



MERRIMACK

School District SAU 26

Achieving Excellence



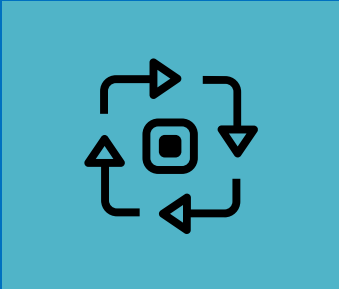
MSD Health and Safety Task Force Members

Staff Member	Role and School
Pattie Chouinard	Merrimack District Nurse, Merrimack High School
Kelly Grassini	School Nurse, Reeds Ferry School (RFS)
Laura Bobbitt	Administrative Assistant, RFS
Michaela Champlin	Assistant Principal, Thorntons Ferry School (TFS)
Julie DeLuca	Principal, TFS
Jackie McMahon	School Nurse, TFS
Wendy Greenland	Paraeducator, Mastricola Elementary School (MES)
Elizabeth Compton	Library Media Specialist, MES
Zoe Schwalje	8 th Grade Language Arts Teacher, Merrimack Middle School (MMS)
Steve Chasin	Health Teacher, MMS
Tom Tousseau	Director of Maintenance
Melissa Gagne	Director of Human Resources
Dorian Walters	Administrative Assistant, TFS
Alisha Hansen-Proulx	Assistant Principal, MES
Betsy Fowler	Special Education Coordinator, Student Services, TFS
Jennifer Saucier	Physical Education Teacher, TFS
Jennifer Robinson	5th Grade Teacher, Mastricola Upper Elementary School



**After School Board approval:
gather public input and comments**

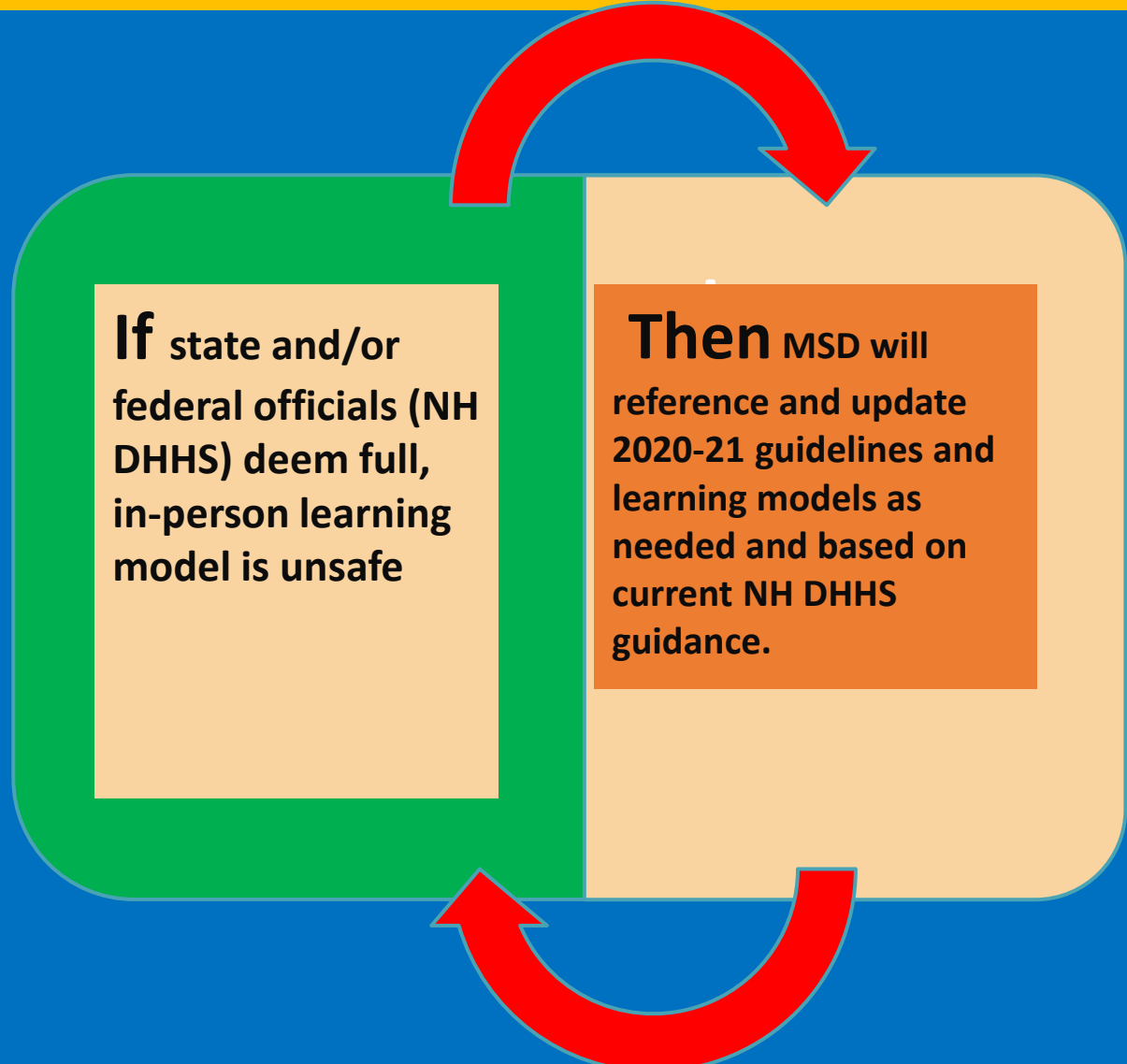
What was our process?



