

# ASHFORD SCHOOL

*“Instruction for Full Recovery  
from the COVID 19 Pandemic”  
and our Commitment to  
Continuity of Services Plan  
2022-2023*

Based on Guidelines of the Connecticut State Department  
of Education

# The Ashford School Plan

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## 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 couple of years proved to be a challenging time, we all navigated the complexities of teaching and learning during the COVID pandemic. 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 are now planning strategies for the coming school 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 lives.


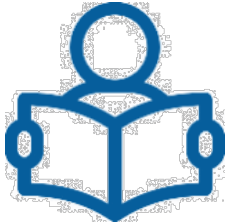


In planning for the continued safe return of all of our students to in-person learning at Ashford School, it has been essential to envision the safest environment and the highest quality instruction for the school community. Based on guidelines provided to school districts from the Connecticut State 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 (Eastern Highlands Health District), 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 the strategies taken within the learning environment.

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 2023.

	<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 continue a systematic cycle of assessments, including 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. These strategies are taken directly from the guidelines provided by the local health district. Please note that all of the information provided below are recommendations and guidelines, not executive orders. Those have all expired. Locally we are working with our school nurse, administration and the local health district to make the best decisions for our community.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), State Department of Education (CSDE), and Office of Early Childhood (OEC) are excited to announce the ***Launching into Healthy Learning*** initiative for the start of the 2022- 2023 school year! This initiative is designed to get Connecticut's kids back to school, child care, and camp at the scheduled start of the school year, to keep them there in-person as much as possible throughout the year, and to keep them healthy and learning all year long. In addition to updated DPH guidance for K-12 school administrators, child care, and youth camp program operators (*Respiratory Disease Prevention Strategies for Schools, Child Care, and Camps: Fall 2022*), DPH, CSDE, and OEC will work closely with school districts, child care, and youth camp facilities in the coming weeks to provide the following resources to Connecticut's children and their families.

**COVID-19 VACCINATION CLINICS** will be organized for all 36 of Connecticut's Alliance School Districts that are open to school, child care, and youth camp staff, students, and families in those communities. DPH, CSDE, and OEC will coordinate with Alliance District administrators, child care operators, and youth camps to deliver on-site state-sponsored mobile vaccination clinics ("yellow vans") to offer COVID-19 primary or booster vaccine doses to anyone 6 months of age or older. Administrators, child care operators, and youth camps in non-Alliance Districts can also request free mobile vaccination clinics for their communities by contacting [SDE.COVID19@ct.gov](mailto:SDE.COVID19@ct.gov) at CSDE (for school district administrators) or [HealthEquityTeam@ct.gov](mailto:HealthEquityTeam@ct.gov).

**SELF-TEST KITS** will be available free of charge to all Connecticut schools, child care programs, and youth camps to distribute to their students, staff, and service providers (e.g., bus drivers, specialized instruction providers, etc.). The State of Connecticut has ordered approximately 2.5 million self-test kits (5 million individual tests) for distribution to school districts and early childhood education programs. The State plans to order additional self-test kits for distribution to licensed child care programs and operating youth camps throughout Connecticut as well. For more information on test kit distribution, school administrators should work within their Districts to coordinate COVID-19 supply requests or contact [SDE.COVID19@ct.gov](mailto:SDE.COVID19@ct.gov) for more information. School districts, licensed child care centers, and operating youth camps will receive additional information in the coming days directly from CSDE and OEC.

**TEST-MASK-GO** is an optional strategy designed to increase the number of days of in-person learning and care available to children, both to improve the social/emotional/physical wellbeing of students, staff, and their families and

to enhance learning recovery. The fall and spring allergy seasons combined with New England winters present a challenge for schools, child care, and youth camp facilities that were advised in previous years to exclude individuals from in-person attendance if they had any of a long list of symptoms associated with COVID-19. Schools, child care programs, and camp operators choosing to utilize a *Test-Mask-Go* strategy can give children and staff with mild respiratory disease symptoms (e.g., infrequent cough, congestion, runny nose, sore throat, etc.) the option to continue participating in-person provided:

- they are fever-free (< 100°F) and feel well enough to participate,
- they do not live with anyone who has had COVID-19 in the past 2 weeks,
- they can wear a mask consistently and correctly (if facility operators require them to do so), and
- they test negative for COVID-19 prior to reporting in-person on every day they have symptoms, as well as one final test on the morning their symptoms have completely resolved.

