

Germantown CSD Opening Plan 2021-2022

(Subject to Change based on CDC, NYSED, NYSDOH Guidance)

Multi-Layered Mitigation Strategies

Many of the health and safety guidelines put in place last year, which helped prevent COVID-19 outbreaks and school closures, will continue indefinitely to ensure the safety of students, staff and families:

- Regular cleaning and disinfecting of school buildings and buses
- Improved ventilation in all school buildings
- Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Respiratory etiquette - cough or sneeze into your mask or use a tissue or the inside of your elbow
- Stay home when sick and call your family physician
- Provide surveillance and point of care testing of students and staff in schools

Face Coverings

In accordance with CDC and NYSED recommendations, and a directive of the Governor, face masks covering both the mouth and nose will be required for all students, staff, and visitors inside schools and on school buses regardless of vaccination status. Masks will be optional when outdoors on school property.

Students will be provided mask breaks when seated in class and socially distanced.

****Importantly, CDC guidance also indicates that in the K-12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student if both the infected students and the exposed student correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.***

Given this guidance from the CDC, the district anticipates that fewer students will likely be quarantined by adhering to the recommendation to require mask wearing in our schools regardless of vaccination status.

Social Distancing

Schools will maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms. The district can comply with this guidance and fully accommodate all students for instruction.

Transportation

All students and staff must wear face masks while riding on a school bus regardless of vaccination status. CDC guidelines permit buses to operate with two students per seat. Windows and roof hatches will be open to increase ventilation on the bus. Cleaning and disinfecting will continue following each bus run daily. Students will be assigned seats to assist with possible contact tracing needs.

All students will be placed on a bus route for the upcoming school year. However, if parents plan on driving their children to and/or from school, they are asked to please inform the district office to assist with our planning. Please call 518-537-6281 or email Transportation Supervisor Diane Palazzo at dpalazzo@germantowncsd.org.

Cafeteria

Appropriate physical distancing will be maintained in cafeterias and eating areas to provide necessary meals to all students in attendance. Seating arrangements for students are being made to ensure as much physical distancing as possible within space constraints. Layered mitigation protocols will include hand washing or hand sanitizer before and after meals; limiting mask removal to the duration of eating; cleaning and disinfection between lunch periods; providing increased ventilation of seating areas.

Athletics

Interscholastic sports will be offered to students this Fall. In accordance with CDC guidelines, it is recommended that schools currently located in regions classified as a “high” transmission zone be subject either canceling higher risk sports or ensure that all students participating in higher risk athletic teams are fully vaccinated. For the Fall season, this requirement affects participants in Girls’ Volleyball. The district is conferring with other schools within our league and the NYS Public High School Athletic Association to examine this recommendation. Parents of all students including those registered for interscholastic athletics are encouraged to consider vaccination in consultation with your child’s primary care provider.

The district is also requiring a surveillance testing program of student athletes among other students in accordance with CDC recommendations.

Parent/Guardian consent for testing of students is required in all cases.

Music

Band and chorus will continue to maintain the 3-6 feet social distancing of students during instruction. Wind and brass instrumental instruction will make use of bell covers for instruments to prevent aerosol spread similar to the end of last school year. Chorus singers will wear masks at all times. Outdoor instruction will be considered as weather permits.

Physical Education

When indoors, students should maintain 6 feet social distancing during physical education instruction. Physical Education teachers will prioritize outdoor activities as weather permits.

Classroom Desk Cleaning

In accordance with CDC recommendations, in general, cleaning once a day is sufficient to remove potential viruses that may be on surfaces. Daily disinfecting removes any remaining germs on surfaces, which further reduces any risk of spreading infection. Classroom desks will not need to be disinfected after each period. Surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected daily by custodial staff. High touch surfaces will be given additional cleaning and disinfecting.

Lockers

Students will be allowed to use lockers during the school day.

Contact Tracing/Quarantine

In conjunction with the Capital region, Questar III Boces, and Columbia County Department of Health, the Germantown Central School District will follow the contact tracing/quarantine flow chart describing processes for vaccinated/unvaccinated individuals, three-foot distancing vs. six feet distancing, mask wearing, and time exposed to a positive case. A flow chart will be amended to this document.

Testing

The district is working with Questar BOCES, other schools and the county health department to develop and implement a voluntary Covid-19 testing program for students and staff. We will conduct surveillance testing for 10% of all students and staff on a weekly basis. This test will be a rapid PCR test and will provide for a safe environment for all students and staff. In addition, through support from our local DOH, we will provide a point of care testing option for students and staff that may be showing symptoms while in school. This molecular test will provide our nurse with results within 15 minutes. This molecular, point of care test will provide the district with results to make decisions to quarantine, contact trace, or allow the student/staff member to return to their normal daily activities. Last year, we sent home every child that showed any symptoms related to Covid-19. This point of care testing will allow us to ensure there is a positive or negative result quickly and allow more students to learn safely without quarantining.

School Events

The Germantown CSD is committed to restoring as many in-person school events as possible this school year, including welcome back events, open houses, parent-teacher conferences, etc. Face masks would be required for any indoor events, and they would be optional for outdoor events.

Full Remote Program

A Full Remote Program through Questar III BOCES is in development for medically eligible students. This program would be a regional Full Remote Program for K-12 students taught by Questar instructors. Course options may be limited at the 7-12 level. The district anticipates making final arrangements for this program within the next few days and will make the application available to parents this week. ***Only students with an immunocompromised condition with a doctor's note will have the option for remote opportunities. Please provide the district with a medical excuse prior to Friday, August 27th***

COVID-19 Vaccine

The COVID-19 vaccine is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the pandemic. All eligible individuals are encouraged to receive the vaccine as soon as possible. Currently, there are three vaccines available (Pfizer-ages 12+, Moderna-ages 18+ and Johnson & Johnson-ages 18+). If you have any questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, please contact your family physician.

[Find a COVID-19 Vaccine](#)

More information about these presentations will be available at www.germantowncsd.org

Resources

- [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#) (CDC)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools](#) (American Academy of Pediatrics)
- [Back to School Health and Safety Guide](#) (NYS Education Department)