

# **Deer Creek – Mackinaw CUSD #701**

## **Safe Return Plan**



# Introduction

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a major disruption to all aspects of life. School as we knew it no longer existed. To open schools for in-person learning strict health and safety protocols were required which created barriers and limitations to teaching and learning. Recognizing the challenges and trauma the COVID-19 pandemic created across remote and in-person learning environments, the U.S. Congress made emergency funds available to local schools to prevent, prepare for and respond to COVID-19. Most recently, funds available through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act require that school districts develop a Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services. As such, this plan has been developed in accordance with the ARP Act and the Illinois State Superintendent of Education declaration of July 9, 2021; is aligned with guidance provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and addresses adjustments needed in response to evolving COVID-19 circumstances. This plan will be made publicly available on the district's website. School strategies in this plan may be changed based upon mandatory state laws, local conditions, levels of community transmission (i.e., low, moderate, substantial, or high), local vaccine coverage, use of screening testing to detect cases in K-12 schools, and consultation with local public health officials to determine the prevention strategies needed. School officials will communicate any changes in plans to staff members, students, and parents/guardians through the district's regular communication platforms.

## In-person learning

5 days a week of regular instruction

Primary/Junior High: 8:00-3:00

Intermediate: 8:00-3:00

High School: 8:10-3:10

ISBE's declaration states:

*“Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, all schools must resume fully in-person learning for all student attendance days, provided that, pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-30 and 105 ILCS 5/34-18.66, remote instruction be made available for students who have not received a COVID-19 vaccine or who are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, only while they are under quarantine consistent with guidance or requirements from a local public health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health.”*

Students that are medically unable to attend for an extended period of time will need to follow the procedures for home/hospital services pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/14-13.0.

## Masks

**Update 2/6/2022\*** The Board of Education directed the Superintendent to amend the Return to School Plan to provide that masks are recommended but not required effective Monday, February 7, 2022

**Update 8/2/2021\*** *Currently under Governor's executive order that requires masks indoors for all students and staff (vaccinated and unvaccinated). The local face covering handbook addendum during the executive order is included at the end of this document. When order is lifted, the policy below will apply\**

- CDC/IDPH/ISBE recommend that masks be worn indoors by those who are not fully vaccinated
- Unless exempt by CDC Order, passengers and drivers/monitors must wear a mask on school buses
- Masks do not need to be worn outside
- School staff are to model support for and encourage students to be supportive of people who choose to continue to wear a mask as a personal choice or because of a personal medical reason

## Bus Services

We will return to normal full capacity bus service to and from school for all eligible students. As per state mandate, **ALL** students and the driver of the bus **MUST wear a mask properly** during the duration of the route. This will be strictly enforced.

## Physical Distancing

- Students and staff will maintain three to six feet of social distance to the greatest extent possible
- Provide assigned seating for students and encourage students to remain in these seats to the greatest extent possible
- Physical distancing will be done in an equitable manner that does not perpetuate segregation of isolation

## Contact Tracing and Quarantines

**Update 2/6/2022\*** The Board of Education directed the Superintendent to amend the Return to School Plan to provide for no quarantine period for asymptomatic close contacts effective Monday, February 7, 2022

We will contact trace to the best of our ability and notify those in close contact of a positive case. Parents will be called, and students will be quarantined per health department guidelines. Again, mask use, vaccinations, and previous covid infection (within 3 months) will be considered when making close contact determinations for students. Should school and community transmission rates increase the quarantine procedures may be modified.

## Close Contacts

We will work to follow CDC guidelines regarding defining close contacts. CDC defines a close contact as “someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period”. CDC has also created a close contact “exception” for schools defined below.

*Exception: In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student where*

- *both students were engaged in consistent and correct use of a well-fitting masks and*
- *other K-12 prevention strategies (such as universal and correct mask use, physical distancing, increased ventilation) were in place in the K–12 school setting.*

Mask use, vaccinations, and previous covid infection (within 3 months) will be considered when making close contact determinations for students.

## Hygiene

- School staff will monitor and reinforce frequent handwashing and respiratory etiquette by continuing to teach handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Assisting young children with handwashing
- Reminding everyone in the facility to wash hands frequently
- Using hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol (for teacher, staff, and older students who can safely use hand sanitizer) when handwashing is not possible
- Continuing to teach respiratory etiquette (e.g., covering coughs and sneezes)
- Providing adequate handwashing and hand sanitizer supplies that are safely stored

## Health Screenings

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 begins at home. Children should not be sent to school while sick. Before sending students to school each day, parents need to make sure that their children are:

- Fever free without the assistance of ibuprofen, etc.
- Not exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19
- Not waiting on the results from a COVID-19 test

Any student or staff member who begins to exhibit symptoms associated with COVID-19 must report to the school office.

