

End of Year Covid-19 Planning Tool

This tool was developed to guide districts in preparing updates to school operations based on previous directives, now considered guidance, and assist districts in eliciting community feedback via the district website.

Current Guidance: Post Links to ADH Guidance on the district website for easy reference by the public.

<https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus>

Considerations:

- **Current Guidance**

The Arkansas Department of Health and Arkansas Department of Education strongly advise districts to continue to follow all measures that have allowed successful in-person learning to occur.

- The success can be attributed to the multiple layers of mitigation strategies that have been implemented by schools, such as social distancing, reduced class sizes, mask wearing, disinfecting and cleaning, handwashing, and physical distancing to the extent practical.

Masks: Provide a narrative of the local school board directive concerning masks for the remainder of the school year. Add a link to any necessary policy or procedure or school board resolution.

Mask Procedure Update:

Governor Hutchinson lifted the state's mask mandate today. Beginning March 31st, 2021, Westside School District Faculty, Staff, and Students will be allowed to make a personal decision regarding wearing a mask at school. The school district will continue to follow state guidelines concerning safety protocols including and not limited to sanitization, social distancing, etc.

Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson and the Arkansas Department of Health announced today, March 31st, 2021, the requirement to wear masks will end. Throughout the pandemic, Ozark School District has diligently complied with the directives of the Arkansas Department of Health, and we will continue to do so.

Therefore, effective tomorrow, March 31, 2021, masks will no longer be required to be worn by students, staff, or visitors when on Westside School District campuses. All other directives of the Arkansas Department of Health continue to be in effect including enhanced sanitization practices and social distancing.

Although it is no longer required, students, staff, and visitors are welcome to continue to wear masks at school and school events.

As always, if you have questions or concerns please contact me or either of your Westside Principals.

At a Special Meeting of the Westside School Board on Tuesday, March 30th, 2021, Mike Estes made a motion to continue to follow the state guidance about mask procedures and follow the Governor's recommendation to make mask wearing an option, but not a requirement. The motion was seconded by Flo Ann Highfill and passed on a 3-2 vote.

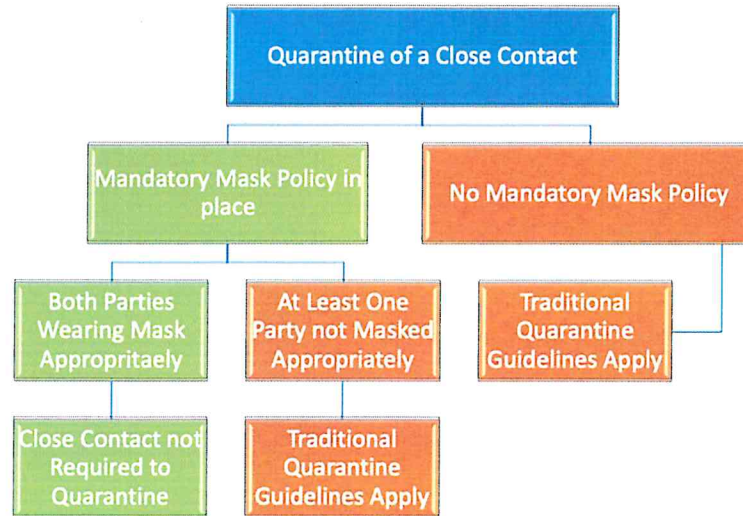
Considerations:

- **Masks-Continuation of mask policies and proper wearing have benefits**

A school system may continue to require the use of masks for adults or students for whom it is developmentally appropriate.

- Local school district boards must review current policy and determine whether to ***continue, modify, or eliminate by formal action*** policies that require the wearing of masks.
- If the district elects to continue a universal mask policy:
 - Proper mask wearing may be a consideration when identifying individuals as close contacts in K-12 schools that continue to implement mask requirements. This means that if both individuals – the person diagnosed with COVID-19 and the person exposed to the positive case – were wearing masks correctly at the time of exposure, the individual exposed does not need to quarantine.
 - When making decisions districts should consider approaches that are safest for a variety of situations, such as, *buses, classrooms, lunchrooms, hallways, activity and special event spaces* to determine the extent and impact of changes.

- **Close Contact Identification**



Physical Distancing: Provide a narrative of the local school board directive concerning physical distancing for the remainder of the school year. Add a link to any necessary policy or procedure or school board resolution.

The district will follow state guidelines concerning safety protocols and comply with Arkansas Department of Health directives.

Updated CDC guidance:

1. With universal masking, students can maintain a distance of at least 3 feet in classroom settings.
2. Social distancing of 6 feet between adults, as well as adults and students, in common areas, when masks can't be worn, during activities with increased inhalation like sports or band practice, and in community settings outside the classroom.

Considerations:

- **Physical Distancing**

CDC has updated guidance to reflect the latest science on physical distance between students in classrooms.