Individuals who have any respiratory disease symptoms **should not** use the *Test-Mask-Go* strategy if:

- they have a fever ( $\geq 100^\circ\text{F}$ ) or feel feverish (they should not report in-person until their fever has resolved for at least 24 hours without the use of medication)
- they live with a person who recently tested positive for COVID-19 (within the past 2 weeks)

Instead, these individuals should stay home until their symptoms resolve and test for COVID-19. Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 should complete isolation according to the [CDC Q/I Calculator](#). School, child care, or youth camp administrators or health staff who have questions regarding *Test-Mask-Go* should contact [DPH.EPI@ct.gov](mailto:DPH.EPI@ct.gov).

Ashford School is **still required to report COVID-19 cases** using systems put in place by DPH and OEC, and DPH encourages continued sharing of general information about COVID-19 cases in your facilities with families. However, DPH recommends that school, child care, and camp administrators rely on the CDC [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) to determine when to consider applying enhanced measures for the prevention of respiratory viral diseases (e.g., COVID-19, influenza). Facilities located in counties with Low community levels can focus on maximizing in-person learning days and rely on routine everyday strategies to provide healthy learning environments. If their county moves to the **Medium** level, administrators can consider whether implementing some additional prevention strategies could be beneficial in mitigating any impact that increased COVID-19 cases in their community may have on in-person learning. Facilities located in counties with a High COVID-19 Community Level can consider whether implementing even more advanced mitigation strategies could be beneficial, including such things as universal masking and contact tracing, to prevent further surges or outbreaks at their facilities. Administrators who may be experiencing case clusters or outbreaks at a facility should [contact DPH](#) and [their local health department](#).

Facilities located in counties with **LOW** community levels should maintain everyday prevention strategies:

- Encourage and facilitate [COVID-19 vaccination](#) for all children 6 months of age and older and all staff, including [booster vaccine doses](#) when recommended.
- Support children and staff who choose to continue [wearing a mask](#) even when not required.
- Follow [isolation guidelines](#) for individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have symptoms and live in a household with someone with COVID-19.
- Recommend [self-testing and masking](#) for children and staff with respiratory disease symptoms (with or without fever) or known exposures to COVID-19 cases with or without symptoms.
- Ensure that ventilation systems are well-maintained and operating appropriately.
- Maintain routine cleaning and disinfection protocols for all classroom surfaces and common areas.

- Continue advising parents to report cases of COVID-19 to the school and maintain accurate absentee data.

Additional prevention strategies to consider for facilities located in counties with **MEDIUM** community levels:

- Increase spacing between seated individuals in classrooms and during other activities, if possible.
- Be prepared to respond quickly to rapid increases in absenteeism, cases, or outbreaks in schools.
- Increase ventilation to ensure maximum delivery of fresh outdoor air to occupied spaces, appropriate filtration of any recirculated air, and use of outdoor spaces to the extent possible.
- Reinforce frequent hand cleaning and proper respiratory (cough/sneeze) etiquette.
- Communicate early and often with students, staff, and families regarding any changes in policies and procedures in order to ensure a heightened awareness of any respiratory disease symptoms.

Advanced prevention strategies to consider for facilities located in counties with **HIGH** community levels or those experiencing outbreaks:

- Implement a universal mask use policy for indoor spaces.
- Limiting outside visitors to the school to those who are necessary for instruction or student support.
- Cohort classrooms and during meals, recess, and other gathering times.
- Implement strategies to monitor and prevent in-school transmission of COVID-19, such as contact tracing, quarantine or daily screening testing (i.e., *Test-Mask-Go*) of close contacts of a COVID-19 case in any setting (with or without symptoms), and classroom-level exposure notifications.
- Discuss whether extracurricular activities that involve high-intensity close contact (e.g., indoor athletics, performing arts) should be temporarily suspended.

## II. Continuity of Services

The district will utilize supports 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 2022-2023 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 an email to [cford@ashfordct.org](mailto:cford@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:

- December 23, 2022
- June 23, 2023
- December 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!***