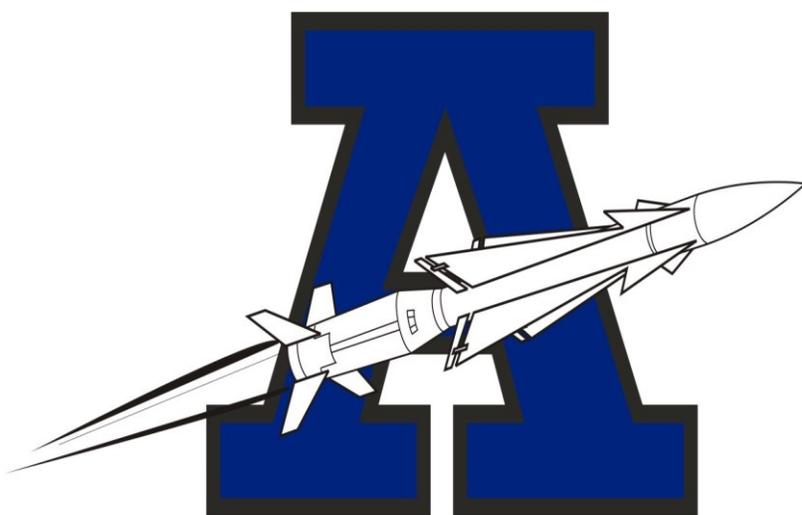


Auburn Public Schools Return and Readiness Guide



Latest version as of 11/3/2020

Our vision is to educate and prepare students for the opportunities and challenges of a changing world.

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Superintendent's Message

Dear APS Families, Students, Faculty, and Staff,

As you are aware we left school on March 12, 2020 for what we thought was going to be a brief period due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis. Suffice it to say no one expected our country, state, and town to be impacted in the serious manner it has over the last 7 months. As of now, uncertainty continues to abound related to COVID-19's continued impact on our lives. However, as society begins to reopen amidst a plethora of challenges related to COVID-19, so must our academic community.

The return to school plan put forth in this document has been assembled after thorough review, contemplation, and discussion with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, national and local centers of public health, our district Return to Schools team, Auburn Fire Department, Auburn Police Department, Auburn Board of Health and Department of Inspectional Services, Auburn School Committee and the Auburn Education Association. It is important to note, as well, that this plan was structured in accordance with the "School Reopening and Readiness Guide" written and published by Ariadne Labs, Brigham and Women's Hospital, and Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health. This resource was provided to all superintendents in Massachusetts through the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents.

Every community has its own unique challenges. To this end, there will be many similarities in this plan when compared to other districts; however, no two plans will be exactly alike. The physical and mental well-being of all members of our school community was the primary driver behind how this plan was assembled, followed by the need to provide rigorous and relevant educational experiences for students in both synchronous and asynchronous remote environments. The medical guidance governing COVID-19 is continually evolving as doctors and scientists learn more about it. It can be confusing and hard to follow at times. However, we feel a cautious, phased return makes the most sense at this time with the ability to accelerate or decelerate movement between phases based on national, state, and local health data. Our teachers have been working hard over the summer months participating in professional development and creating high quality remote lessons to alleviate the stress of parents and caregivers having to become de facto teachers in digital learning environments.

We are confident that through the use of proper personal and physical plant hygiene practices that we can keep our school community safe as we move toward a full in-person return to school in Auburn. However, this is not a time to become lax with important measures such as hand washing, wearing masks, and maintaining appropriate social distance whenever possible. A second surge of COVID-19 could impact Massachusetts schools forcing us back into an entirely remote learning situation again. It is important we remain vigilant to maintain current levels of health and welfare not only in Auburn, but across the Commonwealth.

Thank you for your continued patience and support as we navigate this very complex task. It will not be easy, but we will persevere and be a stronger community as a result of the adversity currently before us.

Most Sincerely,

Casey J. Handfield

Dr. Casey J. Handfield, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Acknowledgments

The experience of creating this document has repeatedly reminded me of the African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." I am extremely grateful for the partnership between the Auburn Public Schools and the many members within the Auburn community who helped create this document. What we are attempting to do is extremely complicated from a variety of perspectives and I would like to specifically recognize the following individuals for their incredible work and dedication to this endeavor:

Allison Cherie	Laurie Bonneau	Caitlin Heatwole	Christin Robbins
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Last but not least, a big thank you to the many students, staff, parents, and caregivers for your partnership and support these past seven months - we know it hasn't been easy. Thank you for your patience, for responding to our multiple surveys, for your thoughtful emails, and participating in our Town Halls. We learned from your experiences during the emergency school closure, and your input has helped to inform this plan. We have accomplished a lot in a short period, and I am thankful for your efforts.

With Sincere Gratitude,

Casey J. Handfield

Executive Summary

This document is intended to provide the students, families and staff of the Auburn Public Schools with a detailed understanding of the wide range of decisions that have been made related to the continued education of the students of the Auburn Public Schools. This Executive Summary provides you with a high level overview of the many details contained in the body of this document. The decisions herein were driven by data gathered via family and staff surveys along with input from the Return to School Team and the APS Leadership Team.

Key Priorities for Return to School

- Classrooms and buildings will be structured to ensure 6 feet of distance between all students and staff when they are at school.
- All students, prek-12, and staff will be required to wear masks or face coverings when on a school bus or when in a school building.
- Many families want students to return to school.

Health and Wellness

- All students and teachers will receive training regarding building based safety expectations.
- All students and staff will be required to complete a health assessment prior to coming to school to ensure they have no potential COVID 19 symptoms.
- All students and staff must stay home if they do not feel well.
- All students and staff will be trained in handwashing protocols, hand sanitizer use, mask wearing safety, and overall respiratory hygiene (coughing, sneezing).
- APS Nurses have created a comprehensive plan for managing any student or staff who may present with symptoms.

Facilities

- All school buildings will utilize CDC approved cleaning materials and protocols.
- All buildings are being examined to ensure ventilation systems are in good condition while also exploring options to further improve the air quality in all buildings.
- Each school building is working to create entry and exit plans that minimize the number of students and/or staff utilizing a single entrance, carefully orchestrated plans for traffic flow within the building, handwashing and hygiene protocols, scheduled mask breaks for students and staff along with plans for students to have lunch and recess breaks in a safe manner.

Teaching and Learning

- The Auburn Public Schools will offer two return to school options for families to choose from:
Option 1 is a [Hybrid Learning Model](#) where students learn in school for some of the week and remotely for some of the week.
Option 2 is a [Full Remote Program](#) where students learn remotely only.
- All students, whether learning in the Hybrid Model or the Remote Learning Program, will be required to attend school each day ([attendance](#) will be taken) and they will receive [grades](#) for the work they submit.
- All students will receive support from their teacher and guidance counselors related to social emotional learning.

