

# DIXON PUBLIC SCHOOLS #170

*"A Place to Grow"*

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## DPS #170's Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Learning

August 11, 2021

In May of 2021, the Illinois State Board of Education passed a resolution that all schools must resume full in-person learning for all student attendance days for the 2021-2022 school year.

On August 4, 2021, Governor Pritzker issued a statewide mask requirement for students, staff, and visitors in all buildings from preschool through high school. ([Executive Order #18](#))

Dixon Public School District #170's Return to In-Person Instruction shares the vision of ISBE to get our students back in school full time in a way that is safe for all students, staff, and parents. Please note that the recommendations below are subject to change as additional guidance, recommendations, or transmission rates change.

### **Goals for the Plan for Return to Safe In-Person Learning:**

- Maintaining the health and safety of our students and staff is our primary goal in our Plan for Return to Safe In-Person Learning.
- Return to and be able to sustain full school days (7:45 a.m.-2:15 p.m.) for academics, co-curriculars, and extra-curriculars.
- Limit the risk of exposure by following CDC guidance in conjunction with local health data.
- Limit the risk of liability and financial loss as a result of not following the state guidance.
- Attempt to move cautiously toward what a "normal" school year looks like.

(Approved by DPS #170 School Board on 8/11/21)

For the 2021-2022 school year:

## **Masking**

- All students, staff, and visitors will wear a mask when inside Dixon Public School buildings regardless of vaccination status
- Mask exemptions for medical conditions remain available
- Unless exempt by CDC Order, passengers and drivers must wear a mask on all school district transportation. This includes transportation to and from school, extra-curricular activities, and co-curricular activities
- Students in middle and high school who participate in extra-curricular activities will follow IHSA/IDPH COVID-19 protocols and guidelines. Governor Pritzker announced an update to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) All-Sports Policy that will require masks to be worn for all indoor IHSA athletic events regardless of an individual's vaccination status. This mask directive for indoor athletic events applies to student-athletes, coaches, officials, game personnel, and fans. This masking mandate applies to all IHSA fall sport practices and contests that are conducted indoors. Swimmers and divers do not have to wear masks while competing but must adhere at all other times. The masking directive also applies to any winter or spring IHSA sports that may be conducting open gyms, general conditioning, or weightlifting indoors. ([IHSA Announcement](#))

## **Physical Distancing**

To the extent possible, school staff are to help students commit to physical distancing as much as possible by:

- Arranging furniture, play spaces and materials to model and reinforce physical distancing of at least 3 feet
- Providing assigned seating for students and encourage students to remain in these seats
- Developing paths of travel in classrooms and corridors

School staff will maximize physical distance as much as possible when moving through food service lines and while eating indoors. Aside from the cafeteria, additional spaces for mealtime seating will be utilized when available and feasible (e.g., weather permitting).

Physical distancing measures are to be done in an equitable manner that does not perpetuate academic, racial, or other tracking.

## **Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette:**

School staff will monitor, teach and reinforce frequent handwashing and respiratory etiquette by:

- continuing to teach handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds

(Approved by DPS #170 School Board on 8/11/21)

- assisting young children with handwashing
- reminding everyone in the facility to wash hands frequently
- utilizing hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol (for teachers, staff, and students who can safely use hand sanitizer) when hand washing is not possible
- continuing to teach respiratory etiquette (e.g., covering coughs and sneezes)
- providing adequate handwashing and hand sanitizer supplies that are safely stored (up, away, and out of sight of young children and used only with adult supervision for children under 6 years of age)

### **Facility and Transportation Cleaning, Disinfection and Ventilation**

- School custodial staff and transportation staff will continue to clean surfaces daily. To further reduce the risk of spreading infection, these staff will also use disinfectants on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency COVID-19 “List N” to disinfect spaces occupied by someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours.
- Custodial/Maintenance staff will continue to regularly replace school ventilation system filters by using high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters. The ventilation system in all Dixon Public Schools has been updated due to the renovation that was done during the past few years.
- When appropriate, staff will open doors and windows, use child-safe fans, and have activities and/or classes outdoors when circumstances allow.
- When it does not pose a safety risk, transportation staff will keep vehicle windows open at least a few inches to improve air circulation.

### **Contact Tracing/Isolation/Quarantine**

- Students and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as influenza (flu) or COVID-19, should stay home and contact their healthcare provider for testing and care, and are to follow the CDC guidelines to determine when they can return to school.
- Individuals in our school environments who show symptoms of COVID-19 are to immediately report to or be escorted to the school’s quarantine room to be evaluated by the school nurse. Individuals will be evaluated while awaiting pickup.

