



18 September 2020

Dear Families of Avon Public Schools and Community Members:

We have had a very successful transition thus far in reopening our schools, and we remain grateful for your support, feedback, and suggestions. I have had numerous conversations with staff, students, families, and community members in the last few weeks and would like to share a few items today to assist in preparing us for the next few weeks. As I have mentioned previously, comprehensive information related to reopening is located on our website, including summaries to find quick info at [Avon Blueprint for Reopening 1 Page Overviews - Google Docs.pdf](#).

### **Scheduled Staggered Return from Hybrid Model**

As you know, we are expected to return totally to in-person instruction by the second full week of October. Our plan to do so was submitted to the state after consulting with our local health department, Farmington Valley Health Department (FVHD), and remains in effect, unless it is recommended or we are required to make a change by the State of Connecticut or the FVHD. Any recommendation or requirement to change our plan to return fully would be based upon public health data in our region.

- The dates of full return to in person instruction at each grade level are as follows: K-4 on September 29; Grades 5-8 on October 5; and Grades 9-12 on October 13.
- Students may still “opt out” to participate in remote learning, in accordance with the Governor’s Executive Order.
- Likewise, students may return to us if they have been learning remotely. We ask that parents contact their child’s school office so that we can make proper arrangements, which may take 2-3 days.

### **Transportation**

Our bus routes were planned with stops for every student, in both the morning and afternoon. If families have been transporting students to and/or from school, the option is always available to have your child ride the bus at any time. As previously noted, several new procedures to comply with new health and safety protocols have been implemented. You can find this information on [our website](#).

### **Staying Healthy and Our Procedures in Managing COVID-19**

We have been asked again about when to keep students who are not feeling well at home and also how the schools manage suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19. You can find [helpful information regarding the virus](#) and preventing illness during COVID-19 on our website along with additional resources, including our protocols for managing possible COVID-19 cases in our [Frequently Asked Questions Related to School Reopening](#) (which is updated, as necessary) or on pages 11-13 of our [Blueprint for Reopening](#). We have already managed several suspected

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cases of COVID-19 in close partnership with our colleagues at the Farmington Valley Health Department, and unfortunately, we can be fairly certain that we will continue to manage suspected cases, as well as some confirmed cases. That said, we will continue to ensure that the health and safety of our staff and students is our primary concern. As you have already seen on the news, it is possible that there are small or large scale closures of schools recommended by the health department when any case is being managed. We ask for your continued patience and cooperation if and when we, too, find ourselves in a position of adhering to quarantining and/or social tracing procedures.

- Families, please be sure that you have a “backup plan” for childcare in the event that such a decision needs to be made quickly.
- In the event any individual students or perhaps whole classes need to be quarantined (by requirement of the health department), we will continue instruction for those impacted via remote learning. Be sure to monitor school communications in such a situation, as there will always be specific nuances that must be addressed.

#### Visitors in Schools:

In order to comply with the many health and safety protocols we now have to implement, the State Department of Education and the Department of Public Health issued guidance to restrict non-essential visitors to schools. Likewise, schools need to make use of the outside facilities more frequently than in the past as outdoor classes, lunches and times for dedicated mask breaks are now scheduled in addition to our normal physical education classes, recesses, and athletics. As a result, our reopening plan required that we restrict access to our schools while students are present (our school safety and security plans have always required the same, particularly with visitors to outdoor areas that students access). We understand that the entire community enjoys using our outdoor facilities, and we are proud to have our schools be community centers, too; we ask just that you limit visits to outdoor facilities to days/times when school is not in session, and that those who need to enter school buildings follow the established procedures. For information about school schedules, please visit [Building School Hours & Contact Info 2020-2021](#).

Again, we are grateful for your partnership with us as we work diligently to provide an exceptional educational experience for all of our students under continually changing and challenging circumstances. As always, please do not hesitate to reach out with questions, concerns, or ideas.

Sincerely,

*Bridget H. Carnemolla*

Bridget H. Carnemolla, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

**Avon Public Schools**

**Dr. Bridget Heston Carnemolla**

Superintendent of Schools

34 Simsbury Road, Avon, CT 06001

860-404-4700