School Reopening Handbook for The Lehman Alternative Community School Families & Staff

Ithaca City School District

October 2020
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Letter from Dr. Brown

Dear Ithaca Families and Caregivers,

I am excited to welcome you back to Ithaca City School District for the 2020-2021 school year. We have missed you and the energy that your students bring to our physical and virtual learning spaces.

It is my hope that this handbook will serve as an important and user-friendly tool for all families navigating this school year. In this handbook you will find much information about how our team of educators plan to address health, safety, and instructional delivery within each of our buildings.

I appreciate your patience and support as we move forward together in-person and virtually as one Ithaca City School District community. It is an honor to be on this journey with you.

Regards,

Luvelle

Superintendent of Schools
Ithaca City School District
Letter from Building Principal

*Dear LACS Families and Caregivers,*

Welcome to the 2020-21 academic year! These unprecedented times remind us of the importance of a meaningful and loving place for learning. LACS has been providing an alternative pathway to learning since its inception in 1974. A member of the former Coalition of Essential Schools, we embrace the principles that drive a creative synergy that results in an alternative public school education rooted in democracy and vision. The 10th principle of the Coalition reads “The school should demonstrate non-discriminatory and inclusive policies, practices, and pedagogies. It should model democratic practices, and pedagogies. It should model democratic practices that involve all who are directly affected by the school. The school should honor diversity and build on the strength of its communities, deliberately and explicitly challenging all forms of inequity.” Student agency, voice and choice are at the core of our belief system.

We are carrying these principles into the 2020-21 academic year by providing students and families with a “Choice Forward” model for learning. We look forward to exploring this year together in partnership.

*Sincerely,*

*Deborah Ptak*
Principal of the Lehman Alternative Community School
Ithaca City School District
School Contacts

How to Contact LACS

- **Address:** 111 Chestnut St Ithaca, NY 14850
- **Website:** www.ithacacityschools.org/lacs
- **Principal, Deborah Ptak:** 607-351-6963
- **Attendance/Main Office Phone, Lisa Gervais:** 274-2183
- **School Fax Number:** 274-2351
- **Guidance Office, Mary Heffner:** 274-2347
- **School Counselors, Alan Miller & Matt Riehlmann:** 274-2347
- **School Nurse/Medical Office, Barbara Cerza:** 274-2307
- **LACS Community Service Placement, Jon Raimon**
- **AIS/Support Teachers:** Naomi Raimon & Sam Chernikoff
- **Educator for Inclusion:** Lisa Rieger
- **Special Education Teachers:** Shira Reisman, Jennifer Curley, Michelle Katz, Robyn Saulsbury
- **School Psychologist, Beth Taplitz**
- **School Social Workers:** Simnia Singer-Sayada & Meredith DePo
Students’ Return to Instruction

The 2020-2021 school year began for all students PreK - 12 VIRTUALLY on Monday, September 14, 2020.

All buildings will use the first few days of virtual instruction to serve as orientation for staff and students to build relationships and understanding of online tools for teaching and learning.

LACS 2020-2021 Orientation Days (3)

Prior to welcoming students who chose to be back in person, our school will hold orientation sessions for students around health and safety practices. Key topics included:

- Masks
- Physical distancing
- Hand washing
- Walking through the halls
- Breakfast and Lunch
- Bathrooms

Beginning Monday, October 5, 2020, students PreK-12 that chose the IN PERSON option will be welcomed back to campus and our classrooms. The Choice Forward instructional schedule is the same for students who are in-person or virtual.

LACS Instructional Plan 2020-2021

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<td>9:05 - 10:35</td>
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<td>Projects / Community Service</td>
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<td>12:10 - 12:50</td>
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<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>12:50 - 1:10</td>
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<td>Conference Time/Office Hours/Homework Club</td>
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<td>1:10 - 1:50</td>
<td>Committee</td>
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<td>ASM Spokes</td>
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<td>1:55 - 3:25</td>
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Mission: Engage, Educate, Empower

Vision: 6,000+ Thinkers
(90 mins) | Community Service |

**Wednesday Schedule**

Students will be engaging in experiences virtually or in the community (following safety guidelines). All students will engage in one project per cycle.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:05-10:35</td>
<td>Project split 1 or free period</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:40-12:10</td>
<td>Project split 2 or free period</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:10-12:50</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:50-1:10</td>
<td>Conference Time (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:10-1:50</td>
<td>ASM Spokes in Family Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:55-2:55</td>
<td>Office hours (optional)</td>
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Students that chose the DISTANCE LEARNING option will continue their studies online per the schedule listed above. Instruction will take place either via google classroom or Canvas.

