



## **Special School District of St. Louis County Return-to-School Guidance**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this plan is to outline guidelines for returning to school following federal, state and local recommendations. These guidelines have been carefully considered to address and promote the safety, health and welfare of our school community.

However, COVID-19 mandates and recommendations are ever-changing as additional information is shared by our local and state health departments and state and national regulatory agencies which, in turn, will change our community's practices.

Reopening requires all of us to move forward together using recommended best practices and maintaining safe daily habits in order to reduce our risk of exposure to COVID-19. Remember: we're all in this together!

### **What is COVID-19?**

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China. COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new coronavirus, which has not been previously identified in humans. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses found in both animals and humans. There is no specific antiviral treatment nor vaccine for COVID-19 at this time. People with COVID-19 should receive treatment and care to help relieve symptoms.

### **Symptoms of COVID-19**

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with the following symptoms may have COVID-19 and should stay home and contact their healthcare provider:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update this list as we learn more about COVID-19.

## **Transmission of COVID-19**

Transmission, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is believed to be spread mainly from person to person:

- Between people who are in close contact with someone with the virus.
  - The CDC as of the date of this document defines a close contact as any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person (for at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection until the time the identified positive person is isolated).
- Via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes and then those droplets land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby, possibly entering that person's lungs.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not considered the main reason for spread of the virus.

## **Practices to Prevent Transmission**

- Strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19 will be practiced by all staff/employees:
  - social distancing (specifically, staying 6 feet away from others when you must go into a shared space).
  - frequently washing hands or use of alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol) hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
  - wearing cloth face coverings.
  - avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth.

- staying home when sick.
- cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.

## **Screening Procedures/Staff**

- To enter SSD facilities, each staff member will be required to complete a self-assessment of symptoms within 10 minutes of reporting to work each day. The self-assessment can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/SSDSELFSCREEN>.
- Anyone who does not pass the self screen will be asked not to return until fever-free and in accordance with CDC Return Guidelines.
- Thermometers and cleaning supplies will still be available at main entrances for staff to use if they choose.
- Employees may be required to have their temperature checked upon entry to the building with a non-contact thermometer.
- Staff members will notify their direct supervisor of absences by following District policies and procedures. Staff members should notify Human Resources for any COVID-19 specific absences or leaves.

## **Screening Procedures/Students**

- If a student is sick, he or she should stay home.
- Families should notify the school using the absence reporting procedure if they will not be sending their child to school due to concerns over COVID-19.
- School attendance secretaries will be required to ask the parent/guardian for the reason for a student's absence. Parent/guardian will need to specify whether it is due to respiratory illness, fever, etc. (not just "out sick").
- A temperature check will be done prior to a student getting on the bus. Any student with a temperature of 100F or above will not be allowed on the bus. An adult must be present at the bus stop.
- Temperatures of students transported to school by families or by EMT/cab will be checked by a staff member at the front vestibule of the school.
- Families must develop a plan in the event a child gets sick at school to pick up the child and need to provide up-to-date emergency contact numbers.
- If a student is identified as having a fever at school, the student will be placed in an isolation room. Families will immediately be called to pick up.
- Any student with a temperature of 100F or above or with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will be asked not to attend school and not to return until fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication or a note from a healthcare provider (MD, NP, DO) indicating that student may return to school.

## **Bus Transportation Procedures**

The following strategies will be implemented during school bus transportation:

- Students are encouraged to wear a cloth face mask if physically able and when harm (e.g. increasing hand-mouth/nose contact) does not outweigh risk (potential COVID-19 risk reduction) while on the bus.
- The number of students on a bus will be limited to promote physical distancing as much as possible.
- Staff members checking temperatures will be provided with a District-issued non-contact thermometer, gloves, disinfectant wipes, mask and goggles or face shield and/or other PPE per CDC recommendations at the time student transportation resumes.
- Any student with a temperature of 100F or above will not be transported to school.
- Any student identified with a fever will also be reported to dispatch by the driver/monitor/aide and dispatch will notify the student's school attendance secretary and transportation will be cancelled for 24 hours unless a note from a healthcare provider (MD, NP, DO) indicating that student may return to school is provided.
- All buses will be wiped down after each route – entry handrail, front/back of seats, windows, window handles, seat belts, walls, steering wheel, door opener, etc.
- Hand sanitizer will be available on the bus.
- There will be tissues on the bus and a disposal hamper will be available on buses.