Training

- Teachers will receive additional training on strategies to teach in the remote environment.
- Training will be provided to parents/guardians and students regarding how to effectively navigate the remote learning platform.
- Information sessions will also be provided to families as a general overview of the return to school process.

Guiding Principles

The APS Leadership Team and the Return to School Team identified several key priorities in the development of this Return to School Plan:

- Safety of students and staff is paramount;
- Social and emotional needs of students and staff must be a priority;
- Students need to be face to face in school in a manner that is safe for them and for staff;
- We will be responsive to the changing nature of the pandemic to continually assess and reassess the needs of our students and staff;
- We will provide all students with a standards based, rigorous and robust learning experience whether they are in the Remote Learning Program or the Hybrid Model.
- Based on an analysis of the space in our current school buildings, and the community's insistence that we continue to comply with 6ft of distancing between students and staff, drastic improvements to the rate of transmission of COVID 19 and presence within the community will need to emerge in order to allow all students back in school with less than 6ft of distancing. This determination would be made in collaboration with the Auburn Public Schools Leadership Team, Nursing Team and Auburn Board of Health.

Disclaimer

The Auburn Public School Community has spent much time analyzing survey data, speaking with stakeholders and discussing as a staff, the model with which we will re-enter school. However, given the evolving nature of the COVID-19 virus and its impact on communities, we reserve the right to change this Return to School plan should prevailing guidance from DESE, the CDC, the Auburn Board of Health indicate the need to keep students and staff safe.

When does school start?

DESE has recently issued guidance on the start date of schools that changes the mandatory number of school days from **180 days to 170 days**. This action was taken to allow districts time to provide critical safety and wellness training for all staff members. Given the change in the number of school days, The Auburn Public Schools will begin school on **Wednesday, September 16th** allowing teachers and staff to have the full 10 days to prepare for the arrival of students. The 10 days will consist of health, wellness and safety training, a review of cleaning protocols and building-based transition plans for entry and exit along with movement throughout the building along with time to plan and prepare for both in person and remote teaching. Below you will find some tentative dates that outline the phased approach for the beginning of school.

How do I know when my child will attend school?

School administrators are working to create balanced groups for Cohort A & B (regular and moderate special needs education) and Cohorts C & D (high needs population). We are creating groups that will allow siblings to attend school on the same schedule. More information will be forthcoming on the cohort to which your child is assigned.

Students with Disabilities

Many students and families, including those students with disabilities, have been greatly impacted by the school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although students on IEPs and 504 plans were offered individualized Remote Learning Plans, there were those students for whom remote learning was neither effective nor efficient.

We are dedicated to providing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for our students, consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of our students with disabilities and those who are providing education, specialized instruction and related services to these students.

Students will receive services documented in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) through in-person instruction, remote instruction, or a combination of both, with a strong emphasis on providing in-person instruction, while abiding by the current necessary health and safety requirements. Services, both teacher-directed and independent, will consist of regularly scheduled and consistent classes, interventions, services and therapies. In recent guidance provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, we are asked to provide high-needs students and early childhood students with in-person opportunities to the greatest extent possible.

Students with disabilities return to school is proposed below, the District will have the ability to adjust these cohort placements on an individual basis:

1. Students who receive most of their instruction in a co-teaching or inclusion classroom will attend school in person as their typical classmates do when schools reopen in the fall (Cohort A and Cohort B).
2. Students who receive more than 25% of their instruction in a pullout model will attend school in person four days per week, the 5th day being remote instruction when schools reopen in the fall and during any hybrid learning time (Cohort C).
3. Students who receive most of their instruction (over 75% of their day) in a substantially separate classroom will attend school in person four and one half days per week when schools reopen in the fall and during any hybrid learning time (Cohort D).
4. Students in the Integrated Pre-School will have in school programming when schools reopen in the fall and during any hybrid learning time.
5. Special educators or related service providers may provide services remotely via video conference if they are unable to avoid overlapping with other staff within a classroom or have multiple buildings to service.

It is important that inclusion opportunities continue for students with disabilities. Inclusion may look different than it has in the past, depending on the structure of the schedule at each level. Please note that if conditions require us to close all buildings again, remote learning is likely to apply to all students.

Students with disabilities, along with their peers in general education, will be assessed to evaluate skill gaps. In addition, special education progress reports and data on levels of performance towards goals and objectives prior to closure will be reviewed for progress and regression post-closure.

Staff will also be prepared to provide hands-on assistance, with the proper PPE, for activities of daily living for those students whose IEPs or Individualized Health Care Plans (IHCP) that indicate support is needed in Activities of Daily Living Skills (ADLS) (e.g. feeding, toileting, changing of clothes and transitions) as well as:

- Utilizing hand over hand/hand under hand or physical guidance for academic purposes (discrete trial training, etc.)
- Providing support to students who need to be within 3 feet of an adult for any other reason (students with mobility issues, distractibility during transitions, etc.)

For these reasons, PPE will be worn by staff throughout the school day in specialized programs. This includes:

- Facial mask and/or face shield
- Protective gown or shirt
- Gloves
- Staff will be encouraged to tie up, cover or pull back long hair; refrain from dangling jewelry; consider rubber-soled flat shoes
- Staff will change outer clothing if body fluids from the child get on it. Staff will change the child's clothing if body fluids get on it. Soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home with the child to be washed. Parents of students in our specialized classrooms will be asked to make sure that their child has access to at least one change of clothes at school

Students with disabilities will be provided transportation in accordance with their IEP. All required medically-advised health and safety requirements as well as all bus seating capacity guidelines will be followed.

One of the most important aspects of our services will include parent engagement. Ongoing communication with families will be critical to a successful start to the year. Parents can expect special education teams to communicate at the outset to determine what worked and what did not work this past spring. Teams will gather as much data as possible to assess present areas of need and levels of need upon re-entry to school.

In order to reduce foot traffic in the schools and limit social contact, IEP meetings, 504 meetings and progress meetings, will continue to be held virtually. Parents may continue to respond to IEPs and 504s electronically, stating their consent. For those students whose initial evaluations or three-year reevaluations were interrupted due to the closure in March, the team chair will reach out to parents to determine an appropriate timeframe for completion of the testing, assessments and team meetings.

English Language Learners

The Auburn Public Schools remains committed to supporting our students who come to us as English Learners. Throughout the closure, our EL tutors have provided our students with targeted small group instruction and remediation when needed. As we move to the hybrid model of learning, some EL students will have an enhanced schedule (4 days of in person learning for Level 1 & 2 EL students) that will provide them with additional face to face time in the classroom and with small group work with the EL Tutor. Remote learning was challenging for many of these students and we are committed to ensuring their continued growth and progress.