**School Hours:**

9:05am-3:25pm

AM: Drop off may begin at 8:40am. Please do not pull down into the bus lane. Drop off at the curb only, use the front entrance door.

PM: Pick up from 3:25pm-3:45pm. Please do not pull down in the bus lane. Students will walk up to meet you along the curb.

Mission: Engage, Educate, Empower

Vision: 6,000+ Thinkers
Arrival and Dismissal Procedures:

If your child is receiving transportation to and from school you will be notified by the transportation department via e-mail and USPS prior to the opening of in person instruction.

It is important to remember:
- Families must drop students off outside of the building
- Drop-offs must be as brief as possible
- Wash your hands before drop-off, prior to pick-up
- Visitors (including families and caregivers) to our buildings is limited
- Pen and paper sign-in/sign-out sheets have been eliminated and will instead be catalogued electronically.

Health and Safety Information:

Ithaca City School District COVID-19 Coordinators

Lily Talcott, Deputy Superintendent of Schools: lily.talcott@icsd.k12.ny.us
Kari Burke, Coordinator of Health Services and Wellness: kari.burke@icsd.k12.ny.us

Daily Health Screening

Daily screening of students by caregivers is required every day for in person learners at least 20 minutes before school begins. You are required to fill out the on-line survey each day. If your student’s screening results do not show up in the daily report prior to arriving at school, your student will report to the gym and will have their temperature checked by the School Nurse upon arrival to the building. If they have a temperature, or are symptomatic you will be contacted to come to school and pick up your child. They will not be able to attend classes during this time.

Expectations and protocols for daily screening as well as information about the Screening App will be communicated to families prior to the start of in person instruction, with regular reminders provided throughout the year.
Currently, the screener will inquire whether your child has experienced any symptoms consistent with the CDC’s Symptoms of COVID-19 as well as their temperature, known exposures, and a positive test result:

- chills
- cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- fatigue
- headache
- muscle aches or pains
- new loss of taste or smell
- sore throat
- congestion or runny nose
- nausea or vomiting two or more times in the last 24 hours
- diarrhea in the last 24 hours

If your child is experiencing symptoms as noted above, please do not send them to school and call the school to alert them that they are staying home. We encourage you to reach out to your doctor prior to returning to school. If you have any health questions or concerns, please reach out to your school nurse. Your child will be able to engage in learning for all of their classes virtually.

**If Symptoms Develop While at School**

Students or staff who develop symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 or those with a positive response to the questionnaire during the school day will be assessed by the school nurse, with the district medical director available for consultation, as needed. Following assessment by the school nurse, any students or staff with a temperature of 100.0°F (37.78°C) or higher, signs of illness, and/or a positive response to the screening questionnaire will be directed to a dedicated isolation area, where students will be supervised prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home.

**Masks**

Students are required to bring and wear a mask at all times, to the extent practical, if medically capable of doing so. If a student or staff forgets their mask or does not have a mask, a disposable mask will be provided. All students will be provided with mask breaks. Staff will facilitate regularly scheduled mask breaks throughout the day, ensuring that students maintain 6 feet of physical distance when removing their masks.

Students are encouraged to bring their own mask(s) from home. The most effective masks are made with at least 2 layers of fabric which cover their nose and mouth without large gaps and include ear
loops or ties for adjustments. Please note, the following types of masks are not recommended as they are less effective in blocking respiratory particles:

- Bandanas and gaiters
- Masks with a breathing valve or “button” vent

If a student or staff member reports to school with one of these mask types they will be provided a school issued mask and must wear it while at school. If a student or staff member forgets their mask or does not have a mask, disposable masks are in plentiful supply and will be provided as often as needed.

**Hand Washing**

All who enter the building must wash their hands or use hand sanitizer. In addition to bathroom and outdoor sinks, some learning spaces are equipped with a sink and hand soap for routine hand washing. If a sink is not in a learning space, signage and frequent reminders will be given so that students are encouraged to wash their hands frequently. All hand dryers in district buildings have been replaced with disposable paper towel dispensers. Hand sanitizer stations are also located throughout the building and in classrooms for staff and students to use.

**Bathrooms**

All students will wear their masks while using the bathroom, and wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer after bathroom use.

- Each student bathroom will have signage indicating “open” or “occupied” on the outer door and on each stall.
- Every other stall will be sealed for use.
- Students are expected to maintain 6 feet of social distancing within or outside of the bathrooms.
- Signage encouraging handwashing and/or hand sanitizer after usage will be posted.
- Bathrooms will be cleaned by custodial staff throughout the day.

