

Charleston CUSD #1

Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Summary & FAQ's Last updated on September 9, 2021

Summary

This is only a summary of the Charleston CUSD #1 *Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services*. The full four-page plan can be accessed on our district's website. Based upon the most recent guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **these strategies may be removed or become more restrictive based upon local COVID-19 metrics and county health department guidance**. For additional clarification about how a particular school will operate under this plan, please refer to the school's website or contact the student's teacher or principal.

1. Our schools are scheduled to be open for full days of in-person instruction.
2. Universal mask use is required indoors for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to schools regardless of vaccination status, outdoors during close contact activities, and is required by all on school buses.
3. School staff will continue to physical distance students at school as much as possible.
4. School staff will continue to monitor and reinforce frequent handwashing and respiratory etiquette.
5. School custodial, maintenance and transportation staff will continue to clean surfaces daily and replace air filters regularly.
6. County health department staff will continue to oversee quarantines of students and staff who are not fully vaccinated.
7. Screening testing will continue to be available for non-vaccinated students and staff upon request.
8. District staff will continue to work with county health department staff to promote vaccines.
9. District staff will continue to work with students and staff who need accommodations, modifications, or assistance related to COVID-19 safety protocols, disabilities, underlying medical conditions, or weakened immune systems.
10. District staff will continue to discourage nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations with people who are not fully vaccinated from visiting schools.
11. District staff will continue to consult with county health department staff about pandemic protocols and decision-making.
12. District staff will continue to post revisions to this plan on the website and communicate changes to these strategies through the district's regular communication platforms.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- Q1:** Why were last year's protocols based on the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) guidance and this year's protocols are based on the CDC guidance and the Governor's Executive Order of August 4, 2021?
- A1:** Last school year, the Governor's Executive Orders required that public schools follow guidance provided by the IDPH. This school year, the IDPH fully adopted the CDC's updated guidance for schools. In addition, the American Rescue Plan Act requires that school districts develop a plan that is aligned with the CDC guidance for schools. On August 4, 2021, Illinois' Governor Pritzker's Executive Order of August 4, 2021 requires that all public and nonpublic schools in Illinois require the indoor use of face coverings regardless of vaccination status.
- Q2:** Why is the district requiring, rather than recommending, masks?
- A2:** The district aligned its plan with the CDC's guidance, which recommends indoor masking and included a provision by which masks may be required in a school or universally for reasons such as increasing COVID-19 transmission in our school community or increasing community transmission of a variant that is spread more easily among children and adolescents. As a result of Illinois' Governor Pritzker's Executive Order of August 4, 2021, however, the district's plan now requires indoor use of face coverings by students, staff, and visitors regardless of vaccination status.
- Q3:** Why are masks required on buses?
- A3:** By CDC Order, passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses.
- Q4:** How will school staff enforce mask wearing compliance?
- A4:** Staff are to enforce mask wearing as was done last school year. District staff are extremely proud of our students for following last year's mask requirements. District staff also recognize that would not have been the case without parental support. Rather than compliance with a rule, the district seeks a continued commitment to the collective health and safety of our school community. Generally, a student's commitment, and subsequent actions, strengthens when educators and parents communicate similar messages to students about the rationale (the "why") behind the rule (the "what"). In this case, wearing masks is not only *required*, it is *desired* in order to play an individual part in protecting the health and safety of Illinoisans.
- Q5:** How long will masks be required to be worn?
- A5:** Governor Pritzker's Executive Order of August 4, 2021 does not specify when masks will no longer be required.
- Q6:** Will remote instruction be available or offered like it was last year?
- A6:** According the State Superintendent's September 7, 2021 declaration, remote instruction will only be made available for students who are under isolation, quarantine, or adaptive pause consistent with guidance or requirements from a local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health.
- Q7:** How will remote instruction be made available for students who are under quarantine by the local health department?
- A7:** Remote instruction for students under isolation, quarantine, or adaptive pause will be determined by teachers and based upon the instructional activities of the day. On some days, teachers may elect to utilize a "synchronous" approach; other days may call for students to access lessons through Empower, etc. Students who are under a quarantine order can expect to receive information from their teachers about remote instruction (for younger students, parents can also expect such communication).
- Q8:** Will my child have to be quarantined if they are a "close contact" like last year?
- A8:** Students and staff who are not fully vaccinated should quarantine after a recent exposure to someone with COVID-19. Fully vaccinated people 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. Quarantine decisions will be made and communicated by Coles County Health Department officials.
- Q9:** How long will people be under quarantine this year?
- A9:** County health department staff will communicate to parents that students will be allowed to return to school on Day 8 of quarantine with a copy of a negative PCR test; otherwise, students may return on Day 11 of quarantine as long as the student is symptom free. Parents are to provide the school's health care professional with a copy of the negative test result, and the school's health care professional will communicate the negative result to the Coles County Health Department. Individuals should continue to be monitored for 14 days for symptoms (refer to the IDPH/ISBE guidance for more information).