



COLUMBIANA COUNTY SCHOOLS COMMON SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES AGREEMENT

Preface: The American Rescue Plan (ARP) provides federal resources to support states and local school districts. Recent federal guidance clarifies that districts submit to the state of Ohio a plan that fulfills the requirement that districts publish local “Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plans” by June 24, 2021. Each district school should then post the plan on its local website and then submit the plan to the Ohio Department of Education by June 24. This overall plan is being built upon existing district plans that address many of the elements of the federal requirements.

School district superintendents from each public school district in Columbiana County, along with Columbiana County Educational Service Center and Columbiana County Career and Technical Center in consultation with the Columbiana County Health Department, have identified common practices for school reopening in Columbiana County. These guidelines are subject to change based on the mandates established by the Ohio Department of Health and/or the Ohio Governor’s executive orders.

These general principles will guide each school district as they move forward with reopening schools throughout Columbiana County:

- **School Districts will continue to consult with the Columbiana County Department of Health and the Salem City and East Liverpool City Health Departments to establish health and safety protocols based on local data.**
- **School districts will communicate with all stakeholders throughout the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services process. The goal of these procedures and protocols is to reduce the risk that may be present when children and school district employees occupy school district facilities.**
- **Each school district will strive to provide the appropriate face covering and physical distancing requirements based on classroom sizes, school facilities, and building operations, while following the local Health Department recommendations.**
- **School districts are planning to maintain their approved school calendars with additional employee professional development and requirements.**
- **Although these guidelines are common to all districts in Columbiana County, specific guidance may be necessary to address the unique needs of each school district.**

Health and Safety Protocols

Daily Precautions to Practice:

The “Daily Precautions to Practice” below may include physical and social distancing, daily health checks, use of personal protective equipment (face coverings), daily hygiene habits, cleaning and sanitizing throughout the day and at the end of the day, and attendance policy related to coronavirus symptoms.

- **Daily Health Assessments:** Assessing symptoms is an important component for early notification. Students and staff should not report to school with symptoms.
 - Do not come to work/school if you are sick or have knowledge of the COVID symptoms or known COVID exposure. If you have any of the above symptoms stay home and report your absence.
- **Vaccinations:** All District staff have been provided the opportunity to receive vaccinations in partnership with local health care providers and the Columbiana County Educational Service Center. In addition, vaccination efforts among students ages 12 through 18 have also begun. To support this effort, the local health departments have held a number of clinics focused on supporting families and students with the goal of providing access to vaccination. Columbiana County districts fully intend to support further vaccination efforts as deemed necessary as other age groups are provided the opportunity for vaccination.
- **Physical/Social Distancing:** Recommend physical distancing (at least 3-6 feet apart based on the American Academy of Pediatrics Guidelines) among all persons on school grounds. Utilize visual cues (i.e. floor markings) and other strategies to reinforce spacing. Create transition schedules that minimize the number of students and staff in common spaces including hallways, cafeteria, etc.

- **Face Coverings:**

*** Districts will follow the state mandate in terms of face coverings.**
These mandates supersede district plans.

The use of masks (face coverings) is an important component to help prevent the spread of germs. Vaccinations have been made available for individuals aged 12 and older.

- Individuals who have been [fully vaccinated](#) are **not required** to wear a mask for school or work.
 - Masks are optional/personal choice for:
 - Any **person** who has been fully vaccinated.
 - Any **student** (12 years old or older) who has been fully vaccinated.
 - Any **visitor** or **volunteer** who has been fully vaccinated.
- It is recommended that individuals who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask.
- The School District is not requiring vaccination proof at this time; therefore, the school's mask policy is dependent on an individual's good conscience and adherence to this guidance document.
- It is recommended that unvaccinated students in summer programs/community education camps wear a mask, especially if students are congregating in an enclosed area.

Good Hygiene Practices: Schools and districts should continue to reinforce good habits to stop the spread of germs, including covering sneezes and coughs and handwashing. Hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, before eating and after using the restroom. Schools and districts should ensure soap is readily available in all restrooms and wash stations throughout the building. Schools and districts should make hand sanitizer (60-95% alcohol based) and sanitizing products available for personnel and students, especially in high traffic areas, including at each school entrance and in every classroom.