CAVEAT

If state and/or federal officials (NH DHHS) deem full, in-person learning model is unsafe

Then MSD will reference and update 2020-21 guidelines and learning models as needed and based on current NH DHHS guidance.



MAJOR CONSIDERATION

- ▶ *This document is a dynamic plan that may change as local, state, and national trends fluctuate. MSD will consult the most updated guidance from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, and may adapt this plan as needed to fit the needs of the school community and as directed by the Merrimack School Board.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Intent

Return to pre-COVID-19 protocols and procedures for the 2021-2022 school year based on updated NH DHHS guidance.

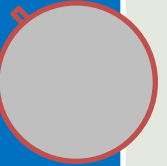
Continue

A variety of safety and health protocols and practices developed in 2020-2021


Monitor

NH DHHS guidance and local data on COVID-19 Dashboard.

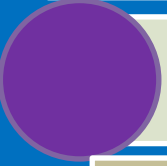
RECOMMENDATIONS



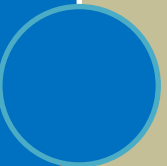
Face masks optional for staff and students. The MSD Mask Policy will be reviewed and determined by the School Board on July 12, 2021. Any changes in mask requirements will be informed by the Merrimack School Board and NH DHHS guidance.



With students at full capacity, physical distancing will not be possible



School facilities are open to all students, staff, families and visitors with health and safety measures in place.



School Nurses will communicate with families in providing guidance on students on return to school after illness or exposure based on NH DHHS/DPHS current guidelines. The Director of Human Resources will provide return to work protocols and guidance for MSD staff



The MSD will adhere to all contact tracing and quarantining requirements of the NH DHHS



Schedules - Lunch and Recess schedules will return to Pre-COVID-19 conditions as determined by each school. Plexiglass and other protective gear will be available to staff as needed.



Review of NH DHHS Guidance and Data

Press Release

For Immediate Release

June 9, 2021

Contact

Angela Adams

(603) 271-0448 | comms@doe.nh.gov

New Hampshire Department of Education and Division of Public Health Services Issue Joint Statement Regarding Masks in Schools

Concord, NH - "As we wrap up the school year and look forward to some of our great summer programming, it is important that we implement policies that will support student learning and overall health.

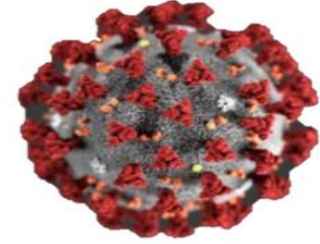
With levels of COVID-19 in our communities decreasing around the State, the New Hampshire Division of Public Health recommended last week that schools can safely remove masks in outdoor settings, regardless of a person's vaccination status. As we enter the summer months, it is becoming more difficult for people to wear masks in settings that lack climate control.

While K-12 schools continue to have the ability to set face mask policies for COVID-19 prevention, the New Hampshire Department of Education and Division of Public Health Services recommend that there should be flexibility in school face mask policies so that if situations arise where it becomes potentially unsafe to wear a face mask for prolonged periods of time (e.g., due to the potential for heat exhaustion, dehydration, significant discomfort or inability to wear a face mask, etc.) that steps be taken to allow masks to come off, even in indoor environments. The New Hampshire Division of Public Health Services is in the process of updating their general face mask guidance."

