



### **Alternate Virtual Learning Model**

**If we don't feel comfortable sending our kids to school if they are reopening, is there an option to continue remote learning?**

Yes, as described in the Alternate Virtual Learning Model Survey that was sent to families on Monday, August 3rd, parents will have the opportunity to select a remote option if they do not plan to send their child(ren) in person. Details of this option will be provided in the coming week(s) so parents can make an informed decision.

**If I choose not to send my children to school and choose virtual, who is providing that virtual instruction? Is my child on their own for the days the students should have been in school or will my child get teacher instruction for all the days at home? Will the student be considered 'home schooling' and need to get her own resources?**

We are currently in the process of developing the virtual option/program if families do not plan to send their child(ren) in person. Details of this option will be provided in the coming week(s). The child(ren) will not be considered "home schooled" unless parents choose to home school their child(ren). Parents have the right to home school their child(ren) according to the Commissioner's regulations. Pursuant to those regulations, parents are responsible for developing/selecting the curriculum materials, providing the instruction, and determining assessment methods. Parents are also responsible for sending the District quarterly reports indicating the child's progress in all areas. This is different from selecting the Alternate Virtual Learning Model option. For those parents who need additional information regarding home schooling may contact District office.

**By choosing to remotely homeschool our children how will their work be regulated? Through the school or through the state?**

If a parent chooses to home school their child(ren), they are responsible for regulating the work. If a parent chooses the alternate virtual learning option, the child is still registered in the District, so the school will regulate the work.

**If a parent chooses a virtual option even if the district implements an in person or hybrid model depending on the Governor's direction, will the district provide synchronous instruction or does the parent need to look for other home school options?**

We are currently in the process of developing the virtual option/program if families do not plan to send their child(ren) in person. Details of this option will be provided in the coming week(s). It will not be synchronous (live) instruction provided by our teachers in the classrooms. The program will be provided

by the District, but parents always have the option to home school their child(ren). Please see home school information on page 1.

**Is there an option to home school my child(ren)?**

Yes, as always, parents have the right to home school their child(ren) according to the Commissioner's regulations. Pursuant to those regulations, parents are responsible for developing/selecting the curriculum materials, providing the instruction, and determining assessment methods. Parents are responsible for sending the District quarterly reports indicating the child's progress in all areas. This is different from selecting the Alternate Virtual Learning Model Option. Those parents who need additional information regarding home schooling may contact the District Office.

**Will children who chose the remote learning option (regardless of what the district does) be placed in classes with in-person students, or will fully remote classes be formed?**

Fully remote groups/classes will be formed, but students will be rostered in their home school and appropriate grade, assigned to a grade level teacher.

**If I decide to send my child to school (vs. remote schooling) and my child has difficulty with the experience, how do I change my approach and switch them to remote school?**

If this occurs, parent should contact their principal to discuss moving the child to the alternate virtual learning model.

**If we choose to keep our student home for remote learning, do we have the option to reevaluate after the first marking period and then send in person? Will they have the same teacher as remotely or will it be separate?**

Yes, the option to reevaluate the model chosen for your child(ren) will be provided after the first quarter. No, students will not have the same teacher they had for the alternate virtual learning model when they move to the in-person model after the first quarter.

**What does a parent need to do to inform the school & district if they decide to home school now, or at any point during the school year?**

Parents should contact District office and request the home school packet to be sent to them to be filled out and returned.

**By choosing to the remote learning will my child have a teacher to report to?**

Although we are currently still in the process of developing the virtual option/program if families do not plan to send their child(ren) in person, child(ren) will have a teacher to report to in this model.

**Is there the option of home schooling instead of virtual learning if/when circumstances require us to switch to one of the programs involving virtual learning?**

Parents always have the option to home school their child(ren).

**Will remote learners be given any flexibility as to how long they have to hand in assignments, or will they be on the exact same schedule as in-person students?**

For parents who choose the alternate virtual learning model for their child(ren), a separate assignment schedule will be provided. If flexibility is needed in adhering to the schedule, a parent should contact their child's principal.

**What if you decide to keep them home for two marking periods, can you send them after that and will they lose their spot in Old Mill Road?**

Yes, parents may send their child(ren) back after two marking periods. Students will be rostered with a grade level teacher in their school.

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### **In-Person Model**

**What about special areas (library, music, art)?**

Special area teachers will push-in to the classrooms.