- **Clean and Sanitize:** Frequently clean surfaces paying particular attention to high-touch areas (stair handrails, door handles, counters, desks, tables, chairs, lavatories, computers, books, etc.). Cleaning and disinfection should be done after each cohort of students leaves a facility or classroom, including between class changes (if applicable), between groups in the cafeteria (when utilized), and after each school day. Limit sharing of supplies and equipment and sanitize between student use. Minimize the amount of materials in the classroom to items that are essential to meet student academic and social-emotional needs. Schools and districts need to consider the appropriate level of staffing to accommodate the cleaning/sanitizing schedule.

Visitors and Community Partners

- If possible, limit visitors in schools and recommend a symptoms check for all visitors. Schools and districts may have partnerships with volunteers, community organizations, health care providers and local government agencies, among others, to provide additional educational and wraparound services to students. Schools and districts should continue to work with these partners, allowing their staff into the building following the same precautions as school and district personnel.

Student Health Issues

Schools, working closely with the local Health Department, have an important role in slowing the spread of diseases to help ensure students have safe and healthy learning environments. Schools serve students, staff, and visitors from throughout the community. All of these stakeholders may have close contact in the school setting, often sharing spaces, equipment, and supplies.

- The duration of home stay for the child sent home with a fever is fever without medication for 24 hours (1 full day) AND improvement of all other symptoms for 24 hours.
- If a student tests positive for COVID-19, the local Health Department will implement isolation and quarantine and will perform all disease contact tracing assisted by school personnel.

Symptoms of COVID-19 illness has been defined by the CDC as follows:

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of reported symptoms – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms can include:

- 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 and children and youth with SARS-CoV-2 infection may experience any, all, or none of these symptoms.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>

Once learning of a COVID-19 case in someone who has been in the school, immediately notify local health officials. These officials will help administrators determine a course of action for their child care programs or schools. The following decision tree can be used to help schools determine which set of mitigation strategies may be most appropriate for their current situation.

Any school in any community might need to implement short-term closure procedures regardless of community spread if an infected person has been in a school building. If this happens, the school district will follow what the local Health Department recommendations regardless of the level of community spread. Localized impact of a facility outbreak may warrant containment activities independent of the broader community.

Other Considerations

Custodial and Maintenance:

- Face coverings and gloves are recommended and proper training for COVID-19 should be provided.
- Each classroom should be properly disinfected after use by students. If schools are using a rotating schedule for students, then this may result in each classroom needing to be cleaned multiple times a day.
- Like classrooms, all bathrooms and other common spaces should be properly disinfected on a frequent and regular basis.
- School districts should determine sanitizing schedules, protocols for cleaning surfaces in all areas of the building, checklists for before and after-school.
- In addition, collective bargaining agreements will need to be reviewed and a memorandum of understanding will likely need to be put in place.

Secretarial/Clerical:

- The secretarial and clerical employees are often the most visible and most interactive with students, parents and community members. As a result, they should be provided with training and protocols and be prepared to answer many questions. Prior to re-occupancy, provide appropriate PPE and perform a detailed review of the configuration of office workspaces.
- Consider eliminating reception seating areas.
- Recommend installing a plastic partition at the reception area.
- Review floorplans and remove or reconfigure seats, furniture and workstations as needed to preserve recommended physical distancing in accordance with ODH and local health guidelines. Reconfigure workstations so that employees do not face each other or establish partitions if facing each other cannot be avoided.

Transportation

Health Concerns

The transportation of students in a manner which is safe for students and employees is of highest importance. Implementing daily health routines for bus routines will require new practices and protocols. Each bus will need to be analyzed for adherence to guidelines, keeping safety of students and drivers foremost.

Exposure Management

- Face Coverings – Individuals who have been [fully vaccinated](#) are **not required** to wear a mask on the bus. It is recommended that individuals who have not been fully vaccinated wear a mask on the bus.
- Practice maximizing ventilation. Travel with windows open at least 2 inches and front and rear roof vents open.

Bus Cleaning and Sanitation

- Each bus will be equipped with a lock box containing approved sanitation equipment, disposable gloves, and disposable masks.
- Buses will be sanitized and cleaned frequently, particularly after a bus route.