## **Face Masks or Face Shields/Staff**

Staff members will have face coverings (cloth masks, reusable face shields). Protocol for face coverings:

- Wear a cloth mask while on any SSD campus.
- May remove cloth mask and don face shield for forward facing instruction or communication; AND 3-6 feet from person; AND no one beside or behind you.
- Cloth mask AND face shield must be worn for direct student care activities.
- Cloth masks must be worn during transitions (such as in halls or not able to physically distance).
- Face coverings may be removed when using restroom or eating lunch as long as physical distancing is maintained.
- If alone in the office and door closed, may remove face covering(s).

## **Face Masks or Face Shields/Students**

- Students should wear family-provided cloth masks or face shields if physically able.
- Students will be encouraged to wear a face mask if there are circumstances that put them in close areas. Wearing masks when in a hallway is highly recommended.
- Face coverings should be compliant with school dress code guidelines

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

SSD will provide its staff in partner districts with any necessary PPE that is not provided by the partner district.

Staff at SSD schools will be separated into the following categories to ensure adequate distribution of personal protective equipment:

- a. Tier 1: Staff who do not have direct contact with students or staff that do not perform direct student care activities (i.e. secretaries, custodial staff):
  - will be required to wear cloth facial coverings to work and will maintain physical distancing as much as is feasible (6 feet apart).
  - will have access to District-provided disposable gloves, disinfectant, and access to perform handwashing or use hand sanitizer.
  
- b. Tier 2: Staff that have direct contact with students and perform direct student care activities, such as toileting, diapering or feeding (i.e. teachers, paraprofessionals):
  - will be required to wear cloth facial coverings to work and will maintain physical distancing as much as is feasible (6 feet apart).
  - will have access to District-provided disposable gloves, disinfectant, and access to perform handwashing or use hand sanitizer.
  - will also have access to disposable gowns, gloves and surgical face masks if providing student care and there is a concern for exposure to bodily fluid.
  
- c. Tier 3: Nursing staff and any staff member that will be assigned to assist in the nursing office or sick student isolation rooms:
  - will be required to wear cloth facial coverings to work and will maintain physical distancing as much as is feasible (6 feet apart).
  - will have access to District-provided disposable gloves, disinfectant, and access to perform handwashing or use hand sanitizer.
  - will wear medical grade mask, eye protection and gloves when providing nursing interventions.
  - will use clinical judgement to evaluate the risk of exposure and implement further PPE as appropriate for themselves and other Tier 3 non-nursing staff.

Appropriate PPE must be utilized in conjunction with universal precautions and proper hand hygiene. PPE supplies will be provided to all staff at the beginning of each school week prior to student arrival and supplemented throughout the week as needed. Supplies will be tracked/monitored and distributed to ensure all have access to needed supplies. Staff should check with their Area Coordinator, Principal, or Director if they need PPE.

Should PPE be in short supply due to demand, CDC PPE strategies will be followed, and alternatives may need to be provided.

## **Alterations to School Environment to Promote Social Distancing**

### **Classrooms/Cafeteria/Art/Music/PE**

- Desks will be rearranged in classrooms to maximize space between students, 3-6 feet apart, with elimination of seating where students face each other.
- Recess or break times will be staggered to decrease the number of students on the playground and in hallways.
- Breakfasts and lunches will be delivered to classrooms on disposable trays; single use utensils and individual condiments will be used.
- Passing time between classes will be staggered.
- Water fountains will be disinfected frequently.
- After-school activities, student meetings, sports, etc. will be suspended.
- Assemblies and other large group gatherings will be suspended.
- Communal school supplies will be eliminated, and each student will have their own school supplies for their own use only.
- A hand-washing schedule will be adopted with school-wide reminders for staff and students throughout the day.
- Lessons and practice sessions for students on when and how to wash hands will be conducted.
- There will be a disinfecting schedule for restrooms and all doorknobs, counters, tables, desks, and school surfaces.
- Classroom staff will routinely sanitize computer equipment.
- Movement of students around the building will be limited (e.g. restrooms, PE, music, art).
  - If feasible, the same cohort of students will be kept together throughout the school day. Physical distancing will be practiced, and frequent hand washing, and respiratory etiquette will also be followed. By assigning students to cohorts and limiting exposure to other cohorts within the same building, close contacts of potential cases can be limited.
  - If possible, PE, art, and music staff will travel to classrooms.
- CBI/CBVI trips will be suspended.

