
USD 498 ~ VALLEY HEIGHTS



Preface to the Plan of Safe Return

The following plan was developed and written by the administrators, teachers, and department leaders of the Valley Heights Schools, with guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [Marshall County Health Department](#), [Marshall County Emergency Management](#), [Kansas State Department of Education](#), [Kansas Association of School Boards](#), and the [Kansas State High School Activities Association](#). Much time and attention has been given to returning to the school environment with the health and safety of all our students, families and staff as the priority. It has been crafted following the current mandates and

recommendations of our state and county governments. In the event these mandates are altered, we will adapt our plan accordingly.

Communication will be the key to the successful implementation of this plan and bringing students back into the structured and social/emotional learning environment that only a school setting can provide. It is our hope that, through fidelity to this plan and consistently upholding the recommendations within it, we can return to our buildings in a safe and efficient manner. Therefore, it is imperative that we are all diligent in communicating; district to families, families to the district, teachers to students and parents, parents and students to teachers.

Please note that students, staff and parents should be prepared to enter into a strictly remote learning environment should conditions warrant that our schools and/or buildings are shut down for any period of time. Again, we will do our very best to communicate any alterations to the course of the school calendar as they emerge. It is crucial that we each practice due diligence in routinely checking status updates via Facebook, email and Twitter.

We are committed to our students, their physical, emotional and educational well-being, and overall success as Valley Heights students and individuals. Please know that our doors are open to you in addressing your concerns and answering your questions. As a staff, we have adopted an attitude of positivity and resilience, and we firmly believe we are stronger for uniting and tackling this problem with a family mentality. A mentality that has created the success that our district has enjoyed, and will continue to build upon in the years to come.

It's a great day to be a Mustang!

USD 498 Board of Education

Melissa Kennedy, Superintendent

Michele Palmgren and Robert Green , Principals

The teachers and staff of Valley Heights Schools

Table of Contents

Health

- Masks and Face Coverings 5
- Hygiene Measures 5
- Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities, including Ventilation 6

● Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities	6
● Diagnostic and Screening Testing	7
● Efforts to Provide Vaccination to School Communities	7
● Exclusion from School	7
● Medical Inquiries	9
● Defining a Case of COVID-19	9
● Defining a Close Contact	9
● Return to School After Exclusion	11
● Other Students and Employees in the Household	12
● Travel-Related Quarantine	13
● School Response to Isolation or Quarantine	13
● Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 in the School Building	14
● Closure of School	14
Continuity of Services	
● Services to Address Students' Academic Needs	15
● Students' and Staff Social, Emotional and Mental Health	15
Classrooms	16
Food Service	17
Contact Information	18

HEALTH

Face Masks and Coverings

- Our school district has removed the mask mandate based on vaccination rates and infection rates for the school. Masks are still recommended for unvaccinated individuals and unvaccinated groups.
- If needed, we may adopt reasonable safety measures to protect the safety of district personnel, students, and visitors during school-related activities. Reasonable safety measures may include, but may not be limited to, cleaning and sanitization plans, use of physical safeguards and barriers, and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Exceptions to any requirements may be granted as required by law, state, county, and/or local health officials, and on a case-by-case basis. We will continue to monitor national, state, and local government and health agency mandates, guidance, and recommendations as well.
- Lastly, the district will continue to train students and staff in the proper wearing of personal protective equipment as needed, and we will post signage outlining the proper wearing of personal protective equipment as needed.

Adoption of Hygiene Measures

- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette will continue to be taught to students with emphasis and practice protocols rehearsed more frequently in the primary grade levels. Signage will continue to be posted throughout our buildings as reminders of handwashing and respiratory etiquette. In addition, hand sanitizing stations and liquids will continue to be made available for use in all classrooms.
- Hand Sanitizer
 - All individuals must use hand sanitizer upon entry into the educational facility, as well as when entering the classroom after each transition.
 - Sanitizer stations will be placed at the entrance to each facility.
- Social Distancing
 - Where possible, social distancing practices will be utilized. Efforts will be made to maintain classroom seating with a minimum of 3 feet of social distancing between students and between students and staff for the 2021-2022 school year. Considerations will be made for cohorts or podding if needed.
- Calling student in sick
 - When calling in a student sick, secretaries will be asking a set of specific questions that will be documented.
- Visitors

- Visitors into the educational facilities will be limited beyond the front office. Depending upon the current Marshall County recommendations, may be asked to wear masks, have their temperature checked and use hand sanitizer upon entry into the facilities.

Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities, Including Ventilation

- Custodial staff have been and will continue to follow specific cleaning protocols and procedures. We will continue to consider assignments/reassignments to applicable shifts in order to continually clean high traffic and high contact surfaces. USD 498 will continue to use cleaning solutions that are rated to eliminate the COVID-19 virus. We will consistently monitor ventilation efficiency and effectiveness for opportunities to continually improve air quality.

Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities

- Our district will provide reasonable, necessary, and appropriate accommodations to its policies and practices for students with disabilities as determined by individual student needs and in accordance with an individual's documented accommodations and/or individualized education plan (IEP). Parents or guardians of students requiring accommodations should contact the applicable building administrator(s) to request information on plans for students with disabilities

Diagnostic and Screening Testing

- Students, staff, and community members can access COVID-19 diagnostic or screening tests through a variety of community partners. School nurses and health support staff will continue to monitor for symptoms, trends, and clusters, and request that students and staff seek medical services as appropriate.

Efforts to Provide Vaccinations to School Communities

- Our district will participate and partner with vaccination efforts in accordance with state and federal law for staff and eligible student groups. The District will not refuse, withhold from, or deny a person any services, goods,

facilities, advantages, privileges, licensing, educational opportunities, health care access, or employment opportunities based on the person's COVID-19 vaccination status.

Exclusion From School

- Students and employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 without other obvious explanations are prohibited from coming to school, and if they do come to school, they will be sent home immediately. The current known symptoms are:
 - Fever (100.4 or higher)
 - Chills
 - Rigors
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Fatigue
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Lower respiratory illness (cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing)
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea

- The following graphic provided by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment could be useful in assessing your child's symptoms, and will be referred to by the school when a student is called in as ill



COVID-19

CORONAVIRUS vs. COLD vs. FLU vs. ALLERGIES

SYMPTOMS	COVID-19*	COLD	FLU	ALLERGIES
 Fever	Common (measured at 100 F or higher)	Rare	High (100-102 F), can last 3-4 days	No
 Headache	Sometimes	Rare	Intense	Sometimes
 General aches, pains	Sometimes	Slight	Common, often severe	No
 Fatigue, weakness	Sometimes	Slight	Common, often severe	Sometimes
 Extreme exhaustion	Sometimes (progresses slowly)	Never	Common (starts early)	No
 Stuffy nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes	Common
 Sneezing	Rare	Common	Sometimes	Common
 Sore throat	Rare	Common	Common	No
 Cough	Common	Mild to moderate	Common, can become severe	Sometimes
 Shortness of breath	In more serious infections	Rare	Rare	Common
 Runny nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes	Common
 Diarrhea	Sometimes	No	Sometimes**	No

For more information: www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus

Medical Inquiries

- If a parent tells the school that a student is ill, the school may ask the parent whether the student is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19. Please refer to the KSDE Coronavirus vs. Cold vs. Flu. vs. Allergies graphic above.
- The school may take the temperature of students, employees and visitors on a random basis or in situations where there is reason to believe that the person may be ill.
- If a student is tested outside of Marshall County, parents will need to contact the school with the results. The school will in turn contact the Marshall County Health Department for further guidance.

Defining a Case of COVID-19

- A person is considered a case of COVID-19 disease if they have tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus by a diagnostic test. Based on what we currently know, a case is considered infectious two days prior to the onset of symptoms through at least 10 days after the onset of symptoms. For cases that do not have symptoms, the infectious period is considered as two days prior to the date the sample was collected through a minimum of 10 days from the date the sample was collected. Cases must remain in isolation until they have met the criteria for release from isolations set by KDHE or the Marshall County Health Department.