Preschool Learning Model

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has asked all districts to prioritize the face to face instruction for our youngest learners. As a District we support this as well having a keen understanding of the importance of the early days of learning. As with all of our students, our program will place great emphasis on

safety and hygiene for all students. Students will all wear masks and maintain 6ft of distance from one another. In contrast to previous years, preschool programming will begin the school year with an abbreviated face to face schedule (½ days) to allow us to have greatly reduced class size. Students in our 3 year old program would attend face to face school for 2 half days each week with an additional 3 half days of remote learning. All four year old students will attend face to face learning for 5 half days each week with any student who registered for a full day program receiving 5 half days of remote learning. We are exploring the possibility of a fully remote program for preschool students who prefer that model. The remote learning of preschool students will be a robust and engaging addition to the face to face class time to further the learning of our students. This decision will be revisited regularly by staff and administration so that face to face time can be increased if local and state public health guidance allows and the health and safety of students and staff can be maintained. Special education students attending our preschool will receive services and therapies as indicated in the IEP and may have an individualized schedule for face to face learning time.

Tentative Opening Schedule

Health and safety data will be discussed with the local DPH, teachers’ union, and school committee before each of these transitions to ensure it is safe to increase the amount of face to face learning time unless the state gives other directions. School hours remain the same as those in previous school years. This is being done to ensure our students meet the DESE issued Time on Learning based on 170 days of school: 850 hours (for elementary schools) and 935 hours (for secondary schools). Students in the Hybrid Learning Model will achieve this through in-school learning, remote learning, small group instruction and independent work. Students in the Remote Learning Model will achieve this through synchronous and asynchronous lessons with a Remote Learning Teacher, remote participation in specials and unified arts offerings and independent work.

School Hours

Bryn Mawr School	8:40-3:10
Pakachoag School	8:40-3:10
Swanson Road Intermediate School	8:30-3:00
Auburn Middle School	7:30-2:15
Auburn High School	7:25-11:55 (live) 12:50-1:50 (remote)

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Cohort Schedule</u>
August 31st - September 15th	Professional Development and Training for staff
September 16th -18th	Cohorts A,B - start the school year remote Cohort C - starts the school year remote Cohort D - ½ day face to face Wednesday - Friday Preschool-starts the school year remote
September 21st - 25th	Cohort A - ½ day face to face on Monday; Remote Learning Tuesday - Friday Cohort B - ½ day face to face on Thursday; Remote Learning Monday-Wednesday and Friday

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	Cohort C - ½ day face to face all week except remote on Wednesday Cohort D - Full day face to face all week with ½ day face to face on Wednesday Preschool-½ day face to face based on age group
September 28th - October 2nd	Cohort A - Full day face to face on Monday; Remote Learning Tuesday-Friday Cohort B - Full day face to face on Thursday; Remote Learning Monday-Wednesday and Friday Cohort C - Full day face to face all week except remote on Wednesday Cohort D - Full day face to face all week with ½ day face to face on Wednesday
October 5th - Until Further Notice	Cohort A - Full day face to face on Monday and Tuesday, Remote Learning Wednesday-Friday Cohort B - Full Day face to face on Thursday and Friday; Remote Learning Monday-Wednesday Cohort C- Full day face to face all week except remote on Wednesday Cohort D - Full day face to face all week with ½ day face to face on Wednesday

School Safety Protocols

The APS Leadership Team, the APS School Nurse Team and the Return to School Team have collaborated to develop protocols for keeping our students and staff safe when they are in our school buildings. The protocols outlined here align with recommendations from DESE and the CDC and have received the approval of the Town of Auburn Board of Health along with Auburn Fire and Police Departments.

What is COVID?

Coronavirus is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person. COVID-19 symptoms can range from asymptomatic (no symptoms), mild, to severe illness. COVID-19 is a novel virus, meaning this strain (called SARS-CoV-2), has not been encountered before. This results in new information being discovered and shared daily and, because of this, changes to current protocols are to be expected.

How is COVID Spread?

An individual can become infected by coming into close contact (about 6 feet or two arm lengths) with a person who has COVID-19. You can become infected from respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. You can also become infected if an infected person touches surfaces after recently touching their nose, mouth, or eyes and a non-infected person comes into contact with those surfaces and then touches their nose, mouth, or eyes.

What are COVID symptoms?

Fever (100 degrees or higher), chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, lethargy. Updates to this list can be found here: [Symptoms of Coronavirus](#).

What precautions can we take?

Staff must monitor themselves for symptoms daily and students, with the assistance of families, must also be monitored daily for symptoms. Staff and students must stay home if feeling unwell. Everyone must do their part to protect others and not come to school if they are exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms or are feeling sick.

- [Each day before you come to school](#)-Students and staff MUST reflect on their physical health in relation to these symptoms each day before coming to school.

Staff will read and sign a [Healthy Together Code of Conduct](#) stating each individual will be in compliance with the guidelines and protocols recommended by DESE and the CDC, including but not limited to, wearing a mask, maintaining 6 feet of social distancing and conducting a daily self health assessment prior to school to monitor for symptoms.

Other precautions to take to prevent oneself from COVID-19 include:

- **Observe Physical “Social” Distancing Guidelines**
 - The CDC recommends 6 feet of distance between individuals.
 - Per the CDC, the more closely you interact with others and the longer the interaction time the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread.
 - In the classroom setting, desks will be spaced at a minimum of 6 feet apart.
 - **Cohorts/assigned seating:** Students organized in groups/classrooms and other cohorts help mitigate transmission of the virus.
 - While on school grounds, small cohorts of students and staff should be maintained.
 - Assigned seating is important because it effectively creates even smaller groups within cohorts which minimize transmission. Assigned seats can also assist with contact tracing. Wherever possible, seats should be assigned (including classroom, bus, meals).
 - Outside of school, social gatherings should be reduced to a limited amount of individuals.
- **Frequent hand washing**
 - [Hand hygiene is critical](#). Students and staff are required to exercise hand hygiene (hand washing or sanitizing)
- Each classroom will have a schedule for regular hand washing. This schedule will include the following opportunities in addition to the regular schedule.

Hands must be washed:

- Immediately before: leaving home, leaving the classroom, eating, touching shared objects, touching one’s face, and leaving school
- Immediately after: arriving at school, when entering a new classroom during the day, finishing lunch, touching shared objects, using the bathroom, coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose, and arriving at home.

Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the school buildings:

- Proper hand washing includes using warm water and soap and scrubbing hands for a minimum of 20 seconds followed by drying hands with a disposable towel.
- Sanitizing gels of a minimum of 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water is not readily available.

