



#### **MISSION**

*RSU 63 is a community of learners dedicated to providing a safe, supportive, and challenging academic environment. Our students are respectful citizens and responsible stewards of our world. They are well prepared for high school with skills and a work ethic that enables them to succeed.*

~~2021-2022~~

~~2022-2023~~

~~2023-2024~~

**2024-2025**

# **Guide for Returning to School**

**Approved by RSU 63 Board of Directors on August 23, 2021**

**Reviewed & Revised May 22, 2023**

**See Addendum(s) A, B for recent revisions**

**Reviewed & Revised August 28, 2023**

**Reviewed & Revised April 29, 2024**

The purpose of the rules and procedures in this guide is to maximize at-school, in person instruction for our students, help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, and limit the need for quarantining. We want our students healthy, safe, and in school as much as possible.

Priorities:

- Keeping the **health and safety** of students and staff the primary consideration while providing **At-School Instruction** for our students **with as little disruption as possible**.

This 2021-2022 Guide for Returning to School is based on available public health information at the time of its creation. The rules and procedures may need to be adjusted based on local conditions and guidance from public health officials.

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## Health and Safety

### STAYING HOME WHEN SICK

Students, staff, and visitors who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as the flu or COVID-19, should stay home and contact their healthcare provider for testing and care, regardless of vaccination status. Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keep COVID-19 infections out of schools and prevent spread to others.

1. The following questions are to be used for screening for school attendance:
  - a. Within the past 24 hours have you had a fever (100.4 and above) or used any fever reducing medicine?
  - b. Do you feel sick, have vomiting, diarrhea, or a sore throat?
  - c. Have you been told to stay home and isolate/quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure?

**If the answer to any of these questions is “Yes,” stay home! Contact your health care provider and...**

**Parents** – Contact the school secretary and let her know why your child will not be coming to school.

- **Eddington** (PreK, K, and Grade 1): [kjsmith@rsu63.org](mailto:kjsmith@rsu63.org) 843-6010
- **Holden** (Grades 2, 3, and 4): Heather Kiley [hkiley@rsu63.org](mailto:hkiley@rsu63.org) 843-7828
- **Holbrook** (Grades 5, 6, 7, & 8): Karen Everhart [keverhart@rsu63.org](mailto:keverhart@rsu63.org) 843-7769

**RSU 63 Staff** – Contact Timothy Baker or Zachary Chenier (drivers) and let them know why you will not be coming to work.

## Reporting a Positive Case of COVID-19

If you or someone in your household has COVID-19, **STAY HOME** and report that (immediately upon confirmation of a positive test) to our school nurse, Dawna Bickford by sending an email to [dbickford@rsu63.org](mailto:dbickford@rsu63.org). Please email Nurse Bickford even if it is during the night or over a weekend. Timely communication is critically important to reducing spread.

## Responding to a Positive Case of COVID-19

RSU 63 will follow the [Standard Operating Procedure](#) (SOP) from the Maine CDC when responding to COVID19 among students or staff.

## COVID-19 Vaccinations

COVID-19 vaccination is one of the most critical strategies to help schools safely resume full operations. **Fully vaccinated people who are asymptomatic do not have to quarantine when exposed to a positive COVID case.**

1. RSU 63 encourages all staff, eligible students, and adults who regularly interact with our students who are not already fully vaccinated to get vaccinated as soon as possible.
2. As required by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, RSU 63 will collect and report the rates of COVID-19 vaccination among school staff serving our students.

## ~~Pooled Testing~~

~~Any student or staff member who participates in weekly pooled testing is exempt from school quarantine if exposed to COVID at school and is asymptomatic.~~

~~The early detection and reduction of spread provides peace of mind for students, staff, and families, as well as the added benefit of reducing education disruption and exclusion from extracurriculars due to quarantine as a close contact.~~

~~Opt-in pooled testing will be offered to all RSU 63 staff and students following Maine Department of Education's (DOE's) procedures and guidelines. Consistent with legal requirements and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), parental consent will be obtained prior to any COVID testing.~~

~~More information about Pooled Testing can be found at <https://www.maine.gov/doe/covid-19/toolkit#pooled>.~~

## Masks/Face Coverings

The primary route of transmission for COVID-19 is respiratory. Masks/face coverings are among the most critical tools for reducing risk and spread of COVID-19. Masks help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people or surfaces.

