



**Talcott Mountain Academy
Reopening Plan for 2020-2021
Version 07/24/2020**

Plan Points of Contact:

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COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison:

Jennifer Travers, RN

Guiding Principles

1. **Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff.**
2. **Allowing all students the opportunity to return to school full time starting in the fall.**
3. **Fostering strong two-way communication with partners such as families, educators, and staff.**
4. **Offering a rigorous remote learning plan that includes both synchronous and asynchronous learning for families that choose not to return to the physical campus.**

School Liaison, Communication Plans, and Data Collection

Talcott Mountain Academy has named Jennifer Travers, RN to be its COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison.

Talcott Mountain Academy is investigating communication apps such as the Remind App for emergency use (power outages, early dismissal, etc.).

Talcott Mountain Academy will hold mandatory cohort orientations prior to the start of school during which training regarding new policies and procedures will be conducted.

Suites A and B: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 10:00 AM

Suites I and II: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 1:00 PM

Suites III, IV and V: Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 10:00 AM

Families will also be enrolled in Talcott Online/Canvas LMS as this will be the system used for emailing parents.

A distance learning survey was completed on July 1, 2020. A remote learning option email was sent out on July 15, 2020.

The reopening update was sent to parents on July 9, 2020.

The reopening plan draft will be sent to parents on July 24, 2020.

Health and Safety

Talcott Mountain Academy will continue to work closely with the local health department to assess the plans and policies for the 2020-2021 school year. These plans and policies may be updated due to changing circumstances, updates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or changes to federal and state orders and guidance. We are planning to open for all students for in-person instruction in September 2020, unless circumstances change. This model will be supported with intensive mitigation strategies and specific monitoring, containment, and class cancellation plans.

Facilities

Classroom Layout

Classrooms will be arranged to maximize physical distancing between student workstations, achieving 6 feet when feasible.

Desks and tables will be arranged so that students all face the same direction when possible.

Outdoor learning spaces for each building will be organized to maximize outdoor time weather permitting.

Cohorting will be used even though our total number of students is small. Cohorts will be as follows:

- Suites A and B (remaining in Academy building with assigned bathrooms and outdoor learning space)
- Suites I and II (moving to the main building in STEAM room and lunch room with assigned bathrooms on the first floor and outdoor learning space)
- Suites III, IV and V (remaining in the Chrono building with assigned bathrooms and outdoor learning space).
- Math classes will also be considered cohorts and students will be moved to the appropriate math class while maintaining face coverings, handwashing and physical distancing. Students who need to be moved for a math class will have an assigned seat which will be cleaned by the teacher upon the completion of class.

Specials such as Tech, Music and Art will have their rooms' high touch surfaces sanitized by the teacher or by the cleaners after each cohort leaves. These rooms will be used only if the specials teacher is unable to move to the cohort classroom for lessons. Students attending a specials class in the main building will use the second floor bathrooms.

Health and Safety

Signs and Messages

Signs will be posted in highly visible locations, such as school entrances and restrooms that describe how to stop the spread of germs (i.e. handwashing, face masks).

When communicating with families (school website, social media) messages will be included regarding behaviors to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Bathrooms

Talcott Mountain Academy will maintain physical distancing in communal bathrooms which may only be used by those who feel well. The following bathroom protocols will be implemented:

- All bathrooms will be single-use. The urinal will be closed in the boy's bathrooms and a stall will be closed in the girl's bathrooms.
- Blow dryers have been blocked off and paper towel dispensers have been installed in all bathrooms. Each building will house a cohort and the bathrooms in each building will be assigned to the resident cohort. In the main building, the upstairs bathrooms will be assigned to students from other buildings using the music room and tech lab.
- Bathrooms will be professionally cleaned at mid day and after school.

Water

Water fountains have been closed off and water coolers have been placed in every building.

Cleaning and Sanitation

Talcott Mountain Academy believes that reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by cleaning and disinfection is an important part of reopening that will require careful planning. Talcott Mountain Academy will follow all CDC cleaning guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>).

- Talcott Mountain Academy has contracted with a professional cleaning company.
- Bathrooms will be cleaned and sanitized midday and after school. Routine cleaning will occur every day and high touch surfaces such as door handles, desks, tables, countertops, and other areas will be given special attention. Appropriate PPE will be worn by the cleaners and the cleaners will be screened upon their arrival to campus every day.

