

# ASHFORD SCHOOL

*“Instruction for Full Recovery  
from the COVID 19 Pandemic”  
and our Commitment to  
Continuity of Services Plan  
2021-2022*

Based on Guidelines of the Connecticut State Department  
of Education

# The Ashford School Plan

Date of Submission:	June 22, 2021
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***Note:***

***On June 30, 2021 our current Superintendent, Dr. Longo, is retiring and will be replaced by Mr. Craig Creller beginning July 1st.***

***Mr. Creller's email will be: [ccreller@ashfordct.org](mailto:ccreller@ashfordct.org)***

## INTRODUCTION

Over the years it has been established that the Administration, Faculty and Staff of Ashford School are committed to supporting the children of our town. While the past sixteen months proved to be a challenging time, we all navigated the complexities of teaching and learning during the COVID pandemic. In Ashford we were able to provide a full in-person learning model as well as an opt-out, distance learning option for those who were not ready for in-person attendance. We mobilized a school plan with various models of instruction to allow for the fluid nature of our community's response to the virus. Various mitigation strategies were used to support our efforts and maintain an in-person learning model. Cohorting allowed us to minimize the impact when a COVID case touched the school community. We believe that mask wearing and social distancing were key factors in helping to minimize the spread within our school. In fact, anecdotal evidence supports the notion that the transmission of COVID was rare within our school community.

We are now planning strategies for the next school year. Regulations may require that Ashford not offer a fully remote learning option next year. It is likely we will be required to continue various mitigation strategies as mandated by the SDE (State Department of Education) and DPH (Department of Public Health). Our goal is for children, families, and staff to remain as safe as possible while engaging in educational opportunities. **The following document shall be considered a living and ever-evolving plan that will be adjusted according to developing research and guidance from the State Department of Education.**

We appreciate the commitment and flexibility of our faculty and staff, children and families as we continue to navigate learning during this historical time in our live

In planning for the safe return of all of our students to in-person learning at Ashford School, it has been essential to envision the safest environment and the highest quality instruction for the school community. Based on guidelines provided to school districts from the Connecticut State Department of Education and the State of Connecticut. **Ashford School is currently planning for a full In-Person Learning Model.** Like last year, the plan is intended to be a fluid document that will evolve based on the public health data and research available to mitigate the spread of the virus. As we proceed toward the fall, we will continue to receive input from our educational partners, students, and families and will continue to work toward providing the best opportunities for our greatest resource—the students in the State of Connecticut. An “In-Person Learning Model” refers to the desire to have all students and all staff return in the fall for a full-length traditional day of school with necessary modifications given the pandemic. A “safe” reopening refers to adherence to expectations and guidelines from the State of Connecticut, the CDC, the local health officials (Northeast District Department of Health), and other sources that will be in place to ensure that the schools’ environments support learning during this time of COVID 19. Rates of positive COVID results will determine whether the schools need to transition to a remote learning model.

A central belief is that the children of Ashford need to be connected to teachers, interventionists, service providers, coaches, and mentors. As the schools open in the fall, the plan is to phase in all aspects of school life in the safest and most appropriate manner. It may be necessary to continue with our suite of mitigating strategies to protect students and staff.

Ashford School values the contributions and suggestions of parents, caregivers, families, and students in the decision-making process. The Ashford School faculty will continue to play an active role in building trust and credibility for the plans that are to be implemented. Parents and community members are invited to give regular feedback and suggestions concerning the plans to reopen and phase in all aspects of School life

## Ashford Priorities

The Ashford School Community has identified priority areas that must be in place to fully reopen, including: (1) the safety of the students and staff; (2) the development of appropriate educational opportunities; (3) the awareness of social and emotional well-being of students, families, and staff; and (4) the expectation that all children will achieve at the expected grade level by June 2022.

	<p><b>Safety of Students and Staff</b></p> <p>Our schools will be prepared to reinforce healthy practices among our staff and students, take preventative actions to prevent the spread of all respiratory illnesses, and prepare for any potential cases or increased transmission of COVID 19.</p>
	<p><b>Development of Appropriate Educational Opportunities</b></p> <p>Our schools will reopen with a full in-person learning model. As new information relating to COVID transmission becomes available we will be flexible to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff.</p>
	<p><b>Awareness of Social and Emotional Well-Being</b></p> <p>Our schools will reopen knowing that the COVID-19 pandemic has created different types of traumatic experiences and high levels of stress for many of our staff, students, and families. The pandemic has shown the importance of social/emotional well-being for all. In addition, there is a growing body of research proving that social/emotional learning (SEL) is fundamental to academic success.</p>
	<p><b>Achievement at Expected Grade Level</b></p> <p>Our schools will consider and solidify a systematic cycle of assessments, including initial screenings and formative and summative assessments in order to inform instruction and gauge student learning. We will work to analyze individual student data to identify shifts and changes in instruction to meet students' needs and implement intervention strategies.</p>

### OBLIGATION TO ADHERE TO STATE GUIDELINES

In addition to our own priorities, the Ashford School expected to follow the guidelines of the State Department of Education. Such publications are posted on [www.ct.gov/sde](http://www.ct.gov/sde). These guidelines are subject to change.

