will return to full in-person on Monday, April 26th. AIHS will return to full in-person on April 12th. We received a waiver from DESE that allows us to keep the 5th grade in line with the return to full in-person start for the rest of the middle school.

Over the past several months, our community has worked together to keep all of us as safe as possible. We will need to maintain this level of diligence as we open up schools to a greater degree. I am confident that we can safely do this with your continued support!

Thank you for all that you do!

Respectfully,  
Elizabeth McAndrews  
*Acting Superintendent*

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## Overarching Goals for the Full Reopening of Schools

Our original reopening plan was produced in August of 2020 and was later published on the [Reopening 2020](#) page. It provided the details for each of the phases we anticipated would be implemented over the course of the 2020-2021 school year. As was required by the state, our plan included specific details about Full In-Person, Full Remote, and Hybrid (in-person and remote) learning models. Although our schools entered the hybrid model at different times during this school year, each individual school made updates to their hybrid plan that reflected the conditions of the time frame of their transition. Given that a full in-person model was most similar to a typical model and that we were many months away from it being a reality, we provided fewer details. Now, as we are committed to returning to full in-person learning in the weeks ahead, this document provides more extensive details on the model, including the reason for the shift.

Our goals for full reopening remain very similar to those embedded in our original plan. We will continue to prioritize the physical safety of our students and staff, access to instruction, as well as an added emphasis on the social, emotional, and mental health of our school community. These priorities permeate every aspect of the teaching and learning process and are the overarching umbrella under which our models were developed. Our return to full in-person will necessitate a strict adherence to these concepts as well. This plan will be in place for this spring and does not extend to our next school year. Commissioner Riley has made it clear that districts will not be required to provide a fully remote option for the 2021-2022 school year. This will allow all of our resources to shift back to support our in-person learning.

It is important to acknowledge that navigating these transitions has been very challenging. There are no scripts that clearly delineate the best ways to balance the physical safety and mental health of the members of our school community. As the number of cases continues to decrease and the number of people who are vaccinated increases, we can begin to put an increased emphasis on the overall social, emotional and mental health of our staff and students. A return to full in-person provides us with greater access to our students and staff thus allowing us to identify their needs and offer them support as needed.

Our goal of returning to full in-person is to begin restoring a sense of normalcy and routine for our students. As might be expected, this change will be exciting for many, while, at the same time, it may heighten the anxiety for others. At each school, staff is planning for a range of reactions including excitement, anxiety, and anything in between. Should your child need additional support when making this transition, please reach out to his/her teachers, counselors, and administrators to assist you. We want this to be a successful transition for all students; however, we fully understand that the transition will occur at different speeds for different students. It is imperative that you communicate with us should your child struggle with this transition. We are here to help.

As we all know, one of the unavoidable outcomes of the pandemic is gaps in learning. Nonetheless, we cannot expect these losses to be regained as quickly as we would like. Instead, it will take time to reverse the learning loss and mend the overall social and emotional well-being of our students and staff. This summer, we will offer programming that provides the opportunity for students to address their learning gaps. Returning to full in-person learning will help us to reestablish the norms and routines that we will build upon for the summer and the upcoming school year. To do this will require time, resources, and intentional planning. As a district we are committed to providing all that is necessary to ensure that our students and staff have the support they need moving forward.

## DESE Guidance

The state regulations ([603 CMR 27.00](#)) that govern the required time on learning for all public school students in

Massachusetts (900 hours elementary, 990 hours secondary) were formally amended by the Board of Education in January to allow remote and hybrid learning hours to qualify for time on learning. On Friday, March 5, 2021, additional changes were approved allowing the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Commissioner to determine the point at which remote and hybrid learning will no longer qualify for time on learning. This change effectively required schools to transition to full time, in-person learning. Following that vote, Commissioner Riley produced detailed guidance on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/in-person-learning-guide.docx>).

By confirming these changes to the regulations and updating the guidance, the Department solidified the fact that ***there will only be two (2) options following the shift for the remainder of this year.***

- DESE has stated that **the only permissible learning model for schools and districts is full in-person.**
- However, for the remainder of this school year, families will be able to select a remote only option for their child(ren).
- Hybrid learning, where some learning time occurs in-person and the remainder of learning occurs remotely, will no longer be an option based on the regulations.
- Furthermore, families are required to make a full-time selection of full in-person or remote. Families will not be able to choose a model on a day to day basis. Additional information and clarification can be found in the Remote Learning section.

On pages 4 and 5 of the March 9, 2021 guidance, the Commissioner specifies the timeline under which all students must return to full in-person learning, 5 days a week. The guidance is clear that we can continue to provide a remote option for the remainder of this year if families commit to full-time remote. The only way remote learning will count towards time on learning for the rest of this year is if a family selects this as the full-time option for their child(ren). To further clarify, a school or district does not have the option to select remote learning as its primary learning model; however, a family does have that option for the remainder of this school year. The excerpt below is taken directly from the guidance, including the bold/underlined emphasis.

