

Return to School Plan 2021-2022

Highland CUSD No. 5 plans to offer 5 days of in person learning to all students aligned to pre-COVID daily schedules. However, from August 18th to August 27th, Highland High School and Highland Middle School will dismiss bus riders 10 minutes early at the end of the day. The purpose is to ensure during the first 8 days that our buses are able to return to the primary and elementary parking lots for dismissal. It is crucial that the staff at those schools develop a dismissal procedure with buses in position. We hope that those 8 days provide an opportunity to fine tune our procedures. Also, doors at all primary and elementary schools will not open until 8:15 a.m. (same as last year)

Social Distancing

A social distance of 3 feet is recommended by IDPH/CDC. While staff and students will be encouraged to attempt social distancing as much as possible while in doors, best educational practice often requires students to work together in small groups in close proximity. Since 3 feet distancing is not possible in some classrooms, students may be seated in small family pods to reduce the number of close contacts within a classroom. Parents and/or students concerned about these situations need to communicate directly to the building administrator to identify a remedy if possible.

Wearing masks

Illinois Governor, J.B. Pritzker issued an Executive Order on August 4, 2021, increasing mitigation measures in public and non-public schools serving students in grades PK-12 to include a requirement for all individuals to wear face masks while indoors, regardless of vaccination status. For the duration of this Executive Order, the issue of wearing a mask is no longer a local decision. We are hopeful that the level of transmission will soon lessen, and that the CDC (and IDPH) are able to adjust their existing recommendations to again allow this decision to be made locally.

Staying home when sick/COVID testing for symptomatic individuals

As was the case in the 2020-21 school year, the District will continue to ask parents to keep students home that are exhibiting COVID symptoms. Keeping students and adults that are sick out of schools remains the number one way to prevent the spread of COVID as well as other illnesses. The District will provide updated details on the COVID symptoms periodically in weekly messages.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing will help prevent the spread of COVID-19. The district has provided most classrooms and entryways with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 80% alcohol that can be used. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette (covering coughs/sneezes) will be encouraged and emphasized throughout the school year.

Contact Tracing/Quarantine from School

Keeping students in school is a primary focus. However, there could be times where students who are not able to maintain social distance would have to be quarantined from school for a period of time (likely 7 to 14 days) if it is determined that they were in close contact with a COVID positive individual. The District is waiting on final guidance from IDPH regarding the length of time students will have to quarantine from school. Students who participate in other mitigation strategies (masking) may not have

to quarantine even if they are a close contact to a COVID positive individual. Our staff will follow the guidance provided to the extent possible.

CDC and IDPH have confirmed that vaccinated individuals will not have to be quarantined from school even if they are a close contact. If an individual is vaccinated, documentation will need to be provided in order to not be identified in the contact tracing. Any individual who has not provided documentation will be identified as unvaccinated until documentation is provided. We will not ask for documentation except in this case. Parents/Students may provide documentation to the school nurse in advance to be proactive, but it is not required. For individuals who are not vaccinated, wearing a mask may allow them to remain in-person in some situations. We will continue to update our procedures as guidance is provided.

Proper Cleaning and Disinfection

Classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized throughout the day and disinfected with an approved EPA disinfectant when appropriate. Staff and students will also have the ability to sanitize their work spaces with appropriate cleaning agents that will be available in all classrooms.

Highland CUSD No. 5, in consultation with the Madison County Health Department will make decisions about when to add or remove any of the prevention strategies for the students and staff based on local conditions, transmission rates of the virus within our school and local community.

We are very excited about the start of the 2021-22 school year. Although the uncertainties of COVID are not yet behind us, we know we are better equipped to keep our students in-person for full days of school as the 2021-22 school year begins. We need everyone's help, support and patience to keep our students safe and focused on learning.