

To: West Monona School Community  
Date: August 11, 2021  
Re: COVID Return to Learn Plan Update

As we prepare for school this fall, questions related to COVID and how it will be handled at school have taken center stage. Last fall we shared a Return To Learn plan through our webpage. In an effort to create as much clarity, here is an overview of how that plan has adapted to meet the current situation. All plans are based on the latest laws and IDPH guidance. Please keep in mind that these plans may have to change in the future as health guidance as well as mandates and legislation from Des Moines and Washington may dictate. If/when things change we will do our best to give you as much notice as possible.

This fall **masks will be optional** during the school day, at school events, and on district buses. An Iowa law passed this spring and signed by Governor Reynolds on May 20th made clear that school boards or administration no longer have the authority to mandate masks. If students, patrons, or staff wish to wear a mask on school grounds they are free to do so. The CDC has strongly recommended that masks be worn in schools. Students, staff, and patrons who choose to do so have our full support.

We will **continue to encourage good health practices** like the use of hand sanitizer, regular hand washing, coughing/sneezing into elbows, staying home when you are not feeling well, and cleaning/disinfecting classrooms and surfaces. We will also work to maximize classroom space for social distancing. Students are encouraged to bring water bottles and utilize bottle filling stations rather than using drinking fountains.

Quarantine requirements are also different this year, especially related to contacts of someone who has COVID. This fall **students will be sent home if they exhibit symptoms** related to COVID. Having the student tested for COVID will be recommended. **If the student tests positive they should isolate for ten days and until they are symptom free. Contact tracing will not be taking place this year and close contacts will not be sent home.** It is still best practice for those who have had contact with someone who has tested positive to quarantine and be COVID tested but the school will only be sending home those who have symptoms or who have tested positive.

Vaccinations are probably the hottest topic being discussed currently. Regardless of where you may stand on this issue, here is how it will be handled at school. **The school does not have any mandates requiring vaccinations** of students, staff, or visitors. In cooperation with Burgess Community Health, we will likely offer vaccination clinics, for those who wish, in the coming weeks. **Parents would need to give written or verbal consent before any minor could be vaccinated on school grounds.** Students who have reached the age of majority (18) must give permission for themselves. Parents would also be able to be vaccinated at one of these clinics if they wished. A survey will be shared in the coming weeks for those who are interested in vaccinations. Again, this is not mandatory and parent permission is required before a minor could be vaccinated.

Last year we provided the option for students to attend school either online or in-person. That experience made it clear that students are better off academically when they come to school. There were some exceptions but overall students who participated online struggled to engage and pass classes. Because of this **we will not be providing online virtual instruction this school year**. Parents who would like to discuss what alternative options exist should contact the superintendent's office.

Again, it is likely that as the situation changes our Return To Learn plan will also need to be updated. We will do our best to provide you with timely information.

Thank you,

Marty Fonley  
Superintendent  
West Monona School District