

FAQs Regarding Reopening FMS

Will students & staff have their temperature checked before entering the school building?

We will not be checking temperatures of students & or faculty/staff before entering the building. You will see a checklist later in this FAQ that will help you assess the health of your child before sending them to school.

What are the mask requirements & protocols for students?

All students K - 8 grade 8 are expected to wear a mask to school and keep a mask on during the day. Teachers will be providing mask breaks throughout the day. A mask break will be a 10-20 period when students will be supervised outside or in a large indoor space (Gym or MPR) where students can remove their masks and remain socially distant.

Teachers will have the flexibility to determine when the class needs a break, we anticipate that more breaks will be needed when we first return to school.

We are very much aware that some students simply cannot tolerate wearing a mask for any length of time either due to a medical condition or disability. Decisions regarding mask wearing for these students will be made on a case by case basis with medical documentation at the center of the decision.

We suggest that you send your child to school with an extra mask, or 2. We also suggest using a lanyard to secure a mask so that it is not inadvertently put down and forgotten. Disposable masks will be available to students as needed.

What happens when a student or staff member is sick, but it's unknown if he/she has Covid-19?

For the safety of everyone at FMS, we ask students, parents and staff, to err on the side of caution & consideration and stay home when they are not feeling well or are demonstrating any of the symptoms listed below.

Do you have:

A temperature greater than 100.0 without taking fever-reducing medications	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
New loss of taste or smell	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Shortness of breath	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Cough	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Sore throat	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Chills	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Headache	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Muscle Aches	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you tested positive for COVID-19 or been in close contact with any individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you been asked to self-isolate or quarantine by your doctor or local public health officials?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

How will wellness compliance be enforced?

As noted above, we are relying on parents & staff to be respectful and responsible to other community members by keeping children with fevers home and staying home themselves if the staff member does not feel well.

Of course, there will be some folks that don't feel this is possible due to work demands. In the event that a student or staff member presents as being ill while on the bus or in school, the school nurse will assess the individual. If any 3 of the following symptoms (runny nose, sore throat, body aches &/or headache) are noted, the individual will be moved to the FMS isolation room for further evaluation. A parent/legal guardian will be contacted and the student will be restricted from returning to the classroom/school until he/she is fever free & symptom free *without Tylenol or Motrin for 24 hours*. If Covid-19 is suspected, the school nurse will notify the administration and UPH and await further instructions. Families will be notified in accordance with CSDE and DPH guidelines as stipulated in the reopening plan.

How will students be grouped throughout the day?

Students will be grouped into cohorts by grade level. The goal is to have students in groups of no more than 10-12 depending on classroom space.

Teachers at grades 3-8 will travel to different classrooms and all students will remain in their homeroom/cohort. Health Education will be delivered in the regular classroom. Music and Art may also be delivered in the homeroom class depending on the planned lesson. If possible, the cohorts will be permitted to go to Music and Art rooms as these classes are best conducted in a designated space. PE will take place outside, weather permitting, or in the gym with appropriate social distancing. Time will be scheduled between classes to sanitize any surfaces prior to the next class arriving.

Will students be sharing classroom materials? Will students be using cubbies & lockers?

CSDE & DPH guidance suggests that all students have their own individual school supplies; pencils, pens, markers, colored pencils, scissors etc. Needed school supplies will be posted on Parent Square by August 10th. It is recommended that students have a set of supplies that can be left at school and a set of supplies that can remain at home so as to avoid having to bring materials back and forth to school. Any classroom materials such as math manipulatives and art supplies that are typically "common" property will be sanitized between uses &/or placed in bags or bins for individual use.

School issued devices and keyboards will be assigned to an individual and will not be shared with anyone else. Students will be given instructions about how to properly sanitize devices so as not to damage them.

Classrooms containing cubbies may use them for the storage of student personal belongings. Lockers will not be used during the fall semester. Middle School students will be asked to keep their personal belongings in a plastic laundry bin, in their homeroom. Textbooks will not be going home. Keeping personal belongings to a minimum is recommended to prevent loss &/or inadvertent sharing of materials.

All classrooms, hallways and common areas will be cleaned nightly as is customary. High contact points and bathrooms will be sanitized throughout the school day. We will sanitize the building on Wednesdays prior to the second cohort entering the building on Thursday.

What about breakfast and lunch?

