



BLACK ROCK SCHOOL

REOPENING OUR SCHOOL:

COVID-19 GUIDELINES

FALL 2020

APPENDIX FOR PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK

BASED ON THE GUIDELINES FROM:
THE CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION;
THOMASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2020-2021 SCHOOL DISTRICT REOPENING PLAN

A Message from the Principal

I hope this message finds you all happy, healthy, and prepared to commence the 2020-2021 academic year. It seems like it has been forever since we've had our students in the building; I truly miss the interaction.

Our focus at Black Rock School is to provide the very best educational opportunities possible. This is always true; however, in the age of COVID-19, it has become even more challenging to achieve this goal while maintaining a safe environment. We are living in unprecedented times, and for many of us it is really scary. For those of you who have decided to send your children back to in-person instruction, I want to assure you that we have planned the reopening of our school with a full appreciation of the fear and anxiety that goes hand-in-hand with your decision.

This handbook is intended to provide our school community with rules, regulations, and policies that are designed using, and a direct result of, our district reopening plan. It is important for all stakeholders to acknowledge and understand that all COVID-19 related decisions were made based on local, state, and federal guidelines. It is even more important to acknowledge and recognize that political beliefs played no role in decision making and will play no role in how we enforce the rules, regulations, and policies found within this handbook. Lastly, this handbook pertains to COVID-19 related issues, it is not intended to replace our full Parent and Student Handbook.

I have had the pleasure of working in the Thomaston Public Schools for a long time. When difficult situations arise, our community has always risen to meet those challenges by working together. I expect no less in how we meet the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We will not let it derail our work to provide students with an outstanding educational experience.

I look forward to working with all the stakeholders in our community to provide an outstanding education for our children.

JONATHAN KOZLAK
PRINCIPAL



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Reopening Our School

The Thomaston Public Schools 2020-2021 School Reopening Plan identifies the critical “requirements” needed to submit a reopening plan in accordance with the Connecticut School Reopening Plan, Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut’s Plan to Learn and Grow Together.

In developing the Black Rock School Reopening Plan the review and consideration of the Thomaston Public Schools (TPS) 2020-2021 School Reopening Plan, and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) School Reopening Plan was imperative as it elaborated on certain requirements with additional considerations and included “guidance” to consider prior to the development our unique school approach.

Links below:

[Connecticut School Reopening Plan, Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut’s Plan to Learn and Grow Together](#)

[Thomaston Public Schools \(TPS\) 2020-2021 School Reopening Plan](#)

Thomaston Public Schools Distance Learning Plan

- March 2020-June 2020 – The TPS Distance Learning Plan was written and successfully implemented from March 2020 through June 2020. An enhancement to the TPS Distance Learning Plan is the addition of classroom Web cameras that will allow for nearly synchronous instruction to occur for in-person and remote learners. The 2020-2021 enhanced TPS Distance Learning Plan offers a learning option to students who continue remote learning from home (students who are medically verified to not participate in in-person instruction or students who choose to temporarily learn from home due to COVID-19 conditions). The TPS Distance Learning Plan offers families robust educational support options (*See also Academics*).

Web cameras (and associated hardware/software):

- July 2020 – Purchase webcams for 54 classrooms (all general education classrooms and as many special education, related arts and intervention classrooms as prudent).
- August 2020 – Installation of webcams and other related equipment
- August 2020 – Certified Staff Professional Development – Webcam use training

Google Classroom:

- August 2020-June 2021 – Certified Staff to use Google Classroom for all students whether students are utilizing in-person or online instruction.

Professional Development:

- August 2020 – Certified Staff – Use of Web Cameras and associated hardware/software
- September 2020-June 2021 – All Certified and Non-Certified Staff – Use of a variety of hardware/software related to the recording of attendance and instruction (including online assessments and communication)

TPS COVID 19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison

A School Nurse shall serve as the COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison. This Liaison is responsible for engaging with students, parents, faculty, staff, and administrators to answer questions or concerns about health and safety requirements regarding COVID-19 concerns.

The Liaison will provide ongoing two-way communication with the school community (staff, families, and students) about any new policies and/or protocols at the following times:

Liaison Information:

Diane Aniki, TCS School Nurse, 860-283-3036 Ext. 12303, daniki@thomastonschools.org



Communications Plans

Following past practice, the District and School Administrators and certified staff will continue to notify community officials about changed policies, the need to cancel classes, or other changes or restrictions as warranted, through a variety of methods such as:

- school messenger
- emails
- newsletters
- school website
- phone calls

Reopening Policy and Procedures

Use of Facilities – Training

The identified training needs of staff related to health and safety protocols shall be addressed prior to the first day of classes. As with all other training and professional development in the district, the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment shall coordinate and, at times, facilitate training.

