

North Stonington Elementary School Parent/Student FAQ
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Q: Who is required to wear a mask?

A: All staff and students are required to wear a mask in the building for the majority of the time. Students and staff will remove masks when they eat lunch and during scheduled mask breaks when they are six feet apart from other students or staff. Staff can remove their mask when they are alone in their room, and while they are instructing from the front of class, as long as they are 6 feet from students.

Q: What PPE will be available?

A: The school will provide masks, gloves, cleaning wipes/spray and hand-sanitizer. The hand-sanitizer and cleaning wipes/spray will be available in each room for staff and students to use at the end and beginning of each period. We will encourage students and staff to use personal masks if that is their preference.

Q: What will happen if there is a confirmed COVID-19 case among the staff or student population?

A: The superintendent will send a generic message informing all parents of the situation. Ledge Light Health District will be notified immediately and they will then take over and perform contract tracing and communication.

Q: For families on the fence about full distance versus hybrid, can they send their children in the hybrid and then decide to go full distance?

A: We STRONGLY encourage families to consider starting their children in the hybrid model for at least a week or two so they have a better idea of what the day will look like for students as there simply is nothing that replaces in person learning. This will also provide students with opportunities to meet their teachers in person if they do decide to do all distance. If any student in the hybrid changes their mind, they will be required to schedule a meeting via ZOOM with their child's administrator to discuss the need for the change.

NSES Facebook Questions

Q: I have three elementary children that will be brand new to the school district. One has an IEP, one has begun to receive some extra reading help. Will special services be available with the hybrid model?

A: Students will receive their special education and related services to the greatest extent possible. At the start of the year all new students to our school are assessed to determine academic levels. Students who are performing well below grade level expectations will receive instruction from our two reading specialists. Based on tiered interventions, small group support will also be provided from the classroom teacher.

Q: With both mom and dad working, childcare will be needed for the virtual days, what happens if my kids cannot log in during the virtual learning days? For example, they are at a relatives house without proper Internet, or with a grandparent who's too overwhelmed to do the homeschooling?

A: We will be spending the first weeks of school using the Google Classroom format to teach children the means to log in, get to their classroom and follow the link to the Google Meets which provided live remote instruction by the teacher.

Q: What will the remote learning look like? I'll be back at my school full time. My children will be home with dad who is working from home. My rising fourth grader had a VERY difficult time

navigating and engaging in remote learning in the spring. I'm concerned about my youngest being able to log in, access, participate, engage, etc...with limited parental assistance.

A: To ease access to the programs, all teachers will be teaching use of the Google Classroom the first weeks of school using the Google Classroom format to teach children the means to log in, get to their classroom and follow the link to the Google Meets which will provide live remote instruction by the classroom teacher.

Q: Will the hybrid model still allow for children who did not meet expectations in spring to go all 4 days?

A: At this point all students will begin two days a week however we will continue to assess the best means of instruction for each child.

Q: When hybrid changes to full time, will we have the option to choose full distance learning at that time?

A: Yes parents can change to the full distance plan if and when it is decided. Yes, if after your child has attended school in the hybrid plan and you decide you are more comfortable with distance learning, you can change. We just ask for the consistency for the students that changes after that are made per trimester.

Q: Are all the children in a household, regardless of last name going to be attending school on the same day?

A: Yes, we have made for adjustments that if there are students with different last names, all will attend the same session.

Q: With regard to children that attend childcare facilities - are they going to be marked absent because they lack access to the technology and equipment during their scheduled school time?

A: Is there the possibility that the students can bring their laptop to the daycare?

Q: How many hours a day are children expected to be on their chrome books/computers during at home learning days? Does their learning day follow the school day or will it be shortened?

A: Students are not expected to be involved in remote learning the entire school day. Based on age of the children and grade levels, the online expectations will be adjusted. Amount of time students will be expected to be online will be determined by age and grade level but at no time will students be expected to be online for the entire day. Wednesdays will be used as our Extra Support/Catch-Up Day for small group instruction for students who might be struggling as well as offering teacher office hours for student's questions/support and parent concerns.