**Will there be any small group instruction or group work?**

Yes, the District is in the process of developing building protocols for small group instruction and services.

**Why will these kids be in school an entire day without gym, art, music, or recess and be expected to be in the classroom for the entire day for learning, lunch and more?**

School districts are strongly encouraged to cohort students (keep them in a static group) and avoid intermingling. North Merrick UFSD is implementing this to the maximum extent possible in our in-person model. Physical education will be provided through a push-in model into the classrooms, as well as taking the students outdoors when weather permits. Additionally, weather permitting recess will be held outdoors. The District will work with our Lunch Monitors and Aides to ensure that students are socially distanced and offered opportunities to play. Our Principals will oversee the structure of recess within their respective buildings.

**What will children be doing during the time that they are supposed to be outside for gym class, or art?**

Our special area teachers will be pushing into the classrooms and take students outdoors when the weather permits.

**How is the school going to be able to fit all our children safely in the school to learn with exposing them to more children and teachers than they should be?**

“Pursuant to NYSDOH guidance, schools must ensure that appropriate social distancing (6ft. or barriers) is maintained between individuals while in school facilities and on school grounds (inclusive of students, faculty, and staff), unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance.”—NYSED Reopening Guidance FAQ (July 22, 2020)

In North Merrick UFSD, the students will be socially distanced in the classroom through the use of barriers (desk shields). This model meets the mandate listed above. In order to space student desks at least 4 ft. apart, excess furniture is being removed from the classrooms and placed in storage.

As per the NYSED Reopening Guidance FAQ, schools utilizing barriers are strongly recommended to also encourage the use of face coverings. Therefore, students will be expected to wear masks, to the extent practicable, even while sitting at their desks behind shields. This will serve as an extra precautionary measure. When in common areas and in situations where social distancing is not feasible, students must wear their masks (i.e. walking around the classroom, hallways, bathrooms, etc.). As per the guidance, students are allowed to remove their masks for meals and are required to take mask breaks throughout the day.

#### **Is the District going to hire more teachers to teach the other students?**

At the present time, there has not been any additional hiring of teachers.

**Will homework be limited (or not given at all) given that these children will be spending so much time sitting at desks (whether at home or at school) during the day without recess, proper gym, etc. - and will need the time after school to be physically active. Additionally, how will children learning remotely be able to handle school at home all day and additional homework at home later that same day.**

The amount and type of homework assignments will vary depending on the instructional model in place. As individual circumstances and needs arise and flexibility is needed, it is recommended that the parent contact their child's teacher.

#### **What are the hours for the new day – whether hybrid or full time?**

The full in-person and hybrid model will follow the regular school schedule. In the event there needs to be a staggered arrival or dismissal plan, the respective building principal will communicate this with their school community.

**Usually each class is 19-23 or so children, now that there cannot be more than 15 students in a room where are the overflow going to be taught and who is going to teach them if all the grade teachers have their 15 students already?**

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wear their masks (i.e. walking around the classroom, hallways, bathrooms, etc.). As per the guidance, students are allowed to remove their masks for meals and are required to take mask breaks throughout the day.

If the District implements the hybrid model, only 50% of the students will be in attendance at school each day.

**Will a supply list be coming home soon or is the school waiting for the Governor's decision?**

A supply list for each grade/school is available on the school's website.

**Will they be getting devices before school opens or once school opens?**

Devices will be distributed as needed once school opens.

**Will there be opportunities for outdoor learning for some grades/classes?**

Yes, opportunities for outdoor learning will be provided weather permitting.

**How often will students be able to get outside on the playground or just for fresh air?**

Weather permitting, as much as possible.

**For classes without A/C will there be air purifiers installed?**

Every room is equipped with a uni-vent, which will have a MERV-13 filter in it as per the recommended guidance provided to school districts.

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**Remote Model**

**Is an effort being made to reduce screen time? 9:00-3:00 is LONG time for my kindergartener and 3rd grader to be on screens everyday, even with breaks. I'm hoping that a lot of the asynchronous assignments will be in physical notebooks, worksheets, workbooks, etc. and not all online.**

In a remote learning model, the District will provide a combination of synchronous (live) and asynchronous (independent) learning opportunities. Student materials will be sent home if we transition to the remote model.

**What has the district done to improve the quality of digital remote learning since our experience in March-May?**

The District evaluated the virtual platform, grade level schedules, and resources utilized during the spring. Daily student schedules, models for providing services, special area schedules, and on-line resources have been modified.