All staff and students shall complete training in health and safety protocols. The COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison shall address such training in collaboration with the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. The initial health and safety protocol training for staff will be provided prior to the first day of school. Students shall receive training in health and safety protocols on the first day of school, regardless of their instruction status, i.e., in-person or online.

Health and safety protocols mandatory training for employees, substitutes, students, and staff shall include:

- Social distancing
- Cleaning protocols
- Hygiene practices.

Use of Facilities – During Regular School Hours

Visitors and 504, IEP, Parent/Guardian Meetings

Staff, students, and contractors shall be permitted in school buildings only after participating in Health and Safety Protocol training. Emergency responders shall be permitted in school buildings with no Health and Safety Protocol training. No visitors shall be permitted in the school buildings. This includes the dropping off of materials, lunch, or other equipment to the main office will not be permitted. If a student forgets lunch we will provide a lunch for that student on that day.

All meetings that are typically held in –person and include outside visitors such as 504, IEP, and all other parent/guardian meetings shall be held virtually. We highly recommend parents/guardians set up a google Gmail account or Zoom account for virtual meetings, we can accommodate either. **When BRS schedules meetings with parents/guardians, the meeting will default to a Google meet unless the use of Zoom is requested.** Parents/guardians who cannot set up either Google meet or Zoom will be limited to conference calling for participation in meetings.

Student Movement in the Building

Social distancing strategies implemented at BRS to strategically limit movement throughout the school day include the following:

- Clearly demarked hallways making movement two directional only
- Organized entry, dismissal, breakfast, and lunch procedures; details provided in this handbook.
- Staggering lunch waves to minimize congestion outside the cafeteria
- Increasing staff presence during entry and dismissal times to minimize large congregating groups of students

Student IDs

All students will be provided with a student ID to be used for lunch purchases.



Classroom, Gymnasium and Cafeteria Layout

- ⇒ Social distancing between student work areas will be maximized, providing 3-6 feet of distance when practicable.
- ⇒ All student desks shall face the same direction.
- ⇒ The space between the teacher and students will be maximized when practicable in order to minimize the exchange of droplets during instruction.
- ⇒ All staff and students shall wear cloth face coverings when in the building

Our main goal is the health and wellbeing of our students and staff. In order to achieve this goal we have committed to reducing contact between students and staff and the success of this relies on student and staff cooperation. We ask that all students commit to achieving this goal. Students that intentionally and repeatedly violate our goal will be moved from the in-person instruction and placed into remote/distance learning.

Use of Facilities – Outside of Regular School Hours

The school building is not to be used outside of regular school hours. Outside organizations will not be granted after school building use until further notice. **No visitors shall be permitted in the school buildings after school hours.**

No-Touch Usage

Wherever possible, the installation and usage of no-touch items such as doors, trashcans, and bathroom fixtures shall occur. Remove lids from lidded trash cans.

Technology

All device fees for the 2020-2021 school year have been suspended. Devices will be collected and redistributed for maintenance on a regular basis.

Field Trips

Field trips will not occur until further notice.

Safety Drills and Procedures

Safety drills and procedures such as Fire Drills will follow regular procedures as “The State Fire Marshal's Office, at this time, does not intend to modify the requirement as it pertains to fire drills during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

All participants must wear a mask as social distancing cannot be maintained during safety drills. Classrooms and spaces with direct access to the outside of the building should be used for evacuation. These exits will need to be maintained for the entire school year.

Drinking and Water Fountains

Drinking water from the water fountain will be prohibited. Select bottle filler fountains will remain open to fill bottles and will be cleaned and sanitized once daily at the end of the school day. Students are urged to drink plenty of water before school, during lunch, and after school. Please note that movement throughout the building will be limited and may impact access to water throughout the school day.

Isolation Room

In the event that the school nurse identifies in an individual with symptoms that are consistent with Covid-19, that individual will be directed to the nurse’s office (“isolation room”) while the family is contacted to arrange pick-up. The nurse’s office will be closed to other students until cleaned and sanitized. If another student needs medical attention outside of COVID-19 symptoms that student will be directed to another location for care.