Q: What exactly is distance learning going to look like? I feel that we should have had some input/insight on this before surveys. Those of us that can't comply with the distant learning regulations have to do more research on homeschooling.

A: Grade level expectations will be based on the age and grade level of students. A typical lesson might include:

- Whole group instruction for both students in class and remotely learning. The teacher's computer will be sending the lesson remotely through the Google Meet. Students at home will be able to interact with the lesson as if in school.*
- The teacher may provide independent practice for some students as they often do in rotations while other students will be in small group instruction.*
- Students at home will participate in both.*

Q: Are all special classes still going to be on the schedule? If so, do distance learner's have to do them as well?

A: We are still working on the best way to support the whole child that will include special classes which will be more interactive or project based. There is a discussion for the full time. distance learners that on Wednesday they will possibly participate in specials if during the week, it is too much time online time.

Q: How much parental support is expected if distant learning with all 4 kids and mom being on a computer from home, we will definitely lag or quite possibly just get cut off. What happens if a child can't log back in.

A: We will be spending the first weeks of school using the Google Classroom format to teach children the means to log in, get to their classroom and follow the link to the Google Meets which provided live remote instruction by the teacher. Age level of students and computer capability of students will also determine the need for parent support.

Q: Since teachers and students can't exchange papers, are they all on computers as well while in school. Or is this just a rumor that papers can't be passed and returned? If it's a rumor, how will we get our weekly materials and return what is due? For those distance learner's, can there be a meet and greet with their teachers beforehand?

A: Papers can be turned in however there are opportunities to complete work through the Google Classroom which will allow for teacher feedback and student opportunity to correct their work.

Q: Is it possible to put all distant learner's in the AM or PM Class for first grade so one child isn't the only one on the computer? *A: With the hybrid model approximately half of the class will be on the computer along with those who are distance learning the entire week whether on Monday/Tuesday or Thursday/Friday.*

Q: How are fire drills and lockdown drills going to work with socially distancing?

A: For fire drills since we have 3 staircases and additional exit doors, we will be able to social distance on the way out. Students will also be wearing masks during this time. We have a huge area to line students up outside to ensure social distancing.

Regarding lock downs, with the hybrid model and half the number of students, students can safely distance. If and when we go to the full return, students will need to wear masks and keep a safe distance facing away from each other as best as possible. Of course, if there is a dangerous situation in the building, the safety of the students overrides the need for social distancing.

Q: Are children who go to school Thursday and Friday going to be do distance learning mon-wed or Wednesday only when everyone does distance learning? And vice versa for kids who go Mon & Tues doing wed-fri distance learning or Wednesday only?

A: Students who are attending school sessions on Thursday and Friday will be part of the distance learning group, learning from home on Monday and Tuesday. Wed. will be an extra support/ catch-up day for all students which will include small group instruction and office hours.

However at the elementary level, our first week will be instruction for the health and safety protocols as well as use of Google Classroom for the M-T group and then the Th-F group. There will be no online expectations for the first week for students at home.

Q: Will an outline of the distance learning expectations be available prior to the start of school? In particular, timing for logging in and how long they are to be in front of the computer.

A: There will be a weekly plan sent from the teachers. The schedule will remain as best as possible the same for the distance learning and in school learning each day.

Q: When will student laptops be available?

A: We will hopefully be able to distribute computers the week before school begins.

Q: I would like to know who is holding the cleaning or “deep cleaning” of our schools to checks and balances and making sure it is done and done well

A: At our school, it will be the wonderful Mr. Jim, our head of maintenance and the administration. There will be checklists of cleaning expectations in each area that have to be completed.

Q: Could a video of some sort be done so parents can see inside the new school?