**If I choose remote learning and want to send my child back to school after seeing that there are no cases of covid, can I opt to send my children to school for in person learning?**

Yes, the option to reevaluate the model chosen for your child(ren) will be provided after the first quarter.

**With the remote learning option, will my child be given directions on what to do or any virtual learning from their assigned teacher?**

Students will receive directions from their assigned virtual learning teacher.

**Are the arrival and dismissal times being adjusted in anyway to lessen the amount of people entering and exiting the building?**

Arrival and dismissal will occur at various doors throughout each school to separate grades, classes and students. At this time, arrival and dismissal times are remaining the same as always.

**What will the classrooms look like?**

All student desks will be at least 4 feet apart and will face the same direction, including the teacher's desk. Partitions/barriers will be secured to each desk. Tables have been removed from the classrooms.

**Why full time instead of hybrid?**

North Merrick, along with all elementary component districts and most Nassau County elementary schools, are able to open full in-person following the mandates and guidelines put forth by NYS DOH and NYSED.

**Will after school programs like H2O continue?**

After-school programs will not open in-person initially. A virtual option for after-school programs will be considered prior to holding them in-person.

**Will the new parents of children entering kindergarten get a tour of the school or an open school night? Even a zoom meeting if not any of the above?**

A zoom invitation will be sent out from the Principal of each building over the next couple of weeks.

**Will students have their own supplies and books? Will there be no sharing of these items as recommended by the health department?**

Yes

**Do all kids attend at the same time in the same room?**

The full in-person model has all students reporting to their school and their classroom every day, at the same time.

**Will you be sharing actual photos of what the smallest classroom is going to look like so that the students can see in advance and we can prepare them?**

Actual photos of classroom will be shared at the parent discussion forums next week.

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### **Hybrid Model**

**Assuming the school opens fully, would there be an option to send the child in the hybrid setting**

If the school opens fully, the hybrid model is not available.

**The asynchronous days you mentioned for hybrid learning – the other 2 days – where will those take place – home or in school – and will we have an option to keep students home those 2 days if parents wish?**

Asynchronous days will take place at home.

**If my child cannot attend all live sessions in any day, will they be penalized for this?**

Attendance will be taken each live session and recorded accordingly to fulfill State reporting requirements. Families who have extenuating circumstances will need to communicate with their child's teacher or building principal. The District will exercise flexibility in terms of understanding a student's inability to attend all scheduled live sessions due to parental scheduling issues or lack of technology access.

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### **Special Education**

**My child has a 504, how will the school be able to accommodate the special needs of my child?**

The District will ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each student with a disability will be provided the special education and related services identified in the student's IEP. The District will also ensure compliance with 504 plans to the greatest extent possible. According to NYSED's Reopening Guidance, "During the 2020-21 school year, due to the health and safety requirements that must be in place when schools resume, schools may not be able to provide all services in the same mode and/or manner they are typically provided." The District will work with teachers and families on a case-by-case, individualized basis to ensure that students' needs are met.

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### **Facilities**

**Is there air conditioning in the buildings?**

All the buildings are equipped with air conditioning in the common areas which may include the all-purpose rooms, auditoriums, and gymnasiums. There are classroom spaces that are air-conditioned, but not all. Additionally, every room is equipped with a uni-vent, which will have a MERV-13 filter in it as per the recommended guidance provided to school districts.

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**What will the clear desk shields look like and what are the size specifications?**

They are three-sided clear polycarbonate shields which measure 24” high X 20” wide X 19” deep and they meet the NY State building code 2606.4 for flame resistance. They attach to the desks with adhesive tabs to keep them in place.

**How have you updated the airflow in the building?**

All classroom unit ventilators were replaced as part of the recently completed Bond Project. All units meet or exceed ventilation requirements set forth by the State Education Department and are controlled by an automated building management system. Areas of assembly also have appropriate ventilation and the District is in the process of replacing all filters with MERV 13 rated filters throughout the buildings.

**September and the beginning of October can continue to be hot, will the district be allowed to use the AC units that are written in my daughters 504?**

Yes, all 504 accommodations will be met.

**Why was an AB hybrid schedule chosen, and not an AA/BB schedule as it pertains to cleaning?**

The school district follows requirements from the CDC and DOH on cleaning schools. We will continue enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces and school spaces during the day with daily deep cleaning after school hours.