[DESE Guidance](#) Excerpt: (Quoted - including **bold/underline** emphasis - Pages 4 & 5)

#### **Timeline for Phased Implementation**

With the authority to determine when remote and hybrid learning models no longer count towards structured learning time hours, the Commissioner has laid out a graduated strategy for providing all students with the opportunity to return to full-time, in-person learning this spring, beginning with elementary students.

**We encourage schools and districts to bring back students at each grade level as quickly as possible. With pooled testing in place and improvement in COVID-19 health metrics across the state, many districts and schools are already moving to bring back all students K-12 for full-time, in-person learning in the coming weeks. However, the timeline below represents the requirement for full-time return for districts who would not otherwise have students back by the dates below at each grade level.**

**With this timeline, DESE aims to steadily increase the number of students learning in-person for the remainder of the school year. The plan unfolds in phases, allowing us to assess implementation and health indicators before moving to the next phase.** During these phases, we will work in close collaboration with state health officials and medical experts to monitor case counts in schools, assess public

health metrics, and monitor for potential impacts of the COVID-19 variants. In addition, we will seek feedback from district and school leaders on implementation. Ultimately, the Commissioner will confirm the timeline for proceeding to subsequent phases based on the review of these data points and other relevant findings from implementation, and following written notice to the Board.

We know COVID-19 positive individuals will be identified in schools, as has been the case throughout the school year. However, districts and schools are well-equipped with the necessary protocols to effectively manage these cases and prevent in-school transmission, including the testing, contact tracing, and quarantine procedures found in DESE guidance.

**While the timeline below is subject to change,** the following dates provide a roadmap for local planning this spring. In reviewing the timeline below, please note that districts and schools may apply for a waiver from DESE, and parents/guardians who wish for their children to learn remotely will still have that option. Schools and districts must have robust and reliable ways to communicate with all families, students, teachers, and staff to send and receive key messages related to the timelines below. To the greatest extent possible, districts and schools should give families, remote enrichment learning programs, and the broader community at least a two-week notice of planned changes to their school schedules.

- **Elementary school phase (grades K-5):** Districts and schools are required to shift their learning model for elementary school grade levels to full-time, in-person instruction five days per week effective **Monday, April 5, 2021**.
- **Middle school phase (grades 6-8):** Districts and schools will be required to shift their learning model for middle school grade levels to full-time, in-person instruction five days per week, effective **Wednesday, April 28, 2021**. Districts may choose to ask students who have traveled to a state on the restricted list to learn remotely for the week of April 26, 2021 (the week after April vacation).
- **High school phase (grades 9-12):** **We will announce the details and timing of the high school phase of the plan in April.** Districts will be provided with at least two weeks advance notice of the specific date requirement for high school students but should start making such plans now.

The Commissioner may delay or accelerate the timeline for subsequent phases of the plan in consultation with medical experts and state health officials.

This excerpt from DESE's guidance establishes a clear expectation for schools to return to full in-person as soon as feasible. The full document includes a provision allowing districts to request a waiver; however, it also makes it very clear that these waivers would be extremely limited and restricted, and would be in place only for a short period of time.

As you are aware, our community has prioritized the vaccination of our educational staff. Because of these concerted efforts, all of our educators who wish to be vaccinated will have received at least one of their vaccine doses by the time that their students return to school. In fact, many of our educators will have received both of their doses prior to returning to school. In some cases, staff members will be fully vaccinated prior to returning to full in-person (2 weeks after their final dose).

In the excerpt above, the Commissioner provides a timeline for schools to return full in-person. You will note that the April 5, 2021 deadline is designated for grades K-5. Given the grade configuration of our elementary and middle schools, I requested and received a waiver to allow grade 5 to return to full in-person at the same time as the rest of the middle school. Throughout the year, as a district we have had to respond to sudden changes and shifts delivered by DESE. In this case, we have chosen to return to full in-person learning within a

time frame that best fits our needs.

**Thus, our students in grades K-4 will return to full in-person learning for five days a week beginning on Monday, April 5, 2021. This timeframe is aligned with the expectations provided by DESE. Our PK students will continue attending school 4 days a week (no classes on Wednesdays) plus they will have an additional 30 minutes of in-person learning each day. PK students will attend one session. AES PK students will attend one session from 8:30-11 am or 12:15 pm to 2:45 pm. CES PK students will attend one session from 8:40 - 11:10 am or 12:00 - 2:30 pm. (Please note the different PK times for AES and CES). AIHS will begin full in-person on Monday, April 12th. Both AMS and AHS will return to full in-person learning five days a week beginning on Monday, April 26, 2021.**