(Approved by DPS #170 School Board on 8/11/21)

- Parents should ensure that ill students are picked up from school within 30 minutes (or as soon as possible) after being notified. Ill students will not be allowed to utilize the school bus to return home. To facilitate a COVID-19 diagnosis and inform the need for quarantine of close contacts and isolation, a rapid COVID-19 test can be administered on site **only with parental consent.**
- Students and staff who are not fully vaccinated should quarantine after a recent exposure to someone with COVID-19. Exposure is defined as 15 minutes of contact within a 24 hours period within a 6-foot radius of the person testing positive for 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. Proof of being fully vaccinated must be presented to the school nurse in order to avoid being quarantined. **If someone cannot or refuses to present proof of being fully vaccinated, then they will be required to quarantine.**
- Student absences related to a COVID-19 isolation or quarantine will be recorded as excused. To ensure continuity of services, school work missed during such an absence can be requested and made up in accordance with the school's policy (refer to attached quarantine protocols); social, emotional, mental health, or other needs will be provided in accordance with a student's IEP or 504 Plan. Parents of students who have social, emotional, mental health, or other needs outside of an IEP or 504 Plan should contact their child's principal to discuss needs. Quarantine instruction will only be made available for students who are under quarantine as directed by the local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health.
- Students who are quarantined as a result of COVID-19 will receive quarantine learning services. However, quarantine learning services WILL NOT consist of five hours of instruction as they did during the previous school year. They will follow the Quarantine Protocols established by grade levels. (refer to attached quarantine protocols)
- Staff absences related to a COVID-19 isolation or quarantine will be recorded in accordance with the district's related professional negotiations agreements. To ensure continuity of services, staff members should contact their principals to discuss support for social, emotional, mental health, or other needs.
- To the extent allowable by privacy laws and other applicable laws, school health care professionals will continue to collaborate with the Lee County Health Department officials to confidentially provide information about people diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19, including making notifications to staff and parents as soon as possible regarding those who were in close contact of someone in the school who tested positive for COVID-19.

(Approved by DPS #170 School Board on 8/11/21)

- The school’s health care professional will inform the school community of outbreaks while maintaining student and staff confidentiality rights.
- Following quarantine, students and staff returning from illness related to COVID-19 are to call to check in with the school’s health care professional.

## QUARANTINE LENGTHS

The CDC currently recommends a quarantine period of 14 days for unvaccinated individuals. The local health department will make the final determination on who is to be quarantined and for how long. They also may determine that a close contact is not a candidate for modified quarantine due to a high-risk exposure (e.g., sustained close contact without masking).

**Option 1:** Quarantine at home for 14 calendar days. Date of last exposure is considered day 0.

**Option 2:** Quarantine for 10 calendar days after the close contact’s last exposure to the COVID-19 case. Date of last exposure is considered day 0. The individual may end quarantine after day 10 if no symptoms of COVID-19 developed during daily monitoring. SARS-CoV-2 PCR testing is recommended and may be required by the local health department. The individual can maintain physical distancing and masking at all times when returning to school; for classrooms, physical distance of 3 to 6 feet is acceptable for return.

**Option 3:** Quarantine period is for seven calendar days after the last exposure if: No symptoms developed during daily monitoring AND the individual has a negative SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic test (PCR) that was collected within 48 hours of exposure day 7 (starting on day 6 or after). The individual is responsible for obtaining a copy of the negative results for documentation purposes. The individual can maintain physical distancing and masking at all times when returning to school; for classrooms, physical distance of 3 to 6 feet is acceptable for return.

**Option 4:** Test-to-Stay Strategy, as has been documented by CDC, if schools test close contacts, as defined above, on days one, three, five, and seven from date of exposure by a PCR (SHIELD) or rapid antigen or molecular emergency use authorization (EUA)-approved test (Binax), close contacts are permitted to remain in the classroom as long as the results are negative. (See IDPH’s Interim Guidance on Testing for COVID-19 in Community Settings and Schools for specific details on testing in schools.) Test to Stay is only applicable when both the COVID-19-confirmed student and close contact were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitting masks and the school *requires* universal indoor masking for all individuals (age 2 and older), regardless of vaccination status, as recommended by the CDC.

- Test to Stay may be used for any indoor exposure, with the exception of household exposures.
- Students engaged in Test to Stay after an exposure may participate in extracurricular activities. Local health departments have the authority to order a classroom-only Test-to-Stay protocol after assessing the risk of an individual situation.
- Because students engaged in the Test-to-Stay protocol were exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19, they must wear a mask while indoors at school, regardless of the mask policy at school.