Signs and Messages

As required by the [CSDE Plan](#), the school will post signs and messages related to stopping the spread of COVID-19 in all school facilities. These signs and messages shall be accessible for students with disabilities and in languages appropriate for the school population. BRS will deliver regular announcements related to stopping the spread of COVID-19 over the



school intercom systems on in-person instruction days. Announcements will also be posted to district and school webpages and online communications will be distributed to staff, students, and families via email and social media.

Bus Transportation

All students are to ride their assigned bus to and from school. Please note, the main office staff will not accept notes for change of bus assignments because the district's plan does not allow for traveling home on a different bus.

Cleaning Products

Staff and students do not need to bring in their own cleaning products (for desks, etc.). Personal hand-sanitizer use is permitted.



Daily Operations

Length of School Year

Thomaston Board of Education approved a change in the 2020-2021 district calendar.

The changes to the 2020-2021 district calendar are as follows:

- September 1, 3, and 4, 2020 and September 8, 10 and 11, 2020 shall be changed from full student days to early dismissal student days to allow for student instruction in and practice of proper mask wearing and COVID-19 hygiene protocols and to transition students back to in-person instruction under COVID-19 health and safety mandates. All students will attend school in-person on these days unless their parents have chosen to have them temporarily opt out of in-person instruction and utilize distance learning.
- Since September 2, 2020 and September 9, 2020 are Wednesdays, there will be no “in person” school. These will be remote learning days for all students.

These changes will shorten the school year for students to the minimum level permitted by the State (now: 177 school days). NOTE: The last day of school does not change with this proposal (current last day of school: June 9, 2021).

September 1, 3, 4 Only	September 8, 10, 11 Only	Regular School Day	Early Dismissal	2 Hour and 3 Hour Delay
Start Time – 8:15am Dismissal – 11:40am	Start Time – 8:15am Dismissal – 12:40pm	Start Time – 8:15am Dismissal – 3:10pm	Start Time – 8:15am Dismissal – 12:40pm	2 Hour Delay: Start Time – 10:15am Dismissal – 3:10pm 3 Hour Delay: Start Time – 11:15am Dismissal – 3:10pm



Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Arrival Procedures

Students will not be let into the building prior to 8:10am.

Students being dropped off by car – Parents will enter the property via the Route 6 driveway entrance, then follow markings and the traffic patterns around to the drop off zone. Students will be met by staff members and enter the building.

Students arriving by bus – Will be directed by staff to use specific entrances at the front of the building based on grade level (each grade level is housed in certain parts of the building).

Students arriving after 8:20 A.M. will enter through the main entrance.

Dismissal Procedures

Student dismissal to buses – Teachers will guide students to busses. A foot traffic pattern to the busses is established to avoid interaction by students in different classes.

Picking-up students – Parents/Caretakers will form a socially distant line outside the building at the Route 6 entrance. Students for pick up will be sent to the yellow hallway and arrange in marked, socially distant locations. Staff will greet each parent/caretaker and the student will be brought to the door. No one picking up students will be allowed to enter the building.

Bathroom Protocols

Bathroom usage will comply with DPH guidance for cleaning and disinfecting of schools during COVID-19.

Multi-stall bathrooms will be utilized to maximize social distancing.

BRS Cafeteria Procedures

We remain committed to providing Thomaston's children with healthy and nutritious meals during the COVID-19 Pandemic. There are several strict guidelines on food service at this time and Black Rock School will need to adapt our menus and school meal protocols.

- Each grade level will have their own lunch wave. Pre-K students will eat with kindergarten.
- Students will be seated at desks all facing one direction. Desks are spaced apart to meet distancing protocols.
- When buying food, **students MUST have their ID badge on them. Cafeteria staff will either scan the barcode on the badge or use the ID badge for proof of identification.**
- Student's mask can only be removed while eating; once the student is done eating they must put their facemask back on.
- Floor decals will be presented on the floor in order to maintain social distancing while in line for food, and to keep traffic flowing in a "one way" direction.
- The handling of cash is trying to be eliminated. To put money on account please use a check or deposit money online through E-Funds for Schools at the following link: <https://www.thomastonschools.org/OnlinePayments>

Breakfast:

- The students who are purchasing or eating breakfast will report to the cafeteria immediately after arriving at the school.