Face mask or cloth face covering:

- Face masks are required for Grades PreK-12 and all staff members. A face mask is defined

as a cloth or disposable covering that covers the nose and mouth. This can be a disposable mask, or a two layer cloth face covering made from other cloth fabrics.

- Photos of acceptable masks:



- **Gaiters and bandanas are not allowed.**
- If a student is without a mask or family is unable to provide one, the school will provide a mask for use.
- Mask breaks will be available for staff and students with proper distancing and ventilation guidelines.
- If a staff member or student is unable to wear a mask, please seek administrator or nurse guidance for arrangements.
- Please follow this link for more guidance on [wearing masks and good respiratory hygiene](#)

Staff Education

Prior to the return to in-person classes, continuing education and safety protocols will be provided to APS staff. Family education will be ongoing and will begin prior to the start of school. Student education will be ongoing and visual cues, such as posters and infographics will be placed around the school to remind the student ways to stay healthy and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Procedures for Daily School Attendance

In advance to the start of the 2020-2021 school year (in-person learning), school nurses will be contacting families to acquire updated physicals and immunization information. State recommendations include receiving age-appropriate vaccinations, a seasonal flu vaccine, a yearly physical, and a lead test (for incoming preschool and kindergarten students). We are awaiting further guidance from DESE regarding the flu vaccine requirement for all school aged children and staff. Any questions regarding grade level medical requirements can be directed toward the school nurse or primary care provider.

Prior to departure to school while at home, students and staff will take a [personal inventory of symptoms](#) to ensure wellness daily (or assessment will be completed by parent/guardian). If any symptoms of sickness are noted, please stay home, and follow up with your primary care provider. If you have questions please feel free to call or email your child's school nurse for guidance. Please notify the school nurse if your child will be absent from school.

Due to current social distancing guidelines set by the state of Massachusetts, students riding the bus are required to wear a mask or face covering and must be seated in an assigned seat in a socially distanced manner.

Upon arrival to school, children and staff will don masks and practice proper hand hygiene. All appropriate staff and students (non-exempt) are required to wear a mask while on public school transportation or while in school. Hand hygiene should be maintained throughout the day, and gloves will only be required for staff coming into contact with bodily fluids. PPE will be provided by the district for designated staff members who will have closer contact with students needing medical assistance or personal care assistance.

Classroom and building specific procedures will be discussed and distributed to staff, faculty and families prior to the start of school by the Superintendent and or Building Administrator.

When to Seek the Nurse

In an effort to reduce the number of non-emergent nurse visits, and to decrease the number of students and staff traveling throughout the building, we ask that staff carefully follow the symptom checklist to determine if a visit to the Nurse is indicated. ***When in doubt, please call the nurse directly to discuss circumstances.***

Reasons to send the student to the nurse:

Bleeding, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, shortness of breath, persistent cough, bumps, body impacts, insect bites, a suspected break or sprain, or loss of consciousness, allergic reactions, seizures, *persistent* headache or stomach aches *not relieved by water and snack offering*.

Reasons to call the nurse for an assessment: (COVID symptoms suspected)

If a student or staff member is exhibiting the following symptoms, please advise the nurse via phone or walkie, that you have an individual not well in Room ____ with suspected symptoms. This will allow the nurse to don proper PPE and transport the student to the isolation space.

- Fever or feels warm, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache (see above), new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, lethargic, or appears unwell and or recent close contact with an individual that was a confirmed or presumptive positive.
- Proper PPE for individuals in contact with a suspected COVID case include:
 - Gown
 - KN95 Mask and Face Shield
 - Goggles or Protective Eyewear
 - Gloves
 - Booties

Nurse Protocols

Individual Arrives in Health Office and is assessed for illness

→ If no ill symptoms, treat for presenting symptom visit and return to class.

→ If an individual has illness symptoms:

- a. Isolate them from well children/staff
 - i. Nurse will escort the student/staff to the isolation room for assessment.
 - ii. Isolation room will have a separate set of supplies (from regular nursing office stock) for conducting said assessment.
 - iii. After use of the isolation room, the room will be closed for 24 hours for proper cleaning.
 - iv. Nurse will put on all required PPE prior to leaving to attend to the student and dispose of it into a specific waste bin. Nurse will then perform hand hygiene.
 - v. Nurse or staff will place a sign on the isolation room door stating that the room is closed for cleaning and notify custodial staff.
- b. Obtain History: onset of symptoms, type of symptoms, anyone sick at home, any recent exposure to anyone with COVID-19, any recent travel? If so, where and when? Any recent gatherings?

- c. Assessment: Temperature, respiratory rate, physical appearance, pulse oximeter reading, mental status
- d. If temperature above 100 degrees, pulse ox below 98%, and other symptoms present, dismiss immediately and refer to PCP.
- e. If it is a student, the child will be provided a mask, if they are not already wearing one. If it is a staff member, they should notify their supervisor immediately and the nurse should collaborate with the Auburn Public School staff and school administration to evaluate the disposition of the students in the staff member's classroom.
 - i. Refer to the cleaning and disinfection section of this document for cleaning of affected areas.
- f. Assess if the individual needs further medical evaluation and guide the staff member or family on how to proceed. If the person is having difficulty breathing, has any chest discomfort, mental status changes, lethargy/unable to stay awake, and/or cyanotic- call 911. Inform dispatcher the person has symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and will need further evaluation.

School Response - Notification - Should there be a **CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID** (not suspected) in a school or schools, all close contacts will be notified by the school via letter, and the Board of Health will call you. The school community will also be alerted that there is a confirmed case of COVID in the building but that your child was not a close contact with a contact for questions or concerns.

When a Student or Staff Member Becomes Ill

- Any student or staff member exhibiting COVID-19-like symptoms must stay home. Staff and students should not come to school and should report their absence to the school if they
 - become sick with COVID-19 symptoms;
 - test positive for COVID-19;
 - were in close contact with a confirmed case;
 - were in close contact with someone who is symptomatic awaiting COVID-19 test results;
 - are in a mandatory 10 day isolation;
 - are currently in a 14 day quarantine due to recent COVID contact.
 - *Close contact is defined as:*
 - An individual who has been within 6ft of a person who is confirmed positive for COVID-19 for 10-15 minutes
- Individuals who are sick at school will be triaged by the school nurse and asked to either go home immediately and follow up with their primary care provider, or to a healthcare facility depending on the severity of the symptoms. They will be asked to follow [CDC guidance](#) for caring for oneself and others who are sick. You will also be asked to dismiss any siblings or household members within the district from their designated school until the symptomatic child has been tested or he/she receives an alternative diagnosis. If the child is negative, household members can return to school. If the child is positive, household members would be considered close contact and they too should be tested and quarantined for 14 days from the date of the last exposure.
- Each school will have a designated isolation space where staff and/or students will be triaged and assessed. This room will be separate from the nursing office or treatment area.
- School nurses and other healthcare providers should use [Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions](#) when caring for sick people. See also [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know](#), a protocol that explains what we need to know about caring for patients with confirmed or possible COVID-19 infection.
- If the nurse/school personnel are calling an ambulance or bringing someone to the hospital, they will alert the dispatcher that the person may have COVID-19.

