

# Miller Place Union Free School District



## OPENING SCHOOLS PLAN Regarding COVID-19

**2021-22 School Year**

**Board of Education Adoption Date: August 23, 2021  
September 29, 2021**

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## 2021-22 OPENING SCHOOLS PLANNING

The Miller Place UFSD developed a COVID-19 Opening Schools Plan based on guidance provided by the following:

- The Center for Disease Control (CDC)
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH)
- The Suffolk County Department of Health (SCDOH)
- New York State Department of Education (NYSED)
- District Legal Counsel
- District Liability Insurance Carriers
- District Emergency Health Care Provider, Medical Director and Chief Medical Inspector
- Governor Kathy Hochul

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Miller Place Union Free School District is to educate all students to their fullest potential by providing opportunities for learning that are challenging and effective. This education will enable all students to master the knowledgeable skills, strategies, and attitudes necessary to become lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

## BELIEF STATEMENTS

The Miller Place UFSD believes that:

- Children are our community's most valuable asset
- All children can succeed in learning
- Every individual has inherent worth
- Children learn at different rates and in different ways
- Learning is a lifelong process
- Our democratic form of government thrives upon an educated citizenry
- Parents bear primary responsibility for the welfare and development of their children
- Excellence in learning is directly related to excellence in teaching
- The school district is accountable to the public
- Understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity are critical to world peace and harmony
- Education is the shared responsibility of the school, student, family, government and the entire community
- A core of common values and ethical conduct are fundamental to sustaining our society
- All children have the capacity to become responsible citizens
- Each individual is entitled to equal educational opportunities

## INTRODUCTION

The Miller Place Union Free School District shares the overarching goal for the 2021-22 school year with the New York State Education Department with regard to maximizing full-time, in-person, learning for all students, while keeping students and staff healthy and safe. The District is planning for all students to return to in-person classes as we know learning is most effective and best for children when they are in a classroom with direct teacher instruction. Students benefit from routines and a consistent learning environment.

The physical, social and emotional, and academic health of students, faculty, and support staff remain paramount in the development of this plan. Utilizing the aforementioned referenced guidance and reflecting on the lessons learned during the 2020-21 school year, this plan is divided into sections based upon the goals of the Miller Place UFSD.

The plans detailed in this report are flexible, subject to change, and/or shift based upon a multitude of factors including, but not limited to, guidance from various health agencies, NYS, and District advisors.

## GOALS AND PROTOCOLS

The goals within the plan are based upon the following protocols:

- I. Communication - Family and Community Engagement
- II. Health and Safety
- III. Facilities
- IV. Child Nutrition
- V. Transportation
- VI. Social and Emotional Well-being
- VII. School Schedules
- VIII. Teaching and Learning
- IX. Instructional Technology and Connectivity
- X. Athletics and Extracurricular Activities
- XI. Teacher and Principal Evaluation System
- XII. Student Teaching
- XIII. Superintendent's Conference Day

## COMMUNICATION - FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Discuss monthly at Board of Education business meetings
- Community messages via email, and/or telephone, **and/or website postings [added 9/29/21]**
- The District will periodically communicate with the community regarding close contacts and positive cases. **[added 9/29/21]**
- Questions can be emailed to: [openingschools@millerplace.k12.ny.us](mailto:openingschools@millerplace.k12.ny.us)