**Hallway Movement**

Hallways will be one directional with floor markings and signage. Stairways will be one directional and clearly marked. Outdoor spaces will be used during passing periods while the weather holds.
Playgrounds, Green Spaces and Recreational Areas:
Outdoor spaces will be used as much as possible, weather permitting. Adults will be present to support small groups and their physical distancing during both learning and play as well as to encourage hand washing at our portable outdoor sink units. Students will wear masks unless they are engaged in activities which allow them to maintain physical distance.

School Nutrition
All students have the opportunity to receive school meals in a safe and comfortable environment so that they are ready to succeed in academic and social activities. The district will continue the healthy school nutrition program our families rely on to both in school students and remote learners. Meals will be free to students who qualify for Free/reduced priced meals, and fee based for students not qualifying for Free/Reduced priced meals. Please note that all students are eligible for free meals through December 31, 2020. After December 31, 2020, the meal pricing (below) will resume to pre-distance learning fees.

Meal pricing for the 2020-2021 School year
Elementary Breakfast $1.75
Elementary Lunch $2.85
Middle Breakfast $2.00
Middle Lunch $3.10
High Lunch $2.25
High Lunch $3.35
If you are a distance learner: The ICSD will utilize the online forms developed during spring of 2020 for caregivers to make their meal choices and dates requested known to the ICSD. Sites will be set up throughout the district, based on responses generated, so the greatest number of families will be able to comfortably travel to a nearby site. Attention will be given to remote areas, as well as areas that have a higher percentage of families reliant on public transportation. If you have any questions please feel free to call Child Nutrition at 607-274-2302.

If you are an in-person learner, students will be expected to wash hands before and after eating all meals. Proper sanitation protocols (handwashing or sanitizing prior to consumption; appropriate containers for food waste placed throughout the building; physical distancing; not sharing food/drink) will be followed. The use of the cafeteria itself will be determined on a case-by-case basis. For students unable to navigate to the cafeteria, their meals will be delivered by appropriate school personnel to the learning location of the student. The ICSD has eliminated “self-service” items (e.g., salad bars). Pre-packaged items will be utilized whenever appropriate. **Breakfast** will be eaten in the cafeteria only and will be served from 8:45 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. **Lunch** will be served from 12:10-12:50 p.m. Students will report to the cafeteria in staggered shifts and will line up using social distancing. Following our long-standing LACS tradition, students will be able to determine where they eat lunch once committing to the social distancing and safety protocols. If protocols are not followed, students will be assigned eating areas which will be supervised.

**Paying for meals and snacks** Cashless Funding for School meals for Paid eligibility as well as a la carte drinks and snacks should be funded online in the secure hosted platform SchoolPay.com. Ithaca City School Nutrition Program is committed to providing meal service that is as contactless as possible. Funding on this platform assures no transfer contact between cashiers and students. Funds may be deposited with credit card or checking account encrypted information hosted by SchoolPay.com or checks can be handed to school foodservice staff.

**Remote Learning days meal ordering** Meals for all students are available for remote learners and onsite learners for free. The USDA free funding ends on December 31, 2020. At that time meals will be available for all students and will follow the paid/reduced and free eligibility status.

**Physical Education (PE)**

A gymnasium is simply a structure made up of brick-and-mortar. Physical Literacy is about exploring the ability to move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development

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**Mission:** Engage, Educate, Empower  
**Vision:** 6,000+ Thinkers
of the whole person (Mandigo, Francis, Lodewyk & Lopez, 2012). Let's not let the walls of our school contain our ability to learn and be active.

LACS PE staff will make every effort to hold Physical Education (PE) classes outdoors. In the event that PE cannot be held outdoors, classes will take place in a gym, or a classroom with 12 feet of physical distancing for aerobic activities, while also wearing a mask.

LACS students will no longer be able to change their clothes for participation in PE and the locker rooms will not be accessible. Please wear proper athletic footwear and attire, regardless of the location. Students should also be prepared to participate in outdoor classes by wearing proper outdoor attire (jackets, sweatshirts, long sleeve shirts, sweatpants, etc.). During PE classes, all physical distancing guidelines and practices will be followed. During indoor classes, if physical distance guidelines pertaining to physical activity cannot be followed, classes will focus on the cognitive and affective domains of PE. Examples of these types of lessons would be presentations, reading articles, class discussions, or other methods of learning that do not require physical activity.