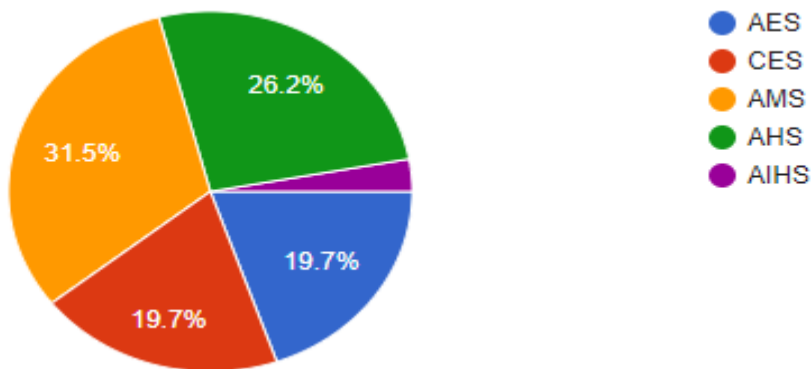
### **Process to Assess Feasibility**

As noted above, the planning for a full return to in-person learning has been in process all year and is now being further refined. Each building has created its own full Reopening Committees that have been tasked with all of the logistics associated with this transition. The most critical factor in our planning is the number of students who will return to full in-person learning both by school and by grade level. As you are aware, the hybrid model restricted us to having approximately half of our students in the building at any one time as we were required to maintain the standard 6 foot social distancing expectation. This shift to full in-person learning requires us to realign our social distancing to the DESE and CDC recommended distances of "6 feet where possible, but no less than 3 feet." With that in mind, we needed to know how many students would be coming back for full in-person learning, and how many would select the remote option detailed further in this document.

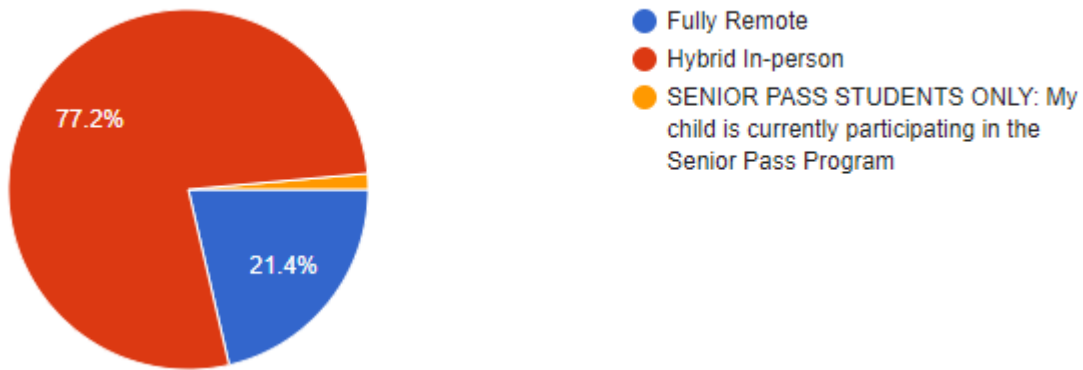
### **Student Enrollment**

During the second week in March, families completed a survey in which they indicated both their current learning model (hybrid or remote) and their intended learning model. (See below). To ensure that we had collected data that was accurate, each building followed up with families who had not responded to the survey. As of Friday, March 19th, elementary families had to indicate their final intentions for the April 5th transition. When we move to full in-person learning on April 5th at the elementary level, approximately 85% of our students will be in-person with approximately 15% remaining in a remote learning model. No later than Friday, April 9th, middle and high school families must inform their school of the learning model for their child

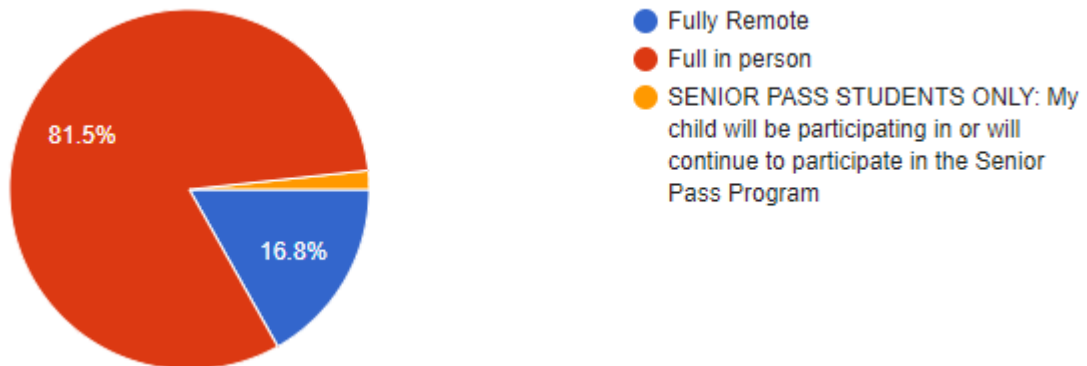
### **Breakdown of the total number of responses by school**



## Current Learning Models



## Learning Model #2 Survey



Following the initial survey, the breakdown of students expecting to return to full in person learning is approximately 82% and 17% who anticipate remaining remote. The remaining 1% is constituted by seniors who will be participating in the Senior PASS Program. Our initial survey indicates that our in-school population will increase by approximately 4.3%. Our plan allows for flexibility in the case that these numbers shift after the final responses from the middle and high school are received. More information on accessing instruction for remote learners will be outlined in the Remote Learning section.