- Families need to provide the school nurse with at least four emergency contacts, indicating individuals who will be able to come to the school and pick up their child if they become sick during the school day. Dismissing sick children (and staff) in a timely fashion (within 30 minutes) is imperative for the safety of all.
- If a student is being sent home, see below scenarios for further guidance.

Scenario Specific Guidance:

Student or Staff Sent Home with Possible COVID-19 Symptoms

- As per the APS Health Guidelines, caregivers must pick students up within 30 minutes of being notified of student illness.
 - Students will wait to be picked up in the medical waiting/isolation room. Caregivers must wear a mask/face covering when picking up their student. Students should not ride the school bus to get home. Caregivers and students should wash their hands upon arriving at home and change their clothes as a precaution.
 - **Household members within the district should also be sent home from their buildings when a student or staff member is dismissed during school hours with possible COVID symptoms.**
- Any individual presenting with COVID-like symptoms should **follow up with their primary care physician**. They may return to school with either:
 - Proof of a negative COVID test result and 24 hours of symptom improvement
 - Proof of an alternate diagnosis made by a physician and 24 hours of symptom improvement

→ **If an individual has acquired neither of these, the individual must remain home for 10 days from the start of symptoms.**
- Household members of a symptomatic staff or student must follow the same above guidelines as the student who is symptomatic. Household members may return to school when the symptomatic individual has proof of an alternate diagnosis or a negative COVID test. The symptomatic individual should isolate from any siblings. If the symptomatic individual does not have an alternate diagnosis or a negative COVID test result, the siblings cannot return to school for 14 days from last exposure to the presumed COVID positive individual. If isolation is not possible, the sibling must wait for the symptomatic individual to finish their 10 day quarantine and stay home an additional 14 days. Close contacts must be symptom free in order to return to school.
- If the individual is tested for COVID-19, the following protocols are in place:
 - **IF NEGATIVE:** If the individual does not have COVID-19, the student/staff may return to school based upon guidance from their clinician and necessary management of another diagnosis. The individual stays home until there is improvement in symptoms and the individual has been without the use of fever reducing medication for 24 hours.
 - **IF POSITIVE:** See below.

Student or Staff Tests Positive for COVID-19

- Students or staff members should remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify personal close contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts, and answer the call from the Auburn Board of Health. **The student or staff member will need to stay in self-isolation at home for at least 10 days and until at least 3 days have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms.**
- Any siblings or family members who are considered a close contact of the COVID positive individual should get tested and will be subject to a mandatory 14 day quarantine from the last exposure. If the sibling or family member tests negative but is unable to isolate from the COVID positive family member, specific direction on a return to school date will be determined with the school nurse and the Auburn Board of Health.
- If the staff or student is COVID positive, the nurse will notify the Auburn Board of Health. The nurse or principal will immediately inform the Superintendent of a positive case. Families and employees need to be informed of exposure while confidentiality of the individual is maintained. The school nurses will collaborate with the Auburn Board of Health for contact tracing and guidance for when the individual can return to school.

Student or Staff Exposed to Confirmed COVID-19 Case

- In school settings, close contacts include other students and staff who were **within 6 feet of the COVID + individual for 15 minutes (cumulative over a 24 hour period) or more while the person was infectious. The infectious period begins 2 days prior to symptom onset, or 2 days prior to testing date if asymptomatic.** School nurses will collaborate with the building administrator and appropriate staff to determine individuals who have come into close contact with a suspect COVID case.
- If the Board of Health identifies a student or staff member as a close contact, they must **stay at home and quarantine for 14 days from last exposure to the positive individual.**
 - If an individual is at school when they learn they were in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, they should be masked and taken to the isolation room. The family will be contacted to pick up the child.

Staff/Students identified as a Close Contact or Household Members Identified as a Close Contact to a Confirmed COVID-19 Case.

- If a **staff/student** has been identified as a close contact to a COVID positive person, they must stay home, quarantine for 14 days from the last exposure and COVID testing is recommended.
- If a **household member** has been identified as a close contact and is showing no COVID symptoms and is awaiting COVID test results, the staff/student should report to school.
- If a **household member** has been identified as a close contact and is experiencing COVID symptoms the staff/student should remain at home.

- If a **household member** is identified as a close contact and tests negative for COVID staff/students should continue attending work/school.
- If a **household member** is identified as a close contact and tests positive for COVID the members of the household are then identified as close contacts and must quarantine for 14 days from last exposure and COVID testing is recommended.

School Response - Notification - Should there be a **CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID** (not suspected) in a school or schools, all close contacts will be notified by the school via letter, and the Board of Health will call you. The school community will also be alerted that there is a confirmed case of COVID in the building but that your child was not a close contact with a contact for questions or concerns.

Presence of Multiple Cases in the School or District

If there is more than one confirmed COVID-19 case (students or staff) in the school at one time, the superintendent and nursing staff will work with the local board of health to determine if it is likely that there is transmission happening within the school or community. There is not a "black and white" answer to school or district closures when a confirmed case or cases is identified. The determination to close a school or district will be made by the Superintendent of Schools in concert with the Auburn Board of Health and Auburn School Committee using relevant data in appropriate context. In addition, the state of Massachusetts has put together Rapid Response Teams if there are multiple outbreaks in different contexts within a 14-day period. You can read more about the exact nature of that protocol here: [Massachusetts Rapid Response Teams to Assist Schools](#)

School Response - Notification - Should there be a **CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID** (not suspected) in a school or schools, all close contacts will be notified by the school via letter, and the Board of Health will call you. The school community will also be alerted that there is a confirmed case of COVID in the building but that your child was not a close contact with a contact for questions or concerns.

Available Testing Sites

The current list of testing sites can be found [here](#). The closest testing site to Auburn Public Schools is: Reliant Medical Group Auburn 4 Brotherton Way, Auburn, MA 01501 and the phone number is 508-832-9621. The staff and students who have symptoms should also contact their primary care physician for further instructions.

