

HERMITAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

End of Year Covid-19 Planning Brief & Updates to Ready for Learning Plan and Guiding Documents

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

Response: HSD has this information on the homepage of the website at this link: www.hermitageschools.org - Click on American Rescue Plan Act/Ready for Learning Plan

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.

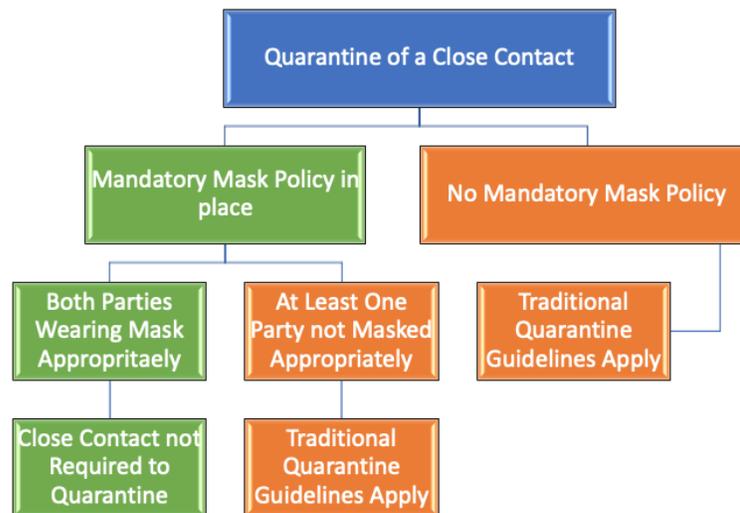
Response: Under the new guidance, it is the recommendation of the Ready for Learning Committee that the HSD continue to require the proper wearing of masks at indoor, school-sponsored events. This committee met on Friday, April 9 and the recommendation was approved at the HSD Board of Directors meeting on Monday, April 12, 2021.

Rationale for Action: *While the mask mandate was eliminated and other mandates are now considered guidance, the quarantine guidelines were modified, not discontinued or eliminated. The committee and Board want all students and staff to be able to finish this school year successfully and don't want students or staff to have to miss end of the year activities, such as Prom, Graduation, Banquets, Field Day, Honors events, etc. The safest way, although perhaps not the most favorable way, for this to happen is for masks to continue to be worn until the end of the school year.*

Guidance states that: "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."

Considerations:

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

Response: HSD will encourage physical distancing to the greatest extent possible. We will require 3-feet of space in classrooms, which should be easily obtainable. Teachers will continue to be encouraged to stay 6 feet away from students, when feasible.

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.

Response: No changes are expected to be made to the process found in the Ready for Learning Plan when responding to confirmed positive cases of Covid-19. We will follow the guidelines from the CDC and ADH for how to respond appropriately, as communicated to the POC for the district. Quarantines will follow the revised guidelines from ADH, as required.

Considerations:

- **Responding**

Schools are still responsible for responding to confirmed cases within the school district and for identifying and responding appropriately to 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.

Response: Information is found on the homepage of our district website. By clicking on the American Rescue Plan Act/Ready for Learning tab at the top of the page, pertinent information may be found. A link for public comment is found on this page. Information is also shared via social media and text messages to parents. For the months of April and May, HSD will hold on-site learning 5 days per week, as previously announced. We will continually monitor cases within our district and respond accordingly as changes occur. Some end-of-year events will be held virtually, while others-such as graduation-will be held in-person with protocols in place for the safety of students, staff, and guests.

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.

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.

Response: The Ready for Learning Committee will meet in the end of April to finalize plans for summer and back-to-school. Meetings will continue to be held at least monthly to update the plan as needed, given new guidance and/or situations. The link for public comment will remain on the website and responses will be shared with the Committee and the Board of Directors. It is the intent of the Ready for Learning Committee, as well as the Board of Directors and HSD Administration, that we start the 2021-2022 school year without a mask mandate, pending requirements and directives from the State of Arkansas, ADH, and/or CDC that demand different actions.

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.