Q: Would it be possible to do a virtual tour that the parents and students can watch? It’s hard for me to explain what it will look like and where they are going because we haven’t seen the new building.

Q: Using administration, is there going to be a "mock" representation of a day in the life of a student and teacher at NSES posted before school. I know I'd love to see how it will work.

A. At this point we are still moving back into the building and furniture is still being delivered and assembled. We will do our best to create a video for our students and families before school begins.

Q: Will the school still provide lunches for students distance learning that day? If they do, will it still be at cost for the family, or free like it was at the end of the school year?

A: Lunches will be held as normal throughout the school day. We have increased the number of lunch waves to make smaller groups. Students will be able to purchase lunch and those who qualify for Free and/or reduced through the process that takes place at the start of each year, will qualify. That paperwork DOES have to be filled out each year for consideration. Lunches will no longer be free for all students however families can order a lunch to be picked up and pay for it as if the child was in school. (Will there be a scheduled time for students to pick up lunches on the days they are not physically in the building?)

Q: Are the students penalized if there is a power outage or if the internet goes down?

A: NO. That information needs to be shared with the teacher when it occurs so they can let proper people know. Students will be able to catch up.

Q: How long will my 1st and 5th graders be required to be in front of the screen each day for full distance learning? This is my main concern. My 1st graders attention span is not long and my 5th grader has an anxiety disorder which is coming out full force at the thought of sitting in front of a computer for 7 hours.

A: For example first graders will not be expected to be on the computer for longer than 30 minutes at a time. They will need to be on for the whole group instruction portions of our day then again for shorter/more individualized instruction. We are still working on exact times.

Grade level expectations will be based on the age and grade level of students. A typical lesson might include:

- Whole group instruction for both students in class and remotely learning. The teacher’s computer will be sending the lesson remotely through the Google Meet. Students at home will be able to interact with the lesson as if in school.*

- The teacher may provide independent practice for some students as they often do in rotations while other students will be in small group instruction.
- Students at home will participate in both.

Q: We have one computer for our household. Will the chrome books be available in time to achieve a start date of August 31st for full distance learning? If not, what is the expectation from the school?

A: For the elementary students, Chromebooks may not be available however a laptop from the school will be made available for every child that will be participating in distance learning whether the five day or hybrid plan. For distance learning to be successful, it is important that all students have their own computer to allow for them to participate with live Google Meets. The technology department is working tirelessly to prepare laptops for home use. We are still determining the number of requested laptops. At this point, for the Pre-K program there will not be a need for students to have laptops.

Q: Have there been other trainings for teachers during the summer on virtual classroom? Will they have a curriculum approved that they teach to, or use outside resources (i.e. Khan academy, Lexia, ZEARN, Epic)?

A: Since last year teachers have taken it upon themselves to begin completing the Google training. The first week we return, teachers will have a full week of professional development starting first with all of the Health and Safety protocols as well as topics ranging from: Social/Emotional needs of students, Growth Mindset activities for students, Google training for staff, Diversity training...etc. Many staff members do continue to broaden their professional experiences over the summer on their own time but this is not required of them.

Q: Could we have a representative on the zoom that can speak to the sanitizing measures both prior to the start of the school year and throughout each day for each school?

A: A detailed explanation has been provided by the Head of Maintenance and will be reviewed.

Q: How is grading going to be done? With so many variations with distance learning I.e, child care issues, working from home parent(s), technology issues etc. how will grading be done fairly?

A: Grading will depend on the plan that is in place. For this year, all students will be expected to be online for remote instruction and complete the work assigned. There will be opportunities for students to work closely with their teachers that will support student learning and give teachers the ability to assess students.

Q: On the days your child is in class while the teacher is teaching, will our in-class students be seen on home devices and vice-versa? Can in-house cameras be turned off and is the school providing headsets or earbuds for the students so parents who work from home can also work without disruption?

