

**SCHOOL CITY OF WHITING
RETURN TO LEARN
COVID-19 RE-ENTRY PLAN
2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR
PARENT GUIDEBOOK**



The School City of Whiting Return to Learn COVID-19 Re-Entry Plan is guided by information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Indiana State Department of Health, and Local Board of Health. The School City of Whiting plan addresses the needs of our students, staff, and community as we work to reopen our schools during COVID-19. The district is working with the guidelines from these medical experts in order to do everything possible to protect our students and staff from COVID-19. It is our goal to provide the safest learning and working environment we can to protect all members of our School City of Whiting community.

It will take cooperation from every staff member, student, and parent to make the plan successful. Staff will need to be diligent in following procedures and protocols during the school day. Parents will need to be diligent in following the guidelines for only sending healthy students to school. Support of the procedures and protocols in the plan and consistent enforcement are key to keeping our school and students safe. Everyone will need to practice good hygiene measures, social distance as much as possible, and wear a mask during all indicated times. It is up to us to keep our school community healthy.

RE-ENTRY PLAN GOALS

- **Provide a learning environment with enhanced safety measures in place to keep the health of all students, staff, and community members our first priority**
- **Provide 5 day/week in person instruction as well as support and intervention services to all SCW students that meet their educational, physical, social, and emotional needs**
- **Work together with our families to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within the School City of Whiting community by following CDC, Indiana State Department of Health, and Lake County Board of Health guidelines**
- **Work with the ISDH and Lake County Board of Health in seeking vaccination opportunities for staff, students, and families with the Whiting community**
- **Implement daily health and safety protocols and procedures in all departments district wide**
- **Maintain clear, consistent, and timely communication with our parents and families**
- **Maintain approaches that are adaptable and flexible throughout the school year in response to changes with COVID-19 spread in our community**
- **Work closely with the Lake County Board of Health to plan for contingencies if we experience a school closure**

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As a School City of Whiting parent I will:

- monitor and screen my child each morning for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to the sending he/she to school:
 - A fever of 100.4° F or greater
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Repeated shaking with chills
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea
 - Nausea
 - Nasal congestion
- keep my child at home when he/she is ill
- communicate the presence of COVID-19 symptoms in my child or any known exposure to a COVID-19 person to the school administration and nursing staff as soon as I am aware
- seek medical attention for my child if he/she is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 and inform the school nursing staff of test results if tested for COVID-19
- reinforce and practice proper personal health and safety measures with my child that includes proper handwashing, use of hand sanitizer, following mask guidelines, and social distancing from others
- support and follow all school safety protocols and procedures in place
- keep personal contact and emergency contact information up to date in my child's records
- make sure my child has all required immunizations for in person school attendance
- make sure my child practices social distancing at all the bus stop
- follow visitor restrictions and phone the office to make an appointment before coming to school
- follow safety procedures and practice social distancing when dropping off or picking up my child from school

MITIGATION STRATEGIES

The opening of schools are guided by information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Indiana State Department of Health, and the Local Board of Health.

Masks

Vaccinated Individuals:

- Masks are optional indoors/outdoors for all fully vaccinated students and staff. Staff and students will be asked to provide a copy of their vaccination card in order to be unmasked during the school day.
- Masks are required on all school buses per current federal requirement for vaccinated students and staff.

Unvaccinated Individuals:

- Masks are required indoors for all unvaccinated students and staff except when eating.
- Masks are required outdoors for all unvaccinated students and staff in any high risk situations when social distancing cannot be maintained such as contact sports.
- Masks are required on all school buses per current federal requirement for unvaccinated students and staff.

Physical Distancing/Hand Washing

- Classrooms will be arranged with all seats/desks facing the front of the room with as much distance between seats as possible.
- Proper social distancing, defined as 3-6 feet will be maintained:
 - Between adults in the building and between adults and students when in common areas
 - When masks cannot be worn, such as during meals
 - During activities when increased exhalation occurs, such as singing, shouting, band practice, choir, exercise, and sports
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds whenever hands are visibly soiled and in the following situations:
 - Before and after meals, after recess, after sharing supplies or equipment, and after using the restroom
- Build time into the day/schedule to allow for students to wash their hands
- Provide hand sanitizer throughout the buildings for student and staff use

CORPORATION HEALTH AND SAFETY PLANS

- New social distancing procedures will be in place, with one-way traffic through the buildings, where possible.
- Mark spaced lines to enter the building and designate entrance and exit flow paths.
- Appropriate signage for social distancing, hygiene procedures, and masks will be posted throughout the corporation buildings.
- Visitors to the buildings are only upon appointment. If something needs to be dropped off, it will be left at the main entrance where office staff will retrieve it.
- All scheduled visitors will be screened in the main office and will be requested to wear a face mask and use hand sanitizer.
- Clean/disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects after each use.
- Conduct deep cleaning of schools prior to students/staff returning.
- Schedule additional cleanings during weekends, after events, or school holidays/breaks.
- Develop building specific procedures for student pick/drop up to ensure proper social distancing.
- Masks must be worn by all staff and students on buses.
- Events and student activities may be held outdoors weather permitting.

INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL

Instructional Guidance

The opening of the schools is guided by information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Indiana State Department of Health, and the Local Board of Health.

Due to the availability of vaccines as well as the data from the 2020/2021 school year demonstrating that in-person instruction does not result in increased transmission of the COVID 19 virus, the School City of Whiting will resume 5 day a week in-person instruction for all students grades prek-12th for the 2021/2022 school year. Educational research also supports the effectiveness of in-person instruction for students and the importance of students having in-person social and emotional support services. We know that in-person instruction will be key in addressing student learning loss from the past year.