Families who utilize our buses to bring their children to and from school will experience new guidelines for bus transportation. The DESE transportation guidelines have been adjusted to allow for 2 students per seat

with the expectation that all other mitigation strategies will be followed.

### Facilities Assessment: Capacity at 3 - 6 Feet

With this preliminary student data in hand, we updated our facilities assessment district-wide to ensure that we have the spacing available across our schools to accommodate a return to in-person learning for all students, in all grade levels. To do so, we needed to ensure that we can maintain the required minimum distance of at least 3 feet while maximizing distancing wherever possible.

The DESE guidelines are clear that schools will no longer be required to maintain 6 feet of social distance if it precludes a return to full in-person learning. Wherever possible, we will strive for the maximum distance between student desks. However, the Department, and now the CDC, have been clear in their guidance that 3 feet is safe and acceptable. The only exception to this is when individuals are unmasked (meals/breaks) when a minimum of a 6 foot distance must be maintained. The rationale for allowing the 3-foot distancing is included below. This position was further supported by a [Study by Oxford Academic](#) that was released on March 10, 2021 that shows no significant difference in COVID rates in districts using 3-foot and 6-foot minimums for distancing.

[DESE Guidance](#) Excerpt: (Quoted - including **bold** emphasis - Page 2)

**Since June 2020, DESE guidance has consistently noted that three feet in classrooms is a safe standard for physical distancing when masks are worn and other mitigation strategies are in place, based on guidelines from the World Health Organization and the American Academy of Pediatrics.** Our guidance balanced the urgent need to bring students in the Commonwealth back to in-person learning while minimizing the risk to students, staff, and their families. While districts should space students further than three feet when feasible, evidence demonstrates that the additional risk reduction associated with six feet as opposed to three feet is low – when masks are worn and other mitigation strategies are in place.

Although preliminary work was done this past summer regarding the capacity of our classrooms and learning spaces, we needed to adjust our data to reflect that additional students who have returned to school since September. Each classroom and learning space throughout the district was assessed to determine the maximum number of students that can be in that space with a minimum distance of 3 feet (general assumption = seated at desks). We utilized that information to determine which, if any, classrooms needed to be relocated to a larger learning space.

For planning purposes, we assumed that all students would return to in-person learning this spring. However, we completed this assessment knowing full well that there will still be a significant number of students who will remain fully remote in their learning through the end of this year, allowing greater distancing in many places. It is important to realize that this plan will be in place for this spring and does not extend to our next school year. Commissioner Riley has made it clear that districts will not be required to provide a fully remote option for the 2021-2022 school year. This will allow all of our resources to shift back to support our in-person learning.

### The Plan for Full In-Person

Having assessed our capacity and confirmed that we can make the shift, we are able to focus on the details of what full in-person learning will look like this spring.



## What Stays The Same?

All of the safety measures that have been implemented throughout the school year will remain in place. The information and expectations on health and safety that were included in the original plan and subsequent hybrid and update plans will remain in force. As outlined in the DESE guidance and other guidance from the CDC and medical community, the 3 to 6 foot distancing standard in schools is predicated on the fact that other mitigation strategies are in place. At this point in time, these strategies are ingrained in the routines and behaviors of all members in our school community.

These strategies include:

- Continuing the use of proper mask wearing, frequent hand washing or sanitizing, and maximizing distance whenever possible will not change with this shift to full in-person learning.
- Maintaining a minimum distance of 6 feet whenever unmasked. Lunches and snack times will maintain the 6 feet of distance.
- Maintaining proper air flow. The district dedicated a significant portion of its relief funds to improve the indoor air quality across all our schools. All rooms that do not have windows have an air purifier. We will continue to keep windows open and utilize outdoor space as weather permits.
- Continuing our daily cleaning and disinfecting regimen across all schools. Maintenance staff clean frequently touched surfaces, including bathrooms, throughout the day. Staff and students wipe surfaces after use. In addition, the extensive nightly cleaning will continue with the use of electrostatic sprayers.
- Minimizing the sharing of supplies, equipment, and desks/seats between students, unless they are able to be sanitized between uses.
- Adhering to the more strict DESE/DPH guidelines for activities that increase respiration, such as physical activity, singing, or the playing of brass/woodwind instruments. These activities generally require a minimum of a 10 foot distance and should be held outside when possible.
- Conducting meetings and larger events virtually when safety guidelines cannot be met.
- Remaining diligent about paying attention to, and remaining out of the schools when they have symptoms. Families are encouraged to periodically review the COVID 19 guidelines that identify the protocols and symptoms. These protocols remain consistent with this shift to full in-person learning.

Further details of all these safety measures are included on pages 10 and 11 of the [original reopening plan](#) from this past August.