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The District has removed all classroom and cafeteria desk polycarbonate dividers/shields.
- Health attestations will be required to begin the school year:
  - Staff - Start of the school year by September 3, 2021, and then periodically as needed.
  - Students - Start of the school year, by September 10, 2021, and then periodically as needed.
  - Essential visitors (example – contracted service providers) will be required to complete a COVID-19 screening questionnaire prior to entering a district building.
- Families are expected to monitor their children for symptoms of COVID-19. Children with symptoms of COVID-19 must be kept home and should not board a school bus, attend school, or attend any school related function.
- Parents are asked to report positive COVID-19 cases immediately by calling the school nurse, emailing a building administrator, or submitting the information via the District’s Safe School Hotline which is on the District website.
- Students with COVID like symptoms who have siblings attending school, all students in the household will be required to stay home until the sibling with symptoms gets either an alternate diagnosis or a negative covid test. [added 9/29/21]
- A doctor’s note or SCDOH release form must be submitted to the school prior to a student returning to in-person instruction and for a staff member returning to work.
- If a student is sent home from school with COVID-19 symptoms, in order to return to school, the child will need to test negative for COVID-19 (rapid or PCR, not home based) or have an alternative (not COVID-19) diagnosis from a physician or complete a 10-day quarantine.
- Ill students will be isolated as per the assessment of the school nurse to an area determined by the building administrator until the parent is contacted and picks up the student.
- Temperature checks of students, staff, and essential visitors will occur upon entry to any school building.
- Students will be a minimum of 3-feet physically distanced in classrooms whenever possible.
- Staff will be a minimum of 6-feet physically distanced in classrooms whenever possible.
- Student seating charts will be maintained in all indoor classrooms and cafeterias.
- Contact tracing will be conducted as outlined by SCDOH as required, including notification to parents, and inputting student information into the SCDOH database.
- Quarantine of confirmed cases of COVID-19 is defined as a close contact who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. The exception is the K-12 indoor classroom, if students within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student, and both students correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.
- All employees must complete the *Fully Vaccinated Status Submission to Opt-Out of Weekly COVID-19 Testing* attestation confirming vaccination status which must be completed by September 10, 2021. [added 9/29/21]
- If a staff member attests that they are fully vaccinated and opting-out of the required weekly COVID-19 testing, they will need to provide vaccination documentation to their supervisor. [added 9/29/21]
- Staff members should submit vaccination documentation to their building administration (except Operations unit members). Operations unit members should submit vaccination documentation to the Director of Facilities and Central Office staff should submit vaccination documentation to the Deputy Superintendent. [added 9/29/21]

- Hand sanitizer dispensers will be available in all schools.
- Hand washing stations will be available in all schools.
- Hand washing (for 20 seconds or more) is preferred over the use of sanitizer and will be encouraged among staff and students (as age appropriate).
- As per the direction of Governor Hochul with guidance from the NYSDOH, that mandates face covering/mask wearing for students, staff, and visitors inside school buildings. Effective immediately, and until further notice, face coverings/masks are required by all individuals when inside our schools regardless of vaccination status. [added 9/29/21]

**Suffolk County Department of Health Quarantine:**

- **Asymptomatic individuals who have been fully vaccinated** against COVID-19 do not need to quarantine after exposure to COVID-19. Fully vaccinated is defined as being 2 weeks or more after either receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or 2 weeks or more after receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine.
- **Asymptomatic individuals exposed to COVID-19 who have been previously diagnosed with laboratory confirmed COVID-19**, and have since recovered, are not required to retest and quarantine within 3 months after the date of symptom onset from the initial COVID-19 infection or date of first positive diagnostic test if asymptomatic during illness.
- **Individuals who have been exposed to someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, who are not fully vaccinated or have not recovered from COVID-19 in the previous 3 months**, are required to quarantine for 10 days after exposure. Testing is not required to end quarantine if no symptoms have been reported during the quarantine period. However, a test should be sought immediately if any symptoms develop during the 14 days after exposure.

**Irrespective of quarantine status, all individuals exposed to COVID-19 must:**

- Monitor symptoms daily from day of exposure (or first date of awareness of exposure if there is a delay) through Day 14.
- Continue strict adherence to all recommended non-pharmaceutical interventions, including hand hygiene and the use of face coverings, through Day 14 (even if fully vaccinated).
- Immediately self-isolate if any symptoms develop and contact the Suffolk County Department of Health Service or their health care provider to report this change in clinical status and determine if they should seek testing.