Dr. Benjamin Chan, State Epidemiologist

Frank Edelblut, Commissioner of Education

New Hampshire Coronavirus Disease 2019 Twice a Month Call for Education and Childcare Partners



June 16, 2021

*Ben Chan
Elizabeth Talbot
Beth Daly
Lindsay Pierce*

Q&A Session: To ask a question use the Q&A feature in Zoom

- Hover over bottom of Zoom screen to find “Q&A”
- This is a public call, do NOT share confidential/sensitive information
- Ask general questions, individual consultation should be directed to the Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at 603-271-4496 (ask for a public health staff members)

Pandemic Response Transition As Community Transmission Decreases

- Transition from specific guidance to applying general principles:
 - NH Universal Best Practices: <https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/>
 - Available CDC guidance
- Fewer press conferences (de-escalate public messaging)
- De-escalate public health contact tracing and quarantine
- De-escalate use of mitigation measures (e.g., face mask use)
- National Guard fixed vaccination sites demobilizing end of June
- National Guard testing sites (Concord & Londonderry) going away (Last day of testing is 6/19)
- There is still a need to continue to promote vaccination (especially as vaccination opens to younger ages possibly by September)

Face Mask Use in School and Childcare Settings



Multiple Factors Contribute to a Person's Risk of COVID-19





Bureau of Infectious Disease Control

NH Public Health Recommendations for People Who Are Fully Vaccinated When Around Others From Outside the Household

May 17, 2021

- Due to “substantial” levels of community transmission in May, NH DPHS recommended that everybody, including fully vaccinated people, continue to wear face masks and physically distance when indoors in public settings, and around other people who may not be fully vaccinated
- Our approach has been to implement mitigation measures at a population level (based on population-level risk)
- This guidance also stated that we would re-evaluate face mask use recommendations in June, which is now...

May 2021 → June 2021

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/fully-vaccinated-guidance.pdf>



De-Escalating Mitigation Measures

- As population immunity increases (from vaccination and/or natural infection) and community transmission decreases, the goal is to pull back on use of some of the recommended community mitigation measures when risk/benefit is in favor of doing so
- As community transmission decreases, the risk to everybody is significantly lower so that even unvaccinated people can begin to go without masks in lower-risk settings (e.g., outdoors)



Are K-12 Schools and Child Care Settings Considered “High-Risk” with Classrooms of Students/Children Who are Not Fully Vaccinated?

- No, we do not consider these high-risk settings
- Children are less likely to transmit COVID-19
- Schools and childcare are controlled and monitored settings
- We also haven’t seen high-levels of spread in school or child care settings, including last summer when COVID-19 was low and face masks weren’t universally used for children in child care
- Children who are 12 years of age and older should still be encouraged to get vaccinated against COVID-19
- Schools and childcare settings can choose to safely de-escalate use of some mitigation measures...

June

2021

Summary of NH DPHS Face Mask Recommendations for School and Childcare Settings

- We recommend removing the requirement for face masks outdoors
- Community transmission/risk is low enough that we suggest you can safely choose to remove face mask requirements indoors as well, and we would recommend doing so in situations where face mask use might pose a health risk
- Individuals who are concerned for their health, or people who are immunocompromised, can still choose to wear face masks (i.e., for individual protection)