**In short, the only significant change that we will be making during the return to full in-person is the reduction of distance between students desks as the minimum distance will now be 3 feet. As stated previously, we will maximize the distance where possible.**

## What Will Be Changing?

While the only change we are making to our overall design is reducing the minimum distancing to 3 feet

rather than 6 feet, there are some adjustments that will be needed. These are outlined below:

## **Classroom**

With more students in each classroom, the dynamic in the classroom will obviously change. In order to maximize both safety and space, classrooms will predominantly contain student seating with minimal other furniture. The teacher's desk will maintain a distance of at least 6' from the closest student desk. Plexiglass has been installed in offices and classrooms where this is not possible.

## Elementary

With the exception of the remote teachers, elementary teachers will continue to focus only on the students in the classroom, there will not be any live streaming. While we are making strides towards normalcy, we are still unable to implement many traditional components of an elementary classroom. In short, routine small groups, circle areas, teacher tables and other similar things will not be part of the day-to-day experience for students and teachers. Both schools will use outdoor spaces as weather permits and AES will have access to a large tent that can be used for mask breaks, classrooms, and/or lunches.

## Middle & High School

Like the elementary classrooms, the learning spaces will be dominated by student seating rather than other furniture. However, at the middle and high school levels, teachers will have students learning in their classrooms as well as students learning at home. Our educators have done an incredible job managing the challenges of live streaming to students at home. With the majority of students returning to full in-person learning, teachers will be expected to focus on those students in front of them. Additionally, in their March 9, 2021 *On the Desktop* message, DESE states that, "If students are currently in a remote model or choose to learn remotely when these new requirements go into effect, the remote learning option may look different than the model offered prior to the implementation of these new requirements." (6) Thus, those students who are remote may experience some degree of change from their current remote live streaming experiences.

Whenever possible, the use of outdoor spaces will be encouraged as warmer weather arrives this spring. Both the middle and high school will have a large tent on their campus that will be used during lunchtimes for general cafeteria seating. These tents may also be used by classes and for mask/snack breaks.

## **Attendance**

Given the state's guidance on a return to full in-person learning, students will be marked either present or absent based on the learning model that their families have chosen. This is really straight forward at the elementary level as each student is assigned to either a remote or an in-person classroom. When an elementary student is out due to quarantining, they will be provided with makeup work as they typically would be when they are out due to illness. This work may be picked up at the school or in some cases may be posted in Google Classroom.

However, at the middle and high school level where teachers are live streaming to the remote students, it may seem like an option for an in-person student to remain at home, live stream into class, and be marked as present. This will no longer be permitted. Students who opt for full in-person learning will be marked absent for any days that they are not in school regardless of whether they log in remotely or not. If there are extenuating circumstances, please begin this conversation by contacting the school nurse.

It is important that those students who are in-person report to school as long as they are not sick. If a student is quarantining and/or ill, he/she may access the live streaming option as a resource if they feel well enough.

**Students who are quarantining will not be marked absent (at the middle and high school when live streaming) provided they can provide documentation from a medical provider, our school nurse, or from one of our public health nurses.**

We realize that for some students, particularly at the high school, this may represent a significant change to the current procedure. Please be advised that this policy will go into effect for the middle and high school on Monday, April 26, 2021, and Monday, April 12, 2021 at AIHS.

### **School Meals & Cafeteria**

While we will be reducing the minimum distance between students desks to 3 feet in the schools for any time when students are masked, eating lunch requires a student to be unmasked. As such, any time an individual is eating, they will be required to maintain a minimum of 6-foot distancing and sit facing in the same direction.

#### Elementary

At both schools, students will be 6 feet away from one another. At AES, lunch for students will occur in the gym. A lunch count will be taken in the morning and will be arranged in the gym for easy student pick up. Teachers will eat in the cafeteria. At CES, lunch will occur in the cafeteria and in the gym. Teachers will continue to eat in the teachers' lounge, outside and/or the repurposed music room.

#### Middle & High School

At the middle and high schools, cafeteria spaces are not large enough to hold all classes while maintaining the required 6 feet of distancing. At the high school, multiple locations will be utilized for lunch. These spaces include the cafeteria, the gym, Room 108, and a large tent outside the cafeteria. Similarly, at the middle school, students will eat lunch in the cafeteria, under a tent, and, if needed, in an adjacent classroom. At AIHS, students will utilize classrooms, outdoor spaces, and the gym. Again, all students will be spaced at least 6 feet apart.

#### Grab and Go Meals

We will continue to offer Grab and Go Meals for all children ages 0 to 18, regardless of whether or not they are an Amesbury student. The menu for these lunches and breakfasts can be found at <https://amesburyma.nutrislice.com/> The Grab and Go meals will continue to offer 10 meals weekly, including 5 days of breakfasts and lunches. We will continue to offer lunch and breakfast pick up on Monday and Wednesday from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm out back of AHS.

If you have questions about the Grab and Go meals, please contact Heidi at (978) 388-4800.

### **Hallways**

We will continue to follow our current hallway traffic patterns and will maximize distance between students wherever possible. Students will not be able to use lockers which will minimize the amount of time spent in hallways.

