



Aug. 13, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are excited for the 2021-2022 school year and look forward to a great year. Thank you in advance for sharing your children with us! It is a privilege to spend educational time with your children and we want you to know how much we appreciate the opportunity to spend quality learning experiences with them during our school year.

As COVID-19 and variant cases continue, we wanted to share with you the mitigation strategies and plans for the 2021-2022 school year.

Face Masks

- Face masks are not required this year but are optional if students, parents, or staff wish to wear one. We cannot mandate employees, students, or members of the public to wear a facial covering for any purpose while in a school building or on school property.
- As of today, a federal executive CDC order remains in place that requires masks on public transportation, including school buses. We are waiting for further guidance on this topic and will communicate our next steps to students and parents very soon.

Additional Mitigation Strategies

- Frequent hand washing is encouraged and multiple hand washing/sanitizing stations are available throughout all buildings.
- Cough/sneeze etiquette will be reviewed and reminders shared as needed.
- Daily sanitizing of all areas with disinfectant sprayers and regular cleaning.
- Some social distancing and spacing will take place when necessary and possible.
- After Open House, we will limit parents and volunteers into the buildings unless an appointment is made.

We will operate as normal in regard to illnesses and contagious illnesses. Please have your student stay home when feeling ill and work with your school nurse on the next steps. Please do not send them back to school until fully recovered from an illness.

The Iowa Department of Public Health in conjunction with the Iowa Department of Human Services announced updated isolation and quarantine guidelines for students including:

- Exposed students should no longer be required to stay home, regardless of mask usage when not exhibiting symptoms.
- Parents/guardians of exposed students will be given information around exposure to COVID-19 in order to make their own informed decisions regarding risk.
- COVID-19 positive and symptomatic students will still be excluded from school for the duration of their isolation period (10 days from symptom onset or 10 days from test collection if asymptomatic).

As the health and safety of all students and staff remain a priority, we will continue to monitor the local health situation and communicate any updates or modifications as necessary.

Central Administration Office

304 First Street • P.O. Box 70 • Van Horne, IA 52346 • (319) 228-8701 • Fax (319) 228-8254

Dr. Pamela Ewell
Superintendent
pewell@benton.k12.ia.u

Dr. James Bieschke
Associate Superintendent/School Business Official
jbieschke@benton.k12.ia.us