Additional Important Resources-Please follow the links

- [Student transportation options](#) and capacities; Follow this link to the [DESE Guidelines for Transportation](#)
- [Safe ways](#) for students to enter and exit the school building and classrooms
- [Plans to monitor bathrooms](#), disable water fountains (can still fill water bottles), provide paper towels;
- Frequent [risk assessment](#) checks by Administrators to ensure that all safety measures are being followed and [supplies](#) are in stock.
- [Lunch and Snack protocols](#)

Building Based Safety Plans

Teams of educators and administrators in each of our school buildings are working to create specific building based safety plans that address exit and entry protocols, interior building flow, specifics related to lunch and other building specific items that will provide further information to families and staff in the coming days. The building based plans will incorporate and follow all of the guidelines included in this document to ensure that as a district, we provide a consistent experience to all students and staff.

School Attendance Guidelines

- Flexible attendance policies will be implemented, and all staff and students must stay home when sick.
- [Staff and Family procedures](#) must be followed before coming to school.
- We may implement a staff attestation for with a daily self-checklist to review their own health for COVID 19 symptoms.
- Students and staff with a temperature above 100 degrees should not attend school until they have been fever free for 3 days without the use of a fever reducing medicine such as Tylenol, Motrin, Advil or Ibuprofen.
- Any students or staff diagnosed with COVID 19 should not return to school until they have met the criteria established by the Massachusetts Department of Health to discontinue home isolation or quarantine. Students and staff must check with their school nurse prior to returning as well.
- When physically in school, attendance will be taken by the teacher and entered in to Powerschool (the District Student Information Management System)
- Attendance for Hybrid Model students, when learning in the remote environment, will be either daily or at the start of each period, and entered into Powerschool
- Students learning in the Fully Remote Model, will have a designated time each day during which attendance will be taken by the Remote Learning Teacher. Assignment completion will also inform student attendance data. The District is considering the creation of flexible attendance taking models to accommodate those families who are unable to note attendance at designated times within the school day due to daycare or other conflicts.

Choosing the Hybrid In-Person or the Remote Learning Program

Until such time as we are able to have all students return to a full-time in-person model of school, the student enrollment options for Grades K-12 are Hybrid In-Person and the Remote Learning Program. Any student can choose either of these options and you will not be locked in to your choice for the entire school year. Prior to the beginning of each trimester, families will have the option to change the manner in which their child attends school.

It is important that families select an option that is most appropriate for you and your child. The decision to enroll in a hybrid model or a remote learning model is a personal one for each family. A Hybrid Learning Model is a combination of remote and in-person learning. A Remote Learning Program is one in which the teacher at the school checks in regularly with students at home, the student completes independent assignments, the student receives feedback through the identified online learning platform for the school/grade level, and the student utilizes an online platform to extend his/her learning.

As the school year begins, your child will be assigned to a learning model based on your selection. If you have a desire to change the learning model for your child, you will be able to do so at the start of each trimester. You will be asked to provide this request to your child's building principal at least 2 weeks prior to the end of the current trimester to allow for time to plan for the transition.

Auburn Public Schools Phased Entry Approach

As we have seen in our communities, it seems prudent to take a phased approach to the reopening of schools. We believe that a cautious approach to the reopening of schools will result in a more likely chance that all students will be able to return safely. Below you will find an outline of each of the phases as well as the initial category described as Remote Instruction.

Remote Instruction

Any student may select to participate in the Full Remote Learning Program. Some students in this category may have an underlying health condition that warrants remote learning for health reasons. However, any student may participate in this model of learning. Students in the Remote Learning Program will be monitored for regular daily attendance, grades will be given and full participation will be expected. DESE has indicated the potential availability of an online learning platform. If appropriate, this may be a part of the online learning experience of students in the Remote Learning Program. Students may choose to participate in this program for the entire school year or may opt to return to the in person program at the change of each trimester. Weekly plans for the Remote Learning Program will come home each Friday for the upcoming week so that families are able to preview the schedule and learning expectations.

Grade level and content standards from the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks will be utilized to design the teaching and learning that takes place in the remote environment. Weekly collaboration time between grade level and content specific teachers will allow for Fully Remote learning to parallel that in the Hybrid Learning environment to ensure consistency in the content covered for students.

Sample Schedules:

	Kindergarten-Grade 2	Grade 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Times will vary by grade level	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting
	Academic Content	Academic Content	Academic Content	Academic Content
	Break	Break	Break	Break
	Academic Content	Academic Content	Lunch	Academic Content
	Lunch & Recess	Lunch & Recess	Academic Content	Academic Content
	Special	Special	Academic Content	Academic Content / Lunch
	Closing Meeting	Closing Meeting	Check-in/Independent Study	Academic Content /Remote

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Hybrid Learning Models

A Hybrid learning model is one in which students attend some classes in-person with the teacher while also spending time in the remote learning environment. The Auburn Public Schools will utilize a two phased hybrid approach to ensure the safe return of students and staff to our school buildings. Weekly plans for the Hybrid Learning Model will come home each Friday for the upcoming week so that families are able to preview the schedule and learning expectations.

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HYBRID LEARNING MODEL OUTLINE		
	In-Person Learning	Remote Learning
Kindergarten-Grade 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are in school for their regular school day • Students follow a schedule for both academic and virtual specialists classes • Recess and lunch blocks will follow the same schedule with lunch being held in the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students participate in synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities • Teachers provide an outline of the weekly learning activities on the Friday prior to the start of the week • Students participate in a morning and end of day class meeting • The bulk of remote work should be designed to allow students to work independently. Students will be challenged but not frustrated. • Students will also participate in remediation or extension sessions with support staff (e.g. Special Educators, EL Tutors, Math ParaProfessionals, Literacy Teachers and Instructional Assistants, Counselors, and Specialists)
Grades 3-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are in school for their regular school day • Students follow a schedule for both academic and virtual specialists classes • Recess and lunch blocks will follow the same schedule with lunch being held in the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students participate in synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities • Teachers provide an outline of the weekly learning activities on the Friday prior to the start of the week • Students participate in a morning and end of day class meeting • The bulk of remote work should be designed to

		<p>allow students to work independently. Students will be challenged but not frustrated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will also participate in remediation or extension sessions with support staff (e.g. Special Educators, EL Tutors, Math ParaProfessionals, Literacy Teachers and Instructional Assistants, Counselors, and Specialists)
Grades 6-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are in school for their regular school day • Students follow a schedule for both academic and elective classes • Lunch blocks will follow the same schedule with lunch being held in the classroom and snack period built-in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students participate in synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities • Teachers provide an outline of the weekly learning activities on the Friday prior to the start of the week • Students participate in a morning and end of day class meeting • The bulk of remote work should be designed to allow students to work independently. Students will be challenged but not frustrated. • Students will also participate in remediation or extension sessions with support staff (e.g. Special Educators, EL Tutors, Math ParaProfessionals, Literacy Teachers and Instructional Assistants, Counselors, and Specialists)
Grades 9-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are in school for their regular school day • Students follow a schedule for both academic and elective classes • Lunch will be provided as students exit the building for the day with a snack period built in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students participate in synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities • Teachers provide an outline of the weekly learning activities on the Friday prior to the start of the week • Students participate in a morning and end of day class meeting • The bulk of remote work should be designed to

