

St. Elmo CUSD #202

TENTATIVE Back-to-School Plan

2021-2022 School Year

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in major changes to all aspects of life, including unprecedented school closure in the spring of 2020 and revised schedules and protocols in the fall of 2020. Our Board of Education and administration firmly agree that in-person instruction is the best environment in which students learn; therefore, offering in-person instruction while protecting the health and safety of our students and staff, will continue to be our goal for the 2021-2022 school year.

Our Back-to-School Plan will be aligned with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) guidance.

Maintaining the Health and Safety of Students, Educators, and Other Staff

In accordance with the Illinois State Superintendent of Schools July 9, 2021 declaration, St. Elmo schools will be open **fully (5 days/week; full days)** for in-person learning for all student attendance days for the 2021-22 school year. "Non-traditional learning" will only be made available for non-vaccinated or vaccine ineligible students who are under quarantine as directed by the local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Mask Use

- Mask use is **recommended** indoors for students, staff and visitors who are not fully vaccinated.
- The CDC states that masks are to be worn on public transportation and will be available. ***No disciplinary action will be taken against a student who does not have a mask, as described in the US Dept. Of Education COVID-19 Handbook.***

Social Distancing

- **To the extent possible within school and classroom**, school staff are to help students commit to physical distancing **of at least 3 feet as much as possible**. School staff will also maximize physical distance **as much as possible**.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

- School staff will continue to monitor and reinforce frequent handwashing by:
 - continuing to teach handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
 - providing adequate handwashing and hand sanitizer supplies
- School staff will continue to teach and model proper respiratory etiquette

Facility and Transportation Cleaning, Disinfection

- School custodial staff and transportation staff will continue to clean surfaces daily.
- When possible, staff will have activities, classes, or lunches outdoors when circumstances allow.

Contact Tracing in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine

- Students and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as influenza (flu) or COVID-19, should stay home and contact their healthcare provider
- Individuals in our school environments who show symptoms of COVID-19 are to immediately report to the nurse's office. Students and staff are **required** to wear masks while waiting in the designated area.
- Students and staff who are not fully vaccinated should quarantine after a recent exposure to someone with COVID-19.
- Fully vaccinated staff who were in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but do NOT have COVID-19 symptoms do not need to quarantine or be tested.
- Student absences related to a COVID-19 isolation or quarantine will be recorded as excused. "Non-traditional learning" will only be an option for students who are under quarantine as directed by the local health department or the IDPH.
- Students and staff suspected of having COVID-19, whether they were tested or not, are to follow the CDC guidelines to determine when they can return to school.
- Following quarantine, students and staff returning from illness related to COVID-19 are to call to check in with the school nurse.
- The quarantine period for students will be 10 days. For staff only, the quarantine can end after Day 7 with a negative test result. **Please note....the administration reserves the right to refuse to allow an individual to return prior to Day 15 if:*
 - *No daily symptom information is provided*
 - *No evidence of a negative PCR test is provided*
 - *Fever and/or symptoms arise after day 10*

Screening Testing

- A staff member who has not been fully vaccinated can request COVID-19 screening testing by contacting the school nurse.

Visitors

- Nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations are discouraged from visiting schools in an effort to minimize possible exposure for our students.

Collaboration with Public Health Officials

- District officials will continue to collaborate and consult with Fayette County Health Department officials regarding the district's/county's current statistics.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) have recognized the need for decisions to be based on the local needs of the school and community. We will continue to monitor our current data related to COVID and to determine appropriate prevention strategies to be implemented. Should there be a spike in cases, proof of transmission in the school setting, or other related circumstances that are deemed critical, necessary steps will be taken to continue to promote the health and safety of our students and staff. This plan is subject to change, and decisions will be made in collaboration with the local Health Department.