Health and Safety

Ventilation

Ventilation systems will have their filters cleaned and/or changed based on recommended protocols. Duct systems will be cleaned as recommended.

Windows and doors will be open, weather permitting and according to fire code regulations.

Health Practices, PPE and Safety Protocols

Students will be educated in the new expectations related to all public health policies and protocols. Training will be created and provided by Jennifer Travers, RN and will be provided during cohort orientations, at the beginning of school, and throughout the year as new policies and protocols develop or change. Training will be appropriate for each cohort age group. Training will be provided for staff and substitutes. Training will be provided for parents so that parents will be aware of the protocols and will be able to reinforce them with their children.

Talcott Mountain Academy will ensure that there are adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethyl alcohol or 70% isopropyl alcohol (for staff and students who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes or products, and cloth face coverings (as feasible).

Physical Distancing

Talcott Mountain Academy will maintain all physical space, physical distancing and shared material guidelines as outlined by local, state and national recommendations and requirements.

Six-foot distancing will be maintained if possible. When physical distancing is not possible, as in the case of providing direct specialized care or health assessments, staff and students will utilize the appropriate PPE.

Talcott Mountain Academy will provide physical guides, such as tape on floors and signs on walls to ensure staff and student remain 6 feet apart and follow directional flow while in lines and other times (guides creating one way routes in hallways)

Health and Safety

We will designate staircases for up and down as well as one-way entrances and exits to promote directional flow.

Cohorts

Cohorting will be used even though our total number of students is small. Cohorts will be as follows:

- Suites A and B (remaining in Academy building with assigned bathrooms and outdoor learning space)
- Suites I and II (moving to the main building in the STEAM room and lunch room with assigned bathrooms on the first floor and outdoor learning space)
- Suites III, IV and V (remaining in the Chrono building with assigned bathrooms and outdoor learning space).
- Math classes will also be considered cohorts and students will be moved to the appropriate math class while maintaining face coverings, handwashing and physical distancing. Students who need to be moved for a math class will have an assigned seat which will be cleaned by the teacher upon the completion of class.

Use of Face Coverings, Masks, and Face Shields:

Talcott Mountain Academy will require all students, employees and visitors while on school property and on a school bus to wear a face covering, unless medically exempt. Our goal is 100 percent compliance of all students, employees and visitors. This includes parents who are dropping off or picking up children. Talcott Mountain Academy will provide a face covering or mask to any student or employee who does not have one. The school nurse will send a separate document with information about acceptable face masks and the proper way to put them on and remove them.

Mask breaks will be incorporated into the schedule throughout the day and we will be using the outdoor learning spaces as much as possible which will allow students to remove their masks as long as we are maintaining physical distance.

Face coverings can be removed when students or staff are eating, participating in outdoor recess, physical education or during scheduled face covering breaks. Students receiving specialized services, such as medical treatments, may remove their face coverings, but may be asked to wear a clear face shield during services. Physical distancing will be enforced during these times to the best of our ability. Students will be given a lanyard to attach their mask to when eating or outside. This will ensure masks are not lost or touched by others.

All staff will be trained in the use of face coverings. Please contact the school nurse if there are any questions or concerns regarding the use of face coverings.

Health and Safety

Hand Hygiene

We will teach and reinforce hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

If soap and water are not readily available, alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be made available at school entrances and every classroom, kept secured in classrooms where children cannot safely use sanitizer without supervision.

Respiratory Hygiene

All students and staff will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of the elbow.

Shared Material

The sharing of educational materials between students will be restricted. These materials include, but are not limited to: books, computers, calculators, writing utensils, art supplies, and learning aids. No two individuals should use the same materials on a given school day without disinfection between uses. School materials used by students will be disinfected at the end of the school day. Each student will be assigned a specific space to store his or her personal belongings. These cannot be shared. Each cohort will be assigned playground equipment that will be stored at their building.

Lunch and Recess

Students will eat lunch either in their buildings as a cohort or outside, weather permitting, also as a cohort. Recess will be outside, weather permitting, in separate cohort areas. In inclement weather, recess will be held in the classrooms or unoccupied indoor space. Playground equipment will be assigned to each building.

