

Havana District #126

Return to School Plan



Fall 2021

HAVANA DISTRICT 126 PARENTS,

The 2020-21 school year was unprecedented in a number of ways. For Havana District #126 it saw our teachers, students, administrators, staff and community pull together like never before to ensure our students had in-person learning for the entire school year. We are thankful for everyone's effort and recognize that it took all of us to make it happen!

As we look forward to the 2021-22 school year we find ourselves in familiar territory. We realize that COVID 19 is something we will continue to live with for the near future, and need to do so without sacrificing the quality of educational opportunities our students deserve. Because of our success in 2020-21 and the commitment of the Havana #126 community we are confident we have the necessary tools to take the next step toward a more normal school year. We are happy to announce that for the 2021-22 school year we will be back to most of our regular routines regarding lunch, PE, music, full school day and other educational opportunities. However, many things are out of the school district's control. Mandates from federal and state governments may force us to amend and adjust our plans as needed.

We have developing updated plans all summer, but guidelines have changed 3 times in the past two weeks. We will do our very best to do what it takes to make educating your students our top priority while maintaining a safe learning environment. Just like last year, your diligence in sending healthy students to school will be of the utmost importance.

We are looking forward to the upcoming year and appreciate your support of Havana #126.

R. Mathew Plater

Havana #126 Superintendent

Tier I Status Defined

Havana CUSD #126 Considers a Tier I status to mean: that the Mason Co./Havana infection rate is low to moderate, that IDPH allows for optional or no masking requirement, minimal mandates from the state of IL allowing for local control and decision making. Several general mitigation strategies will be in place to continue to provide as safe a school environment as possible while providing in-person learning that is as close to normal as possible. While District #126 cannot eliminate the risk of COVID-19, our strategies are designed to mitigate that risk. Below are the general Tier I mitigation strategies that the district successfully followed throughout the entire 2020-21 school year and will continue to follow. However, if the local infection rate increases substantially, the district may implement one or more of the additional mitigation strategies and consider a move to Tier II.

Tier II Status Defined

Havana CUSD #126 Considers Tier II status to mean: that Mason Co./Havana is experiencing a significant increase in COVID infections, county status is at warning levels and additional mitigation strategies and mandates have been placed on K-12 schools. In this tier mitigations beyond those of Tier I may be implemented in a single classroom, a single grade level, a single school, or the entire school district. The decision to increase mitigation strategies will be dependent upon school, community, and county-wide metrics. The district will add additional mitigations and strategies during this phase to try and further control positivity rates where possible. In this phase school could even be placed back into a remote situation for a period of time to slow the spread of the virus. **(With the new Mask Mandate from Governor Pritzker issued on 8-4-2021, we will begin the school year in Tier II)**

Mitigation Strategies

Disinfection:

Hand washing: Teachers will continue to encourage students to wash their hands regularly and will provide time during the day to do so.

Sanitizer: It is available in every classroom and at building entrances for all to use several times throughout the school day.

Cleaning Surfaces: Common surfaces and desks will be sanitized on a daily basis. Classrooms will be disinfected by spray them down on a regular basis.

Social Distancing: Distances of at least 3ft will be maintained everywhere possible to avoid the need to quarantine.

Masks:

The district will recommend that the current CDC masking guidelines be followed at all times. Assuming there is no mask mandate and based on local positivity rates, consultation with the health department and other factors, the district may choose to allow for an alternative

masking guideline in the future. **Masks have been mandated by the Governor for all K-12 IL schools effective 8-5-2021.**

Athletics: Mask regulations will be determined by the IHSA and IESA and may differ for indoor and outdoor activities. Currently, masking is required for all indoor extra-curricular events and no masking is required for any outdoor events. 8-5-2021

Buses: Currently masks are mandated by the CDC of every American while riding a bus, plane or train PERIOD!

Distancing:

The CDC recommends that students remain distanced by at least three feet, while maintaining as normal a learning experience as possible. There will be times, however, when students may be closer, in hallways, and during some instructional and extra-curricular activities for brief periods. All classrooms will have seating charts with seats as far apart as reasonably possible. This is a change from the 6ft that was recommended last school year.

Close Contact / Quarantines:

Healthy Quarantines: When a student or staff member has been within 3ft of a positive person for more than 15 minutes they will be deemed a close contact by district. It is the health departments job to issue quarantines, not a school district. Close contacts that have been vaccinated and those that have had the virus in the past 90 day will not need to be quarantined. IDPH has allowed for a new **Test-to-Stay program** to be implemented to allow close contact quarantined students to remain at school if they agree to be tested every other day during the quarantine period. **(parents will need to opt in to the testing program to have this option)** Those being quarantined from a positive household person must quarantine and cannot participate in the Test-to-Stay Program!

Symptomatic Quarantines: Like last year any and all symptomatic people should stay at home or go home if symptoms develop while at school for at least 10 days from the first date with a symptom or until they receive a negative COVID test. If parents opt in to the district testing program, they can be given a Binax Now rapid test by the school district and have results within 15 minutes. If a symptomatic person tests negative they may return to school when they feel well enough to do so.