Defining a Close Contact

High Risk Exposures

- Contact with anyone unmasked, when less than 3 feet for longer than 10 minutes
- Eating breakfast/lunch/snack less than 3 feet apart, unless otherwise approved (by Marshall County Health Department or KDHE) physical barriers are in place (i.e. Plexiglas)
- Physical exertion, indoors or outdoors, when less than 3 feet for longer than 10 minutes
- High-risk sports, as defined by the National Federation of State High School Associations, including “sports that involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants.”
- Playing woodwind and brass instruments without other precautions (mask, distance)
- Singing/shouting without other precautions, when less than 3 feet for longer than 10 minutes

Low Risk Exposures

- Being in the same classroom with proper mask wearing
- On the same bus with appropriate mask wearing.
- Playground, even if unmasked, (social distancing and cohorts maintained); this moves into a high-risk exposure if kids have sustained contact with physical exertion for more than 10 minutes

Not considered Exposed or close contact

- Walking in the same hallway masked
- Attending a class during the period after a positive individual was present in the classroom

Wearing of Masks Exclusion Protocol

- Mask wearing has been shown to be an effective way to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Individuals who are wearing masks and are in close contact (3ft for 10 minutes or more) with an infectious individual wearing a mask are considered low risk for contracting COVID-19. Because schools have policies and monitoring capabilities for mask wearing, Marshall County Health Department does not recommend excluding students and staff who are close contacts of a COVID-19 positive individual, as long as masks are being worn correctly (covering nose and mouth) and in what is otherwise considered to be a low risk exposure. In those situations, quarantine of close contacts would not be required. Individuals who were unmasked within 3ft for more than 10 consecutive minutes or more or participated in a high-risk activity with COVID-19 positive individual during their infectious period, or who were directly exposed to respiratory droplets/excretions for any amount of time, will be excluded for 10 days from their last interaction with positive individual.

Exclusion of a Group

- The risk of COVID-19 transmission is low if public health mitigation techniques such as proper masking, physical distancing and hand hygiene are being followed. If transmission is occurring within a group (such as a classroom, bus route, sports team, outside on the playground, etc), it is an indication that public health measures may not have been followed. If there are two or more positives in a group* contact the Marshall County Health Department to determine if there is evidence of COVID-19 transmission. If transmission is identified, the entire group may be excluded for 10 days from the last exposure to an infectious individual.

- If an individual is tested during their 10- day quarantine period and is negative for COVID-19, they still need to complete the 10 day quarantine before returning to school, as symptoms can take up to 10 days to develop.
- ***Groups** are considered to be collections of students in a classroom, bus riders, clubs, etc. It is critical that seats and cohort groups are assigned and adhered to, so that contacts can be traced; if contacts cannot be traced and public health measures are not being followed, the entire group may be excluded following a single positive case.
- Community and school transmission of COVID-19 is continuously monitored. This plan may be modified as new data is collected.
- If a student is fully vaccinated (proof of vaccinations) and or within 6 months from having a proven positive case that individual will not have to quarantine if asymptomatic.

Return to School After Exclusion

- Once a student or employee is excluded from the school environment, they may return if they satisfy the recommendations of KDHE or the Marshall County Health Department. Currently those guidelines are:
 - Untested: Persons who have not received a test proving or disproving the presence of SARS CoV-2 , the virus that causes COVID-19, but experience symptoms may return if the following conditions are met:
 - Ten (10) calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND
 - Fever free for 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine and other symptoms have improved (for example, when cough or shortness of breath have improved).
 - Whichever criteria is longer. Meaning, a minimum of 10 days.
 - Tested and awaiting results. Persons who are suspected of having COVID-19 disease and are awaiting test results should be isolated at home until test results are received.
 - Positive result.
 - Symptomatic cases may return if the following conditions are met:
 - Ten (10) calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND
 - Fever free for 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine and other symptoms have improved (for example, when cough or shortness of breath have improved).
 - Whichever criteria is longer. Meaning, a minimum of 10 days
 - Asymptomatic cases may return if the following conditions are met:
 - Ten (10) calendar days have passed since the date sample was collected AND
 - Symptoms have not developed.