Academics and Remote Learning

The remote learning plan for individual students will be developed between the parents and teachers. It will include remote attendance in synchronous classes occurring on campus to the greatest extent possible with asynchronous learning activities and assignments posted on Canvas. The number of synchronous classes will be determined by students' age and ability with input from both parents and teachers. Students will follow the schedule, as closely as possible, as if they were in school on campus.

If we are required to shift to remote learning at any point, we are committed to providing a rigorous curriculum that will include synchronous and asynchronous learning. The remote learning schedule will closely follow the in-person schedule.

PPTs (Planning and Placement team meetings) will be conducted virtually.

Computers and equipment in the technology and science labs will be cleaned and disinfected between cohorts by the teacher.

Computers in the lab will be assigned to specific students in each cohort so their use is consistent.

Chromebooks and iPads will be assigned to specific students for their use only.

“Bring Your Own Device” policies will be updated.

Health Monitoring, Reporting and Response Measures

Stay at Home Guidelines During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Talcott Mountain Academy understands that deciding when a child or staff member is too sick to go to school or work can be a difficult decision. When trying to decide, use the guidelines below and seek the advice of your health care provider. COVID-19 is an illness caused by a virus that can spread person to person. COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness. The virus is transmitted through respiratory droplets when an infected person talks, coughs or sneezes. The virus may also be transmitted by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes. Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or COVID-19 exposure should not attend school or work and should inform the school if they are sick with COVID-19 related symptoms or if they have had known contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19.

COVID-19 symptoms can vary, but symptoms may include:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever above 100 degrees
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- New loss of taste or smell

If a student or staff member experiences any of the above symptoms, they must stay home and contact their health care provider for further instruction. They must also notify the school of their absence and any COVID-19 symptoms.

Protocols will be developed for return to school/work.

Daily Health Screening Questions

Talcott Mountains Academy asks that all employees and students (or their parents or guardians) to perform a self-assessment prior to leaving for school to identify fever or other COVID-19 symptoms. If the answer to any of these questions is YES, employees and students must remain home and notify the school of the absence.

1. Do you have a fever (100 degrees or higher or feel feverish if no thermometer) without having taken fever-reducing medicine?
2. Do you have a cough?
3. Do you have a new loss of taste or smell?

Health Monitoring, Reporting and Response Measures

4. Do you have a sore throat?
5. Do you have muscle aches?
6. Do you have chills?
7. Do you have shortness of breath?
8. Do you have a new or unusual headache?
9. Have you experienced new onset of gastrointestinal symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or loss of appetite?
10. Have you, or anyone you have been in close contact with, been diagnosed with COVID-19 or placed in quarantine for possible exposure to COVID-19 within the last two weeks?
11. Have you been asked to self-isolate or quarantine by a medical professional or a local public health official within the last two weeks?

If you answered YES to any of these questions you must stay home and notify the school .

Students and staff will have a temperature screening upon arrival. Although not required by the state, our school is small enough that this can be done without creating congestion. Temperature screening will also allow the school nurse to visually assess each person and interact with them for a minute or two.

Health Office Guidance

Communicable Disease Monitoring: Talcott Mountain Academy has a Registered Nurse who will manage positive and suspected cases of student and staff COVID-19 as they pertain to school attendance. The school nurse will collaborate with the Administrative Assistant to record and track symptoms and diagnosis when students/staff are called in for sick days. All health information will remain confidential. The School Nurse will monitor school illness symptoms and disease trends.

Daily Health Self-Assessment: All Talcott Mountain Academy staff and students (or their parent/guardian) will be asked to complete the COVID-19 Daily Self-Assessment Screening Questions prior to entering school each day. If any staff or student answers yes to any question, they must remain at home and notify their school.

Health Monitoring, Reporting and Response Measures

Illness at School: Any student or staff member who becomes ill at school with questionable COVID-19 symptoms will be evaluated by the school nurse. If COVID-19 symptoms are exhibited, the student or staff must be excluded from school immediately. Students or staff will be asked to wait in the isolation room until picked up by a parent/guardian, responsible person, or released to another health care facility. Students will not be left unattended in the isolation room.

Health Office Management: In order to prevent potential exposure to infectious diseases for vulnerable students receiving other medical treatments, all student visits to the Health Office will be triaged. All students and staff will have their temperature and COVID-19 risk factors screened upon arrival to the Health Office.