Visitors:

In Tier I visitors we will be allowed to come to our schools, but they will need to wear masks if they will have any contact or communication with students that are outside of their household. In Tier II visitors will be very limited and met at the door to collect student items or will have to schedule an appointment in advance.

***NEW- District COVID Testing Program:**

The district is partnering with Shield Illinois to be able to use the PRC Saliva test that was developed and used by the University of Illinois and piloted by some schools last year. It is considered the most accurate test available today. The Shield Saliva test is painless and so easy preschoolers have been able to complete the test collection without issue. Every participant is assigned a unique QR code that is scanned and paired to a plastic collection tube. The participant has to spit into the tube and screw a cap on the tube. The samples are taken to the lab in Springfield with results coming within 24 hours. This is the most accurate test in the country. The district may implement this test to all that will participate weekly as some point to create data that is specific to our school districts instead of relying on county or state data that may not represent the conditions of our district.

The district is also going to be able to perform Binax Now rapid tests to participating students and staff as needed. This is a one-time use disposable test that will be administered by trained school personnel. A small Q-Tip will be swirled in the outer nostril and placed in the kit with a result being determined in less than 15 minutes.

Parents and students over the age of 18 will have to fill out an “opt in” form to participate in the program. It is the district’s goal to allow students to stay in school, learn in person, and participate in extracurricular events. Test-to-Stay will allow for close contacts to remain in school during the quarantine period if they complete one of these tests every other day with a negative result. Participation will also allow symptomatic students and staff to receive a test from the district very conveniently and determine if their illness is COVID or not. If it is not, symptomatic people can avoid quarantines that prevent them from coming at school. (those quarantined by a household member are not eligible for Test-to-Stay)

Testing is a proactive approach to prove you are healthy and not a threat to others. It will also help identify positive cases early so they can be quarantined before exposing others.

Parent/Guardian Rights and Responsibilities

Prevention:

Preventing the spread of COVID begins at home. Parents are encouraged to be overly cautious when considering whether or not to send a child to school. Before sending students to school each day, parents need to make sure that their children are:

- Fever-free
- Not exhibiting any symptoms of COVID
- Not waiting on the results from a COVID test

Communication:

Parents whose child is positive with COVID must notify the district as soon as possible so close contact tracing can begin. **There will be different quarantine guidelines this year. Agreeing to participate in district testing programs may allow students to remain in school rather than be sent home and quarantined 10 days for close contact.**

Vaccination:

The district views vaccinations as a personal choice, however, the district needs proof from vaccinated students in order to allow them to avoid certain mitigation strategies, such as quarantining.

The district will not pressure parents to have their children vaccinated, and as vaccines become more available for children of all ages, the district respects the authority of parents to make those decisions for their children, **but close contact healthy quarantines can be avoided if a student or staff member is vaccinated.**

Masking:

Students and staff may be required to wear masks, temporarily or permanently, regardless of vaccination or immunity status, within a particular part of the district.

Distancing:

The school administration may need to limit the frequency of group gatherings and/or limit the number of people allowed in one space. Distancing during lunch may need to increase. In the classroom and during activities, we may need to reduce or eliminate the times when students would normally be within 3 feet or less of one another for more than 15 minutes.

Quarantining:

Healthy quarantines may be used in circumstances involving close contacts, even when the students and staff are not exhibiting symptoms. This may even include those who are vaccinated or are considered immune. **The Health Dept. are the only people with authority to quarantine, NOT A SCHOOL DISTRICT!**

Group Quarantining:

In severe cases, there may be a need to temporarily quarantine whole elementary classrooms of students or other self-contained classes at the JH or HS. This could include an entire grade level within a building or the entire school building. Temporary remote learning will be provided to the students in these situations.

Visitors:

We may limit or eliminate unnecessary visitors from entering our schools as we did in 2020-21.

Remote Learning

The use of Remote Learning will be limited in accordance with ISBE's declaration:

"Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, all schools must resume fully in-person learning for all student attendance days, provided that, pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-30 and 105 ILCS 5/34-18.66, remote instruction be made available for students who have not received a COVID-19 vaccine or who are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, only while they are under quarantine consistent with guidance or requirements from a local public health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health."

Students who are absent will be expected to stay connected and communicate with their teachers, just like they would have for absences prior to COVID. Our district is very fortunate to be a 1:1 district with students having devices and access to their courses and grades at all times. Only in our younger grades do we have the need to send assignment packets home.

Remote learning as it was defined last year, no longer exists per ISBE rules. We have no dedicated remote teachers this year and student absences will be handled like other illness related absences in the past like the flu. All of our students have devices and curriculum that is primarily accessible online. In those few cases where that is not the case, packets will be sent home to help a student keep up. Any student with a long term illness will be communicated with to find a more detailed long term solution that works for all parties.

Students with Disabilities

Parents of students who need accommodations, modifications, or assistance related to COVID-19 safety protocols, disabilities, underlying medical conditions, or weakened immune systems should contact their student's case manager to discuss his/her need(s).

Students that are medically unable to attend for an extended period of time will need to follow the procedures for home/hospital services pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/14-13.0.

Home/Hospital Instruction