- Students will remain in the quarantine areas until a parent or guardian picks up the student

- Students and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as influenza (flu) or COVID-19, should stay home and contact their healthcare provider for testing and care
- Students and staff are considered fully vaccinated two weeks following the final dose of vaccine
- Quarantine and contact tracing decisions will be made after consultation with the local health department
- Fully vaccinated students and staff are exempt from quarantine as a close contact, provided they show no symptoms since exposure to positive cases
- Employees and families are encouraged to report specific symptoms, COVID-19 diagnosis and COVID-19 exposures when reporting absences
- Confirmed cases of COVID-19 should be reported to the local health department as required by the Illinois Infectious Disease Reporting requirements issued by IDPH
- The District will inform the school community of outbreaks per local and state health department guidelines while maintaining students and staff confidentiality rights
- Symptomatic individuals and those who test positive for COVID-19 will be excluded from school per current local and state health department guidelines
- The District will work collaboratively with the Tazewell/Woodford county health departments in determining which tier (minimal, moderate, high, substantial) our local metrics stand and the best course of action to mitigate

## **Mental Health**

Considerations will be given to the impact that COVID-19 has on the mental health of staff, students and their families. Access to school based mental health support will be available.

## **Vaccination**

Our community hosted a vaccine clinic in May 2021. If there is a need or request, the district will support hosting clinics in the future.

- Vaccination clinics hosted at the school are voluntary and meant to provide an opportunity for those who choose to participate
- The district respects that choosing to be vaccinated for COVID-19 is a personal choice

## **Visitors**

Visitors will not be permitted in the buildings during school hours until further notice.

## **Plan Review**

The Administration and Board of Education have the right to alter or adjust this plan if the data or guidance changes. Through September 30, 2023, this plan will be reviewed no less frequently than every six months and revised sooner if needed.

## **Conclusion**

Our goal at Deer Creek-Mackinaw CUSD #701 is to provide a great educational experience for our community while keeping our students and staff safe and healthy. Our hope is to be able to provide as normal of a school year as possible. In the event of a significant increase in COVID, additional mitigation strategies may need to be put in place. These may pertain to a single classroom, single grade level, a single building, or the entire school district. The decision to increase mitigation strategies will be dependent upon local metrics. Increased mitigation strategies may relate to masks, distancing, quarantining, and group quarantining.

## **Face Mask Policy - Student Handbook Addendum 081221**

### **Face Mask Policy under 2021-2022 Executive Order**

This policy is based on the guidelines from the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Public Health and driven by the State of Illinois executive order mandating masks indoors for PK-12 schools. This policy is subject to change as the state guidelines change. We understand this will be challenging for our school community but hope working together will have a positive impact on keeping our students and staff in our school buildings.

As per our Governor's mandate, students must wear face masks/coverings while inside school buildings, during a school function in a district building/facility, and when riding on a school bus.

Students may only remove their face masks/coverings while eating or drinking. At all other times, students will be required to wear their face masks/coverings while they are in the school building. Students will be required to wear their face masks/coverings properly, completely covering their nose and mouth.

Students may be exempt from the face mask policy only due to a documented medical condition. In these situations, medical documentation must be provided in advance from a medical doctor and a face shield will be required in place of a face mask. Students may also be exempt from the face mask policy due to special behavioral or individualized needs as determined by the Director of Special Education and the IEP team.

Teachers, bus drivers, and all district employees will work together to remind students to wear their face masks/coverings properly. Students are expected to comply with adult direction regarding the proper wear of face masks/coverings. We sincerely hope that we can work together to have this policy be a non-issue for everyone involved.

We will provide students reminders and warnings, however, students who refuse to wear a face mask/covering in the proper manner while in school or on the bus under this policy *will be excluded from school until they return with a face covering to wear properly.*

This policy serves as an addendum to the student handbook and is only in effect during the duration of the Governor's mandate for the 2021-2022 school year. Upon the termination of the executive order, our school district will utilize our "return to learn" plan. We sincerely hope this is the case sooner than later.