Students who would like to get breakfast will be welcomed into the building at 8:10 as usual. Students will pick up their breakfast at the cafeteria door and proceed to their classroom to eat breakfast in the room. Only students who purchase breakfast will be admitted to the building.

Lunch will be delivered to each classroom during the grade levels' 30 minute lunch wave. Meals will be bagged or boxed and labeled with an individual's name and ID code. Snacks will still be available and cold items (milk, yogurt, icecream) will be kept in an insulated cooler until served. Large barrels will be placed outside each classroom cluster for disposal of trash.

What about recess?

All classes will continue to have recess. However, teachers will determine when that recess time will be each day or if there is a need for multiple breaks throughout the day. Teachers will also have the discretion to take learning outside for the benefit of the students to allow for a break from masks and a change of scenery. We have identified 3 areas on campus that can be used for either lunch or outside learning.

What will the bus ride look like?

We anticipate that buses will run as they have traditionally done. We believe that having the youngest students in the front of the bus is the best seating arrangement for their safety, PK - Grade 2 students will be seated in the front of the bus. All students boarding the bus, with the exception of PK students, are required to wear a mask. If a student does not have a mask, one will be provided for them by the bus driver. Masks must be worn throughout the bus ride. Students should sit with their siblings/family members whenever possible. Older students should be 1 to a seat, younger students may be 2 to a seat when masks are in place.

Buses will be unloaded from the front to the back and students will be directed into the building according to established procedures.

Middle School Students will enter through the rear door nearest the MS classrooms.

Grades 3-5 will enter through the main entrance, proceed up the hallway & stairs to their classrooms.

Kinder - Grade 2 will enter through the PK playground entrance & proceed to their classrooms.

PK will be greeted as usual in the front of the building and escorted to the PK room.

The district is obligated to provide transportation to all students. Parents can opt to drive their student(s) to school. Students will be dropped off and picked up at the same location each day. The designated drop off/pick up spot will be determined in the coming weeks.

If the need to change transportation mode arises, we ask that a parent/guardian notify the school office as soon as possible. It may take up to 3 days to arrange for bus pick up/drop off.

Current DPH and CSDE guidelines require that buses be sanitized between bus runs. This will most likely result in a change of pick up and drop off times. We will be working with First Student to determine run schedules and notify parents of anticipated time changes.

Parents can choose to drop students off in the morning and pick up in the afternoon, or vice versa. It is helpful if the plan is consistent from day to day.

An updated parent survey specific to bus transportation will be sent out the week of August 10th.

Ventilation & Air Quality

At the July 28th BOE meeting, the board voted to have the air quality at FMS tested. That testing will be conducted by Mystic Air Quality the week of August 3rd. We are pleased to inform you that the testing results indicated that the Air Quality at FMS fell within the allowable limits of &/or recommended levels.

The use of personal fans and air purification units are not allowed as there is a concern for the movement of air that could potentially spread the virus. In the event that the heat in the building is such that students and staff cannot maintain a healthy and productive learning environment, school will be dismissed early or cancelled for the day.

What about the restrooms?

Students will have access to the restroom nearest their homeroom without limitation. All restrooms will be cleaned and sanitized hourly by the custodial staff. Teachers will be asked to keep a sign out sheet to keep track of students using the restroom. A para or other adult will keep eyes in the hallway to determine if more than one student is using the bathroom at the same time and supervise as needed to limit bathroom occupancy.

Will students have Band and Chorus?

At this time, FMS will not have instrumental music or chorus. This decision was made primarily in an abundance of caution, as well as, the need to “buy more time” in the daily schedule for content area classes with smaller cohorts of students. Mrs. Coats is investigating options to have students continue to work from home with their instruments. Fourth grade instrumental music will not begin until a later date TBD.

Who will have access to the school building?

CSDE guidelines suggest that access to and use of the school building be limited. Outside groups seeking to hold events at FMS will not be permitted. “Drop In” visits are discouraged. Visitors to the building will be asked to schedule an appointment in advance, even if it is just a phone call in the morning to confirm an appointment time during the same day.

What about after school sports?

At this time, Middle School sports, specifically soccer, will not be allowed due to a concern for bussing students to another district. FMS may allow a running club pending an adult willing to supervise. A decision regarding MS Basketball will be made at a later date.