- If symptoms develop during the 10-day isolation period, then follow the above criteria for symptomatic cases with a new isolation period starting from the day symptoms started.
- Negative result.
 - If known exposure to a COVID-19 case or travel from a location on the KDHE Travel-related Quarantine List people who are identified as close contact of a COVID-19 case or have travelled from a location on the KDHE Travel-related Quarantine List must be quarantined for 14 days. A negative test result within the 14-day quarantine period does not affect the quarantine period and the person must finish their 14-day quarantine.
 - No known exposure to a COVID-19 case or travel-related exposure. People who have not been identified as a close contact to a COVID-19 case and have not travelled from a location on the KDHE Travel-related Quarantine List may return to work-school.
- In absence of symptoms, students required to quarantine will be held to the same attendance, activity completion and engagement guidelines as Remote Learners.

Other Students and Employees in the Household

10-Day Quarantine Guidance(No Testing and No symptoms):

- **Household contacts** will be quarantined for 10 days after the case has been released from home isolation. (20 days total quarantine)
- **Non household contacts** will be quarantined for 10 days from the last contact with the positive case.
- After exposure, close contacts should monitor themselves for symptoms daily for 10 days. Contact your provider or local health department if symptoms develop.
- If, during the 10 days of quarantine, you do NOT develop symptoms, you can be released from the quarantine with a test.
- ***When ample PCR testing is available in Marshall County (to test non-symptomatic people) we will implement the 7 day guidance:(At the present time, only symptomatic individuals are tested in Marshall County)***
- *COVID-19 can develop up to 14 days after exposure. Regardless of quarantine length, please self monitor the full 14 days to protect our community. Continue to wear a mask, social distance and practice good hand washing.

Travel-Related Quarantine

- If a student or employee has recently traveled from a location on the KDHE Travel-related Quarantine List, the student or employee is subject to a mandatory 10-day quarantine starting from the day after they return to Kansas.

School Response to Student or Employee in Isolation or Quarantine

- As soon as the school becomes aware of a student or employee that has been diagnosed with COVID-19 disease:
 - The Marshall County Health Department will be contacted with the name of the student or employee.
 - The custodial staff will be informed so that all desks, lockers and workspaces of the person are thoroughly disinfected.
 - If the school is not open when notification occurs, the custodial staff will wait 24 hours, or as long as possible prior to disinfecting and instead will block off the area so that others do not have contact.
- School staff will, in conjunction with the Marshall County Health Department, :
 - Immediately begin compiling a list of close contacts, including names, email addresses and phone numbers which will be shared with the Marshall County Health Department.
 - Consider the two days prior to when the case started having symptoms or if the case was asymptomatic the two days prior to the date the sample was collected.
 - Identify anyone who would have been within 6 feet for 10 minutes or more or would have had direct contact with secretions.
 - Guardians of students who have been identified as close contacts and staff identified as close contacts will be informed immediately.
 - Close contacts must start a 10-day mandatory quarantine period starting from the day after the last contact with the case.

