

Frequently Asked Questions for School Reentry

Parent Guide

Somers Middle School

August 24, 2020



Schools are an important part of the infrastructure of communities and play a critical role in supporting the whole child, not just their academic achievement. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, school protocols have been adjusted to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of students, teachers, other school staff, their families, and communities and prepare for educating students this fall. Although, protocols are different and less convenient than in the past, they are necessary.

Please find our most current information and plans for the upcoming school year below. Information and plans are subject to change based on guidelines from Governor Cuomo's office, the State Education Department, and the Department of Health.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival:

Students who take the bus:

- will adhere to social distancing protocols with siblings sitting together
- will wear protective masks while riding to and from school (if a student forgets a mask one will be provided)
- playdates and the riding of other buses will be prohibited to ensure every child has a socially distanced seat
- Students will exit buses in a staggered manner and enter SMS through various entry points

Students who are dropped off at SMS:

- Students should not be dropped off before 7:30 am.
- Drop off in the morning will be in the lot between SIS and SMS. We anticipate an increase in traffic on campus so please give yourself enough time in the morning. Students should be dropped off by 8:20 as first period begins at 8:25.
- Students arriving early will report to the cafeteria.

Dismissal:

- Dismissal will begin at **2:20**. Students will be called for dismissal as their busses arrive on campus.
- Students will report to parent pick up when the bus they would typically ride is called for dismissal. This will allow us to stagger dismissal and keep hallways from becoming overcrowded at the end of the day.

Attendance

- Attendance will be taken daily
- Students are expected to attend classes daily, whether remotely (via Zoom) or in person.
- To report an absence:
 - you may email smsattendance@somersschools.org or
 - call 914.277.3399 x 3003.
 - If you choose the email option, this will also serve as a valid absence note.
- Daily student health questionnaires must be completed prior to a student arriving to school or riding the bus

Health and Handwashing

- Touchless sanitizing stations will be located throughout the school
- Signage has been placed throughout the building and in bathrooms to encourage proper hand hygiene.
- Staff and students will receive training and reminders for hand hygiene
- High touch, high traffic areas will be sanitized regularly throughout the school day.
- Classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized at the end of the school day.

Food Services

Students will be able to purchase both breakfast and lunch at SMS.

Students will be able to:

- Eat in the café in a socially distant environment where they can remove their masks while seated.
- All payments will be cashless, students can use “My School Bucks” or send a check or cash to SMS for their lunch accounts.
- Breakfast will be available to purchase and pick up in the morning. Students will bring it to their classrooms
- Students may also bring a bagged lunch from home
- As with any school year, all faculty and staff are aware of any allergy concerns of students and proper measures will be taken to keep children safe

Student Supplies

- Supply lists will be posted on our website.
- Student will be carrying their belongings with them during the day as no lockers will be available.
- Students will be expected to bring their tablet to school daily.
- Water bottles are permitted.
- Masks or face coverings are required.
- Students are permitted to have a small, personal bottle of sanitizer.

Scheduling

- Students will be assigned to cohorts that will remain together for much of the school day. These cohorts will help us to limit the amount of movement occurs throughout the building.
- **6th grade:** will report to school daily and will be split into two classrooms. Each cohort will have the support of their classroom teacher and teaching assistant for each of their courses.
- **7th and 8th grade:** will report to school following the hybrid model on alternating days. Students groups will be created in collaboration with SHS to coordinate transportation for siblings.
 - Students whose last names begin with the letters **A-K** will be in the **Red Group** and attend school in person on **Mondays, Wednesdays, and every other Friday.**
 - Students whose last names begin with the letters **L-Z** will be in the **White Group** and attend school in person on **Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and every other Friday.**

Technology

- All students will be provided with a tablet.
- All educational programs accessed by students will be available on the devices.
- Students will be expected to bring their tablet to school daily. If students need technology support with the device that will be provided in school through our Gear Shack team.
- Students will be reviewing the use of key applications such as Schoology and Zoom both in Advisory and with their classroom teachers.

Masks

- Students and school personnel will be required to wear masks to and from school as well as throughout the school day. Currently, according to CDC guidelines face shields must be worn with a mask underneath.
- Scheduled mask breaks will be incorporated into the school day when it is safe.
- We will utilize outdoor spaces to the extent possible, weather permitting.
- Recess periods will be provided daily and students will be permitted to take off their mask during recess when they are 6ft apart from others.

Visitors

No visitors will be permitted inside the school. Items for drop-off can be left in the SMS lobby.

Field Trips

Field trips will be postponed for the foreseeable future. Virtual field trips will be integrated when available.

Parent Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences and meetings will take place virtually through ZOOM. Teachers will contact parents with meeting dates, times and ZOOM links. All parent/teacher communication will be done electronically, by phone, or virtually.

Open House and Building Events

- Transition activities for our incoming sixth graders will be scheduled via ZOOM.
- A “Welcome to SMS,” video will be sent to all incoming sixth graders. This video will introduce students to the building and many of the opportunities here at SMS.
- Open House evenings will occur via ZOOM. Building events have been postponed or will occur virtually.

Full eLearning

- In the event of a school Covid-19 closure, teachers and students will be expected to follow the eLearning schedule provided
- Teachers will provide all relevant links and assignments via Schoology
- Live instructional sessions will take place via ZOOM.
- eLearning schedules will be sent to all parents via email prior to the start of school in September

Special Education and Support Services (AIS, ALP, OT, PT, ENL, Speech and Language)

- Special Education and support services will be provided to all qualifying students whether virtually or in-person
- Curriculum based assessments and formal in-class assessments will be given in the beginning of the school year to determine student's eligibility for services

Band/ Orchestra

- Students will have the opportunity to participate in instrumental music lessons.
- We continue to await guidelines in planning the delivery of Band, Orchestra and Chorus opportunities

Clubs and After School Activities

- To provide adequate time for the buildings to be cleaned and to further promote social distancing, SMS will not hold in-person clubs. Some clubs may take place virtually. Schedules for these clubs will be sent out in October.