What is the difference between Homeschooling, Remote Learning and Distance Learning?

Homeschooling requires that a student be formally withdrawn from school and the sole responsibility of the child’s education rests with the parent/guardian. A curriculum must be submitted to the CSDE for review. The school district has no obligation to provide materials or assistance.

Remote Learning is an option parents/guardians may choose for their student even though face to face instruction is being provided for the rest of the school population. In this situation, the school district will do it’s best to provide support, guidance and materials to the family/student, but the obligation of the teacher is to focus on the students in front of her/him in the classroom. It needs to be clearly understood that the parent/guardians are assuming responsibility for supervising and engaging their children to fully and effectively access the remote learning programming that is offered through the public school district. Remote learning may not be identical to the instruction provided in the “in school” setting.

Please see [Addendum #1, Temporarily Opting into Voluntary Remote Learning Due to COVID-19, Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut’s Plan to Learn and Grow Together](#) for more detailed guidance.

Distance Learning is provided by the district to *all* students in the event that it is not safe to have students on campus due to the increased rate of positive cases of Covid-19 within the region, inclement weather or other identified threat. In this situation, the school district, it’s teachers and support staff, are required to provide, to all students, a rigorous and comprehensive educational experience that is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. There will be an expectation of participation/attendance, student work will receive timely feedback & be subject to “grading” and standards of behavior & engagement will be explained and expected. Teachers and support personnel will be held accountable by the administration for providing high quality instruction and differentiated learning experiences that will mimic, to the greatest extent possible, in class experiences.

Hybrid Learning is a model that combines both distance learning and in person instruction where only 50% of the student population is on campus at one time for a limited number of days each week. Direct, in person instruction is supplemented with distance learning experiences. Learning experiences and assignments given on Distance Learning days are intended to be an extension of or preparation for learning done in the classroom. Our current thinking is to proceed with the following schedule:

Hybrid Scenario: Two-Day In-Person Rotation (Every Week)				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A-K Cohort (In Person)	A-K Cohort (In Person)	All students and staff on Distance Learning; deep cleaning of building between cohorts	L-Z Cohort (In Person)	L-Z Cohort (In Person)
L-Z Cohort (Distance)	L-Z Cohort (Distance)		A-K Cohort (Distance)	A-K Cohort (Distance)

Homeschooling is often viewed as a *permanent* arrangement thoughtfully chosen by parents/guardians as an alternative to traditional schooling. Hybrid, Remote Learning & Distance Learning are seen as a *temporary response* to a current set of circumstances that are out of the district’s control, and it is assumed that the return to a traditional school schedule is likely in the future.

What if I or my student has trouble accessing Google Classroom, Zoom meetings & other website work assigned by the teacher?

Teachers will provide students a list of all website login and password information on a “Cheat Sheet” that should be kept at home in an easily accessible location. In addition, FMS will establish a “Help Line” for students and families to contact in the event of a problem to get assistance with troubleshooting. How To videos will be made available on Parent Square, as well as, by individual teacher Google Classrooms.

How will my student get to know his/her teacher prior to school beginning?

At this time, we do not anticipate the need to hire additional teachers. Therefore, families can expect to be working with the veteran FMS teachers assigned to a particular grade level. The only new face this year is Mrs. Misty Southern, who will be our Middle School Math teacher and supervise 6th grade homeroom. All teachers will be posting a Greeting & Informational video prior to the welcoming students back on August 31st.

- PreK** - Lisa Crocetta
- Kindergarten** - Cheryl Conway
- First Grade** - Courtney Magario
- Second Grade** - Jamie Owen
- Third Grade** - John Mrakovcich
- Fourth Grade** - Alicia Brockett
- Fifth Grade** - Stacie Dempsey
- Math/Gr. 6 Homeroom** - Misty Southern
- Social Studies/Gr. 7 Homeroom** - Laurie Swanson
- Lang. Arts/Gr. 8 Homeroom** - Joanne Hart
- Science/Gr. 8 Homeroom** - Ev Brown

What will morning Drop Off & Afternoon Pick up look like this year?

Due to social distancing guidelines and the recommendations to keep group sizes to less than 12-15, students will not be permitted to gather in the cafeteria before school or at dismissal time. More information and details regarding the traffic pattern and arrival times will be available in the next week or so,

New additional information will be added to this document with the most recent news at the top of the post.