

Frequently Asked Questions about Reopening Ashford School in Fall 2020

(Updated on Wednesday, August 19th)

If I indicated that I needed to borrow a device, when would I receive it?

Families can begin picking up device(s) starting on Monday, August 31st. Please come to the front door of the school building.

When will distance learning families get a schedule?

Teachers will be in touch with families by Tuesday, September 1st. You will be notified of homeroom teachers via mail.

Will there be sports or after school activities?

To be determined.

What will bus arrivals look like?

If dropping off your student(s) in the morning, between 8:10-8:30, please drive into the back parking lot. Students in grades K-3, should be dropped off at the cone in the circle, and exit the car on the passenger side of the vehicle. Please do not pass vehicles in front of you. Students in grades 4-8, should not be dropped in the circle unless with their younger siblings. When dropping off students in grade 4-8, drive straight past where the buses are usually parked and follow the perimeter of the parking lot, dropping students at the beginning of the sidewalk. Please do not pass vehicles in front of you. These students will enter through the side door to the cafeteria.

If dropping off your student(s) between 8:30-8:40, please use the front parking lot. Also PK students should only be dropped off at 8:30-8:40 in the front parking lot.

NEW - When dropping off more than one student, go to the drop off location of the youngest child.

What will student pick-up look like?

Student pick-up or dismissal will look much like the morning arrival time with the same locations. Parents will remain in their cars and their children will be escorted out to the vehicle. Students in grade K-3, will be picked-up in the circle. These younger students will be supervised and waiting in the gymnasium or lower lobby. Students in grade 4-8 will be picked up at the beginning of the sidewalk. Older students will be supervised and be waiting on the basketball court. Staff, located inside and outside, will communicate with radios about the order of students being picked-up.

Students must listen for their names to be announced. For PK students, we are asking that parents pick up at the front parking lot after the buses leave, at 3:25. Many of our staff will be helping to facilitate student pick-ups.

NEW - When picking up more than one student, go to the pick up location of the youngest child.

What will lunchtime look like?

All students will eat lunch in their assigned classroom. At times, teachers will be able to take kids outside to eat.

Students in grades K through 3 will have lunches delivered to the classroom.

Students in grades 4 through 8 will pick up lunches in the kitchen.

What are appropriate masks?

As families begin to prepare for the upcoming school year, we want to remind everyone that masks must be appropriate. In accordance to our Return to School Plan, “if a student is bringing their own face mask to school, they must adhere to the school's rules regarding appropriate attire in the building.”

- No political statements of any kind.
- No frightening or violent images.

Also, no gaiters will be allowed. Students are asked to come to school wearing a mask that covers the nose and mouth. This includes riding the bus.

How do additional mask-free breaks fit-in with traditional recess schedules? How often do kids get breaks from masks? Is that schedule different by grade?

Teachers will determine when mask breaks will occur in their classrooms. Individual students may need more frequent mask breaks, which may take place in a designated space in the classroom under the supervision of the teacher or paraprofessional, if present. Recess will be supervised by teachers and each class will have an assigned location on the playground. Students within a homeroom will be distanced from each other when masks are off. Students will carry their own masks, so that they can place them on before entering the school building.

What will my children’s classrooms look like?