#### Elementary

At the elementary level, movement in the hallways is far more structured as students are not moving on a 'bell schedule' format. When students are moving together, it is usually with a class and with a staff member. This allows for greater control of distancing. Throughout the year, our students have consistently demonstrated

their ability to maintain an appropriate distance and to follow safety expectations. Routines have been established around individual movement within the hallways.

### Middle & High School

At the middle and high schools, the use of a bell schedule generates larger student populations moving throughout the hallways. We will continue to use the divided hallway approach in both the middle and high schools. We will also continue to encourage students to maintain an appropriate distance from one another. Students will be encouraged to move directly to their next class as opposed to congregating in the hallway. If students are moving and passing one another, even at close proximity, they are not creating the extended exposure (inside of 6 feet for 15+ minutes over a 24 hour period of time) that puts them at increased risk for transmission. Strategies like encouraging the use of restrooms during class rather than at passing times also helps to limit congregating and the increased exposure that it brings.

### **Snack & Mask Breaks**

As noted above, students need to maintain a *minimum of 6 feet* at any time that they are removing their masks. Unlike lunches, snack and mask breaks happen throughout the day and throughout the building. As mask breaks have been happening throughout the year, students are accustomed to the expectations around distancing when not wearing a mask. The arrival of spring provides even greater opportunities for outdoor mask breaks.

### Elementary

At both AES and CES, a snack schedule has been created where classes will eat in the cafe/gym. In addition, there will be increasing opportunities for students to have their snack outside (weather permitting). If a teacher opts for an indoor snack, that teacher will notify the custodian to clean the area that students were in.

### Middle & High School

Snacks will not be permitted in classrooms as desks will not be 6 feet apart. Any student with a medical need may leave class and go to the nurse for his/her snack. Mask/snack breaks may be held outdoors at a teacher's discretion. The large tent outside the cafeteria may be used for this purpose outside of the lunch hours.

### **Student Schedules**

Specific daily schedules will be shared by teachers and principals. Below I have provided an overview for each grade span. Please direct any questions regarding your child's individual schedule to his/her teacher or the appropriate building principal.

### Preschool

Our students in grades K-4 will return to full in-person learning for five days a week beginning on Monday, April 5, 2021. This timeframe is aligned with the expectations provided by DESE. Our PK students will continue attending school 4 days a week (no school on Wednesdays) plus they will have an additional 30 minutes of in-person learning each day. PK students will attend one session. AES PK students will attend one session from 8:30-11 am or 12:15 pm to 2:45 pm. CES PK students will attend one session from 8:40 - 11:10 am or 12:00 - 2:30 pm.

### Kindergarten and First Grade

Both kindergarten and first grade students will return to a full day schedule beginning on Monday, April 5th.

## Second through Fourth Grade

The daily student schedules will remain relatively consistent with the current hybrid model schedule but may be adjusted as needed for changes to lunches and specials. All students will attend school five days a week. Due to changes to the learning models of some students, we have had to make some adjustments to both teacher and student assignments. Each building principal will provide families with additional, specific details.

## Middle & High School

At the middle and high school levels, students will return to school for five days and the daily schedule will remain largely the same. The middle school will continue to run their current schedule rather than follow their "regular" waterfall schedule and the high school will return to a slightly modified version of the "new" schedule that was implemented this year.

### **Student Transportation**

DESE released [updated transportation guidance](#) in February that allows 2 students per seat as long as other mitigation strategies are in place. This updated guidance is based on an extensive study of air quality in school buses by the Harvard Chan School of Public Health. The ability to open windows on school buses creates significant improvements to air quality and hourly air exchange rates. Thus, this new guidance suggests that all windows must remain open at least a few inches at all times. Aside from open windows, we will continue to expect that students wear masks, ensure that hand sanitizer is available and used as each student boards the bus, and that students are assigned a consistent seat. Students will sit in an assigned seat to assist with contact tracing should that be needed. A staff member/administrator from each building will create seating charts.

With these mitigation strategies and adjusted capacities, this means that our buses will be able to run near normal capacities, and transportation can be provided for all students. Bus routes are being updated, generally being created by combining cohorts A and B for each route. However, there will be changes made to routes that could change bus routes and timing for some students. Updated routes will be posted on the district website.

### **Student Drop-off**

Due to the increased number of students who will be arriving at school and the need to ensure that they are socially distanced and safe, we need to confine the student drop off to a shorter time frame. At AES and CES, students may be dropped off beginning at 8:25 am. From there, students will be escorted to their classrooms for the start of their school day. At the middle school, drop off times will remain the same. Students can be dropped off beginning at 7:20 am. Middle school students will begin to enter the building at 7:35. At AHS, students will be allowed to enter the building at 7:30 am. At AIHS, students will be allowed to enter the building at 8:20.