NH DPHS Face Mask Use Recommendations in School and Childcare Settings

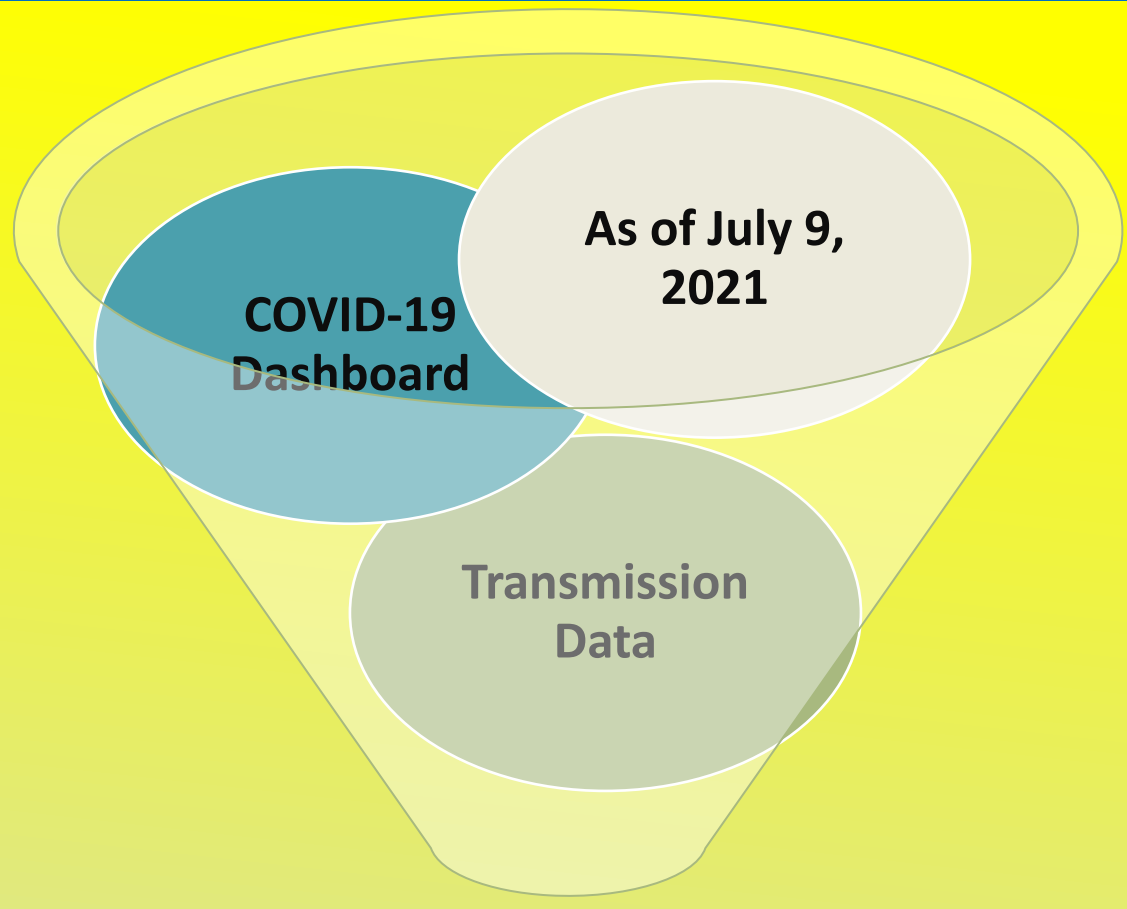
- We continue to recommend a multi-layered approach to prevention of COVID-19 (as outlined in the NH [Universal Best Practices](#)) – it's not all about face masks
- As community transmission decreases, risk to individuals and communities decreases... and while face mask use continues to be an important mitigation measure (especially in high-risk settings), any single mitigation measure has less impact on overall pandemic control
- With low levels of community transmission, we want schools and childcare agencies to be free to choose to remove face mask requirements indoors (*permissive recommendation*), based on your assessment of the local situation and risk/benefit of continued mask use

Why Now the “Permissive” Recommendation? Has The Risk to Unvaccinated Children Changed?

- We continue to base our recommendations for mitigation measures on the level of community transmission
- Multiple factors contribute to a person’s risk – with low levels of community transmission, the risk to unvaccinated persons is less
- The permissive recommendation is consistent with our move to allow all businesses/organizations to apply general principles to their specific situation and context as risk decreases
- If NH DPHS felt strongly that face masks were necessary, we would recommend so... but the risk/benefit of face mask use is shifting in favor of face masks coming off, especially in lower-risk settings

NH DPHS Guidance Is Different than CDC's

- NH DPHS continues to intentionally deviate from CDC's guidance
- CDC guidance on use of mitigation measures is largely based on an individual's vaccination status
 - Based on the science of vaccine efficacy and effectiveness
 - Difficult for businesses and organizations to implement
 - Leads to potential unwanted segregation of populations
- NH DPHS continues to base our guidance on population-level risk based on level of community transmission
- For your awareness, here is CDC's current guidance...