**CDC Definition of Close Contact:**

The CDC guidance document defines a close contact as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes). Exception: 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 student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

## FACILITIES

- Regular cleaning and disinfection using EPA-approved enhanced cleaning procedures and products.
- More frequent cleaning and disinfection of high-risk areas and touch surfaces (desks, tables, doorknobs, light switches, phones, keyboards, restroom fixtures, stairwell handrails).
- Monitoring soap/sanitizer dispensers regularly to ensure that they remain stocked.
- Visitors - Only essential personnel, contractors for building maintenance, and those directly associated with instructional or academic purposes will be allowed to enter school buildings. They must submit a health attestation and follow all COVID-19 protocols.
- Scheduled meeting with parents and guardians during the school day will be conducted virtually. Only meetings that **must** be in-person should occur in a conference area that allows appropriate distancing.
- The District will continue its partnership with SCOPE to offer a Before and After School Childcare Programs at Andrew Muller Primary School and Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School.
- The District will partner with SCOPE to offer a Universal Pre-K Program at Andrew Muller Primary School.
- Use of facilities - after school hours only is approved for community groups as per Board of Education policy.
  - Indoors - must abide by all district requirements as outlined in this plan.
- Interior classroom doors at North Country Road Middle School and Miller Place High School will be closed for security purposes.
- Interior classroom doors at Andrew Muller Primary Schools and Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School will remain open when possible.
- Exterior windows will remain open during the instructional day, when possible, to improve air circulation.

Note: Ventilation system upgrades are being presented for approval to District residents via a bond vote in fall 2021.

## CHILD NUTRITION

- Breakfast - “Grab and Go” will continue within classrooms at Andrew Muller Primary School and Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School, in the cafeteria at North Country Road Middle School, and in the cafeteria and/or lobby at Miller Place High School.
- Lunch:
  - Andrew Muller Primary School, Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School and North Country Road Middle School will eat in the school cafeteria with classes split into cohorts for eating and recess to reduce density. Students will be approximately 6 feet [updated 9/29/21] physically distant and will not be required to wear a face covering/mask.
  - Miller Place High School students may eat in the school cafeteria or senior lounge and will be approximately 6 feet [updated 9/29/21] physically distant and will not be required to wear a face covering/mask.
  - Miller Place High School students may also eat in the senior courtyard and in the outdoor table area and will not be required to wear a face covering/mask.

- The District will participate in the *National Free Meal Breakfast and Lunch Program* for all students at no charge to parents and guardians.

## TRANSPORTATION

- Masks/face covering are required on school buses - all routes and trips for District transportation.
- Members of the same household are encouraged to be seated together.
- The District contract transportation service providers will take similar actions as the District to ensure the ongoing cleanliness of high contact areas on school buses.
- Buses will not be equipped with hand sanitizers.

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

- Social and emotional well-being of students and staff remain a priority for the 2021-22 school year and are expected to be monitored on an on-going basis.
- Additional mental health staff has been provided at each school.
- Building based Mental Health Team meetings will begin in September to review student and staff needs.
- Mental health “check-in” protocols for students, faculty, and staff will be continued at each school by age appropriateness
- The 2021-22 Comprehensive School Counseling Plan, developed in consultation with district administrators and certified school counselors, is reviewed annually and updated to meet current student needs. The plan can be found on the website at: [www.millerplace.k12.ny.us/Page/462](http://www.millerplace.k12.ny.us/Page/462).
- The District will continue to provide resources to address mental health and behavioral/emotional support services and programs.