A: For the Google Meet, the camera will be on the teacher. Students in class will not be able to see students at home and students at home will not see students in school. When students are working in small groups with the teacher, there may be a time that students in school or at home can be seen by the guided group peers.

The district is unable to provide headsets or earbuds for students.

Q: Will the kids be subjected to homework?

A: First graders will be expected to read each night for about 10 minutes. We have also put together some math games to reinforce the concepts taught in class.

All students are expected to read each night to support the development of reading skills and the love of reading. There will be other suggested learning opportunities that might include basic fact practice, states and capital practice, study for tests, or project based assignments.

Kindergarten will have some reinforcement and fun activities to support what students have learned.

Q: Will teachers and other staff members that have access to the school buildings and students be required to COVID-19 test? Or, will testing be offered on a volunteer basis? If so, how frequently?

A: There is no COVID testing planned. Parents are asked to assess students' health before leaving home which includes taking the child's temperature. Staff and faculty will be expected to do the same each day.

Q: Will there be temp checks upon arrival to start the school day?

A: No, it is expected that parents will perform to do that at home.

Q: I have a large school supply list to buy...are they actually needed?

A: We are asking for students to have their own supplies so materials are not shared. However, the school will supply materials for any student who does not have them.

Q: Is there going to be more interaction and accountability than last quarter when covid started?

A: Yes, attendance will be taken daily through students beginning the day by attending the morning meeting or first class depending on grade level. Students will learn how to complete assignments on the Google site and submit them.

Q: What are parent expectations and support who both work full-time?

A: Recognizing that it is important that students maintain a regular schedule whether on days they come to school or are distance learning, we hope parents will:

- Provide the consistency of a daily schedule;*
- A quiet place to work;*
- And supplies needed to complete the assignments. (Even a water bottle and snack)*

Through the training in school for use of the Google Classroom and the weekly schedule provided, students, except for the very young, should become self-sufficient in signing on and completing their daily work. Our youngest students will most likely need help from an adult especially in the beginning of the year. Parent videos that will be provided will help parents to navigate the Google Classroom.

Of course we do always count on our parents to encourage our students to do their best in completing all work assigned,

Q: What will the grading look like? Is elementary going to move to power school which was helpful in keeping me aware of missing assignments?

A: The plan whether full return, hybrid or all distance learning will determine the grade. The elementary teachers do not have grade books that are linked to Power School however the Google Classroom provides the information of missing assignments.

Q: Will bus drivers be providing masks for students who may try to get on without one?

A. Yes, masks will be available to bus drivers to provide to those students.

Q: Will students home in the distance model on the hybrid days where they don't come in, or those home all the time, be able to come and pick up lunch?

A. Yes, they will.

Q. And will lunch be free for all or are we going back to charging?

A. We are returning to the process of those who qualify will receive free or reduced lunch. All families should complete the Free and Reduced lunch application. Mrs. Gonzalez has a copy and it will be posted to our website.

Q: What guidelines are the schools following to provide protection for the students while virtually learning? Meaning, are the computers monitored and locked down so that no outside programs or websites can be reached? And are there security measures in place to forbid outside entities from spying on kids while the cameras are on?

A: The Securly program/service we purchased does this. We can lock down and/ or limit access and the Auditor module we opted for is an AI powered monitor that looks for certain types of content and notifies us when it detects something harmful. The "AI" part means there is not a physical person "watching" any students. Rather than try to describe everything it does, feel free to check out their page...<https://www.securly.com/auditor>

We will also have these tools in our arsenal...

<https://www.securly.com/filter>

<https://www.securly.com/classroom/>

Q: How can I drop off my child's medications if they are unable to bring them in themselves? (Controlled substances)

A: Parents are allowed to come to their respective schools on Thursday, August 27th between 8 AM - 6:00 PM and Friday, August 28th between 8:00 AM-3:00 PM to meet with our school nurses. School nurses will be available to check in any medications being distributed at school to students this year.