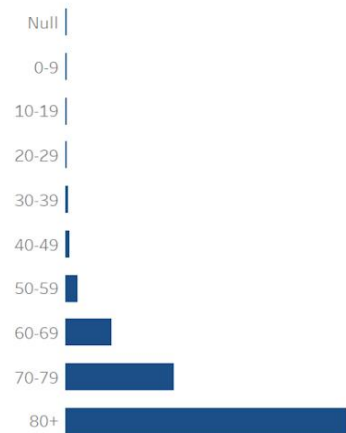
NH DHHS

New Hampshire announced **30 cases** for July 9. There were an average of **25 cases per day** over the most recent 7-day period (July 3 to July 9). This is a **1% increase** compared to the previous 7-day period.



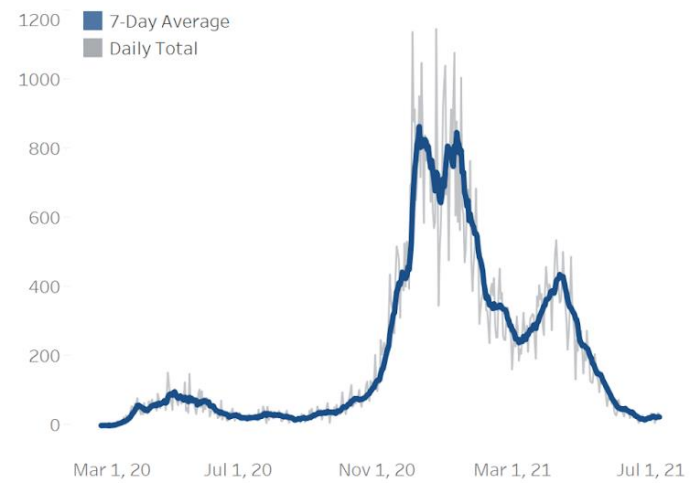
	99,708 Total Cases 210 Active Cases		1,604 Total Hosp. 15 Current Hosp.		1.1% 7-Day Test Positivity 2,365 Avg. Daily Tests		98,123 Total Recovered 1,375 Total Deaths
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↓ Total Deaths by Age

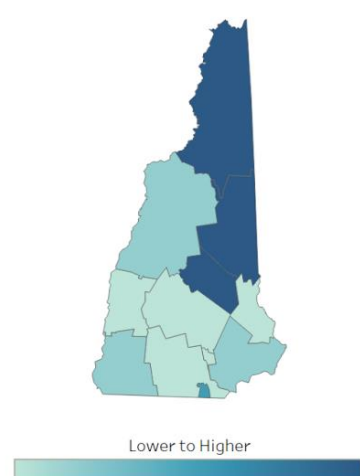


Data as of: 7/9/2021

↓ Daily Trend for New Cases



↓ New Cases per 100k over 14 days



NH DHHS
Dashboard as
of July 9, 2021-
<https://www.covid19.nh.gov>

NEW HAMPSHIRE LABORATORY-CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES

Health Outcomes	Infections		Hospitalizations		Intensive Care Unit		Recovered and Off Isolation	Deaths
	Current	Cumulative	Current	Cumulative	Current	Cumulative		
Persons	6,811	50,152	297	926	n/a	306	42,495	846



Persons with COVID-19	Infections		Hospitalizations		Deaths	
	Persons	% of Total	Persons	% of Total	Persons	% of Total
Healthcare Workers*	3,230	6.4%	68	7.3%	9	1.1%
Long-Term Care Settings**	4,869	9.7%	241	26.0%	662	78.3%

Sex						
Female	25,726	51.3%	396	42.8%	427	50.5%
Male	23,588	47.0%	530	57.2%	418	49.4%
Unknown	838	1.7%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%
Grand Total	50,152		926		846	

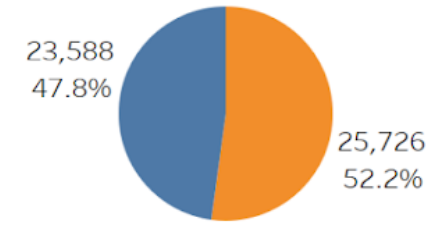
Age Group (in Years)						
0 - 9	2,092	4.2%	6	0.6%	0	0.0%
10 - 19	5,025	10.0%	5	0.5%	0	0.0%
20 - 29	9,411	18.8%	22	2.4%	1	0.1%
30 - 39	7,491	14.9%	43	4.6%	1	0.1%
40 - 49	6,813	13.6%	78	8.4%	8	0.9%
50 - 59	8,070	16.1%	122	13.2%	15	1.8%
60 - 69	5,447	10.9%	219	23.7%	69	8.2%
70 - 79	2,962	5.9%	206	22.2%	194	22.9%
80 +	2,792	5.6%	225	24.3%	558	66.0%
Unknown	49	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Grand Total	50,152		926		846	