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**Social Distancing**

**Is there any way to have the desks spaced the recommended 6 feet apart per CDC guidelines?**

“Pursuant to NYSDOH guidance, schools must ensure that appropriate social distancing (6ft. or barriers) is maintained between individuals while in school facilities and on school grounds (inclusive of students, faculty, and staff), unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance.”—NYSED Reopening Guidance FAQ (July 22, 2020)

In North Merrick UFSD, the students will be socially distanced in the classroom through the use of barriers (desk shields). This model meets the mandate listed above. In order to space student desks at least 4 ft. apart, excess furniture is being removed from the classrooms and placed in storage. Alternative spaces are also being considered as classroom space.

**You mentioned desks 4 feet apart if in full time instruction. Classrooms are small – how will you fit at least 20 desks 4 feet apart?**

Classroom dimensions vary throughout the district. Everything except teacher and student desks is being removed from each classroom. Using alternative spaces, such as gymnasiums and general purpose rooms, when needed as classrooms is also being evaluated.

## **Masks**

**If masks are to be worn and doors closed, will classrooms be air conditioned in the early fall and late spring as to ensure effective circulation and limit heat exhaustion?**

Many, but not all classroom spaces are air-conditioned. Every room is equipped with a uni-vent, which will have a MERV-13 filter in it as per the recommended guidance provided to school districts for proper air circulation.

**What does “to the extent practicable” with regards to mask wearing mean precisely?**

As per the NYSED Reopening Guidance FAQ, schools utilizing barriers are strongly recommended to also encourage the use of face coverings. Therefore, students will be expected to wear masks, to the extent practicable, even while sitting at their desks behind shields. Medical issues may prevent continuous wearing of masks. Masks will serve as an extra precautionary measure. When in common areas and in situations where social distancing is not feasible, students must wear their masks (i.e. walking around the classroom, hallways, bathrooms, etc.). As per the guidance, students are allowed to remove their masks for meals and are required to take mask breaks throughout the day.

**When is a time the students will NOT be wearing masks?**

While eating lunch at their desk, during mask breaks, and when outside socially distanced from others.

**During the mask breaks you mentioned – where will the teacher be? As soon as students take off their masks, it is not safe to be in that enclosed space.**

The teacher will be in the room with his/her mask on, and the students will be at their desks which are equipped with desk shields.

**Since desks will not be 6 ft away how long will students be expected to keep their masks on at their desks before given a “mask break”?**

In North Merrick UFSD, the students will be socially distanced in the classroom through the use of barriers (desk shields). Children will be explicitly taught the importance of wearing masks and the reason for social distancing as it relates to their daily lives at school and their personal health and safety. Teachers will work with students to ensure they are wearing their masks to the extent practicable, while assessing when individual mask breaks might be needed in addition to full class mask breaks. Time between mask breaks has not been determined as it will vary class to class based on age and individual student needs.

**How can you expect these children to keep masks on for the entire day when they don't keep them on with their parents?**

Children will be explicitly taught the importance of wearing masks and the reason for social distancing as it relates to their daily lives at school and their personal health and safety. Teachers will work with students to ensure they are wearing their masks to the extent practicable, while assessing when individual mask breaks might be needed in addition to full class mask breaks. If

there is a blatant refusal to wear a mask when social distancing is not feasible, the teacher and/or administration will look to partner with parents to address the situation.

**What are you going to do when a child does not want to wear them anymore because they can't breathe with them?**

Provide mask breaks and individual support.

**Are masks mandatory in the classroom?**

As per the NYSED Reopening Guidance FAQ, schools utilizing barriers are strongly recommended to also encourage the use of face coverings. Therefore, students will be expected to wear masks, to the extent practicable, even while sitting at their desks behind shields. Medical issues may prevent continuous wearing of masks. Masks will serve as an extra precautionary measure. When in common areas and in situations where social distancing is not feasible, students must wear their masks (i.e. walking around the classroom, hallways, bathrooms, etc.). As per the guidance, students are allowed to remove their masks for meals and are required to take mask breaks throughout the day.

**If there are dividers between every child why do they still need to wear masks?**

As per the NYSED Reopening Guidance FAQ, schools utilizing barriers are strongly recommended to also encourage the use of face coverings. Therefore, students will be expected to wear masks, to the extent practicable, even while sitting at their desks behind shields. This will serve as an extra precautionary measure.