### **Quarantine/Close contacts**

#### **Elementary**

In the event that 2/3 or more of an individual class is required to isolate or quarantine, then subject to consultation with DESE's COVID-19 rapid response help center and the local board of health, the class and teacher will shift to remote learning. Otherwise, the following expectations will be in place: Can we discuss these options further tomorrow? Karina and I have a draft plan we created with our leadership teams.

- The classroom teacher will set aside the day's student work.
- The Building Coordinator will upload the work into google classroom.
- A paraprofessional will be assigned to hold morning and afternoon meetings with the quarantined

student(s).

- The paraprofessional will be provided a space within the building which allows for internet connectivity.

### **Middle/High School**

Teachers will support quarantined students using live streaming and Google Classroom.

### **Middle & High School Extra Curricular Activities and Sports**

Throughout this year, we have offered a reduced number of co-curricular activities at the high school as permitted by state and MIAA regulations. We will continue to offer the programs that have been running and hope to increase offerings at both the middle and high school as we are able to throughout the spring. As expected, our focus will be on returning to full in-person instruction.

Students who are currently remote or who plan to move to remote will continue to have the opportunity to participate in any school sponsored offering. All attendance expectations for co-curricular participation will be in place. In short, attendance in school (based on your identified learning model) is mandatory for participation in any co-curricular activity. Extenuating circumstances should be discussed with the building principal.

### **Before and After School Programs**

The Before and After School Programs offered through the Recreation Department have not been offered this year. We do not anticipate that this will change prior to the end of this school year. However, we do expect that this program will resume at the start of our next school year.

### **Special Education & 504 Services**

The district will continue to deliver special education and 504 services for both in-person and remote students. Having students in school more frequently will increase student access to other supports as well. As we make this transition to full in-person learning, we may have to tweak current schedules to ensure coverage both in and out of school. If there are any changes these will be communicated to parents.

We will begin to transition to in-person IEP meetings. However, as these meetings are scheduled, families may request that their child(ren)'s meeting may be held remotely. Further, as a result of the change to full in-person learning guidelines we have the opportunity to provide students with disabilities more options for participating in academic and nonacademic activities with their peers. School staff will be working together to schedule times for students with disabilities to be included with general education peers when it is appropriate and safe to do so given current safety guidelines.

### **Remote Learning Option**

As previously noted, Amesbury will continue to offer a full-time remote option for families who do not want their students returning to full in-person learning. This looks different at each grade span level. At this time, each elementary grade level, K-4, has one remote teacher. Due to students shifting from remote learning to in-person learning, we have reassigned one remote teacher to a new in-person assignment. This has resulted in a change in teacher for some of our elementary remote students. At the middle and high school levels, remote students will continue to access all aspects of instruction by live streaming into the classroom. Middle and high school families who are currently participating in hybrid will still have the chance to change to a remote learning model or return to full-in person. The deadline for committing to a learning model at both the

middle and high school levels is Friday, April 9th.

We realize that as health conditions continue to improve and more people are fully vaccinated, families may feel more comfortable sending their child(ren) to school in person. We would like to provide that opportunity.

In DESE's March 9, 2021 *On the Desktop* message, the Commissioner stated that after families have made a choice between full in-person and remote, "a parent or guardian who subsequently wishes to have their student switch from a remote to in-person model, should be aware that the school or district may require a reasonable transition period. Consistent with DESE's remote Learning Guidance, we recommend that this transition period be ideally no more than four to six weeks. (6)"

Given the tremendous amount of planning and logistics involved with changing a learning model, particularly when returning in-person, we have established a district wide date at which time families will have the opportunity to change the learning model for their child(ren).

**Families will have until the end of the school day on Wednesday, May 5, 2021 to communicate to their building principal a desire to change the learning model of their child(ren). This deadline will allow us to have those students who are changing a learning model to implement the change on Monday, May 17, 2021.**

### **Timeline**

The timeline for the phasing in of full in-person learning for the district is based on specifically identified dates from DESE and because of the need to transform our learning spaces to accommodate the students returning to full in-person learning. Additionally, there are logistical challenges at both the middle and high school.

At the middle school level, we implemented a very creative hybrid model that kept entire teams together. By this I mean that all students on a particular team had the opportunity to attend school with all members of their classes on their respective teams. Unlike the high school, we did not divide a team into Cohort A and Cohort B but rather chose to keep entire teams together. In order to do this, we needed to utilize 16 large spaces that were transformed into large group instructional areas. This meant that we removed projectors, desks, and other necessary devices for instruction from teachers' classrooms and relocated them to these areas. It will take time to dismantle the larger spaces and reassemble the classrooms. Given that students will be using those spaces for learning until we return full in person, we need April vacation for our custodial staff, cleaning company, and technology staff to be able to get the teachers' classrooms prepared for their return. Of course, we will be working on preparing the classrooms that are not currently in use prior to April vacation.