Test Type						
Antigen Positive	13,522	27.0%	49	5.3%	105	12.4%
PCR Positive	36,630	73.0%	877	94.7%	741	87.6%
Grand Total	50,152		926		846	

Race / Ethnicity	% of NH Population ****	Infections		Hospitalizations		Deaths	
		Persons	% of Total	Persons	% of Total	Persons	% of Total
White**	90.0%	24,006	78.8%	687	79.5%	662	94.0%
Hispanic or Latino*	3.9%	3,365	11.0%	90	10.4%	21	3.0%
Black or African American**	1.4%	756	2.5%	38	4.4%	12	1.7%
Other***	1.8%	1,660	5.5%	15	1.7%	3	0.4%
Asian**	3.0%	666	2.2%	34	3.9%	6	0.9%
Grand Total		30,453		864		704	

Race/Ethnicity is known for 60.7% of COVID-19 infections, 93.3% of hospitalizations, and 83.2% of deaths

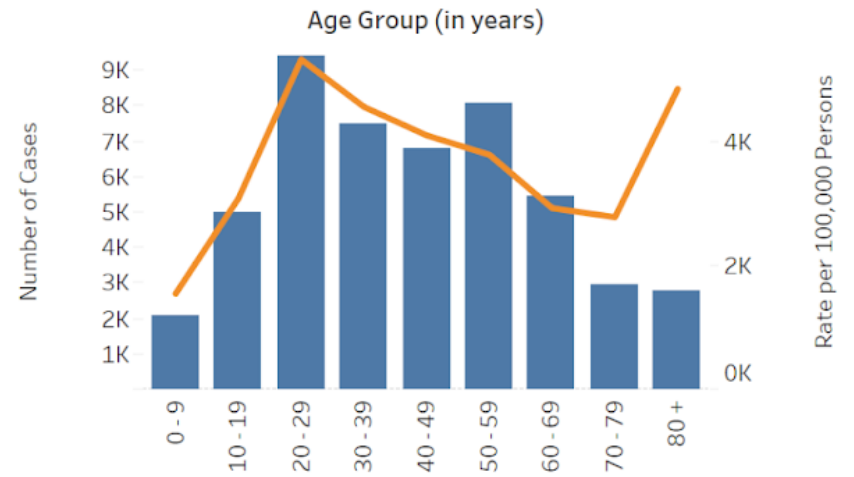
COVID-19 CASES BY SEX (n= 49314)



Unknown 838

Sex: Female (orange), Male (blue)

COVID-19 CASES BY AGE GROUP (n= 50103)



Unknown 49

Cumulative Infections (blue bar), Rate per 100,000 Persons (orange line)

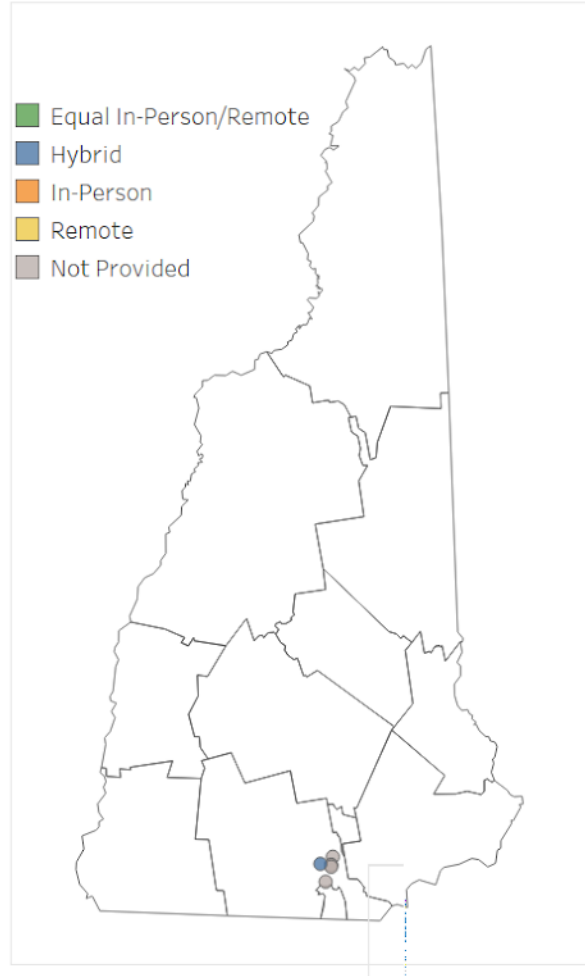
Data as of: 1/8/2021

School Level

K-12 School

Show Map By

All Schools



Data as of: 7/9/2021

Community Level Transmission Metrics - Statewide

(Not School Specific)