Students without symptoms, who attend schools requiring the wearing of masks indoors, and who are at least 3' away from an individual who tests positive for COVID-19 do not have to quarantine from the regular school day.

Select a mask/face covering that:

- Has two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric
- Completely covers the nose and mouth
- Fits snugly but comfortably against the side the face and does not have gaps
- Masks with exhalation valves are not allowed

~~1. All adults and students must wear a mask/face covering that covers their nose and mouth while on an RSU 63 bus or in an RSU 63 van (as per [Federal CDC order](#)).~~

~~2. It is highly recommended all adults, students, children over 2, wear a mask/face covering that covers their nose and mouth while in an RSU 63 school (Eddington, Holden, and Holbrook Schools) or in the RSU 63 bus garage.~~

~~a. A parent/guardian must provide written permission for their child to not wear a mask/face covering while in an RSU 63 building.~~

~~b. All visitors inside RSU 63 buildings are required to wear a mask/face covering.~~

c. Face shields may be an alternative for students with medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear masks/face coverings. The same applies to staff with medical or other health reasons for being unable to wear face coverings. Face shields will be allowed for staff and/or students who provide medical documentation that they cannot wear face masks/coverings due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors.

3. **Adults and students do not need to wear masks when outdoors.** However, CDC recommends that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people.

4. Please be aware that when students who participate in sports or other activities travel to other schools, different rules for that district may apply to RSU 63 students and adults. Please respect the rules and decisions made by that district.

5. Masks/face coverings should be provided by the student/family, but extra masks will be made available by the school for students who need them. Families experiencing financial hardship and unable to afford masks/face coverings should contact the school.

6. Masks/face coverings should be replaced when soiled or wet. If the mask/face covering becomes soiled, remove and safely discard disposable masks, or store reusable face coverings in a sealed plastic bag for laundering. Perform hand hygiene after changing a soiled mask/face covering. Masks/face coverings should be washed daily.

7. Masks with exhalation valves are not allowed.

8. Incorporate outdoor learning as much as possible and incorporate mask breaks throughout the day.

## Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is another important practice that helps reduce transmission of the virus. We aim for three to six feet of distance between individuals whenever possible.

- ~~1. When eating, students must be at least three feet apart and facing the same direction.~~
- ~~2. Desks will be spaced three feet or more apart and facing the same direction.~~
- ~~3. Unvaccinated adults must maintain a distance of six feet from other adults and students.~~

## Hand Hygiene

Frequent hand hygiene reduces the risk of transmission of COVID-19 by removing pathogens from the surface of the hands.

1. Students will receive training on good hand hygiene practices and receive frequent reminders through verbal prompts, signs, and other means.
2. All students and staff will use hand hygiene (handwashing or hand sanitizer) frequently throughout the school day.
3. Handwashing is the best option. When handwashing is not practicable, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
4. Hand sanitizer is placed in all classrooms and at key locations.
5. Students will be taught and reminded to cough or sneeze into their elbow when not wearing a face covering or alternatively, cough or sneeze into a tissue, discard the tissue into trash container, and then perform hand hygiene.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

1. All RSU 63 schools have standard healthcare supplies (e.g., masks and gloves).
2. The school nurse and school secretaries have access to appropriate medical PPE to use in clinic and with symptomatic students or adults. This PPE includes N95 masks, surgical masks, gloves, disposable gowns, and face shields or other eye protection.

## RSU 63 Facilities

- ~~1. Drinking fountains will only be used as water fill stations. Staff and students should bring water bottles, and cups will be provided for drinking fountain use for those who do not have a water bottle.~~ Drinking fountains will be cleaned and disinfected and have signs for proper use.
2. Lines will be eliminated to the greatest extent practicable. Where lines are unavoidable (e.g. near doors, sinks, bathrooms, or other places where students may line up), three to six feet of distance between individuals will be maintained.
- ~~3. Signs will be at entrances and throughout buildings (particularly high traffic areas), alerting staff and students to physical distancing requirements, face covering policies, and hand hygiene protocols.~~

## Ventilation

Ventilation is another component that helps reduce transmission of COVID-19. RSU 63 is in the process of renovating the heating and ventilation systems at all three of our schools. This will cause some disruption throughout the school year but is an important health and safety upgrade. We will continue to bring in as much fresh air from outdoors as possible.