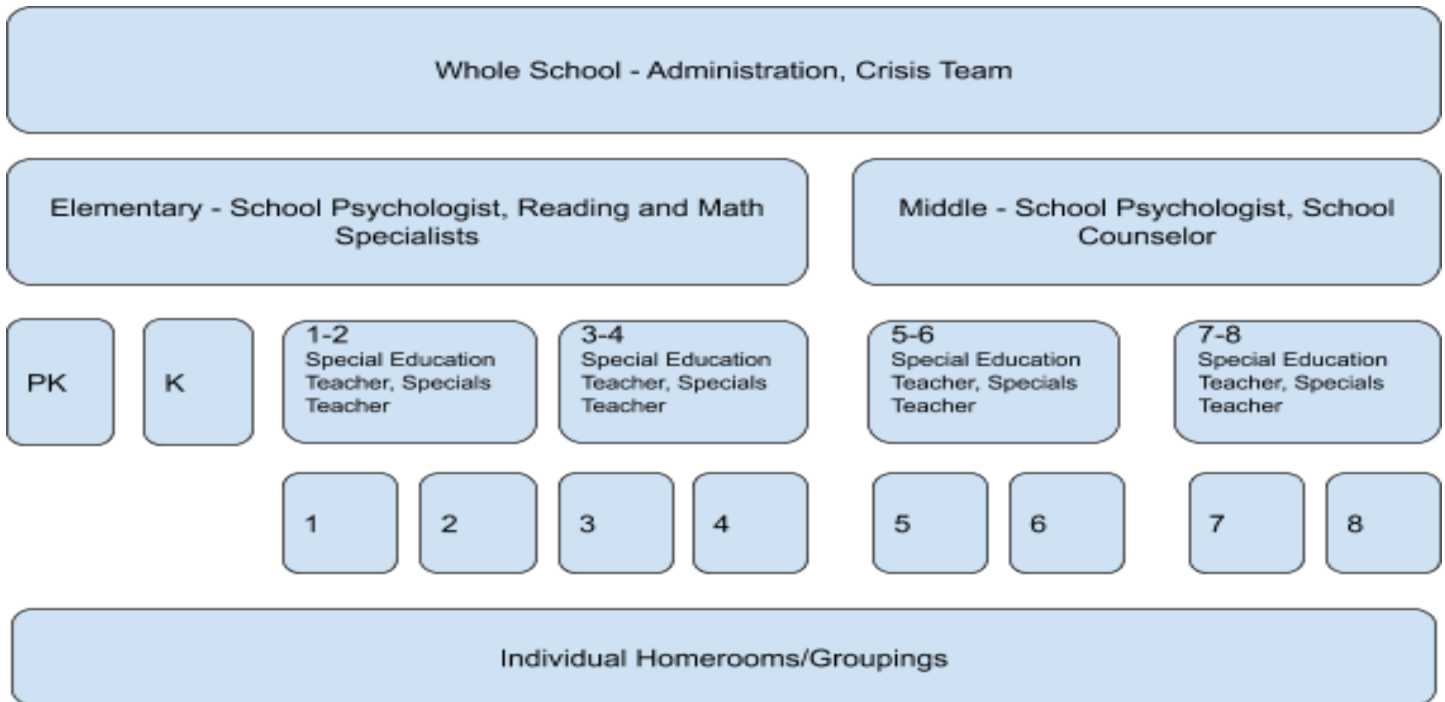
In many classrooms we needed to move and/or change furniture to ensure distancing between students. Students will not be sitting at tables together unless they are separated by a divider. We are trying to acquire a large tent for outdoor use. Also, teachers will be able to take their students outside for lessons when the weather allows. When outside and with adequate distancing, the teacher may allow students to take their masks off for an extended mask break.

What is a cohort?

Our plans to cohort are designed to reduce contact while still maintaining a high quality education for all of our students. This diagram (levels of cohorting) provides a general overview but is not meant to include every staff member. We will be isolating students at the homeroom level (number of students between 9-15 as of Monday, August 24th). So, students will not interact with all the other students in

the grade level. Students will not move from classroom to classroom, rather teachers will move to the students to provide instruction.

5 Levels of Cohorting: (whole school, half of the school, 1-2 grades levels, 1 grade level, homeroom)



What do specials look like in 2020-2021?

A specials teacher will be assigned to one or two grade levels for approximately 4-6 weeks, and will provide in-person instruction in the classrooms, remote instruction by Zooming into classrooms, or taking the student outside for the specials class. Students may go to the science room for instruction, but there is sufficient time between classes for cleaning. After the 4-6 week period, specials teachers will be reassigned to two other grade levels. PK will not have specials classes. All distance learners at home will have art for the beginning of the year.

The first schedule of specials is

K - art

1 and 2 - music

3 and 4 - science

5 and 6 - physical education

7 and 8 - physical education

What percent of students will be attending instruction in-school?

67% or $\frac{2}{3}$. This may change because of new students that enroll, or students who are distance learning at home decide to switch to in-person instruction at school. We ask that families strongly consider waiting until the end of the trimester to make changes. This allows us time to plan.

Will safety drills be held?

Safety drills are still required, but will be modified to maintain social distancing.

Many of our students have siblings at EO or other regional high schools. If a sibling at another school is quarantined does that mean the Ashford sibling should also quarantine? What about that child's class/teachers?

We are working with local health officials, including our medical advisor, to determine the best approach to quarantines. Since it is difficult to plan ahead for every situation that may arise, we will consult with the health officials in every single situation. Siblings within the same grade level have been placed in the same classroom cohort.

What activities, supports, or training will be focused on kids' social and emotional needs coming back to school? Kids have not been in school in nearly 6 months, and for much of that time, they were likely extremely socially isolated. How will the school cultivate a sense of community again?

We are planning our professional development days at the beginning of the year to include training and planning to meet the social and emotional needs of our students. A committee met this summer to prepare workshops for school staff during the professional development days.

Are there additional cleaning procedures for playground equipment?

High touch areas of playground equipment will be periodically cleaned throughout the day. However, transmission from playground equipment is unlikely according to the Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD).

Criteria for closing down the school?

School will be closed based on state and regional medical guidance.

What is the difference between distance learning at home and traditional homeschooling?

If you elect the homeschooling option, then that would mean that you as a parent are taking on the role of teacher and providing for instruction in all required academic subjects. If you wish for your child(ren) to participate in remote learning, then he would be working with our faculty and his peers via remote learning. If homeschooling is the option you choose, you must fill out a "Notice of Intent" form and return it to the Superintendent's Office. The form verifies that the homeschooled student will be taught academic subjects as required by the State of Connecticut Department of Education.