### **Hand Washing**

- Hand washing or the use of hand sanitizer will be encouraged upon entering a building, before eating, after eating, after restroom usage, before any group activities and before boarding school buses.
- Hand washing will be recommended any time the face/mouth are touched.

### **Cleaning and Disinfecting**

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has provided guidelines regarding cleaning and disinfecting school buildings and other areas.

- This will be done in coordination with the District’s custodial service provider, CleanTech.
- Gloves and disinfectant wipes will be available to all staff to provide additional cleaning of their personal workspaces.
- [CDC's Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols](#)

## **When a Case Is Identified/Staff**

- The Human Resources department will verify there is a confirmed case of COVID19.
- The health care provider who handles the positive test/diagnosis is required to contact the health department of a confirmed case.
- Human Resources will notify the District’s medical team of a confirmed case.
- The District will take direction from the St. Louis County Department of Health regarding the need for contact tracing and employee notifications.
- The District will ensure all areas the confirmed case visited are deep cleaned immediately.
- The District will only close buildings based on guidance from the health department in the event of a confirmed case.
- Staff members identified as those in “close contact” with a confirmed case will be subject to mandated quarantine by the health department or their health care provider.
- Close contact is currently defined as being within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour period starting 48 hours before illness onset.
- Staff that are mandated to quarantine will be required to follow the District’s leave policies and practices for reporting absences.
- Staff who would like to apply for FMLA or the temporary FMLA amendments covered by FFCRA should contact Human Resources for information and/or to be provided an application.
- Staff will be required to provide Human Resources a medical clearance to return to work following any absences resulting from a confirmed case or a quarantine mandated by a health care provider or the health department.

## **When a Case Is Identified/Student**

- Any student with COVID-19 like symptoms will be escorted to an isolation room, will be given a mask, if he or she can tolerate wearing one, and will be evaluated by a school nurse.
- Assigned staff will stay with the isolated student while awaiting guardian pick up.
- Student’s desk, chair, etc. in the classroom he or she vacated will be disinfected by custodial staff.
- After the isolation room is vacated by a symptomatic student, it will be closed for disinfection by custodial staff.

*This pandemic has caused stress on staff and students, from prolonged absences to fear of the unknown. It is important to note that school districts may choose to implement plans differently based on local Board of Education and leadership decisions or due to guidelines established by local government authorities. This guidance to the extent possible was established with the current known factors as of October 28, 2020*

## **Reopening Checklist**

- Follow guidelines and best practices for cleaning and sanitizing the building.
- Update facility cleaning schedule to address frequently touched surfaces, communal spaces, and shared objects.
- Re-engage facility vendors.
- Provide cleaning and disinfecting supplies for staff.
- Obtain supplies including soap and paper towels.
- Develop a protocol to ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaners and disinfectants, including storing products securely away from students.

### **Facilities/Safety & Security**

- Create floor markings to direct foot-traffic flow.
- Complete inspections and repairs of all building systems.
- Display COVID-19 informational signs.
- Reconfigure shared spaces to encourage social distancing practices.
- Install protective panels for frontline office and food service team members.
- Provide personal hygiene equipment (soap dispensers, hand sanitizer, etc.).
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly.
- Ensure all water systems and features are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.

### **Teachers & Staff**

- Have staff return prior to students to practice protocols without students present.
- Train staff on all new safety protocols.
- Limit the number of shared items in the classroom.
- Have students wash their hands throughout the day.
- Teach students the importance of handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Teach students the importance of social distancing and staying with small groups, if applicable.
- Provide information on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.

## Transportation

- Develop schedule and procedure for cleaning buses or other District transport vehicles.
- Develop rosters for all buses with assigned seating to better track close contacts.

## Students & Families

- Educate students and their families on proper personal hygiene and sanitation practices.
- Provide access to counseling services.
- Plan to provide food for students eligible for free and reduced-priced meals in school and those remote.
- Educate staff, students, and their families about when they should stay home if they have COVID-19 symptoms, have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are waiting for test results, or have been exposed to someone with symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case, and when they can return to school.
- Provide information on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.