Level of Transmission

Minimal

New Cases per 100k over 14 days

25.2

7-Day Total Test Positivity Rate

1.1%

School Specific Case Data - Current School Year

(Onsite Cases Only)



Search by School District (K-12 Schools Only)

Merrimack

Search by School Town

All

Search by School Name

All

Onsite/Offsite Cases

Onsite Cases Only



Total Onsite Active Cases

0

Total Onsite Recovered Cases

161

Current Onsite Clusters

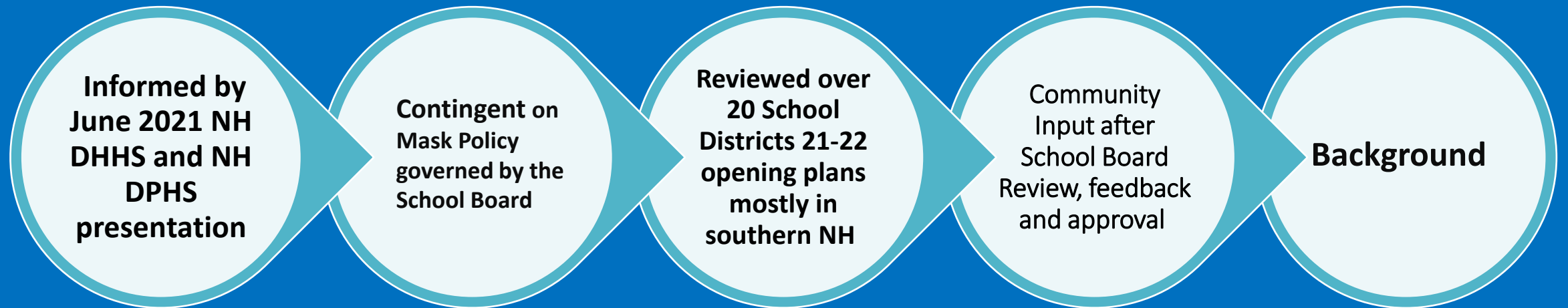
0

Current Onsite Outbreaks

0

School Name	Active Cases	Recovered Cases	Cluster Count	Current Outbreak	Last Case Reported
Merrimack Middle School (Merrimack)	0	22	0	No	06/07/2021
Merrimack High School (Merrimack)	0	74	0	No	05/25/2021
James Mastricola Elementary School (Merrimack)	0	23	0	No	05/22/2021
Reeds Ferry School (Merrimack)	0	17	0	No	05/13/2021
James Mastricola Upper Elementary School (Merrimack)	0	13	0	No	05/13/2021
Thorntons Ferry School (Merrimack)	0	12	0	No	05/06/2021

MSD Health and Safety Proposal



Detailed Recommendations by the MSD Health and Safety Task Force - 2021

Component	Subcategory	Elementary Schools (PK – Grade 6)	Middle (7-8)	High (9-12)
<i>Healthy Classrooms</i>	Face coverings	<p>Face masks are optional for staff and students.</p> <p>If our state and federal officials (NH DHHS, NH DOE, and the CDC) mandate face masks, we will adjust our student and staff safety protocols.</p> <p>Staff who choose to wear face masks will access a supply that will be maintained by the District in each school.</p>	Staff and students may elect to wear face masks but are not required to do so.	Staff and students may elect to wear face masks but are not required to do so.
	Hand hygiene	<p>Students and staff will wash hands frequently and use hand sanitizer if washing hands is not possible. All learning spaces and offices will have hand sanitizer available. Sinks and/or hand sanitizer stations will also be available at all entrances and exits throughout the school buildings.</p> <p>Instruction for hand washing and hygiene protocols will be designed and communicated according to the developmental level of students.</p> <p>Schools will post visuals throughout the buildings reminding students and staff of hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and sanitizing practices.</p>		
	Disinfecting objects	<p>School spaces will continue to be equipped with disinfecting cleaning supplies.</p> <p>Shared equipment (playground balls, lab equipment, etc.) will be available for community use.</p>		
	Physical distancing	<p>With schools at full capacity, physical distancing will not be possible.</p> <p>Hallways will be opened in each of the schools and schools will develop their own protocols regarding hallway usage and traffic as needed.</p>		
<i>Healthy Buildings</i>	Air ventilation	<p>District Maintenance will continue to monitor and maintain healthy air ventilation throughout the year. The Infrastructure Task Force is in the process of completing a ventilation plan as previously approved by the voters. Please see the Infrastructure Task Force for specific details.</p>		