## SCHOOL SCHEDULES

- Student orientations will take place, in-person, as scheduled on the school calendar.
- School will open for students on Wednesday, September 1, 2021.
- Students will follow traditional in-person schedules, 5 days per week.
- There is no remote, virtual, hybrid, distance learning, or live stream learning.
- School buildings will schedule opportunities for outdoor instruction when possible and as appropriate.
- Only SCDOH quarantined students and those contact traced by the District, will receive instructional assignments in their Google classrooms from their teachers.
- Only students with 504 plans or those who are medically fragile, will follow the District’s established process, including submitting the required medical documentation, to coordinate home tutoring.
  - Grades K-6: Five tutoring hours per week
  - Grades 7-12: Ten tutoring hours per week

***Student schedules are subject to change and/or shift between various learning methods based upon a multitude of factors including, but not limited to, guidance from various health agencies including NYSDOH and CDC. Additionally, a return to virtual learning/stay at home order from the State of New York may modify student schedules.***

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

- As per the direction of Governor Hochul with guidance from the NYSDOH, that mandates face covering/mask wearing for students, staff, and visitors inside school buildings. Effective immediately, and until further notice, face coverings/masks are required by all individuals when inside our schools regardless of vaccination status. [added 9/29/21]
- Attendance and absenteeism expectations are students will adhere to school district policies and procedures.
- Only SCDOH quarantined students or students contact traced by the District will be reported “absent per agreement.”
- Music - Individuals participating in activities that require projecting the voice, such as chorus, or playing a wind instrument, such as band, will maintain 6 feet physically distanced. The only exception is if the individuals are outdoors.
- Physical Education - Individuals participating in aerobic activities resulting in heavy breathing (including PE class activities) must be 6-feet physically distanced.
  - For indoor physical education activities in which masking is not possible (e.g., swimming), a minimum distance of 6 feet must be maintained. [added 9/29/21]
  - Outdoor physical education classes will be highly encouraged (weather permitting) and people do not need to wear masks when they are outdoors (e.g., participating in outdoor play, recess, and physical education activities). [updated 9/29/21]
- Library Media Resource Centers will be open for instruction and accessible for book circulation.
- Career and technical education will be based on individual student schedules and existing District policy.
- All educational programs will continue to be aligned with New York State learning standards.
- Lockers in hallways and locker rooms will be available for student use.
- Playgrounds will be open for student use during recess and after school for residents.
- Field trips will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Assemblies may be permitted outdoors where physical distancing is achievable.
- Only essential visitors such as contractors for building maintenance, and those directly associated with instructional or academic purposes will be allowed to enter school buildings during the academic day. They must submit a health attestation and follow all COVID-19 protocols.
- Parents will be permitted to drop off student forgotten items in the school security vestibule only.
- Parent Open Houses and meetings will take place after school.

## INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND CONNECTIVITY

- Student laptops will continue to support in-classroom instruction and afterschool assignments.
- Students and faculty will be provided with guidelines and expectations for use of 1:1 devices.
- Students and faculty will be provided with instructions for 1:1 device updates.
- To the extent practicable, hot spots will be provided for families in need for learning purposes only.
- Grades K-5 student laptops will remain at home, unless the classroom teacher requests the device be brought into school.
- Grades 6-12 student laptops will go class-to-class and home with the student each day.

## ATHLETICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- All interscholastic athletic teams will be conducted following all safety protocols established by the state, various health departments, NYSPHSAA, and Suffolk County Section XI.
- There are no COVID-19 testing requirements to participate in athletics.
- Extracurricular activities are expected to be in-person to begin the school year.
- The District is planning a full athletic and extracurricular activities schedule.
- Spectators will be allowed in school buildings after the school day.
- As per the direction of Governor Hochul with guidance from the NYSDOH, that mandates face covering/mask wearing for students, staff, and visitors inside school buildings. Effective immediately, and until further notice, face coverings/masks are required by all individuals when inside our schools regardless of vaccination status. [added 9/29/21]
- In general, people do not need to wear masks when they are outdoors (e.g., participating in outdoor play, recess, and physical education activities). CDC recommends those who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with others. [added 9/29/21]

## TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION SYSTEM

- Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) will be determined in the future based on guidance that is forthcoming from NYSED.

## STUDENT TEACHING

- The District will be approving and coordinating student teachers and student observers.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S CONFERENCE DAY

- In an effort to maintain safe physical distancing for the August 31, 2021, Superintendent's Conference Day, meetings will be building-based only, with no main gathering of the entire staff in the high school auditorium.