

# Island Park UFSD School Opening Plan Fall 2023



Francis X. Hegarty Elementary School



Lincoln Orens Middle School

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Island Park, New York 11558

## **Introduction**

This plan provides guidance to staff, families, and students and outlines the expectations for continued learning for the Island Park Union Free School District (IPUFSD) students in the 2023-2024 school year. In order to ensure equitable learning for ALL students in the IPUFSD, this plan addresses key factors that must be in place so that all students receive high quality continuity of learning that adheres to safety and health guidelines and best practices provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

## **Goals**

- We are committed to ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of all students and our employees.
- We are committed to providing in-person instruction.
- We are committed to the social and emotional well-being of our students and our employees.

## **Guiding Principles**

- All students Pre-K through Grade 8 will be in school.
- **Universal masking is not required at this time.** Masks will be required indoors for all students, staff and visitors when there is in effect a legally binding mandate to wear masks; Masks will otherwise be optional.
- There will be no remote teaching or learning. All instruction will be in-person only.
- There will be a Building-Level Medical Plan process for medically fragile students only. (Medical documentation must be provided for any medical plan).
- Home schooling will be permitted when all of the NYS guidelines for home schooling are followed.
- **Universal masking is not required at this time.** Masks will be required for everyone riding a school bus when a state and/or federal mask mandate for public transportation is in place.
- **Schools are not required to conduct contact tracing.** When required, any instances of COVID-19 infection will be reported to the Nassau County Department of Health (NCDOH).
- **Schools are no longer required to offer or conduct screening testing.**
- **Schools are not required to test unvaccinated staff.**
- **Schools are not required to report daily test results to DOH.**
- All athletics and school activities will resume in the fall.

The District will attempt, to the greatest extent possible, to:

- Maintain safety protocols established by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).
- Maintain communication with all local and state authorities.
- Disinfect any impacted classrooms and spaces.
- Continuously review procedures for meetings, assemblies, field trips and all large group gatherings.

The following procedures will be established:

## **1. Communication/Family and Community Engagement**

The District remains committed to communicating all elements of school opening to students, parents and guardians, staff and visitors. The plan is available to all stakeholders via the District website at [www.ips.k12.ny.us](http://www.ips.k12.ny.us) and will be updated throughout the school year, as necessary, to respond to local circumstances. The link to the plan appears on the website homepage.

As part of planning for the opening of schools and the new academic year, the District has developed a plan for communicating all necessary information to District staff, students, parents/guardians, visitors and education partners and vendors. The District will use its existing communication channels as well as appropriate signage and training opportunities to support the dissemination of consistent messaging regarding new protocols and procedures, expectations, requirements and options related to school operations throughout the pandemic. All communication and signage will be in English and Spanish.

The District is committed to establishing and maintaining regular channels of communication, and has reviewed and determined which methods have proven to be the most effective in communications with our school community. The District will rely on email, blast email, and the District website to communicate news, requirements and updates related to school opening. The information that we will share will be based on CDC and NYSED guidance.

The District will use existing internal and external communication channels to notify staff, students and families/caregivers about changes and/or developments in the District plan.

The District will follow its existing engagement and communication protocols with parents regarding the provision of special education and English as a new language services for their children.

In addition, the District will make every effort to ensure that communication to parents/legal guardians is in their preferred language and mode of communication.

The District is committed to ensuring that all of its students and their families are taught and re-taught new expectations related to all public health policies and protocols. As part of this continuous training, the District will assess the best approach to communicating the information for each students' age group and will provide frequent opportunities for students to review these policies and protocols. This targeted education will help ensure that all students and their families know what is expected of them as they successfully return to the school setting. The training will cover identifying symptoms of COVID-19

## **2. School Closures**

The District is prepared for situations in which one or more school buildings need to close due to a significant number of students or staff testing positive for COVID-19 or a considerable regional increase in COVID-19 cases.

The District may choose to modify operations in one or more schools prior to closing to help mitigate a rise in cases. The District will consult the local department of health when making such decisions.

In the event a person becomes ill with COVID-19 like symptoms while at school, the following procedure will be followed:

- Information is available in each school building on how to identify signs of illness in students and staff and the procedure to send symptomatic persons to the school nurse or other designated personnel in each building.
- The person will be moved to a predetermined isolation room or area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-19 like symptoms.
- The District will provide individual(s) with state government provided at home COVID-19 tests (when available or supplies permitting)
- Direct employee(s) and/or the family(ies) of students to contact their or their child's primary health care provider for next steps.

The procedure will be followed for allowing persons to return to school following diagnosis of a confirmed case of COVID-19:

- Once a student or employee is excluded from the school environment, they may return if they satisfy the recommendations of the NYSDOH and CDC.

Students may also return if the student's health care provider provides an alternative diagnosis and approves them to do so in writing.