- ~~1. Windows and doors will be open, when feasible, to maximize ventilation, especially when eating or if the room is near maximum occupancy.~~
- ~~2. Fans will be used to increase the effectiveness of open windows. Fans should be safely secured to blow potentially contaminated air out of a window and pull new air in through other open windows and doors.~~

## Cleaning and Disinfecting

1. RSU 63 facilities will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected daily.
2. Products used will meet EPA disinfection criteria. We will continue to follow safe and correct usage and storage practices for cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children.
3. Students will not participate in disinfecting activities.

## BUSING and TRANSPORTATION

COVID-19 presents many unique challenges regarding the busing and transportation of students. **Please consider transporting your child(ren) to school.**

Our traffic flow patterns, drop off, pick up, and building entry points may be different from what we have used in the past. **PLEASE USE CAUTION.**

**Students can be dropped off at the Eddington and Holden Schools from 8:00am until 8:10am.**

Prior to 8:00am, students will need to wait in the vehicle with their parents. When arriving between 8:00am and 8:10am, students can enter the school and go to the cafeteria to get a breakfast or go straight to the playground. After 8:10am, students should be dropped off at the front door.

**Students can be dropped off at the Holbrook School from 7:55am until 8:05am.** Prior to 7:55am students will need to wait in the vehicle with their parents. When arriving between 7:55am and 8:05am, students can enter the school and go to the cafeteria. At 8:05, students can start moving from the cafeteria to their homerooms.

~~Student pick up at the end of the day will be the same as last year.~~

~~Parents can pick up students from the Eddington and Holden Schools from 2:55pm until 3:15pm. Parents will need to wait in the parking lot for their child(ren) to be brought out of the building.~~

~~Parents can pick up students from the Holbrook School from 3:05pm until 3:30pm. Parents will need to wait in the parking lot for their child(ren) to be brought out of the building.~~

### Riding in an RSU 63 Bus or Van

~~Students are required wear a facemask on an RSU 63 bus or van. Students must remain in the seat assigned to them by the driver. Students who do not follow these rules will not be allowed to ride in an RSU 63 vehicle.~~

- ~~1. RSU 63 drivers will practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff (e.g., hand hygiene, face coverings).~~
- ~~2. **Masks/face coverings are required (as per Federal CDC order) to be worn by all adults and students** (including those in Pre-Kindergarten) when on the bus/in an RSU 63 van.~~
- ~~3. Hand sanitizer is available when entering and exiting the bus.~~
- ~~4. Students must remain in their assigned seats.~~
- ~~5. Windows will be open as weather permits.~~
- ~~6. All other RSU 63 rules and policies regarding student transportation will be followed.~~

## FOOD and NUTRITION SERVICES

School meals play an important role in addressing food security for students. COVID-19 has not been shown to be a food-borne disease. Standard food preparation guidelines will be followed, with special consideration for masking and physical distancing between food service staff in the kitchen and when in contact with students/staff.

- ~~1. Food preparation and service procedures will be adjusted to maintain physical distance and support compliance with health and safety protocols.~~
- ~~2. All our Food and Nutrition Services employees will follow cleaning and disinfecting protocols aligned with CDC guidance and will wear face coverings during food preparation and service.~~
- ~~3. RSU 63 will provide **breakfast and lunch free to all students**. ~~Students will eat at least 3 feet apart.~~ This may occur in classrooms, outdoors, and in cafeterias/gymnasium.~~

**Even though meals are free for all students, we need parents to help by taking the time to complete the confidential Meal Benefit application found at <http://rsu63.nlappscloud.com>**

Our schools benefit from the data that is gathered from the application. Examples include school meal reimbursements, funding for our elementary literacy programs, after school and outdoor education funding and resources, special education funding, teacher loan forgiveness, and funding provided through the Maine State Legislature/Essential Programs and Services formula.

To prepay for snack milk (Eddington and Holden Schools) or a la carte items (Holbrook School) on-line using a credit or debit card. Please click the MySchoolBucks link below. Payments can be made whenever it's convenient, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

If you have lost or need your child's student number to register for a free account, please contact your child's school.



Questions or issues creating or managing your account? Contact mySchoolBucks directly at (855)-832-5226.