



Rochester City School District

Back-to-School

Guide for

RCSD Families



Information is accurate as of
August 19, 2021.
Information may be forthcoming as
changes come from the
CDC and NYSED.

Dear Rochester City School District Students and Families,

Welcome back! I am excited that we are returning to school buildings five days a week, and I cannot wait to see you all in person. Everyone in the RCSD community has worked courageously and tirelessly throughout the past year and a half to support and advocate for our scholars, schools, and programs.

I hope you will join me in embracing our theme for the 2021 – 2022 school year, which is *Refocus, Renew, and Reimagine*. This theme provides us an opportunity to evolve, advance, and improve our approach to learning and instruction. This school year, we will forge partnerships in new and innovative ways to support our students and our staff.

The health and safety of students and staff remains our top priority and is critical to providing a high-quality learning experience. This in-person guide gives families important information and resources on preparing for and staying safe throughout the school day.



Thank you for your support of the RCSD community. As we work together, we will engage, lift up, collaborate, and lead our students and staff through a successful school year!

Sincerely,

Dr. Lesli Myers-Small
Superintendent of Schools

Welcome to the 2021-2022 School Year!

This guide will help ensure a smooth return to school in person, five days a week.

Preparing for the School Day

Below are some simple steps that families can take to help minimize the spread of COVID-19.

Daily Health Screening and Temperature Checks at Home

Every student must be screened for COVID-19 symptoms before coming to school each day. This includes daily temperature checks. Parents should assess their children daily using the questions below.

1. Have you been in close physical contact in the last 10 days with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19?
2. Has anyone in the home experienced sudden loss of taste or smell or fever of 100.4°F or higher in the last 10 days?
3. Have you tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 10 days?
4. Do you have any new or worsening symptoms of COVID-19 (fever or chills, shortness of breath, sore throat, cough, sudden loss of taste or



- smell, muscle or body aches, headache, fatigue, congestion or a runny nose, diarrhea or vomiting)?
5. Do you have a temperature of 100.4°F or higher?

If you answer yes to any one of these questions, you must notify the school nurse and keep your child home.

Riding the Bus

Safety precautions are in place for transportation. Students, school staff, and bus drivers are required to wear masks at all times on school buses. Per CDC guidance, students will be socially distanced to the extent possible and disinfection will take place at least once per day. Students from the same household will be seated together.

Staying Safe Throughout the Day

The following information is essential to keeping students in school safely.

Face Coverings

All students and staff, vaccinated and unvaccinated, are required to wear masks indoors at all times except to eat or drink at designated times and in designated locations. Masks that cover the mouth, nose, and chin help to stop germs from spreading to other people. If a student comes to school without a mask, a disposable mask will be provided.



Social Distancing

The District will maximize social distance in all buildings. Students will be as distanced as possible. That means that they may not be the same distance in every space. In some classrooms or spaces, students may be distanced up to six feet. However, in some instances, distancing may be three feet or even less to allow every student the opportunity to return to in-person learning. Adults will maintain six feet of space from each other and students unless the task requires them to be closer. Masks will be worn by adults at all times when engaging in activities that bring them closer than six feet to another adult or student.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes) are two of the best ways to keep from getting and spreading infectious illnesses, including COVID-19. You will see hand hygiene stations in all schools, with signs reminding you to wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, hand sanitizer will be provided.

Eating Meals at School

All schools will serve breakfast and lunch daily. Cafeterias are set up to maximize physical distance as much as possible. Meals may also be served in alternate areas, such as classrooms, or in staggered meal periods. This allows for proper cleaning and disinfection before and after meals. Handwashing will also take place before and after meals. Masks can be removed to eat and drink. Students will be asked to sit with the same group of students for each quarter of the school year.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Cleaning will take place daily and more often in high-use areas. If a school building has a student or staff member test positive for COVID-19, the affected spaces will be cleaned and disinfected according to CDC guidance.

COVID-19 Voluntary Testing in Schools

Screening testing for COVID-19 is a preventative measure to keep schools safe. Asymptomatic students will have the opportunity to be tested for COVID-19 on a regular basis right at school. The test is a shallow nose swab and free of charge. Parental consent is required, as this testing is completely voluntary.