- Teachers will provide in-person instruction Monday through Friday on a regular school day schedule.
- Teachers' desks will be in the front of the room facing students. Teachers should maintain social distancing during whole class instruction.
- All mitigation strategies (masks, social distancing, and hand hygiene) will be implemented throughout the school day.
- Enhanced cleaning of instructional settings, common areas, and high touch surfaces will take place throughout the school day.

- Students who are unable to attend school due to COVID-19 related reasons such as a quarantine due to a known exposure, exclusion due to exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, or testing positive for COVID-19 will be accommodated with remote learning and/or homebound instruction during their isolation/quarantine period.
- If a particular school is deemed by the local board of health to need closing due to exposure concerns, E-Learning would be utilized.
- Any changes to the instructional format would be guided by the ISDH and Lake County Board of Health based on community spread levels and COVID19 positivity rates

QUARANTINE AND ISOLATION

- Quarantine is utilized for individuals who may have been exposed to COVID19.
- Close contacts identified during contact tracing should be quarantined unless they are fully vaccinated, or have tested positive for COVID19 in the past three months and do not have any symptoms.
- All fully vaccinated individuals who are asymptomatic do not need to quarantine but should monitor for symptoms for 14 days following their exposure.
- Close contacts who are unvaccinated **MUST** quarantine.
- Quarantine Options:
 - Asymptomatic close contact may return after day 10 with enhanced precautions in place for days 11-14 (masks, social distancing, lunch eaten separately)
 - Asymptomatic close contact may return after day 8 with a negative PCR test on day 5, 6, or 7 or a negative BinaxNOW in school on day 8. Continue enhanced precautions in place for days 8-14.
- Isolation is utilized for individuals with COVID19 illness.
- Individuals with a positive COVID19 test will be directed to stay home for at least 10 days following the onset of symptoms or the positive test result.
- Individuals may return after 10 days as long as symptoms are improving, and they are fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of medications.

Student Illness During the School Day

ALL STUDENTS SENT HOME WITH ONE OR MORE COVID-19 SYMPTOMS ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO SEE THEIR PHYSICIAN PRIOR TO RETURN TO SCHOOL AND WORK TO DETERMINE IF COVID-19 TESTING IS NEEDED

- A designated isolation room will be used to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-19 like symptoms during the course of the school day.
- Any student that becomes ill during the school day will report to the isolation room to be screened by the school nurse.
- School nurses and healthcare aides will use universal precautions and wear appropriate PPE while caring for ill students or staff exhibiting any COVID-19 like symptoms.
- Local health officials, staff, and families will be notified of a possible case of COVID-19 within the school

environment while maintaining confidentiality consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable federal and state privacy laws.

- The isolation room and any other areas used by a sick person will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after use and prior to use by any other individual.
- Advise sick staff members and children not to return until they have met CDC/ISDH criteria to discontinue home isolation.
- Inform those who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and follow state ISDH guidance if symptoms develop. If a person does not have symptoms, follow appropriate state ISDH guidance for home quarantine.

CAFETERIA

- Scheduled lunch times with alternate serving areas in the building will be developed for students to social distance as much as possible while eating
- Meals may be served in classrooms as needed or indicated by daily school schedule/health department
- Assigned social distanced seating for all students
- Allow student hand washing before and after meal service
- Provide hand sanitizer for students and staff
- No self-serve service lines are available
- Pre-packaged meals for each student instead of traditional serving lines may be utilized
- Disposable trays and utensils will be used
- No sharing of food between students
- Students go in small groups to dispose of trash in cans spread throughout the cafeteria
- All chairs and tables disinfected in between lunch periods
- No contact Grab and Go meal service will be provided during any mandatory school closure

TRANSPORTATION

STAFF AND STUDENTS MUST WEAR MASKS ON ALL SCHOOL BUSES

- Drivers and aides will be assigned to the same bus and route
- Parents need to ensure that their children social distance while at bus stops
- Masks are required at bus stops and while traveling to and from on the bus.
- Students refusing to wear a mask will be refused transportation. Parents will be notified that another form of transportation to and from school will need to be made.
- All students will be assigned to one bus with assigned seating.
- Limit students to one route whenever possible.
- Athletics and extracurricular groups must abide by social distancing, seating charts, and mandatory

masks on buses

- Cleaning is performed daily. Supplemental cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces on the bus is performed between routes.
- Airing out buses when not in use.
- If COVID-19 positive person was transported, the bus/AV will be put out of service for 24 hours for deep cleaning.

TECHNOLOGY

- Students will be assigned an individual device for use during the school day.
- Devices will be picked up in first period classroom and returned to same room at end of the day
- Seating charts maintained in all computer labs and students will be assigned to one computer
- Social distancing should be maintained with seating charts as much as possible in computer labs. Students will be required to wear masks in computer classrooms that cannot social distance
- Headphones will be issued to each individual student. There will be no sharing of headphones

CONTACT INFORMATION

Cynthia Scroggins, Superintendent
Lorri Covaciu, Assistant Superintendent
James Polite, WHS Principal
Christine Wheeler, WMS Principal
Julie Pearson, NH Principal
Amy Segura, NH Nurse
Katie Sabol, WMS/WHS Nurse
Lake County Health Department

cscroggins@ns.whiting.k12.in.us
lcovaciu@ns.whiting.k12.in.us
jpolite@ns.whiting.k12.in.us
cwheeler@ns.whiting.k12.in.us
jpearson@ns.whiting.k12.in.us
asegura@ns.whiting.k12.in.us
ksabol@ns.whiting.k12.in.us
(219) 755-3655