**Where and how often will the mask breaks occur?**

As often as necessary, which will vary from grade to grade, class to class.

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**Lunch/ Recess**

**What will lunch and recess look like? How do you plan to separate the students during recess?**

Lunch will be eaten in the classrooms. Weather permitting, students will go outdoors for recess. The District will work with the Lunch Monitors and Aides to ensure that students are socially distanced and offered opportunities to play. The Principals will oversee the structure of recess within their respective buildings. For more details on lunch, please see the "Child Nutrition" section of the District's Reopening Plan.

**How many classes will be allowed on the playground at one time?**

One class at a time, on a rotating schedule.

## **Kindergarten**

**I am new to the district and have twins starting in Sept (K). Will the twins be placed in the same class next year?**

Yes, we are placing each set of twins in the same class due to the cohort model we are adhering to.

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## **Health and Safety**

**If someone is diagnosed with the Coronavirus, will a remote option be implemented for that class to ensure that learning continues?**

Yes, a virtual model will be put in place for that class.

**After seeing the increases of positive cases, will we have a choice to send our children back to be in class?**

If there is an increase in positive cases, the instructional model may change based on this data. We will work with individual parents to address shifting circumstances.

**How quickly will we be notified of any positive cases in the classroom/school and what are the procedures for shutting down?**

Notification will be provided as quickly as possible. We will work collaboratively with the Nassau County Department of Health when, and if, a diagnosis of COVID-19 was to be identified in a school. The response to a new diagnosis will follow communicable disease response frameworks. If notified of a confirmed or presumptive case of COVID-19, the District will follow the direction of the Nassau County Department of Health in notifying affected individuals, cleaning and disinfecting appropriate spaces, and providing data to public health organizations to aid their investigation/contact tracing.

**The plan also says students will be directed to wash their hands frequently (before lunch, after PE, etc.) which is great, but the plan also says that only one student will be allowed in the restroom at a time. Are there sinks available in classrooms or other locations for the students to safely use?**

In addition to the bathrooms, some classrooms and alternate locations are equipped with sinks in each school.

**Will there be a designated hand washing time on a regular basis throughout the day?**

This is currently being discussed with Principals.

**What daily screening of students (e.g., temperature checks, attestation of being symptom free) will be conducted by school faculty and staff? If only parent-based reporting will take place, how will the school ensure accurate and complete reporting is mandatory for students to attend school?**

Daily temperature checks will be taken prior to students entering the building in addition to the parent-based reporting of daily temperature and attestation of being symptom free.

**Similar to past notifications sent home when a student is diagnosed with the flu or strep, will parents be notified if a fellow student tests positive for COVID-19? How will this notification take place and on what timeline?**

Yes, through the tracing process, and as quickly as possible per the DOH guidance.

**How will the decision of what visitors are allowed in the school be made? Will any of them be allowed to come into contact with children (e.g., assemblies, book fairs, holiday boutique, mystery reader)?**

Upon the re-opening of schools, there will be no visitors allowed into the buildings unless approved by the principal in an emergency. The visitor will have their temperature taken in the vestibule and will be asked the screening questions prior to approval to enter the building.

**Activities like singing and physical exertion increase the distance the virus spreads. Will the student be allowed to do these activities at their desks especially with less than the recommended 6 feet of social distancing?**

Singing and physical movement will not be allowed in the classroom.

**How will the children safely get breaks from their desks throughout the day? Exercise? Special classes?**

Special area teachers will be pushing into the classrooms and students must wear masks when moving through the building.

**If teachers and staff will be enforcing rules for social distancing, mask rules, mandatory hand sanitization etc., what training will be provided so that they fully understand the rules and are able to properly enforce them?**

As per the mandate/requirement of NYSED, all teachers and staff will be appropriately covid trained prior to the re-opening of schools.

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### **Social Emotional Well Being**

**What social experiences will be provided to help the children continue to interact as children?**

Classroom interaction and recess.

### **Bellmore Merrick Child Care Program**

The BMCCP is **not** offering a before care breakfast program for **any** district at this time. The BMCCP will be offering a K-2 program in North Merrick School District from dismissal until 5:00 pm. When run as usual, the BMCCP intermingles students and the District's Reopening Plan calls for cohorting students which based on their staffing reduces the amount of families they can service.