(Approved by DPS #170 School Board on 8/11/21)

- However, if the close contact is identified five days or more from the date of exposure, adjust testing accordingly, ideally on days five and seven after the last exposure.
- When testing in the outlined cadence is not possible due to weekends and holidays, students should be tested at the earliest possible opportunity.
- At the conclusion of the Test-to-Stay modified quarantine period, the school should notify the local health department that the student has successfully completed testing and remained negative.
- Local health departments have the authority to assess high-risk exposures and order a traditional quarantine without the option for Test to Stay.
- If at any time the student tests positive or becomes symptomatic, they should be immediately isolated and sent home, and the local health department notified.

**Regardless of when an individual ends quarantine, daily symptom monitoring should continue through calendar day 14 after the exposure.** Individuals should continue to adhere to recommended mitigation strategies, including proper and consistent mask use, physical distancing, hand hygiene, cough hygiene, environmental cleaning and disinfection, avoiding crowds and sick people, and ensuring adequate indoor ventilation. If any symptoms develop during or after ending quarantine, the individual should immediately self-isolate and contact their local health department or healthcare provider to report their symptoms. The health department can provide guidance on how to safely quarantine and isolate within the household. Further, local public health authorities determine and establish quarantine options for their jurisdictions and may decide to continue using a 14-day period and/or shortened options for certain lower risk close contacts. Given that having students in school is our top priority, we will choose to shorten quarantine time periods whenever possible. The following options to shorten quarantine are acceptable alternatives:

With both options the following additional criteria through Day 14 must be met:

- correct and consistent mask use (including within homes),
- social distancing,
- hand hygiene,
- environmental cleaning and disinfection,
- avoiding crowds,
- ensuring adequate indoor ventilation,
- monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19 illness, and
- minimizing contact with persons at increased risk for severe illness, including vulnerable and congregate populations.

Monitoring can be conducted using any method acceptable by the local public health authorities and could include self-monitoring using an approved checklist of signs and symptoms, direct contact daily by the public health department, or automated communications.

(Approved by DPS #170 School Board on 8/11/21)

## **Screening Testing – Screening tests do not allow you to opt out of masking.**

When community transmission is at moderate, substantial, or high levels, parents can request COVID-19 screening testing for their students by contacting the school's health care professional.

Additionally, the district may consider mass screening in order to prevent infection spread should the current local data dictate such actions. Students will not be screened without parent's permission.

At any level of community transmission, any staff member who has not been fully vaccinated can request COVID-19 screening testing by contacting the school's health care professional.

Dixon Public Schools will continue to offer Binax Testing (Antigen Testing) which began in January 2021, to parents who request it.

Dixon Public Schools will also offer SHIELD (PCR/Saliva Testing) once approved. Parents must opt-in or consent for their child to be saliva tested twice a week in order to be eligible to participate. SHIELD testing will allow students to not have to quarantine if they receive negative test results twice a week should they come into close contact with a symptomatic or positive person.

## **Promoting Vaccination**

Working with the Lee County Health Department, a COVID-19 vaccine clinic, available to anyone in our area 12 years of age and older, was held during the 2020-2021 school year. Dixon Public Schools has also promoted vaccination opportunities via our District website and via various social media channels.

Respectful of peoples' varying levels of vaccine confidence, those who want to get vaccinated against COVID-19 can visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find out where they can get vaccinated in our community, or talk to their doctor for advice. In addition, DPS #170 nurses will work to help coordinate vaccine information for anyone in need of support.

## **Disabilities or Other Health Care Needs**

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 the need(s).

(Approved by DPS #170 School Board on 8/11/21)

Staff members who need accommodations, modifications, or assistance related to COVID-19 safety protocols, disabilities, underlying medical conditions, weakened immune systems, or a sincerely held religious belief or practice (covered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) should contact their school's principal to discuss the need(s). Staff members with weakened immune systems are advised to contact their healthcare professional about the need for continued personal protective measures after vaccination.

### **Collaboration with Public Health Officials**

District officials will continue to collaborate and consult with Lee County Health Department officials throughout a pandemic on various logistics and decision-making including, but not limited to, school health and safety protocols, screening testing, contact tracing, vaccine clinics, social distancing, masking protocols, and emergency school closings.

### **Doctor's Notes**

Students who receive a doctor's note related to learning will receive five (5) hours of tutoring per week in addition to following our quarantine protocols.

### **Plan Review**

This plan will be reviewed as needed upon receiving updated guidance from LCHD, IDPH, ISBE, and the CDC and revised as appropriate after seeking Board, public, and legal input. Revisions will address the most recently updated safety recommendations by the CDC, provided in an alternative format accessible to parents who are individuals with a disability as defined by the ADA, and made publicly available on the district's website.