



Serena Community Unit School District #2

Return to Learn and Other Procedures

FAQ

On August 4th, 2021, the Board of Education tentatively approved the Return to Learn Plan to define the procedures for opening our schools this year. This Plan remains flexible and will be changed according to any guidance and/or requirements issued by CDC, IDPH, and/or ISBE. The following document is intended to answer questions not detailed in that plan. Please contact your building Principal with any further questions.

This document will be updated as more questions arise or procedures change with guidance and requirements.

Last Update: August 15th, 2021

MASKS

1. What is considered an acceptable mask?

The CDC identifies that a mask should fit over one's mouth and nose and fits snugly against the sides of the face. An individual within a Serena CUSD #2 school must wear a mask that fits the standards shared by CDC, which can be found here: [CDC Mask Guide](#)

2. How do I know if my student is eligible for an exemption to wearing a mask?

The following exemptions are identified by CDC and adopted by ISBE as exceptions for the mask requirement:

- Individuals under the age of 2
- A person who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).
- A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the relevant workplace safety guidelines or federal regulations.

Parents/guardians seeking an exemption for their child(ren) will need to acquire a medical note from their doctor indicating the disability, a statement that this exemption is necessary due to the disability, and a recommended alternative for a mask. The school will then collaborate with the parents/guardians to determine reasonable accommodations for the student, including other mask options and increased social distancing.

3. Does my student have to wear a mask all day?

Masks are required to be worn in the building at all times with some exceptions (e.g., meal times). Students and staff do not have to wear masks anytime they are outdoors. Teachers will be encouraged to take their classes outside for learning anytime it is possible. Further, recess and physical education will take place outside whenever possible. Students who refuse to wear a mask indoors will be provided discipline according to student handbooks, which includes possible suspension from school.

All individuals on buses are also required to wear masks. Students who refuse to wear masks on buses will be provided discipline according to student handbooks, which includes possible suspension from the bus.

4. What other ways are there for my student to not have to wear a mask?

There are no other ways for a student or any other individual to not wear a mask in school settings at this time. As of August 4th, 2021, wearing a mask in school is a State mandate. Further, the State's mandate now allows schools to exercise more options in addressing refusals to follow procedures, including discipline according to student handbooks. Schools will take a proactive approach to addressing mask issues, but administrators may utilize exclusionary discipline (i.e., out-of-school suspension and expulsion) if issues persist.

5. What is the procedure for masks during athletics and other extracurricular activities?

As of August 4th, 2021, wearing a mask in school is a State mandate, including in all school-related extracurricular activities and athletics. All students and staff will be required to wear a mask during practices, competitions, and any other related events. Masks do not have to be worn for any outdoor practices, competitions, or related events. Any individual not complying with the mask requirement at an event hosted at a school will be asked to leave.

STAYING HOME, CLOSE CONTACTS, QUARANTINES, & ISOLATION

6. What should I do if my child is feeling ill?

If your child reports they are feeling ill, then a parent/guardian needs to call the child's school by 10:00 AM to report the illness and associated symptoms. Any siblings of the child should also be kept home. Based on the symptoms or report of the child's illness, direction will be provided by the school nurse or administration on whether or not the child needs to be isolated from school. The presence of one COVID symptom will lead to isolation of a student. Symptoms of COVID are kept updated on the [IDPH exclusion guidance](#).

7. What is quarantine? What is isolation/exclusion?

Quarantine is the direction provided to a student who has received a positive test for COVID or been identified by the school or health department as a close contact to a positive case. Quarantine periods must be followed in accordance with the [IDPH exclusion guidance](#) and are managed by the local health department.

Isolation is the direction provided to a student who has been reported to school as ill and has not taken a COVID test, received results for a COVID test, or been provided an alternative diagnosis by a physician.

8. How long is the isolation period?

It is recommended that a student in isolation get a COVID test as soon as possible. If the test is negative, the student (and any siblings) will be allowed to return to school upon presenting verification of the negative test and when no longer feeling symptomatic. If the test result is positive, then the student will begin to follow quarantine procedures. If the student does not get a COVID test, the student will be required to isolate from school for 10 days and can return after those 10 days have passed; a note is not needed by the school.

9. How long is the quarantine period?

The local health department will make all final determination regarding a student's quarantine. However, in general, quarantine timelines are as follows:

Option 1 – Quarantine 14 days since exposure to positive case.