		<p>allow students to work independently. Students will be challenged but not frustrated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will also participate in remediation or extension sessions with support staff (e.g. Special Educators, EL Tutors, Math ParaProfessionals, Literacy Teachers and Instructional Assistants, Counselors, and Specialists)
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Phase 1 Hybrid Schedule-1-2-1-1

Phase One Hybrid Schedule 1-2-1-1 is the most conservative approach to returning to school. Students only attend in person classes one day each week. During the first week of school, students will attend half days on the designated in-person day. Week 2 will be a full day on the designated in person day. Week 3 will transition to the 2-1-2 model noted below. All of this being driven by the health of the community related to COVID 19. This is being done in an abundance of caution to ensure that we have all possible safety protocols and precautions in place. This model also allows us to complete the enhanced cleaning procedures that have been established while allowing teachers to also return to school in a safe manner. An overview of this schedule is below.

Cohort A would attend face to face classes on Monday of each week. The rest of the week would consist of remote learning opportunities.

Cohort B would attend face to face classes on Thursday of each week. The rest of the week would consist of remote learning opportunities.

Phase 2 Hybrid Schedule-2-1-2

Phase 2 Hybrid Schedule-2-1-2 would be the second step taken for hybrid learning should the community remain stable in relation to COVID 19 cases and the district determine that we are able to increase the amount of time students are in school while maintaining all safety and cleaning protocols in a robust manner. An overview of how a hybrid model works is below.

Cohort A would attend face to face classes on Monday and Tuesday and would learn remotely on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Cohort B would attend face to face classes on Thursday and Friday and would learn remotely on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday.

What does a hybrid model look like in action in the Auburn Public Schools?

When students are face to face with teachers:

- Class time is focused on instruction and interactions that capitalize on the fact that teacher and student are in the room together. This is the time when direct instruction takes place, key concepts are presented and potential misunderstandings are addressed.
- Class Schedules would include:
 - Scheduled times for mask breaks;
 - Scheduled outdoor time;
 - Scheduled Social Emotional Learning times with the teacher;
 - Scheduled student lunch covered by another staff member;
 - Time to prepare students for the days on which they will learn remotely.

When students are at home:

- Teachers check in with students, while with their face to face students both morning and afternoon to set the stage for the day and summarize the learning at the end of the day;
- Students are scheduled into and participate in any classes that can be well delivered in the remote environment-specials, literature classes, history classes, intervention blocks....other. This will help to keep the connection between school and home during remote learning;
- Students complete the practice and review of the skills taught while in the face to face model on their own;
- Students may participate in project-based learning opportunities.

Wednesdays

This remote learning day should be primarily face to face with a teacher for review, reteaching or introducing a new concept to the whole group. This time should also be used to create relationships between students who are in the same class but may not attend for face to face at the same time.

Starting the School Year

Back-to-School will look very different this school year. As we prepare for reopening schools we are also preparing a comprehensive orientation for all students in both the Hybrid Learning Model and the Remote Learning program. Some of the topics that will be addressed with students as the year begins include:

- Technology Skills-How do I use the tools and apps provided for remote learning?
- Digital Citizenship-How do I engage safely, responsibly and appropriately in the remote learning environment? This will also include training on organizational skills, how to get tech help with a device and how to ask for academic help when needed.
- Social Emotional Needs-Guidance and teaching staff will provide all students with opportunities to discuss and share questions, concerns or challenges related to the abrupt school closure, how to manage and deal with social distancing, why is it important to wear a mask, how to get support if the student needs it as well as opportunities to interact and get to know the other students in the classroom.

Parent and Guardian education on these topics will be available as well.

Plans are in process for the distribution of devices, hotspots and other educational materials students may need at home. These include but are not limited to program related consumable texts, paper, writing tools,

crayons, white boards, markers, materials needed for art class, math manipulatives, leveled reading texts, calculators, and other materials that may enhance student access to learning.

Attendance and Grading

All students, Hybrid Learners and Remote Learners, will be expected to follow the class schedule that is provided to each student when they are learning in the remote environment. This may include a morning or period check in with the teacher so that in all cases, we are able to take daily or class period attendance as required by [DESE \(scroll to bottom of #2 for "Remote Learning"\)](#) Like any other school year, if your child is unable to participate in his/her selected learning model, whether in person or remotely, you will be required to contact the school so that your child can be marked absent.

All students, Hybrid Learners and Remote Learners, will be graded on their progress towards and mastery of learning standards. Students in grades PK-12 will receive trimester end report cards.

Curriculum and Assessment

The Auburn Public Schools is committed to providing students with a robust and engaging learning experience as we enter the Hybrid model for most students. We have been fortunate to have updated curriculum at each grade level and within each content area. Additionally, we have been a 1:1 iPad district in grades 3-12 for several years and are now able to provide all students, K-12, with an individual device. Each curricular area has online resources that can be used to provide students with assignments.

In order to prepare to receive students, we are using Professional Development monies from the budget along with grant funding to pay teachers to begin the planning process for the school year. We are guiding teachers to complete all preparation and planning through the learning management system at each level so should we be forced to go completely remote due to COVID 19, the shift should be seamless. Teachers are creating lessons and assessments that can be completed either in person or remotely.

We have a number of programs that will be utilized in both the remote and in-person environment to support the daily lessons provided by teachers along with the intervention and extension activities provided to students in the remote environment by support staff. Some of the programs that will be used include iReady, Lexia and when available, resources through the LMS provided by DESE as a supplement for students in grades 6-12.

At the start of the school year, heavy emphasis will be placed on addressing the social emotion needs of students as they transition back to school. The BESS/BASC screener will be used to identify students at-risk and to then provide needed interventions. District Guidance Counselors, Social Workers and School Psychologists are working together to create lessons and advisory topics that will help to address these issues in a thoughtful manner at each grade level. These same staff members are working with building administrators to prepare to support the social emotional needs of staff as they return to school.

We are in the process of determining how and when academic assessments will take place. When students are in school, we feel it imperative that they be receiving direct instruction vs. being assessed. This is a question our teachers, working through the summer will answer as they collaborate with their grade level and content area colleagues knowing that we are developing lessons and assessments that address grade level and content area standards.