### 3. **Health & Hygiene**

- Attendance of employees and students will be monitored.
- The school nurse will evaluate employees and students, who show symptoms of COVID-19 while in school. If the nurse determines that the employee or student has symptoms of COVID-19, the employee or student will be isolated until they can be transported home.
- If an employee or a student has a confirmed case of COVID-19, if required, the District will report the case to the local health department and the District will follow all the protocols established by the local health department.
- The procedures for returning to school after a confirmed case of COVID-19 will follow the protocols established by the local health department.

The following healthy hygiene practices will be in place at all District buildings:

- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not available/practical will be provided, including throughout common areas of all school buildings.
- Students and staff will be reminded to practice frequent hand hygiene best practices.

The following procedures regarding face coverings will be in place at all District buildings:

- **Universal masking is not required at this time.** Face coverings must be worn at all times while indoors when there is in effect a legally binding mandate to wear masks; Masks will otherwise be optional.
- The District will obtain and maintain adequate supplies of cloth face coverings for school staff and/or students who forget their masks, and PPE for use by school health professionals.
- Face coverings must be cleaned or replaced after use or when damaged or soiled, may not be shared, and should be properly stored or discarded.

#### 4. **Signage**

The District will install signage at multiple locations around each school building to instruct building occupants on the proper way to wash hands.

In addition to signage, the District will encourage all students, faculty, staff and visitors through verbal and written communication to adhere to CDC guidance.

The District is committed to creating a learning environment that protects student and staff health, safety and privacy. Our District will operate under a standard procedure for addressing situations in which an individual has tested positive for COVID-19 or appears symptomatic.

#### 5. **Transportation**

- Ridership will return to pre-COVID-19 levels.
- **Universal masking is not required at this time.** All bus occupants will be required to wear masks, if a state and/or federal mask mandate is in effect, while on public transportation.

#### 6. **Arrival & Dismissal**

- For safety purposes, arrival and dismissal will return to the pre-pandemic building-level procedures.

#### 7. **Visitor Management**

- The District will follow the rules and procedures outlined in Visitor Policy 3116.

#### 8. **Food Services**

To ensure the health and well-being of the students, the Island Park UFSD will:

- Continue to provide meals for all students in attendance daily.
- Follow the Department of Health guidelines when preparing, handling, and serving school meals.
- Update and flag student allergies in the District Food Service Management System. The nurse will update the building principal and Food Service Manager of student food allergies daily.
- Promote healthy hygiene by having the children wash their hands before and after all meals. In addition, hand sanitizer pumps are available at each entrance in the cafeteria.
- Continue to reinforce our current policy on “no food sharing.” The classroom teachers, building support staff and principal will remind students of the No Food Sharing policy. Signage will be posted in each cafeteria to provide visuals for hand hygiene and no food sharing during lunch time.
- Ensure that all designated lunch areas are cleaned and disinfected by the school custodians or lunch monitors after each lunch period and prior to the next group of children coming in for lunch.
- Follow the nutritional guidelines set by New York State when preparing student meals.
- Provide My School Bucks on the District website for parents to access their child’s lunch account and add funds to eliminate collecting money on-site. Parents can also send in checks and/or money to the Food Service Manager.
- Provide documents pertaining to food services in Spanish and English. These documents will also be uploaded to the school website and translated into Spanish to communicate with families

effectively.

- Encourage all families to complete a lunch application at the start of the school year. The District's bilingual social workers and guidance counselor will follow-up with families who do not send in an application.
- In case of a school closure, Free and Reduced Price Lunch families will have access to breakfast and lunch (grab and go) pick-up at Lincoln Orens Middle School between pre-established hours. This will be communicated and translated to the school community via the District website, Facebook, Twitter, Robo-calls and emails.
- Ensure the Food Service Manager continues to supervise food handling and distribution during a school closure and report any concerns to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.
- The Food Service Manager and the bilingual school social workers will be the points of contact for parents who need assistance with school meals during a school closure.

### **Safety and Sanitation**

To ensure the safety of all food service staff and students, the following protocols will be followed:

- The District will continue to update standard operating procedures for sanitation of the school kitchen and cafeteria.
- Regularly clean and disinfect all high-touch surfaces including, but not limited to tables, chairs, etc.
- All food service handlers will wear gloves, apron and head visor or hair net when handling and distributing food.
- All food service handlers will wear gloves, apron and head visor or hair net when handling and delivering food.

### **Food Service Staff**

- All food service staff will be evaluated daily and redirected as needed.
- The District will train all food service providers on the health and safety protocols outlined by Department of Health.
- All food service staff will be trained on standard operating food service procedures as well as regulations established by the Department of Health and CDC. These trainings will also be provided to all substitute food service staff.

## **9. Classrooms**

The District will:

- Provide sanitizing supplies in each classroom, including wipes for teacher use, and require handwashing at regular intervals.
- Clean and disinfect classrooms each night.

