



## **Maine Indian Education**

*Indian Island School -- Penobscot Nation*

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April 9, 2021

Dear families and friends,

This letter is to inform you of the recent changes made to our reopening plan. We have experienced the proverbial bump in the road. Our original plan was to have all grades return to in-person learning after April vacation. Based on several recent factors, that has been deemed not safe. We need to limit the number of learners in the building so we have planned a soft opening with ONLY PK-3rd grade returning to in-person at 9:00AM on April 26, 2021. Administration will monitor the situation and reassess for the possibility of more students returning as soon as possible. Our 4th-8th grade students will continue to work remotely, following our regular schedule, until we can safely have everyone return to school. (Maybe as early as May 6th!)

Enclosed is our updated Reopening Plan. Please read over this revised plan. We will discuss this plan Tuesday, April 13th at 5:00PM and Thursday, April 15th at 7:00PM (after parent-teacher conferences). The Zoom link is located on our school website calendar. I urge you to attend either/both meetings. We will go over the plan together and answer any questions or address any concerns.

To prepare, Ms. Pardilla has been calling families with several questions. We are asking families to let us know if they plan to stay with remote or join in-person when the opportunity comes. Will you send your child on the bus? Will you provide transportation? Does your child need some extra tutoring? Summer Academy (July 5-28) is planned for grades 1-5. This is for students with specific learning targets to work on. Mrs. Huerth and the ASP is supporting the academic lessons with cultural and physical activities. If you have not heard from the school office, please call to let us know your intentions.

It is disappointing that we cannot bring everyone back--YET. We are doing everything we can to make that come to fruition. It will be when ALL our students are back that we can feel whole again. This has been a tough year for us all. As your school leader, I have been so grateful for your patience, your support, your senses of humor, and your commitment to making this year work to the best of your ability.

This delay to return for our older learners is one of those bumps in the road I spoke of earlier. But this plan is a sensible compromise and a way to start in-person teaching and learning again. Your child's safety and well-being will always be front and center in our decision making. Thank you for your patience and support.

Sincerely,

*Annemarie Swanson*

# COVID-19

## Pre-Screening Tool for School Attendance

Within the past 24 hours  
have you had a fever  
(100.4 and above\*) or  
used any fever reducing  
medicine?

YES =



Do you feel sick with any  
of the most common  
symptoms?  
(see symptom list to the right)

YES =



Have you been in close  
contact with a person who  
has COVID-19?

YES =



Have you traveled  
outside of the state in  
the past 14 days?

YES =



Contact  
Your School

**Stay home with any YES response to the questions above OR with two or more of the "other" or "less common" symptoms listed to the right.**

Attend school when all answers are NO. Call or see your school nurse or other designated person at school if you have questions.

Updated 7.16.20



### Most Common Symptoms of Covid 19:

Cough  
Shortness of  
breath  
or difficulty  
breathing  
Fever (100.4 or  
greater)\*

### Other Symptoms

Chills  
Muscle pain  
Sore throat  
New loss of taste  
or smell

### Less Common Symptoms:

Nausea or  
Vomiting  
Stomach pain  
Diarrhea  
Fatigue  
Headache  
Rash  
Swelling or redness  
of hands/feet  
Red eyes/eye  
drainage  
Congestion/  
runny nose

\*Fever is 100.4  
regardless of  
measurement  
location (oral,  
temporal).



# Indian Island School Reopening Plan Spring 2021

## **Reopening Plan:**

### **Instructional Model**

#### **Grades PK-3**

Students would be in-person Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8:00-2:00PM. Friday is a remote day to provide custodians the opportunity to do a deep clean. This follows our remote school schedule as closely as possible. It is understood there will be exceptions for some students due to health risks/concerns. Remote learning continues for those few individuals. Parents/Guardians will communicate clearly to the school that this is the safest mode of educating their child. Google Classroom will be used for all remote learning activities.

#### **Grades 4-8**

Students would continue remote learning. Real time, online teaching would happen M-TH, following the established remote schedule for each classroom. Fridays would be an asynchronous day, meaning no new learning lessons would be taught. It is a day for catch up, reteaching, answering any questions, and practice. Attendance is taken M-F. Students are expected to check in with their teachers daily and show evidence of learning.