	Physical barriers	Plexiglass is not required throughout the schools but will be available as needed/as requested in the building for specific learning spaces (e.g., speech services, etc.).
	No-contact infrastructure	Water fountains and filling stations will be re-opened, and students and students and staff are encouraged to bring personal contains for hydration as needed.
	Surface cleaning	Resume routine cleaning and disinfecting per NH DHHS guidelines using EPA approved products in schools and on the bus. Enhanced disinfecting (e.g., use of electrostatic sprayer) will be used in a targeted manner in the situation of contamination in certain areas of the school as needed.
	Cleaning and sanitization	Custodial staff will participate in on-going training for enhanced cleaning and disinfection procedures as needed.
	Bathroom hygiene	In alignment with physical distancing recommendations, each sink and/or urinal will be reopened.
<i>Healthy Policies</i>	Culture	Staff will engage in ongoing education regarding safe and healthy practices as needed in each school.
	Response team	The school nurses are the point of contact for all student health questions and concerns. The Director of Human Resources is the point of contact for staff. Each school will continue to review and implement the State of New Hampshire recommendations.
	Illness	Nurses will evaluate students who report to their offices with COVID-19 symptoms or other health-related concerns.
	Contract Tracing and Quarantining	<p>School nurses will continue to work with NH DHHS to educate families on most current guidance around isolation and quarantine.</p> <p>MSD will follow NH DHHS guidelines for quarantine and isolation for all fully vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. Contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine will continue with NH DHHS guidance as needed.</p> <p>Each school building will decide, based on school configuration and size, whether additional rooms are needed for illness related visits. The School Nurse and School Administration will work together on this decision.</p>

		Volunteers and visitors will be allowed to enter the building and will be informed of self-screening recommendations.
	Screenings	<p>As in 20-21, parents/guardians will continue to screen their children for COVID-19 symptoms and contact their child's respective school if symptoms persist.</p> <p>Each and every day prior to coming to work, employees will self-assess whether they have possible COVID-19 symptoms. Signed attestation forms for staff or visitors for self-reporting of illness are no longer required.</p> <p>The school district will continue to encourage any staff, student, or visitor, who is experiencing any unexplained symptoms of COVID-19 or high-risk exposure, to stay home and seek evaluation by a medical professional.</p>
	Education	<p>At a minimum, the MSD will proactively inform and educate staff, visitors, families, etc. that they should stay home and get tested if they have any new or unexplained symptoms of COVID-19, or high-risk exposures. School nurses will establish guidelines for all six schools based on current NH DHHS guidance.</p> <p>Each school will continue to educate and communicate with students, staff, and families on guidelines and best practices and access printed resources/signage from the NH DHHS and CDC as applicable to each school.</p>
<i>Healthy Schedules</i>	Lunch	All lunchroom schedules will return to pre-pandemic operations.
	Transportation	MSD will require students to follow our transportation provider's (STA and Caring Hands Transportation Services) COVID-19 guidelines and recommendations of the Infrastructure Task Force.
<i>Healthy Activities</i>	Indoor/Outdoor Physical Activities	All recess/outdoor activity periods will return to pre-pandemic operations.

Co-curricular activities and school-wide events

School-wide assemblies and event protocols will be planned while adhering to current health and safety conditions.

Other co-curricular guidelines will be established by the Extracurricular Task Force

School-wide assemblies and event protocols will be planned while adhering to current health and safety conditions. Other co-curricular guidelines will be established by the Extracurricular Task Force.

We value your input

Review and approval of this draft proposal

Seek public input and comments

Review public feedback and refine plan

Present again to School Board for approval of final proposal



Questions are the path to learning