## **10. Teaching and Learning**

- The District will provide full in-person learning for all students.
- As we enter the new school year, teachers and staff will be encouraged to spend time building relationships and supporting students with the transition back to school
- Assessing student learning gaps or areas of need will also be of critical importance. We will be using assessments at the beginning of the year to determine the needs students have.

Formative assessment before a unit of instruction to assess student understanding of pre-requisite skills will also be common practice.

- Grading policy 3112.2 will be followed.
- Every teacher will have a valid NYS teaching certification appropriate for his or her teaching assignment.
- Every aspect of the District's APPR plan will be followed.

#### **11. Instruction**

- All instruction will be in-person and continue to be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards.
- Only in the event that the New York State government and/or the local department of health issues a school building closure (or classroom/s) order will the District provide remote instruction utilizing the District-issued iPads or Chromebooks.

#### **12. Social and Emotional Well-Being**

We recognize that the social and emotional well-being of our students and staff during these challenging times is critically important. The District has made available resources and referrals to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional needs of students, faculty, and staff when school opens for in-person instruction in the fall.

In addition, the District has:

- Established child-study teams in each building to identify and monitor students who may be at risk.
- Created protocols for all PPS staff for communication with students and parents.
- Provided staff development for staff members in order to provide support to students, parents, faculty and staff.
- Partnered with Central Nassau Guidance and Counseling Services to expand the support we provide to our students, families and staff.

#### **13. Academic Intervention Services (AIS)**

Students in grades 3-8, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, who are at risk of not achieving State Learning Standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and/or Science are entitled to receive Academic Intervention Services in accordance with Commissioner's Regulations section 100.2(ee). The District will consider students' scores on multiple measures of student performance, which include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following measures:

- Fountas and Pinnell or Teachers College Running Records
- NWEA and iReady Diagnostic Assessments
- Benchmark and lesson-embedded assessments
- Common formative assessments
- Unit and lesson assessments
- Results of psychoeducational evaluations
- Diagnostic screening for vision, hearing, and physical disabilities as well as screening for possible disabilities pursuant to Commissioners Regulations Part 117.

#### **14. Hallways & Lavatories**

- Teachers at the middle school level will supervise the changing of classes.
- Signage about washing hands will be posted in restrooms.
- Bottle-filling stations were installed in each building to promote a safe school environment.

#### **15. Building Cleaning**

- Buildings will be cleaned and disinfected each evening in accordance with the District Facilities Management Plan.
- Cleaning and disinfecting training will be provided to all custodial employees.
- Cleaning chemicals used in the workplace will follow all OSHA standards.

#### **16. Ventilation**

The District has taken a series of steps to ensure the operations of mechanical systems.

- The percentage of fresh air exchange has been increased in all unit ventilators.
- Natural ventilation will be increased by opening windows if possible and safe to do so to increase outdoor air dilution of indoor air when environmental conditions allow.
- Building ventilation systems will be run during unoccupied times to maximize dilution ventilation.
- All rooftop exhaust fans have been equipped with Merv-13 filters.

#### **17. Building Safety Drills**

##### **NYSED Safety Drill Requirements**

Education Law §807 requires that schools conduct 8 evacuation and 4 lockdown drills each school year. When planning drills, consideration should be given to how a school may modify their drill procedures to minimize risk of spreading infection. Conducting drills is an important part of keeping students and staff safe in an emergency, however, steps should be taken to minimize the risk of spreading infection while conducting drills. As such, it may be necessary for schools to conduct drills in the 2021-22 school year using protocols that are different than they are used to.

Regardless of the modification used when conducting a drill, students will be instructed that if it was an actual emergency that required evacuation or lockdown, the most imminent concern is to get to safety; maintaining social distancing in an actual emergency that requires evacuation or lockdown may not be possible and should not be the first priority.

Modifications to evacuation drill protocols may include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting drills on a "staggered" schedule, where classrooms evacuate separately rather than all at once, and appropriate distance is kept between students to the evacuation site. Staggering by the classroom minimizes contact of students in hallways, stairwells, and at the evacuation site. If conducting drills using a modified procedure, it is required that the drill be conducted with all students in the school building on that school day. It may be necessary to do so during a class period that is extended for this purpose.
- All schools will ensure that all students are receiving instruction in emergency procedures and participating in drills while they are in attendance in-person.



**18. Technology**

- Building level communication with parents using email, video and live webinars in English and Spanish will be utilized.
- Chromebooks or iPads will remain with students. Those that need to be upgraded will be collected on the first day and returned to students within 2-3 weeks.
- Chromebooks and iPads should be brought to school each day and charged each night.

**19. Athletics, Clubs, Activities**

- All clubs and athletics will be in-person only. The status of athletics for the 2023-24 school year will be defined by local and NYS guidelines.

**20. Group Meetings, Large Group Instruction**

- All large indoor group meetings and instructional groups will meet all requirements of local and state authorities.