Technology

Given the current learning environment, technology will play an important role in the successful teaching and learning of our students. The Auburn Public Schools is fortunate to be able to provide all students with an iPad

that can be used for learning both in school and when learning remotely. A recently awarded technology grant will nearly fully fund 50 Verizon Hotspots that can be provided to families who do not have internet, or reliable internet access. The Learning Management System at each level will be used regularly, consistently between teachers and will allow the schools to easily move between face to face learning and remote learning if necessary. Teachers will receive training in the use of the platform at their school along with clear expectations for the structure of this use to ensure students receive a consistent experience as they navigate from class to class. Training will also be provided to parents and students prior to the start of the school year and will be reinforced upon our face to face arrival to school.

	Learning Management Systems by Level	Remote Communication/Teaching Tool
PreK-2	Seesaw	Zoom
Grades 3-5	Google Classroom	Zoom
Grades 6-8	Schoology	Zoom
Grades 9-12	Schoology	Zoom

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Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Wellness/Physical Education

Chorus, singing, brass or woodwind instrument use, physical education activities, dance, and theater require enhanced health and safety measures, because they may involve increased respiration. Research into optimal ways to maximize safety in these types of activities is ongoing. As a result, in consultation with medical advisors, guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is intentionally conservative and recommends modifications to minimize these elevated risks.

The Auburn Public Schools will encourage these courses and activities be held fully or partially online if possible. If they are held in person, we strongly encourage – and at times require – these activities to occur outdoors. Safety requirements for these activities are as follows:

For chorus, singing, musical theater, and using brass or woodwind instruments:

- If outdoors, with masks encouraged if possible, these activities can occur with at least 10 feet of distance between individuals. Note: At this time, these activities are not permitted indoors.

For non-musical theater:

- If outdoors, with masks, these activities can occur with 6 feet of distance between individuals.
- If indoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with 6 feet of distance between individuals. Note: These activities cannot occur indoors without a mask.

For physical education activities and dance:

- If outdoors, without masks, these activities can occur with 10 feet of distance between individuals
- If outdoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with 6 feet of distance between individuals.
- If indoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with 6 feet of distance between individuals. Note: These activities cannot occur indoors without a mask.

the instruction they need to access grade level material. We also recognize that some students may require additional time on learning to make the progress necessary. As the school year unfolds, the Auburn Public Schools may provide additional opportunities to learn after school, on Saturday, during the school vacations or into the Summer of 2021.

Professional Learning

Teachers are the key to a successful learning experience for our students. In order to support their work, teachers are receiving stipends to begin the planning process for the coming school year. Staff in each building who have demonstrated a high level of skill in using technology to teach students both in the classroom and in the remote environment, are creating guidance documents and virtual training sessions for their colleagues. This training will also serve to bring consistency to use of the Learning Management System in each building. The district has purchased Karen Costa's book, 99 Tips for Creating Simple and Sustainable Educational Videos, for each teacher. Staff from Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School will also provide a 2 hour training for all teachers on how to better engage students in the remote learning environment.

The ten days of professional development now available at the start of the school year will be used to provide all staff with training on safety protocols and procedures along with providing planning time for teachers to prepare lessons, videos, and engaging assignments for students.

District and School Communication

The Auburn Public Schools is committed to clear and transparent communication with families. We will communicate with you regularly at both the District and School level. Town Hall meetings will take place for each school in the district. Regular weekly communications will be distributed at the school level. The Superintendent will communicate district wide via email, phone and video to keep the community apprised of any changes to the learning environment. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to your building principal.

Air Quality in Buildings

A significant concern with the reopening of schools is the air quality of our school buildings in the COVID-19 era. Guidance informs us that the speed in which air circulates in and out of classrooms and other school spaces is key to mitigating COVID-19 transmission after appropriate hand washing measures and mask use. The faster air is circulating through air vents in buildings, the faster fresh air gets into classrooms and carries away potentially harmful respiratory particles. During this process, air is passed through filters in the HVAC units, purified, and deposited back into classrooms and other school spaces. Currently, we use MERV-8 filters in the APS. These filters are changed four times per year. However, in preparation for a return to school in September, we are taking the following precautions for COVID-19 and potential Influenza complications in the late fall/winter:

- Kevin Seaman of Seaman Engineering, who specializes in school and hospital HVAC systems, is consulting with the APS on its HVAC plan. Mr. Seaman resides and operates his business in Millbury, MA. He was a lead engineer for the middle school HVAC system, as well as field hospital HVAC systems in Boston during the most recent COVID outbreak this past spring.
- Although we are able to monitor air flow into classrooms and buildings to ensure ample fresh-air for occupants, and feel our HVAC systems are working correctly, we will have a third-party company into all buildings in September for new air quality tests (occupants in rooms provide best results). We have had specific air quality studies conducted at Swanson Road Intermediate School and Bryn Mawr Elementary School within the past 5 years due to concerns about air quality. Nothing remarkable was noted in either

report. There are no concerns at the present time about the HVAC units at Pakachoag Elementary School, Auburn Middle School, and Auburn High School.

- MERV-13 filters will replace MERV-8 filters in all schools this fall. MERV-13 filters are used in hospital in-patient care environments. These filters are ordered and will be installed as soon as they are received by the school district and changed per manufacturer's recommendation. This is being done as an extra layer of protection for influenza season that begins mid-October. Influenza symptoms and COVID-19 symptoms are strikingly similar.
- As another extra layer of security regarding the air quality in classrooms, we are procuring AtmosAir units in all classrooms: <https://atmosair.com/technology/how-atmosair-works/> . We are seeking to have units in classrooms by mid-October or as soon as they are available. This is about the time influenza season starts each year. Influenza symptoms and COVID-19 symptoms are strikingly similar. AtmosAir units will provide extra security beyond our existing HVAC systems to mitigate airborne respiratory illness spread such as Influenza and COVID-19 through their proprietary bi-polarization air system.

Interscholastic Athletics

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletics Association (MIAA) put forth its recommendations to member schools regarding interscholastic athletics for the 2020-2021 academic year. This proposal can be found here: [MIAA Board of Directors 2020-2021 Athletic Plan](#). Member schools within their respective leagues and conferences are now discussing how to implement this plan. More information will be provided by Auburn High School and Auburn Middle School as developments warrant.

Community Resources

[State of Massachusetts Government Page](#)

[State COVID Data In Real Time](#)

[Massachusetts Health Dashboard](#)

[Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education COVID Information](#)

[CDC Guidance Schools and Childcare Reopening](#)

[COVID-19 State Reporting of Cases](#)

[COVID-19 Auburn Reporting of Cases](#)

[Should I Get Tested for COVID-19 - Massachusetts](#)

[Talking to Your Kids About Coronavirus](#)

[Talking About Masks - Mayo Clinic](#)

[How Well Do Masks Work? PBS](#)

[Handwashing Importance - CDC](#)

[Why Physical Distancing Matters - University of Utah](#)

[Parenting Tips for Successful Virtual Learning - USA TODAY](#)

