

# Chautauqua Lake Central School District

*"Charting a course for the future"*

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April 29, 2021

Dear Parents & Guardians,

In an effort to allow more students across New York State to attend school in-person, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) recently released guidance entitled "Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency." The NYSDOH Interim Guidance aligns with recent recommendations put forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The good news for the Chautauqua Lake Central School District is that because of the physical space that we have on campus and our efforts to mitigate the risks posed by COVID-19, the April guidance from the NYSDOH will not mean widespread changes for our students and employees.

Under previous guidance from the NYSDOH, the District has been required to use a six-foot measurement to socially distance students during the 2020-21 school year. Unlike many other school districts across the State, we have been able to use the six-foot measurement and provide all students the opportunity to attend school in-person each day during the 2020-21 school year. So while the NYSDOH guidance permits schools to use a measurement of three feet rather than six feet, we have the space to continue using the six-foot measurement. In addition to social distancing, we will continue to use a host of other safety measures. These measures include daily health screening forms, Merv-13 advanced filtration system, hallway traffic flow patterns, poly-carbonate safety barriers, entry temperature thermal scanners, and increased cleaning to maintain our present in-person instructional model safely.

Furthermore, the NYSDOH guidance document also discusses masking requirements that align with current CDC recommendations. As such, students will continue to wear their masks as much as possible throughout the day in accordance with the DOH's requirement that the District consider the "developmental appropriateness, feasibility, and ability to implement such [a mask] policy in a safe, consistent manner." As we have all year, the District will continue to consider these factors to comply with masking requirements.

There is one change in the NYSDOH guidance regarding the wearing of certain types of masks in schools. The NYSDOH guidance provides that "all masks must also have at least two layers of material (e.g., 2-ply)," and that "acceptable masks include but are not limited to cloth-based masks (e.g., homemade sewn, quick cut), and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose." Therefore, single-layer masks (commonly referred to as "gaiter") will not be permitted in the educational setting.

These protocols and procedures are necessary aspects to help ensure we do everything we can to protect the health of our students and extended school community. The District's legal counsel has advised us that we are obligated to comply with the NYSDOH guidance, regardless of the relative success we have experienced during this school year with our in-person instructional model.

We truly appreciate the level of collaboration, cooperation, and perseverance shown by our extended Chautauqua Lake community throughout this school year. With your continued support, we can finish the remaining two months of this school year and focus on celebrating our students in a positive and safe environment. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the District office at (716) 753-5808 or one of our building principals.

Stronger Together,  
Chautauqua Lake Reopening Sub-Committee

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