### **Technology and Infrastructure**

PK, kindergarten, and grade one classrooms will use technology located in the building. They will leave their school devices at home for at-home work and Fridays. Grade two will need their devices daily and will bring them back and forth M-Th using the case provided. Hotspot devices will stay home to support student access to online instruction when home. Learning platforms (Google Classroom) and Zoom/Meet video conferencing will be used when necessary by IIS students and staff.

### **Staff**

Staff are working in the building until further notice. All adults are ready to conduct in-person teaching using all safety protocols at all times. All teachers may be working with small instructional groups to provide extra support as their schedules permit.

### **Indian Island School supports the following health and safety requirements:**

The following six health and safety measures are required for Indian Island School to open safely, according to Penobscot Nation Health Center and Maine DHHS/CDC.

#### **1. Symptom Screening Before Coming to School**

- Parents of students must conduct self-checks for symptoms prior to boarding buses or entering school buildings each day.

\*Use Screener on the back of the opening letter. ([COVID-19 Pre-Screening Tool for School Attendance](#))

- Students showing COVID-like symptoms? PK-3 parents/guardians must call the school to report their absence and their health provider to report their symptoms. Students must have a negative COVID test before returning to school. The health clinic has rapid testing available. Grade 4-8 parents call the school to report their child's absence. Any parent of a child who has tested positive for COVID-19 or its variant must call the school to report the illness.

## **2. Physical Distancing and Facilities**

- Adults will maintain six feet of distance from others to the extent possible. Maintaining three feet of distance is acceptable between and among students when combined with the other measures outlined in this list of safety requirements.
- Six feet of physical distancing is required for students while eating breakfast and lunch, as students will be unable to wear masks at that time. PK-3 students will eat their meals quietly in the classroom. Socializing will happen outside at recess.
- A "medical isolation room" is designated for students/staff who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms during the school day. The office conference room serves as IIS Medical Isolation room until further notice.
- IIS has evaluated the ventilation system and ensures that they are maximizing their current capacity. Classrooms have Virus Killer Air Purifiers, that purify the air continuously. Windows will be opened at least three inches and doors will remain open to increase ventilation.
- Each room has been evaluated to determine maximum occupancy to allow for six feet between each learner. CDC has issued new guidance that allows for less than six feet between students. IIS strive for six feet for all persons in the building. Adults will maintain six feet from learners unless it is impossible to do their job.
- Plexiglass dividers will be provided for each table/desk.
- Hallways will be one-way traffic. The halls will be clearly marked to establish a traffic pattern.

## **3. Masks/Face Coverings**

- All adults are required to wear a mask/face covering, minimum of two-layers.
- All students are required to wear a mask/face covering that covers their nose and mouth. Minimum thickness is two layers. Gaiters must be at least two layers thick to be adequate face coverings.
- Masks/face coverings must be worn by all students on the bus.

## **4. Hand Hygiene**

- All students and staff in a school received training in proper hand hygiene.
- All students and staff must wash hands or use sanitizing gel:
  - upon entering the school/their classroom,
  - before and after eating,

- blowing nose/sneezing/coughing,
- after using the restroom,
- after use of playgrounds and shared equipment, and
- upon entering and exiting a school bus.

### **5. Personal Protective Equipment**

- Additional safety precautions are required for any staff supporting students in close proximity, when distance is not possible, or when students require physical assistance. These precautions must at a minimum include eye protection (e.g., face shield or goggles) and a mask/face covering that covers nose and mouth.
- Classrooms and/or areas that have been used by an individual diagnosed with COVID-19 must be closed off until thorough cleaning and sanitization takes place.

### **6. Return to School after Illness**

- Sick staff members and students must use home isolation until they meet criteria for returning to school. Rapid response COVID tests are available at the health center. Persons with symptoms must show a negative test result to return to in-person learning.

### **Adherence to Tribal and State Guidance**

All decisions about how IIS reopens, as well as decisions about any future closures, are informed by the most recent local health data in partnership with Tribal Leadership, Indian Health Service (IHS), and the CDC.

### **Protecting Students and Staff Who Need Extra Precautions**

Indian Island School will provide a full-time online option for students and teachers who have a medically documented need for extra precautions. The screening, health, and safety measures that follow will offer further precautions for vulnerable students and staff.