All students will be required and encouraged to participate in their assigned PE class, regardless of the class being administered in the live, synchronous, or asynchronous format. Expectations will be presented and reviewed by each student’s teacher.

**Daily Schedules and Routines**

**Middle and High School Details**

Our building will be reopening on a hybrid schedule which will allow for students to attend a combination of in person classes and remote learning classes. All students will receive a student schedule from the counseling department, those who opted to receive instruction through the strictly remote model will also receive a student schedule in the mail.

- All students will receive a class schedule regardless of the “learning status” they declared. (Hybrid vs. Strictly Remote)
- Hybrid students will attend school in person based on the district’s red and gold day rotation system.
  - Red Days = Monday & Tuesday
  - Gold Days = Thursday & Friday
Wednesdays all students are engaged in virtual project, community service and democracy experiences.

- The school day starts at 9:05 and ends at 3:25 pm. The building will open at 8:40 a.m. for students to enter and go to their classrooms.
- All classes will run within the parameters of the building’s instructional schedule.
  - Faculty, staff and students will follow the blocked 4-period day schedule with Family Group, Committees, Spokes Council and office hours weekly
  - Students will receive “real time” instruction during their assigned period, whether they are learning in the classroom or learning remotely.
- All of the building entrances will be utilized for arrival and dismissal. We will stagger the groups entering and exiting by grade level to avoid crowding.
- Hall changes will be structured to minimize traffic. Physical distancing will be enforced while students rotate from class to class.
- Students will access the entire campus when eating lunch and will maintain social distancing at all times.
- Attendance for in person and remote students will be recorded in SchoolTool.
- Weather permitting, outdoor classroom usage will be encouraged.
- Students will not use lockers and paper/material exchanges will be minimized.
- Students will be allowed to carry backpacks from class to class while in the building.
- Sanitizing wipes will be available for wiping down desks between classes.
- Water bottles will be filled by students and handles/buttons wiped down frequently.

**Special Education Plan**

We are so excited to be serving our students and families this year. Please reach out to us if you have any questions.

LACS Educator of Inclusion: Lisa Rieger lisa.rieger@icsd.k12.ny.us

ICSD Director of Special Education, Jennifer Gondek (jennifer.gondek@icsd.k12.ny.us)

Special Education Programs:

Special education students will follow the Choice Forward schedule with their peers. Per usual, Resource Room will be a regularly scheduled period in students’ weekly schedules.
Special education teachers and related service providers have reached out to families to review IEPs and 504 Accommodation Plans. We will partner with you to make necessary revisions that support individual student’s needs in the virtual learning environment. Our aim is to follow plans as written otherwise.

Wednesdays are a day when students can meet with teachers in person to complete recommended evaluations per their IEPs. Students can also receive 1:1 related services or check-ins with staff via scheduled teletherapy sessions.

**Technology**

**Middle School Devices**

Students in the middle school will be issued a 1:1 Chromebook and must bring their devices to and from school each day. Students already enrolled in the district were directed to keep their Chromebooks over the summer. New students should email help@ithacak12.org if they do not receive a Chromebook on the first day of school.

**High School Devices**

Students in the high school are issued a 1:1 Chromebook and must bring their devices to and from school each day. Students already enrolled in the district were directed to keep their Chromebooks over the summer. New students should fill out a [student/family help ticket](mailto:student/family help ticket) if they did not receive a Chromebook on the first day of school.

**Malfunctioning/Damaged Chromebooks**

Students that have an iPad or Chromebook that is malfunctioning and/or damaged should fill out a [student/family help ticket](mailto:student/family help ticket) for assistance in getting the device repaired or exchanged.
Campus Visitors

The District campus will be closed to all visitors without prior appointment and completion of an online health assurance screener. Parents/guardians visiting campus for any reason other than arrival and dismissal must also follow these procedures.

Building Readiness

Cleaning
All spaces have been deep cleaned and disinfected. Each classroom space will be equipped with a sanitizing supply bin which will include sanitizer wipes, hand sanitizer and gloves. Staff and students will be able to clean off work spaces prior to leaving and upon entering each classroom space. The evening custodian will follow district procedures for cleaning spaces used during the day. Necessary deep cleaning will take place each week on Wednesdays.

HVAC
We are awaiting approval for all of our classroom spaces to be cleared for instruction.

Classroom Capacity
None essential furniture and items have been removed from each classroom. Classrooms have been assigned a specific student capacity which allows for the appropriate social distancing for each instructional block. Students and teachers will be moving from space to space throughout the academic day.