



June 2021

## I. Introduction

As the 2020-21 school year has come to a close, we proudly reflect on our ability to return to full-person instruction for the majority of our school year amid this pandemic. Through difficult times, in collaboration with our partners from the Farmington Valley Health District (FVHD), the Simsbury community persevered.

We are in a vastly different place now than in preceding months, having a much better understanding of Covid-19. As of June 14, 2021, vaccinations are now widely available for individuals 12 years of age and older and utilized (90% of eligible Simsbury residents have received at least one dose); infection rates are at all-time lows since the onset of this pandemic (1 case of Covid reported in Simsbury for week ending June 18, 2021 = 0.3%); and the State has lifted many of its previous restrictions. Therefore, we are dedicated to a normalized return for the 2021-22 school year, barring changes to infection rates and/or any requirements from the State of Connecticut, CT State Department of Health, CT State Department of Education (CSDE), or the FVHD.

To alleviate the financial burdens encumbered by school districts throughout this pandemic, federal grant funds have been made available. Please see this detailed [Board of Education presentation](#) about Simsbury's funding.

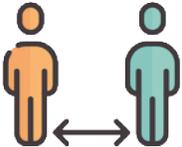
The most recent phase of that funding requires districts to articulate its plan for reopening and to garner stakeholder feedback. Since we have been reopened to full, in-person learning for quite some time, this requirement seems misaligned, but it is nevertheless required. Therefore, we provide the following revised plan toward a more normalized opening. We ask that you provide any feedback/comment to this plan by submitting responses on this [Google Form](#) **by July 23, 2021**. We will revise our plan based upon your feedback as well as anticipated, updated state and federal guidance. Of course, we will communicate any revisions prior to the opening of school.

*Matthew T. Curtis*  
*Superintendent, Simsbury Public Schools*

## II. Health and Safety Strategies

During summer 2020, the Simsbury Public Schools formed a Return to School Task Force. Its purpose was to address our initial return to in-person learning for fall 2020, inclusive of guiding principles, instructional models, mitigation strategies and requirements of families and students to assure a safe return. These protocols were articulated throughout the publication [Simsbury Plan for Reopening](#).

As the pandemic has evolved, so has guidance and understanding of Covid-19. Additionally, since the penning of this plan in August 2020, vaccinations have become widely available for individuals 12 years of age and older, infection rates are trending in the right direction, and the State has lifted its many restrictions in public places. Therefore, the following plan communicates mitigation strategy developments from our initial reopening plan to what we anticipate will be a more normalized 2021 school year. Should further guidance from the CDC, Department of Public Health, CSDE, or the FVHD change from our current understanding, Simsbury will certainly review and revise this information and our strategies accordingly.

	Mitigation Strategy	Simsbury's Response
✓		<p>Simsbury students and employees participated in universal and correct wearing of masks during the 2020 school year.</p> <p>Simsbury will only require masks for all students, staff, and visitors should public health (Department of Public Health, FVHD) or governmental agencies and corresponding markers dictate such a need. Absent the guidance for such, masks will be <b>optional</b>.</p>
	<p><b>Universal and correct wearing of masks</b></p>	
✓		<p>Simsbury will continue with class cohorts in the elementary, middle, and high school settings where feasible. Social distance between student seating for prolonged class periods will be implemented.</p> <p>School provided transportation will continue consistent bus assignments for students.</p>
	<p><b>Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)</b></p>	
✓		<p>As handwashing and respiratory etiquette are effective at mitigating the spread of any disease, these taught practices will be reinforced throughout the school day. Direct teaching of these skills will occur as need is demonstrated.</p>
	<p><b>Handwashing and respiratory etiquette</b></p>	

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<p>The Simsbury Public Schools will continue our regular cleaning practices. Cleaning logs will be completed for each public space (classrooms, restrooms, etc.). Ventilation will continue to meet or exceed building standards set by the CSDE and defined by our ventilation study completed at the onset of the pandemic.</p>
<p><b>Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation</b></p>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<p>Should contact tracing become necessary, our school nursing staff and administrators are well-versed in the practices and procedures of this process. They will continue to collaborate with the FVHD and follow guidelines related to any required quarantine. Communication will occur from the building level.</p>
<p><b>Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the state or local health departments</b></p>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<p>As it is good practice, families will be asked to conduct daily health screens. If students or staff feel ill, they are asked to remain home and be symptom-free for 24 hours prior to their return.</p> <p>Diagnostic testing is available at local health centers (CVS, Walgreens, etc.) should families determine that need. The FVHD is also offered as a resource to families.</p>
<p><b>Diagnostic screening and testing</b></p>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<p>In conjunction with the ten (10) towns comprising the FVHD, closed volunteer-staffed vaccination clinics were offered to all employees of any participating district. Nearly 2,000 school employees were vaccinated through this avenue.</p> <p>The FVHD successfully offered student vaccination clinics to those eligible.</p>
<p><b>Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible</b></p>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<p>Students with IEPs were provided the ability to access in-person instruction through the use of necessary accommodations and the direct teaching of skills needed for mitigation (mask wearing, hand hygiene and respiratory health, etc.) prior to the timeline of their typical peers. The Simsbury Public Schools will continue to provide accommodations to any staff or students in accordance with district policy and governing laws.</p>
<p><b>Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies</b></p>		

### III. Continuity of Services

We will begin the 2021 school year with full, in-person learning for all K-12 programs, 5 days a week. The first day of school will be Wednesday, September 1, 2021. Orientation programs will be offered prior to that date for those who have not been in the school building since March 2020. Additionally, September 1-3, 2021 will be offered as early release days for students, as we provide time for staff to participate in professional development opportunities that support the unique needs for this full-in person return of our *entire* school community.

During Spring 2021, curriculum-based assessments were given to ascertain student performance in academic areas. Results will be used as a springboard for instruction in the 2021 school year. Various K-12 intervention and instructional models have been developed to respond to students' learning needs.

Additionally, work of a social emotional learning (SEL) committee will be implemented, providing a developmentally appropriate scope and sequence for our K-6 learners. Time for skill reinforcement, intervention and support for our middle and high school students will also be made available.

### IV. Public Comment

On June 21, 2021, Simsbury Public Schools will begin to gather public input on this plan by providing it to all stakeholders via an electronic communication from Superintendent Curtis. Those wishing to make comment and/or provide input can do so by submitting responses to a [Google Form](#). Input will be considered in our regular reviews of the plan as noted below.

### V. Periodic Review Process

We are required to periodically review and, as appropriate, revise our *Simsbury Plan for Reopening* **at least every six months** through September 30, 2023. Each review must include seeking public comment on the plan and developing the plan after taking into account the public comment.

Below are the dates that Simsbury must submit a refreshed or updated plan to the CSDE.

Review/Revisit Dates:

- June 23, 2021
- December 23, 2021
- June 23, 2022
- December 23, 2022
- June 23, 2023

### VI. Understandable and Uniform Format

Federal regulations require that this plan be in an understandable and uniform format, to the extent practicable; is written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable, orally translated; and upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.

Should we become aware of any Simsbury community member's unmet needs regarding this plan's accessibility, we will provide accommodations to access an understandable and uniform format.