The SDE has provided each district with a template to support its Safe Return to In-Person Learning

There are five areas that school districts must consider when developing the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan:

**I. Health and Safety Strategies**

**II. Continuity of Services**

**III. Public Comment**

**IV. Periodic Review Process**

**V. Understandable and Uniform Format**

Overview:

**I. Health and Safety Strategies**

Below are descriptions of Ashford's approach to provide a suite of mitigation strategies to keep students and staff safe.

- **Universal and correct wearing of masks:** Ashford Public Schools will follow all State Department of Education mandated policies regarding mask wearing. If mask wearing becomes a local decision the Board of Education will discuss and take action on the matter prior to the start of school. While school is in session and effective until July 20, all staff, students and visitors will wear masks while inside school buildings until otherwise directed by the CDC, CT-DPH or CSDE or by Executive Order.
- **Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding):** The district will comply with CDC guidelines.
- **Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:** Handwashing procedures will be displayed in all public and student restrooms and will be continued as a standard protocol throughout the day. Signs for proper respiratory etiquette will be displayed in classrooms and hallways and reviewed with staff and students on a regular basis.
- **Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation:** The district will continue its current cleaning protocols. Bathrooms and high touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- **Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments:** The district will continue to utilize contact tracing protocols developed during the 2020-21 school year and will continue to collaborate with the Northeast District Department of Health on community contact tracing. The district will follow current CDC and CT-DPH guidelines on isolation and quarantining.
- **Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible:** The district will continue to partner with the Northeast District Department of Health and other health providers to provide vaccination clinics to staff and students as needed. The district will continue to share vaccination literature with the Ashford community.

- **Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies:** The district will continue to accommodate students with special health care needs or disabilities whose learning (direct instruction) or other needs (e.g. assisting with toileting, feeding, or ambulation) may require closer proximity and/or direct contact or other accommodations.

## II. Continuity of Services

The district will utilize existing staff and additional staff hired through the ESSER II and ARP/ESSER grants to ensure continuity of services to address the academic, social, emotional, mental and physical needs of students. The district will have a full in-person learning in place. A remote learning option is not available in the 2021-2022 school year. The district will utilize local and grant funding to provide interventions for students.

### Ashford's Essential Instructional Elements

- Assessment:** Focus analysis of the previous eighteen months assessments to determine individual student's points of learning loss
- Data Driven Instruction:** Utilizing results of assessment analysis to design small group or individualized instruction targeting areas of learning loss.
- Differentiated Instruction:** Utilizing data to develop interventions differentiated by identified needs
- Dialogue, Discussion, Debate, Group Work:** Healthy Social Emotional Interaction
- Interdisciplinary Experience:** Relating Content, Real World Connections
- Intensified Instruction:** Initiate additional opportunities for learning such as after school academic tutoring, clubs, summer enrichment camps, field trips and summer tutoring

## III. Public Comment

Public comment is a key element of stakeholder engagement. The public can provide feedback through the survey posted on our school website, [www.ashfordct.org](http://www.ashfordct.org).

## IV. Periodic Review Process

Ashford is required to periodically review and, as appropriate, revise their Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan at least every six months through September 30, 2023. Each review must include seeking public comment on the plan and developing the plan after taking into account the public comment.

Below are the dates that Ashford School must submit a refreshed or updated plan to CSDE via eGMS. Review/revisit Dates:

- June 22, 2021 - Initial Survey
- December 23, 2021
- June 23, 2022
- December 23, 2022
- June 23, 2023

## **V. Understandable and Uniform Format**

Federal regulations require that this plan be in an understandable and uniform format, to the extent practicable; is written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable, orally translated; and upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent. Ashford School has utilized the Connecticut State Department of Education's template to ensure that the information is in a uniform format. Ashford School currently will provide a copy of this document in requested languages or in an oral format as requested or any other format to ensure accessibility.

## **VI. In Conclusion**

The COVID 19 Pandemic caused every family, and every student, to formulate strategies and behavioral responses unique to themselves in order to cope and deal with the impact of their situation. Some families suffered financial loss, some suffered loss of family or friends, some were devastated by the virus, and all were impacted in some way. We will devote as much time, as many resources, and as much effort as is required to assist our students and their families with their recovery from the impact of the past eighteen months.

Our approach will be a team effort that will evolve as we identify needs and discover solutions. We will remain flexible and receptive to new information. If there is any time that you feel that you have some information that could help us respond to our student's needs, please contact the appropriate administrator or staff member.

As we indicated at the beginning of this document, our plan is a living document and our strategies will change and evolve as needed. Ashford School is a community, and we will address the needs of our students with a continuity of services indicative of our community mindset. We will be posting more information from time to time, so please check the Ashford School website regularly for updates and additions.

***Thank you all, together we ensure that our Children receive the best education possible, no matter the challenges!***