Option 2 – Quarantine 10 days since exposure to case as long as no symptoms develop and clearance is provided by health department for an early return (may also require a test)

Option 3 – Quarantine 7 days since exposure to case as long as no symptoms develop and a negative PCR test is provided within 48 hours of the 7th day

10. Who is a close contact?

Per IDPH, a close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, starting from 2 days before illness onset until the time the patient is isolated. CDC has updated this definition to provide an exception as follows:

In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

Close contacts identified by the school will be required to quarantine from school according to the most up-to-date [IDPH exclusion guidance](#). The school will provide a comprehensive list of all close contacts and parent contacts to the Health Department at the conclusion of a contact tracing.

The Health Department is then responsible for contacting parents of school-identified

close contacts to issue any further quarantine directions.

11. What is needed for my child to return to school after a quarantine?

If your child was positive for COVID, a release from the health department will be needed to return to school.

If your child was identified by the school as a close contact, you will be told by the school the return date for your child. A letter of release is not needed.

If your child was identified as a close contact due to community exposure, a release from the health department will be needed to return to school.

12. What happens if the health department does not contact me after being informed by the school that my child is a close contact?

If the health department does not contact you within 48 hours after your student has been sent home as a close contact, please contact them at (815)433-3366.

13. Is the school allowed to quarantine or isolate my student and not allow them to come to school?

A school district is allowed to establish policy and procedure to address communicable and chronic infectious disease as long as the policy or procedure protects the student's right to an education. For a quarantined student, remote learning ensures the student continues to receive learning opportunities. For an isolated student, the student is considered "excused" and has the right to make up any missed learning according to timelines identified in student handbooks. (The resolution does not allow us to provide remote learning to students in isolation; it is limited to students in quarantine by this resolution and State law.)

14. If one of my children stays home or goes home due to illness, do my other children have to stay home?

A sibling to a child who is positive for COVID and living in the same household is considered a "close contact" and would have to quarantine from school according to [IDPH exclusion tree](#).

A sibling to a child who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID without a test and living in the same household will be required to isolate 14 days, unless the sibling is released to return to school early due to a negative COVID test or alternative diagnosis.

15. What if my student is vaccinated and identified as a close contact?

In accordance with IDPH guidance, an individual who is identified as a close contact does not have to quarantine as long as they are not experiencing any COVID-like symptoms and are fully vaccinated. A verification of vaccination has to be on file with the District. This verification can be submitted through the following link: <https://forms.gle/YGpNmtkxHZ4XpCgQA>

LEARNING DURING QUARANTINE OR ISOLATION

16. What are the learning expectations for my child if required to quarantine or isolate?

Quarantined students' learning expectations are dependent on a student's grade-level. Teachers will provide either live instruction (synchronous) or teacher-prepared videos to provide direction instruction to students.

DISTRICT STRATEGIES

17. What is screening testing and is Serena CUSD #2 using it at this time?

Screening testing is a means to identify individuals with or without symptoms who may be contagious to prevent further transmission. At the current moment, Serena CUSD #2 is exploring the use of parental consent-based screening testing in all schools in partnership with SHIELD of the University of Illinois. A screening testing program has not yet been implemented in the schools.

18. When can we stop wearing masks and reduce other prevention strategies?

As of August 4th, 2021, the State of Illinois has implemented a mask mandate for all private and public schools. Until further notice, schools and districts do not have any options in reducing masks as a prevention strategy. All other prevention strategies will likely be maintained until further guidance is issued by CDC.

Regardless, Serena CUSD #2 will be collecting data related to COVID within its schools during the start of the year for a better analysis of the direct impact on our community. Along with numerous other considerations, this data will serve as one piece of information to analyze if and when districts are allowed to make mask decisions.

19. How can I stay updated on the impact of the pandemic in our schools?

Serena CUSD #2 will keep an updated page on its website with all COVID response documents and a dashboard on current quarantines and cases within the schools. Please view the website at this link: <https://www.unit2.net/>

OTHER

20. Are visitors allowed in the buildings?

In accordance with CDC guidance, Serena CUSD #2 is limiting nonessential visitors, volunteers, and other individuals during school days. Direct service providers will be provided with regular access to schools to ensure continued services to students. Guest speakers and presenters may be allowed with administrative approval and in accordance with all CDC guidance on social distancing and masks.

21. Do parents, visitors, and other individuals have to wear masks at after school events?

All individuals must wear masks while in the school buildings. Schools will have a stock of masks for any person who may need one. Individuals who do not comply with this requirement will not be allowed to enter or remain in the building.