## Human Resources

- Evaluate and share attendance and sick leave policies.
- Review and revise human resource policies related to illness and support for caregivers.

## Administration

- Review relevant local/state regulatory agency policies and orders, such as those related to events, gatherings, and travel.
- Consult local health officials about the school's approach to planning for COVID-19.
- Implement process to track staff and student absenteeism.
- Update assessment plan.
- Give teachers time to collaboratively plan and realign curriculum to account for lost learning time.
- Develop and continue to make improvements to a robust digital and remote learning plan.
- Update attendance policies in Student Handbook.
- Train staff to recognize signs that a student is ill and on how to properly care for them.
- Carefully monitor national, state, and local COVID-19 virus spreading indicators.
- Develop a plan to cross-train staff and create a roster of trained back-up staff.
- Develop appropriate COVID-19 accommodations, modifications, and assistance for students with special healthcare needs or disabilities.
- Incorporate considerations for students in special education who have a 504 plan or individualized education plan to ensure education remains accessible.
- Incorporate considerations for children and youth who need assistance with activities of daily living, as well as their service providers.

- Develop a protocol to monitor and ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of objects, or limit use to one group of students at a time, and clean and disinfect between use.
- Ensure communication is developmentally appropriate and accessible for all students, including those with disabilities.

## **Reentry Plans/Procedures**

- Develop school-wide social distancing strategies. This may include organizing students into small groups or cohorts that remain together throughout the day.
- Prohibit large groups from gathering in shared spaces.
- Develop social distancing guidelines and protocols for school guests and visitors.
- Develop a plan for ensuring that lunch room spaces are properly sanitized.
- Develop a plan for serving students individually plated, boxed, or wrapped meals in classrooms instead of in a cafeteria, or for implementing staggered mealtimes to reduce the number of students or small groups within a cafeteria.
- Designate a room and protocol to isolate any person with COVID-19 symptoms.
- Institute a contact tracing process.
- Notify families when a student or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Institute a screening process for students and staff.
- Develop protocol for isolating any individual exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.
- Develop a communication plan notifying staff, families, and community locals in the event that a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19.
- Develop guidelines for when the school should close due to an outbreak and move to an online learning environment.
- Designate a staff person responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Make sure other staff, families, and students know how to contact this person.
- Develop protocols to limit contact among small groups and with other students' guardians (e.g., staggered arrival and drop-off times or locations).
- Close communal spaces or develop a plan for staggered use and cleaning and disinfecting.
- Follow CDC's considerations for sinks, kitchens, playgrounds during COVID-19, if applicable.
- Post signs in highly visible locations to promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs.
- Develop plans to include messages (e.g., videos) about behaviors that prevent spread of COVID-19 when communicating with staff and families
- Identify who should wear cloth face coverings, and communicate the importance of wearing them. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:
  - Children younger than 2 years old
  - Anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the cover without help

- Identify opportunities to pursue virtual group events, gatherings, or meetings, if possible, and develop a protocol to limit those where social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Develop a protocol to limit nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible— especially those who are not from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, country)
- Identify and prioritize outdoor activities where social distancing can be maintained as much as possible.

## **Daily Administrative Checklist**

- Maintain regular contact with local health authorities and review relevant local/state regulatory agency policies and orders for updates.
- Ensure a staff person is assigned to respond to COVID-19 concerns.
- Monitor absenteeism of students and staff.
- Ensure roster of trained back-up staff is updated.
- Conduct daily health checks (e.g., temperature screening and/or symptom checking) of staff and students, as possible, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations.
- Ensure students are kept together in small groups with dedicated staff and remain with the same group throughout the day, every day, if possible.
- Monitor and ensure appropriate accommodations, modifications, and assistance for students with special healthcare needs or disabilities.
- Ensure education remains accessible for students in special education who have a 504 plan or individualized education plan.
- Ensure safety for children and youth who need assistance with activities of daily living, as well as their service providers.
- Adhere to and review protocols to limit contact between small groups and with other students' guardians.
- Ensure small groups maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet to avoid mixing between groups, if possible.
- Ensure students and staff eat in separate areas or with their small group.
- Ensure limited sharing of electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids, and clean and disinfect between users.