August 11, 2021

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – BACK TO SCHOOL PLAN

If my child has special health concerns or is at higher-risk for severe effects from COVID, how do I share these concerns with the school?

- We want to take a targeted approach to specific settings and individual needs as we begin the school year. Please reach out to our building principals or school nurses to share specific concerns, and we can work on accommodations for your child while in school.

Will the school communicate positive cases and provide data on how many cases and quarantines occur in the district?

- Just as we did in 2020-21, we will embrace communication and transparency. We will communicate positive cases to all individuals who could be impacted within a building, including all parents/guardians of close contacts of the positive individual. We will also provide weekly updates on all student and staff positive case numbers, COVID-related absences, and quarantines. Informing parents and guardians of positive cases and sharing weekly data reports will follow the same format as our approach in the 2020-21 school year.

How will the school district identify close contacts and quarantines this year?

- The Harvey County Health Department (HCHD) currently identifies close contacts as anyone who is within 6 feet of a positive case for 10 minutes or more. The CDC guidance on physical distancing states, "CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to reduce transmission risk."
- The HCHD oversees and enforces quarantines, and our school nurses and administrators will assist the HCHD to ensure families stay informed of potential risks of exposure.
- When there is a positive case, our school nurses will evaluate all settings impacted and potential risk for exposure for all individuals in those settings in order to provide accurate information to families.
- Families may be contacted by the HCHD or school nurses letting them know the status of a close contact and what they need to do at that point.
- Our goal is to keep our kids in school to every extent possible, while ensuring we do not compromise safety.

If my child is home for an extended period of time due to isolation or quarantine, will remote learning be similar to last year?

- Remote learning will not exist like it did last year. When students are home for an extended period of time, we will treat that the same as we always have and exchange work and communicate with teachers and office staff as that work is completed.

How will the school district communicate changes to protocols and procedures?

- As conditions change, our plan is likely to change. We will communicate those changes through several different platforms including IC Messenger (email), our mobile app, and updating our website (Latest Updates). Additionally, we want to make sure everyone knows they can reach out to the district office or any building office to talk to a school administrator about our protocols.

For those who choose to wear masks in school, how will the school district create an environment where that is acceptable and students do not have to worry about being belittled or made fun of for wearing a mask?

- From the very first day of school, our principals and teachers will set very clear expectations for all students when it comes to creating a completely supportive environment for everyone wishing to wear a mask. This will happen through grade-level and classroom discussions, and our approach to this environment will include zero tolerance for anyone making negative comments towards anyone who is making the choice to wear a mask in school. Because masks are optional, we will work to create an environment where every student and staff member is supported and respected, regardless of their decision to wear a mask or not.

Why are masks required on school buses and in school vehicles?

- All school districts have been mandated by the federal government to require masks on school buses and in all school vehicles. This includes bus routes and activity trips.