Confirmed Case of COVID-19 In the School Building

- When there is a confirmation that a person infected with COVID-19 in a school building, the school will contact the Marshall County Health Department immediately.
- The district will assess, along with the assistance of the Marshall County Health Department, factors, such as the likelihood of exposure to employees and students in the building, the number of cases in the community and other factors to determine if the building should close.
 - Building is Closed:
 - All school activities will be canceled or rescheduled, including before and after-school programs, and field trips.
 - Parents/students and employees will be encouraged to stay at home until more information is provided by the school or the health department.
 - Building Remains Open:
 - All areas where the person infected with COVID-19 was in the school building will be blocked off until the building has been cleaned thoroughly.
 - The school will work closely with the Marshall County Health Department to assess for close contacts within students and staff and inform those who are exposed that they must start a mandatory 10-day quarantine period.
- The individual who tested positive will not be identified in communications to the school community at large.
- Our district employs nursing staff, and they complete all contact tracing documentation and efforts. The nursing staff will continue to work with the school administration and will contact individuals who have been in close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID and recommend that those individuals follow current quarantine/self-isolation guidelines and recommendations.

Closure of School(s)

- The closure of any or all district buildings will be in accordance with local and state health officials if there is widespread and/or sustained transmission among students and/or staff at the school level or widespread and/or sustained transmission within the community.
- **Should closure be mandated, all students and staff will immediately enter into remote learning.**

CONTINUITY OF SERVICES

- ***Services to Address Students' Academic Needs***

- Our district has implemented a summer learning program to assist students with academic recovery. Our district plans to continue full time, in-person instruction beginning the fall of 2021. Additional instructional personnel have been added or reassigned where possible to implement further academic recovery efforts in core curriculum areas. Where possible, specialists, paraeducators, and educational consultants will be available and utilized during the instructional day, on professional development days, and/or during before and after school tutoring programs throughout the year to support students.

- ***Students' and Staff Social, Emotional and Mental Health***

- Our district has K-12 staff to monitor and address the social and emotional learning needs of our students. We will continue to partner with social workers and local mental health services with the goal of helping students and families overcome obstacles with connecting to school.
- Our district has provided staff with opportunities for social and emotional supports through our district's participation with an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider. Staff social and emotional wellness and mental health are also considered in district communications and staff committees.

CLASSROOMS

District Guidance

- ***Physical Distancing***
 - Classrooms will be arranged in an effort to maximize the amount of space between students by spacing desks, tables, centers and seating.
 - Class sizes will be minimized to the greatest extent possible.
 - Efforts will be made to decrease shared spaces among students, especially students who may not typically interact with each other during the school day.
 - Where feasible, shared spaces such as hallways and restrooms will be designated to specific grade levels or classes to decrease exposure to other students.
- ***Furnishings***
 - As much as possible, furnishings with fabric and other “hard to clean” coverings will be removed from the classroom.
- ***Preparing to go virtual***
 - Bloomz/Thrillshare tool will be used for communication.
 - Google Classroom will be used for virtual instruction.
 - Remote learning procedures will be practiced in the classroom.
 - K-12 students will have access to an iPad per each student.
- ***Instructional Materials***
 - Shared digital devices will be wiped after use; 1:1 devices used as normal.
 - Students will hand-wash/sanitize after shared use of items.
 - Electric pencil sharpeners and staplers will be available in each classroom.
 - Supplies, manipulatives and technology will be cleaned and sanitized routinely.

- Support Groups
 - All supplies should be cleaned and sanitized routinely.
 - Support staff will wash their hands upon entering a classroom and will sanitize upon exiting a classroom.
 - To the best of our ability, administration will assign support staff to the same cohort.
- Specialized Classes
 - All supplies, including instruments, art supplies, tools, etc., will be cleaned and sanitized routinely.
 - Students will not share any supplies, including instruments, art supplies, tools, etc., where feasible.
- Signage
 - Signage will be posted in each classroom covering hygiene, social distancing, hand washing, proper mask use.

FOOD SERVICE

- Free meals will be made available for all eligible youth this summer and during the 2021-2022 school year. Families may also be in contact with their child's school for any other health or food service needs.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Melissa Kennedy

Superintendent

Waverille, KS 66548

(785)363-2398

mkennedy@valleyheights.org

Michele Palmgren

Jr/Sr High Principal

(785)363-2508

mpalmgren@valleyheights.org

Robert Green

Elementary Principal

(785)363-2530 Waverille

(785)363-7693 Blue Rapids

rgreen@valleyheights.org