### **Health Screening**

Indian Island School has partnered with IHS to develop and refine protocols for daily screening, reporting, and monitoring during the school year. IIS has daily health screening practices for all students, staff, and essential visitors. Staff are required to complete daily self-reporting to verify they are asymptomatic when reporting to the worksite. Parents are required to assess their children using the [COVID-19 Pre-Screening Tool for School Attendance](#) on the back of the opening letter. Essential visitors are limited and must verify they are symptom-free.

### **Health and Safety Measures**

Indian Island School will follow specific mitigating strategies to reduce risk of COVID-19 infection and transmission.

## **Healthy Hygiene Practices**

Routine healthy hygiene practices are a foundational measure to protect against COVID-19 and other illnesses. IIS hand washing guidelines indicate that students should wash hands for at least 20 seconds after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing; before and after eating, and upon entering classrooms. Breaks will be provided for hand washing, as soap and water are the preferred cleansing method. If soap and water are not available, sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol is available in each classroom under teacher supervision.

## **Face Coverings**

All staff, visitors, and students will wear a two-layered face covering while inside Indian Island School and while using IIS-provided transportation. Face coverings may be cloth or disposable and are available for those who are unable to provide their own. Staff will provide directions to students regarding times during the school day when masks will not be worn such as during snack/lunch times and during mask breaks.

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Additional protective equipment including face shields, gloves, and gowns are available for settings that require close human contact for staff providing certain supports for students with disabilities.

## **Intensified Cleaning and Disinfection**

Cleaning and disinfection measures will ensure the physical spaces, equipment, and materials students and staff come into contact with remain safe. Daily sanitizing will be implemented for high touch areas (doorknobs, handles, fixtures, etc.) with a medical grade sanitizing solution. Restrooms will be monitored and cleaned more frequently throughout the day. Equipment that uses ultraviolet light for killing viruses was purchased for classrooms. Outside cleaning services will be contracted, as needed.

## **Social Distancing Practices**

IIS will use social distancing strategies to increase spacing between individuals, including adjusted seating arrangements for school buses and classrooms and posted signs to remind staff and students of six-feet of social distancing. Students will enter the building using the front entrance doors on the right and exit using the front doors with exit signs. Most students will eat meals in classrooms, with meals delivered by the kitchen staff. Students will use traffic patterns clearly labeled in the halls. Recesses will be staggered to ensure safety.

## **Transportation**

Parents are encouraged to transport their children to school or encourage their children to walk to school, if and when appropriate. Indian Island School contracts transportation with Cyr Bus lines. Bus transportation will be available for any school students provided they live within the designated areas. Bus riders must wear a mask and sit every other row. Only students within a family unit may sit together.

All riders will follow the bus driver's directions for entering and exiting the bus. Questions may be directed to Dave at Cyr 827-2335. Parents will drop off their children at the designated area only. They will yield to buses and allow those riders to enter the building first.

### **Visitors**

The school limits nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities that involve external groups or organizations from entering Indian Island School until further notice. Any essential visitors will follow the school safety and screening guidelines.

### **Ongoing Monitoring Practices**

IIS will regularly communicate and monitor developments with Indian Health Services authorities regarding cases, exposures, hospitalizations, and any other relevant metrics that may require a change in school operations. In the event of an elevated number of cases in local health data or in the event of presumed or confirmed cases directly impacting school, IIS will collaborate with IHS and CDC authorities to implement all necessary health and safety protocols. This could include a short-term closure, if school or health officials deem it necessary.

### **Technology and Connectivity**

Every IIS student has access to a personally assigned school-provided device for use at home and at school. These devices support learning in-person and online. HotSpot devices are available for families, when home internet access is unreliable. Contact the school for more information.

### **Assessment**

With the focus for grades 3-8, State student assessments will help the State of Maine identify students' learning needs and plan for upcoming support for schools. This includes the analysis of any student's learning loss that can be attributed to the year-long school closure. Maine, as well as the Bureau of Indian Education, requires each school to assess student achievement every year. There will be some sort of in-person or at-home State/Bureau achievement testing done before June 2021.

### **Attendance**

Indian Island School records attendance on a daily basis. Attendance is taken in each class. Parents call the school office (827-4285) to report the absence. Parents are encouraged to reach out to their child's teacher via email/phone if there is an extended absence or any issue needing attention. Instructional schedules will be adjusted to reflect our in-person schedule.