- Staff will be asked to email, call or radio the Health Office with a request for an ill student visit.
- School nurse will prioritize the student for a visit and direct them to a “well” or “sick” zone based on symptoms.
- Student will independently ambulate to health office unless one or more of the following symptoms are present:
 - Confusion/disorientation
 - Decreased level of consciousness
 - Dizziness/Lightheadedness
 - Spinal Cord Injury/Head Injury complaining of neck pain
 - Vision impairment
 - Diabetic low blood sugar - hypoglycemia
 - Life threatening bleeding
 - Possible fractured bone

If any of the above-mentioned criteria are met, or per staff/nurse best judgment, students will stay in place for in-person evaluation.

Isolation Room

An isolation room has been identified adjacent to the health office to accommodate students who exhibit symptoms consistent with COVID-19 until a parent or guardian arrives. Use of this room will be monitored and the person supervising will be equipped with the proper PPE per DPH guidance.

Health Monitoring, Reporting and Response Measures

Confirmed Case or Exposure

If a child or staff member, who has been present in school, has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, the Public Health District will be notified immediately by the school nurse. In addition, those in contact with the student or staff member will be notified of the exposure by school administration and instructed on current CDC recommendations related to exposure. Confidentiality of the ill individual will be maintained in accordance to FERPA, privacy expectations and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

In the event of a COVID-19 positive case in a school building, the Dean, in conjunction with the Executive Director, will implement a short term dismissal of 2-5 days to allow for the Public Health District to investigate the COVID-19 situation impacting the school and for recommended CDC cleaning. Further recommendations on the scope of school closure and duration will be made during this time. All extracurricular group activities and school based afterschool programs at the school will also be cancelled. Talcott Mountain Academy will communicate all dismissal decisions and possible COVID-19 exposure with all staff, parents, students and relative stakeholders.

The Dean will decide, in consultation with the Public Health District, if any staff will be allowed in the building during school closure and when students and staff can safely return to in-school learning.

School Closure and Reopening

Cancellation of classes and remote learning will happen by order of the governor or in conjunction with the local health district.

Reopening would follow the guidelines of the CDC and State of Connecticut.

Family and Student Engagement

Family Support and Communication

We are prepared to provide families with clear and ongoing communication about what to expect, during and prior to reopening. This includes, but is not limited to, guidance on the school protocols related to health and safety guidelines.

We will continue to engage with families and students as the reopening moves forward to ensure they are informed and have the ability to provide feedback.

Talcott Mountain Academy will hold mandatory cohort orientations prior to the start of school during which training regarding new policies and procedures will be conducted. Families will also be enrolled in Talcott Online/Canvas LMS as this will be the system used for emailing parents.

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Social-Emotional Learning and Mental Health

Talcott Mountain Academy will engage in ongoing communication with families to identify students/families who are struggling and to provide support through referrals to outside mental health providers.

Logistics and Operational Planning

Transportation

Talcott Mountain Academy is working to reduce the bus capacity. Our plan is for our ridership numbers to fall below the state's accepted capacity recommendations for low transmission.

Masks will be required on the bus. We are considering doubling our runs and condensing stops. Also under consideration is having students sit every other row diagonally across from each other. Siblings may sit together.

After School Activities

Policies will be developed to support after school activities such as Math Counts and Science Bowl. Math Counts includes students from the higher level math classes and Science Bowl includes students from Suites III, IV and V. We will be able to use classrooms from the upper level Suite cohort building because all participating students will have had classes in that building.

Visitors to Campus

Visitors to the campus will be limited and directed to the main entrance of the main building and all visitors will be screened upon entry to the building.

Access to the other side of campus will be restricted through the use of cones.

Staffing and Personnel

Talcott Mountain Academy is working to identify designated substitutes for both the teaching staff and the school nurse. These substitutes will be trained in all policies and protocols. We will also request access to the Bloomfield Public School substitute list for both teaching and nursing.

Mandatory training will be provided, before the beginning of the school year, that covers signs and symptoms of COVID-19, Standard Public Health Protocols, Hygiene practices, PPE, Reporting Illnesses, and supporting SEL.

Plans will be made to provide ongoing training as changes occur in recommendations and public health data.