



REGION 15 SCHOOLS 2020-21 REOPENING INFORMATION

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PRESCHOOL INFORMATION

Dear Parents,

On July 27, 2020, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) issued three addendums in regards to the [Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document](#). Addendum Two addressed COVID guidance and considerations for Preschool located in public schools. The CSDE in conjunction with the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) has provided guidance that is slightly different from the guidance for K-12 public schools.

Cohorting

Region 15's preschool, Friends Together, is a collaborative preschool program that serves students with and without special needs. As we review our class sizes and cohorting practices, Region 15 will take into account the size, age and developmental level of the preschool students we serve. We will review appropriate spaces and carefully check for safety concerns. As a district, we will also be implementing preschool cohorting to the greatest extent possible. Given that social distancing is developmentally unrealistic for young children, preschool cohorts will be integral to the district's prevention strategy at this level. This is in line with OEC (Office of Early Childhood) and AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics) guidelines.

Curriculum

The health and safety of our students and staff is Region 15's number one priority. We know that preschoolers learn through relationships and active, hands on exploration; an understanding that is practiced daily via the Tools of the Mind curriculum. Region 15 will continue to implement this curriculum with attention to the cleaning and cohorting of classes.

In the preschool classroom, students will have access to the centers and activities and will be able to move about the room. Teachers will reduce the number of students in certain spaces where possible. Enhanced cleaning practices will occur with items such as toys and games. Materials shared between classrooms will be disinfected and there will be at least 24 hours between cohort usage.

Face Masks/Coverings

Current health and safety policy and protocol does not require mask use for children during the preschool day. However, preschool children are required to wear masks while using public transportation. As a part of self-care curriculum, Region 15 will instruct students on the use of masks as this is a life skill that is needed for passing in the hallways of the K-5 school as well as transportation. The staff in preschool will be wearing both masks and face shields to help mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19.

Signage and Cleaning

Developmentally appropriate signs, social stories and direct teaching of hand washing, social distancing and mask wearing will also be a part of the school day. A schedule for restroom use will be created to track who is using the facility as well as reduce the number of students in this space at one time. A protocol will be created for staff in regards to diapering and toilet training to increase cleanup and safety protocols. Consistent adults will be in each room. Frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing will occur throughout the day, including before and after snacks and meals and toileting. Staff will wash hands between students if they have assisted with eating.

Related services (Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Counseling, Paraprofessional support) will be given special consideration when scheduling to confine exposures to cohorts to certain days. Disinfecting will occur between children.

Recess

Children in preschool will have the opportunity to play outdoors daily. A trash receptacle will be placed on the playground to spot clean any bodily secretions from the playground surfaces and/or equipment.

Drop Off/Pick Up

To protect staff and students, families will not be allowed inside during drop off or pick up. Staff will continue to provide alternative forms of communication as needed. As always, student health and safety as well as staff health and safety are Region 15's number one priority.

First Days of School

School will begin the first week of September for half days. Preschool will begin on an alternate schedule for the first week. This will allow students to experience their new classrooms and review the new expectations...and to see their friends and teachers!! Students who are in the Full Day Session and the AM session will attend school in the **AM** on September 1st and 3rd. Students who attend the PM Session will attend in the **PM** on September 2nd and 4th.

Thank you for your continued support!

Dr. Jessica Sciarretto, Director of Student Services