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# Everything You Need to Know About August 9 Public School Reopening: Mandatory Mask-Wearing, Special Virtual Pilot Program, Campus Rules and More

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The V.I. Dept. of Education Saturday evening provided information relative to the [opening of public schools on August 9](#), including the mandatory wearing of masks, campus rules, a special virtual learning pilot program for select students, transportation, school lunch and much more.

## **Return to In-Person Learning**

- All USVI public schools will resume in-person operations on August 9, 2021
- Schools and/or classes will revert to virtual or hybrid instruction **ONLY** if COVID-19 cases are impacting in-person operations

- The Department of Education has equipped its schools with the necessary technology to seamlessly move from in-person operations to virtual/hybrid operations when necessary
- All students needing a laptop computer or MiFi internet device will be issued these items when schools reopen
- Students are required to be dressed in the school's uniform while on campus

### **Special Virtual Pilot Program**

- For the 2021-2022 school year, the Department of Education will pilot a fully virtual program for select students who qualify in each district (this program is not open to all students)
- Eligible students for the virtual program are students in grades 6th-12th who have 1. Demonstrated the ability to work independently online, as evidenced by student grades from the 2020-21 school year, or 2. Students with an illness, confirmed by a note from a licensed health practitioner, that prevents the student from attending classes in person
- The Department of Education will inform families of their eligibility to participate in the virtual pilot program; space is limited
- Instructors for the virtual pilot program will be sourced through an online educational service provider
- The virtual pilot program is intended to explore the Department's interest in establishing an online public school in the future

### **Campus Safety Protocols**

#### **Masks**

- Students and staff are required to wear masks at all times while on campus; masks are not optional; they are considered a part of the school uniform
- Regular breaks are incorporated into the school day, or on an as-need basis for students to remove their masks outside, under the supervision of a teacher

#### **Handwashing/Sanitization**

- Frequent handwashing and/or the use of hand sanitizer is a normal part of the school day
- Additional handwashing stations have been placed throughout school campuses; bathrooms and classrooms have been retrofitted with automatic paper towel, soap and hand sanitizer dispensers

#### **Social Distancing**

- Under the guidance of the VIDO, a two-foot distance will be maintained between desks and students/staff are required to maintain three-foot social distancing when traversing the campus

#### **Temperature Checks**

- Student and staff temperatures will be checked at the gate of the campus each morning before entry is allowed
- Isolation rooms are made available on each campus to cater to students exhibiting signs of illness

### **Plexiglas Barriers**

- Plexiglas barriers are installed at teacher and student desks, and front offices. These barriers are not a requirement of the CDC or the VIDOH; the Department of Education installed the items as an added measure of safety for students and staff

### **Covid-19 Testing and Vaccination on Campus**

- There is no local or federal mandate for residents to be vaccinated for COVID-19; however, the V.I. Department of Education strongly encourages employees and students, aged 12 and up, to get vaccinated
- With guidance and support from the VIDOH, schools will conduct regular COVID-19 testing of students, with parental consent

### **School Lunch**

- Students in grades PreK-3 will receive covered breakfast and lunch in their classrooms
- Students in grades 4-12 will receive covered breakfast and lunch at a designated area on campus in a grab-and-go format
- Cafeterias will remain closed to avoid large crowds congregating
- Parents/guardians of students enrolled in the virtual pilot program may pick up meals at the school nearest to their homes

### **School Bus Transportation**

- School bus transportation will resume across the Territory
- Students are required to wear a mask at all times while being transported on the school bus
- Under guidance from the VIDOH, students may sit two to a seat on school buses
- The VIDOH will conduct regular visits to bus stops to ensure
- School bus drivers are required to wear masks

### **New Developments**

#### **Arthur A. Richards K-8 Merger**

- Arthur Richards K-6th grade students will attend Eulalie Rivera K-8 School (Eulalie uniform is to be worn)
- Arthur Richards 7th-8th grade students will attend John H. Woodson Jr. High (Woodson uniform is to be worn)
- Claude O. Markoe Elementary 6th graders promoted to 7th grade last school year will attend John H. Woodson Jr. High School

### **Expansion of Early Childhood Learning**

- Lew Muckle Elementary School will be the site of the St. Croix District's newest Granny Preschool – email [studentservices@stx.k12.vi](mailto:studentservices@stx.k12.vi) for more information
- Joseph Sibilly Monroe Annex will be the site of the St. Thomas-St. John District's newest Sugarapple Preschool – email [stregistration@vide.vi](mailto:stregistration@vide.vi) for more information

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