- CDC now recommends that, with universal masking, students can maintain a distance of at least 3 feet in classroom settings.
- The CDC still recommends social distancing of 6 feet between adults, as well as adults and students, in common areas, when masks can't be worn (such as while eating), during activities with increased inhalation like sports or band practice (which would preferably be held outside), and in community settings outside the classroom.

Responding to Confirmed Positive Cases: Provide a narrative describing how the local district will respond to a confirmed positive case of Covid-19 based on their local masking/physical distancing policy/procedure. Identify any pertinent information related to Points of Contact (POC) and ADH public hotlines.

If an individual who has been in a school has tested positive for COVID-19, districts are required to continue to follow the established reporting processes and requirements for quarantine. The district point of contact should be notified when any individual in a school has tested positive for COVID 19. The district point of contact will work with the Arkansas Department of Health to notify any close contacts and determine the required quarantine time.

District Point of Contact: Felicia Johnson or Brad Kent, 479-497-1991

ADH Hotline: 1-800-803-7847

Close Contact Determination:

An individual is defined as being a close contact if that person has been within six feet for 15 cumulative minutes or longer within a 24 hour period during the infectious period of a person who has tested positive for COVID 19.

Additional factors to be considered:

1. Case/contact masking
2. Vaccination status
3. Prior infection status

As of December 2nd, 2020, the CDC amended its guidance to allow two shorter options for the stay at home period. Based on current guidance the stay at home period can end for individuals experiencing no symptoms according to the following:

1. After 10 full 24 hour periods since close contact exposure without testing, or
2. After seven full 24 hour periods since close contact exposure and after receiving a negative test result. (Sample taken no earlier than five 24 hour periods after exposure.)

On March 8th, 2021 the CDC indicated that a fully vaccinated individual does not need to stay at home following close contact exposure to a test confirmed individual if the following conditions are true:

1. The exposed individual is fully vaccinated and
2. The individual has not experienced any COVID 19 symptoms following the close contact exposure to a test confirmed individual.

Individuals who have previously tested positive for COVID 19 and recovered who are subsequently exposed to someone with COVID 19 within three months of their original diagnosis do not have to stay at home or get tested again, as long as they do not develop new symptoms. Individuals who develop symptoms again within three months of their first instance of COVID 19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.

Considerations:

- **Responding**

Schools are still responsible for responding to confirmed cases within the school district. Identifying close contacts/quarantines

Under this updated guidance, there are factors that change prior rules for quarantine.

- Schools with **mask mandates** that promote **proper mask wearing** may now exempt individuals from being identified as close contacts in K-12 schools if **both** the confirmed and exposed individuals are properly masked.
- **A fully vaccinated individual** does not need to stay at home following close contact exposure to a test-confirmed individual if certain conditions are met
- Individuals who **previously have had COVID-19 and recovered and are within 3 months of their original diagnosis** may not have to quarantine

Continuation of Services: Provide a narrative of how the local district will continue to provide in-person learning. A link to an updated Ready for Learning Plan may be sufficient. Identify how public comment will be made available and how feedback will be taken into account.

The district will follow state guidelines concerning safety protocols and comply with Arkansas Department of Health directives. The district will continue to follow the Ready for Learning Plan to provide in person learning.

www.westsiderebels.net

Public comment will be made available on the district webpage in addition to the completed surveys returned on March 18th, 2021 which indicated the following:

70% in favor of making masks optional for the remainder of the school year and summer.

Considerations:

- **Continuation of Services**

As part of the American Rescue Plan Act, school districts must post for parents and the general public a summary of its plan for safe continuation of in-person learning and continuity of services.

- Summarize the overall plan of how the district will continue to implement safety measures for teachers, staff, and students during the final quarter of the school year, while taking into consideration the many end-of-school activities that take place both on and off school campuses. (Please note that this is a summary of the plan the district already has in place; not the creation of a new plan.)
- The summary should be developed in consultation with the district's Ready for Learning Committee
- District must post plan on website by April 15, 2021, and allow for public comment

Summer and Back-to-School Planning: Provide a narrative of how the local district will develop or modify the Ready for Learning Plan for summer and back-to-school activities. Identify how public comment will be made available, possibly linked on the district website, and how feedback will be taken into consideration when developing the plan.

The district will continue to follow the Ready for Learning Plan for summer and back to school activities. The Ready for Learning Plan will be updated and revised by the Ready for Learning committee as needed throughout the year.

Public comment will be made available through a feedback link on the district webpage. The Ready for Learning Committee will regularly review the comments and take those comments into account when revising the plan.

The district may also choose to send out a back to school survey in July for feedback.

Considerations:

- **Summer and Back-to-School Planning**
Districts receiving American Rescue Plan Act funds must request public comment and take such comments into account in the development/modification of the plan for summer and back-to-school activities.
 - Districts should archive the posting, along with public comments, for future auditing purposes.