Visitors

The safety of students and staff is the District's top priority. We want to make visits to school buildings pleasant and welcoming experiences in a safe environment for everyone. In an effort to keep everyone safe, visitors will be limited on school campuses at this time.

The District uses the Raptor Visitor Management System, which is an online tool that enhances school security by screening and registering every campus visitor. The system works by reading a visitor's driver's license (or other approved government-issued ID) and comparing it to a database that contains registered sex offenders in all 50 states. Once cleared through the system, a visitor badge is produced that includes a photo, name of the visitor, date, time, and destination in the building. This system replaces the traditional paper sign in and is especially useful during emergencies to know exactly who is on campus.

Chromebook and Mobile Hotspots

All returning K-12 students will be on a 1:1 model for the 2021-2022 school year. Unless communicated by your school, students will be bringing their Chromebooks to school each day.

Students in Kindergarten will be given a Chromebook at the start of school, and those who have a Pre-K tablet will exchange it for a Chromebook at that time.



Students in grades 1-12 who are new to the District should contact their school or fill out the form at www.rcsdk12.org/StudentTechnology. The Chromebook will be shipped to a student's school, and families will be notified when it arrives in order to arrange for pickup. If a returning student has a Chromebook in need of repair, they should contact their school, as the school will create a ticket for the repair.

All RCSD students are eligible for a free AT&T hotspot with 50GB of data per month. These free hotspots are available until June of 2022. This will allow students free internet access anywhere they go, using whatever mode of transportation, on any device. To request a hotspot, please visit www.rcsdk12.org/StudentTechnology. The hotspot will be shipped to a student's school, and families will be notified when it arrives in order to arrange for pickup.

Vaccinations

Being vaccinated is one of the most critical strategies to help schools safely resume full operations. Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are at low risk of symptomatic or severe infection.

COVID-19 vaccine appointments are readily available for those ages 12 and up through Monroe County vaccination sites. Visit www.monroecounty.gov/health-covid19 or call 585-753-5555 to schedule an appointment.

Medical Exemption

Parents may request a medical exemption for remote instruction by providing medical documentation on a physician's letterhead, signed by a medical professional, explaining why the student medically needs remote-only instruction. Any student granted a medical exemption will be placed in the Home/Hospital program.

These requests must be emailed to medicalexemption@rcsdk12.org or mailed/dropped off in an envelope marked "CONFIDENTIAL" to the District's Coordinator of Student Health Services, 131 West Broad Street, Rochester, NY 14614.

Any parent who does not have a medical exemption and still does not want to send their child to school has the option of home schooling their child. Any student who is not medically exempted and not enrolled in home schooling is expected to attend their RCSD-assigned school. Failure to attend will be recorded as unexcused absences.

PowerSchool Parent Portal

PowerSchool Parent Portal gives real-time access to class schedules, attendance, assignments, grades, and contact information for teachers. High school parents can also monitor their student's progress toward meeting graduation requirements. Parents will need a unique access code to add each student to their account. For instructions and a how-to video to set up your account, visit www.rcsdk12.org/parentportal.

Contact Information

In order to ensure that you are receiving communications from the RCSD, your school, and teacher, please make sure your child's school has a current email address, mailing address, and phone numbers on file for your family.

FAQ

What happens if a student or staff member becomes ill at school with COVID-19 symptoms?

The staff member will immediately be asked to go home and follow up with their physician. Any student who becomes ill with COVID-like symptoms will be assessed by the school nurse and separated from others until they can be picked up by a parent or guardian. Any student or staff member who has COVID-19 symptoms will be encouraged to be tested and must stay home until they have been seen by a medical professional and have a note indicating an approved alternative diagnosis, or evidence of a negative COVID-19 test, or 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms.

What happens if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 and has recently been at the school?

If a student, staff member, or visitor tests positive for COVID-19, the District will immediately notify the Monroe County Department of Health and assist them in all contact tracing efforts. These efforts include supplying student and staff attendance and location information, student schedules, and visitor logs. The school will notify staff and families via letters and robo calls. These letters will be posted on the RCSD website weekly, as needed.

Will all others in that classroom be required to quarantine?

Individuals who were less than six feet from the positive case for longer than 15 minutes unmasked may need to quarantine depending on their vaccination status. We will be mandating that all students and staff stay masked except when they are eating or drinking.