Note: Schools are now required to report chronic absenteeism. A student is considered chronically absent if absent 10% or more of the school year. This is equivalent to 17 days per school year.

### **Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health**

The direct and indirect impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic are expected to have a lasting effect on students and staff. IIS supports explicit teaching focused on

social-emotional learning and relationship-building. Mindfulness classes are part of the school day at IIS. Trauma-informed yoga classes will be offered twice weekly. Counseling staff provide mental health support and resources, including group or individual counseling and consultation for students and families, as needed.

### **Intervention Services**

All learners will continue to require flexible and responsive support for their academic, behavioral, and wellness needs. Academic supports will provide focus and review of essential standards through whole-group and small-group instruction (Tier 1) and individual student intervention (Tiers 2 and 3). Academics, behavior, and social emotional approaches are weaved together to form a foundation that ensures all children are ready to reach their individual potential.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Special education services for students with disabilities will include instruction designed to ensure the least restrictive environment (LRE) as required by their IEP. The school will follow all IEP plans as required. The school will provide services per Maine's 504 Rehabilitation act of 1973 to all students who qualify. Students will continue to receive access to instructional materials for use at home, as needed, including assistive technology tools. The school does not discriminate, has a Title IX coordinator to ensure compliance, provides grievance procedures, identifies and locates all children with disabilities who receive special education within our school and provides notice of the school's 504 responsibilities and procedural safeguards to parents.

### **Family Commitments**

Families with students registered at IIS will have the opportunity for M-TH in-person or continue full-time online remote learning model. If families select full-time online learning, they will contact the office to make their intent known and will prepare to continue their children's active participation in all online learning activities. Families will continue to follow the established daily learning schedule and will need to work with school staff to arrange for their children to participate in standardized assessments and other mandated educational activities.

### **Schedules**

PK-3 will be in person M-TH/remote Fri, and Grades 4-8 will continue remote M-Fri until further notice. A regular school day is 8:00-2:00PM. Only April 26, 2021 will have a 9:00AM start. All other in-person school days begin at 8:00AM. School administration will reassess the situation weekly until it is deemed safe for all to return. This model involves four days per week of teacher-directed/synchronous instruction (Monday through Thursday) and one day per week of independent (asynchronous) online learning (Friday). Certain students may be identified to receive additional intervention or specialized instruction on Friday to meet their program needs, such as IEP goals. IIS staff will also provide specialized instruction, as needed, and all required special education services. The amount of special



education service will be determined by IEP teams. Consideration will be given to individualized student needs.

## **Preparing for Future School Closures**

Changes in public health data could necessitate rapid adjustments to the school's operational approach at any time. Once in-person instruction with social distancing begins, we should be prepared for the potential of building closure on very short notice. The principal will communicate promptly to staff, students, and families using School Messenger in the event that local health conditions warrant school closure or a change in instructional delivery. In the event of closure, IIS will return to full-time online instruction for all students. We will use the remote learning schedule we have used all school year.

### **Safety Protocols**

During a health closure, no students will be allowed in school buildings for instruction. Staff would access buildings for critical purposes, as permitted within tribal guidelines. In rare circumstances when a necessary specialized service cannot be provided remotely, individual students may be permitted into a school space/Culture building by appointment and with strict mitigation strategies in place.

### **Instructional Practice**

In the event of a shutdown, all instruction would be delivered online. Indian Island School is a +Google Workplace School, using Google Classroom, Meet, Jamboard, and other Google extensions to provide distance learning.

### **Schedules**

Class schedules, in an emergency shutdown, will mirror schedules used before reopening.

### **Food Services**

Food services will continue as they did during remote learning. The kitchen will make every effort to provide hot, healthy lunches daily that includes remote learners.

### **Training and Support**

Resources and training to help caregivers understand their roles in supporting students' academic success are available through our guidance department and located. Weekly parent meetings with the Principal and staff are held via a Zoom Open Office Hour 5:00-6:00 PM each Thursday. All school-level information is shared through School Messenger and posted on the school website:

<https://www.maineindianeducation.org/o/iis>.

### **Technology Support**

Luke Esty-Kendall provides an online help desk to support students and caregivers with computer troubleshooting.