Similarly, at the high school, we will need April vacation in order to retrieve furniture from storage pods to add back the necessary number of desks for our students returning full in person. While this may seem like a simple thing to accomplish, it is actually quite challenging at this time. As you may know, for the past two weekends, and for all weekends through the month April, Amesbury High School is the site of a regional vaccine clinic. Our custodial staff, from every building in the district, has been involved in the execution of these clinics. In short, AHS is staffed from 6 am through 8 or 9 pm on both Saturday and Sunday. We are so honored to be able to give back to our community by hosting these clinics. In fact, the joy that I have seen on people's faces after receiving a dose of vaccine is worth every logistical challenge that it poses to the timeline of our return. Nonetheless, these clinics impact the date of our return to full in person learning at the high school.

As a result, we need the additional time to rebuild classrooms and return desks to our classrooms.

### Family Choice Selection:

As stated above, elementary families were required to submit their final decisions by Friday, March 19th. Middle and high school families will need to submit their final decision by Friday, April 9th.

### Important Dates:

- **Friday, April 2nd** - No school due to the observance of Good Friday.
- **Monday, April 5th** - Students in grades PK-4 will return to five days of school. PK will continue to attend one session of school from EITHER 8:30-11 am or noon -2:30 pm. Each session includes an additional half hour. Grades K-4 will attend school for five full days from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm
- **Friday, April 9th** - Deadline for middle and high school families to indicate their final decision regarding their intent to return to full in person or remain remote for the April 26, 2021 date..
- **Monday, April 12th** - Students at AIHS will return to school for five full days a week.
- **Monday, April 26th** - Students at AMS and AHS will begin attending school for five full days a week.
- **Wednesday, May 5th** - Deadline for families to inform the appropriate principal of their intent to return to change learning models.
- **Monday, May 17th** - first day change in learning models for those students who registered by May 5th.

Additional detailed information on each building's transitions, including changes to schedules and other logistics, will be shared directly with families from each school as we approach the date for each building's transition to in-person learning.

At this time, the overall trends of decreasing case counts and increasing numbers of people vaccinated allows us to move forward towards full in-person learning. However, should the need present itself or the state and/or DESE mandate it, we may need to make adjustments to our plan. Our goal is to continue to follow all of our safety protocols and mitigation strategies to limit the chances of such a change occurring.



## Appendix: School Summaries - Capacity at 3 Feet

Each learning space across the district was assessed to determine the maximum number of students that can be in that space (general assumption being seated at desks), and that information will be used to ensure we do not exceed those capacities. The room by room level detail is not included in this report, but a school by school summary of major spaces is included below.

### Amesbury Elementary

Room Number	Grade	Maximum Number of Students at 3'
1	K	22-23
2	K	22-23
3	K	22-23
16	1	22-23
19	1	22-23
6	1	22-23
F	2	22-23
15	2	22-23
9	2	22-23
C	3	22-23
11	3	22-23
21	3	22-23
D	4	22-23
18	4	22-23
4	3/4	22-23
5	1/2	22-23
7	PK-K	22-23

## Cashman Elementary

Room Number	Grade	Maximum Number of Students at 3 Feet
102B	K	22-23
102D	K	27
102C	K	22-23
102A	K	22-23
103B	1	20
103D	1	22-23
103C	1	22-23
303C	2	22-23
301B	2	22-23
303B	2	22-23
301A	3	22-23
302B	3	22-23
303A	3	22-23
301C	4	22-23
301D	4	22-23
302D	4	22-23
302C	4	22-23
<b>101A</b>	PreK - 1	12
<b>407</b>	3	5
<b>409</b>	2 - 4	10

## Amesbury Middle School

Room Number	Student Capacity @ 3'	Room Number	Student Capacity @ 3'	Room Number	Student Capacity @ 3'
100	21	200	20	300	21
101	20	201	22	301	20
102	19	202	22	302	20
103	22	203	22	303	21
104	19	204	22	304	20
105	22	205	21	305	20
106	22	206	20	306	20
107	22	207	22	307	21
108	22	208	21	308	20
109	20	209	21	400	21
110	21	210	21	401	21
111	20	Library		402	21
112	22	211	22	403	20
113	19	212	21	404	20
114	21	213	22	405	21
115	22	214	22	406	20
116	22	215	22	407	21
117	20	216	20	408	21
118	21	217	21	Tech Ed A	30
Life Skills A	20	218	21	Tech Ed B	20
Life Skills B	20	219	22	Tech Ed C	20
		220	22	Performing Arts	22
		221	22	Band	30
		222	22		

## Amesbury High School

Room Number	Student Capacity at 3'	Room Number	Student Capacity at 3'
101	31	246	29
102	27	244	27
103	Athletic Storage	242	27
105	20	241	26
106		240	27
107	20	239	27
108	27	238	26
109	28	236	27
110	24	234	24
111	24	233	22
112	26	232	24
113	N/A	229/231	37
114	24	230	24
115	23	228	24
116	24	227	24
117	24	226	24
118	24	224	24
119	24	223	24
125	24	222	24
127	24	221	24
128	24	220	24

## Amesbury Innovation High School

Room Number	Student Capacity at 3'
1	16
2	16
3	16
4	16
Gym	40
Spec Ed Rooms	4