Bus Equipment

- Must meet and follow all Ohio Highway Patrol guidelines.
- Hand sanitizer must be available as per OHP guidelines.
- Driver protective barrier has been approved but must be installed as per OHP guidelines (consider prohibitive due to cost and time to install).
- No outside signage is permitted on school buses.
- Inside signage permitted within OHP guidelines.
- Air purification systems are approved if mounted per OHP guidelines.

Continuity of Services Plan

Columbiana County schools will be providing a full range of educational opportunities in the 2021-2022 school year. Supporting the academic and social-emotional growth of all students remains a priority as we recover from the pandemic. Regardless of the learning model, students will continue to receive and have access to all student services.

- Learning Recovery and Extended Learning Plans
 - Each school district in Columbiana County created a district Learning Recovery and Extended Learning Plan to help students advance academically and to make up for any learning that may have been lost or delayed due to the pandemic and related disruptions. These plans outlined supports and services for the Summer of 2021, the 2021-2022 school year and beyond.
[EPCSD Learning Recovery and extended Learning Plan.](#)
- Intervention Services
 - Each school district in Columbiana County provides a multi-tiered system of interventions to address the academic and behavioral/social-emotional needs of all students. Each building has a process of screening and identifying students in need of interventions. Interventions are designed and implemented and monitored for effectiveness in order to support growth in targeted areas
- Special Education Services
 - Our special education staff, including school psychologists, intervention specialists, and related service personnel will continue to work with parents, students, and teachers to determine the need for special education services. Students who receive special education services will continue to be provided these services as defined by their Individualized Education Plans.

- English Learner Services
 - Students qualifying for English language support and services will continue to receive these services.
- Gifted Services
 - Students qualifying for gifted services will continue to receive these services. Opportunities for gifted screening/testing will be available as possible throughout the school year.
- Counseling Services
 - School Counselors are an integral part of a student's educational environment. School counselors can support transitions and are available to students in need of immediate assistance with behavioral or social-emotional concerns. Counselors can support students with the following:
 - Short term counseling
 - Referrals for long-term counseling
 - Academic achievement strategies and academic planning
 - Managing emotions and using interpersonal skills
 - Planning for college and other post-secondary options
- Mental Health Support
 - In addition to school counselors, all district buildings have access to licensed mental health providers. These individuals can provide small group and individual services to address mental health concerns, concerns with substance abuse, and other mental health issues.
- Health Services
 - Each district is serviced by a team of health professionals, including full-time school nurses, to ensure that student health needs are met at every building. All health professionals will follow the Department of Health and CDC Guidelines related to COVID-19 and will assist administrators and staff in understanding and implementing those guidelines. Each school has a response plan and a designated isolation area for students or staff that develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 illness at school. Staff will also continue to administer daily medications, if needed, and attend to injuries or illnesses that might occur at school. Mandated health screenings will also be completed with appropriate safety precautions in place.
- Family Support Services
 - County and district family liaisons work in partnership with the districts to help connect families with resources in the community and ensure that basic student needs are met.
- Food Service
 - Schools will collaborate with the local Health Department and Food Service directors to develop guidelines for offering food service to all students. The district will strive to provide for physical distancing and enhanced cleaning of surfaces between service times.
This consideration will provide alternate approaches to breakfast/lunch service as needed.

Periodic Review of Plan:

This plan will be reviewed no less than every 6 months for the duration of the ARP ESSER grant period (through September 30, 2023) and will revise the plan as appropriate.

Columbiana County Superintendents and the Columbiana County Health Department

Anna Marie Vaughn	Columbiana County ESC
Eric Lowe	Beaver Local Schools
Donald Mook	Columbiana Exempted Village Schools
Matthew Manley	Crestview Local Schools
Jonathan Ludwig	East Liverpool City Schools
Chris Neifer	East Palestine City Schools
Dennis Dunham	Leetonia Exempted Village School District
Joe Siefke	Lisbon Exempted Village School District
Sean Kirkland	Salem City Schools
Tom Cunningham	Southern Local Schools
Lance Hostetler	United Local Schools
Richard Bereschik	Wellsville Local Schools
Chuck Adkins	Columbiana County Career and Technical Center
Bill Devon	Columbiana County Board of Developmental Disabilities
Wes Vins	Columbiana County Health Department