- The student will walk into the servery to purchase breakfast; maintaining social distance and following floor markings.
- After purchasing breakfast, they will sit at a desk, eat, and then head to their designated room assignment.
- If a student is not purchasing or eating breakfast in the cafeteria they will be asked to leave the cafeteria and return to the designated room assignment.

Lunch:

- Students will enter the cafeteria and sit at a desk. One student per desk. Rows of students will be called up by a staff member to the servery to receive their lunch and then return to their desk.
- Students are expected to maintain social distancing and follow floor markings.
- Once seated after purchasing food, students will not be allowed to return to the serving area.

There will be no changes in the pricing of school meals. If households need assistance with meal payments, the 2020-2021 free and reduced application is available at thomastonschools.org. The application can be submitted by email or USPS at any point during the school year.

Bag Lunch Procedures during Week One Early Dismissal

During the first four days of school, 9/1/2020-9/4/2020, students will be brought to the cafeteria, class by class, during the last 20-30 minutes of the school day to collect a bagged lunch prior to dismissal. Students will enter the cafeteria through one door, walk into the servery, select a bagged lunch, show their ID badge to lunch staff and then directly exit the building.



Health Practices and Protocols

Use of Face Coverings, Masks, Face Shields

[Thomaston Board of Education changed Policy 5132 - Students - Dress and Grooming](#) requires the use of cloth face coverings by all students. An emergency supply of cloth face coverings will be provided for staff and students who soil, wet or damage their personal cloth face coverings. **A new mask can be requested from the school nurse.** Other protections like a face shield or clear plastic barrier still require the user to wear a cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth; these other protectors are optional and will not be provided by the District.



Face Covering

A cloth, paper, or disposable face covering that covers the nose and mouth; may or may not be medical grade



Face Shield

A clear plastic shield that covers the forehead, extends below the chin, and wraps around the sides of the face



Clear Plastic Barrier

A clear plastic or solid surface that can be cleaned and sanitized often

Teachers who provide instruction to English-language learners or students with hearing impairments will wear a clear face covering.

How to Wear a Cloth Face Covering Correctly

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily
- Don't put the face covering around your neck or up on your forehead
- Don't touch the face covering, and, if you do, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer to disinfect



Choosing to not properly wear a mask will be considered a violation of the Thomaston Public School's dress code policy and disciplinary actions may include using one or more discipline management techniques, such as verbal/written warnings for first time offenses but may require revoking privileges, detention, and removal from class, and or remote learning only option for multiple offenses.

The final decision whether the student has violated the dress code rests with the discretion of the administrators.

*We do not plan on, or intend to, debate the politics of face coverings. Student who refuse to properly wear face coverings will be assigned to remote/distance learning.



How to Take Off Your Cloth Face Covering Carefully, When You're Home



Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops

Handle only by the ear loops or ties

- Fold outside corners together
- Place covering in the washing machine
- Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing and wash hands immediately after removing

How to Clean a Cloth Face Covering (not for one-time use/disposable masks)



Washing Machine

- You can include your face covering with your regular laundry.
- Use regular laundry detergent and the warmest appropriate water setting for the cloth used to make the face covering.



Washing by Hand

- Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) household bleach per gallon of room temperature water or
 - 4 teaspoons household bleach per quart of room temperature water
- Check the label to see if your bleach is intended for disinfection. Some bleach products, such as those designed for safe use on colored clothing, may not be suitable for disinfection. Ensure the bleach product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.
- Soak the face covering in the bleach solution for 5 minutes.
- Rinse thoroughly with cool or room temperature water.
- Make sure to completely dry the cloth face covering after washing.

How to Dry a Cloth Face Covering (not for one-time use/disposable masks)



Dryer

- Use the highest heat setting and leave in the dryer until completely dry.



Air dry

- Lay flat and allow to completely dry. If possible, place the cloth face covering in direct sunlight.



State Mandated Assessments

The administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessment will be determined by the State Department of Education

COVID-19 Resources for Parents, Guardians and Students

The following links can provide parents, guardians, and students with resources for Covid-19 related questions.

- [How to make your own cloth face covering video link](#)
- [2020-2021 Thomaston Public Schools Reopening Plan Information](#)
- [CDC Back to School Planning: Checklists to Guide Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers](#)
- [Connecticut Department of Public Health](#)
- [Connecticut State Department of Education COVID-19 Resources for Families](#)
- [Torrington Area Health District](#)
- [Town of Thomaston](#)

