



Return to School 2021 In-Person Learning Plan

August 2021



McHenry Community High School District 156
Upper Campus
Freshman Campus



MCHS In-Person Learning Plan

“A New Beginning” Return to School Fall 2021

BACKGROUND

On July 9, the ISBE State Superintendent Carmen Ayala made the following declaration: "Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, all schools must resume fully in-person learning for all student attendance days," with the narrow exception, "provided that, remote instruction be made available for students who have not received a COVID-19 vaccine or who are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, **only while they are under quarantine** consistent with guidance or requirements from a local public health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health." Therefore, District 156 will provide full in-person instruction for all students when we open school this fall.

The state superintendent also stressed the [CDC](#) and [IDPH](#) guidance "recognizes the fundamental importance of in-person learning for the well-being of students, families, and communities." She went on to declare that school districts must "prioritize full-time access to in-person learning for all students, while layering the public health requirements to the best of our ability;" however, mitigation efforts should not be a "barrier" to full-time access to in-person instruction.

MCHS District 156 will continue to balance the importance of in-person instruction and our students' connection with our schools, their teachers, and each other with our responsibility to ensure we comply with all [ISBE and IDPH School Guidance](#). The CDC also emphasized in their updated school guidance "the need for localities to monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies." We will continue to work closely with the [McHenry County Department of Health \(MCDH\)](#) to monitor our local community transmission level and positivity rates throughout the year. If we begin to experience an escalation that extends outside of the CDC or [MCDH current threshold](#), or an outbreak occurs in our buildings or community, we may have to adjust our mitigation efforts and strategies in response.

In presenting new school guidance for the fall, the CDC, IDPH and ISBE all note the importance of vaccination to return to normalcy in our schools. To learn more about vaccination and find a local site, visit the [McHenry County Department of Health's website](#). Vaccines are also available at many local pharmacies, often without an appointment. Parents can update their students vaccination status and upload their proof of vaccination in their Skyward Family Portal.

We will respond to any changes to public health guidance, recommendations, or requirements accordingly. With that said, here is a summary of our reopening measures:

Here is a summary of the guidance we will follow when we return to school:

Governor Pritzker issued an Executive Order on Wednesday, August 4 that **requires** masks to be worn indoors by all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to PreK-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status **effective immediately**.

- As a result of Governor Pritzker’s Executive Order, **masks will be required for all students, staff, and visitors while inside District 156 school buildings regardless of vaccination status**. Masks will also be required on the bus or district transportation. Masks will not need to be worn outdoors
- Vaccinated students **will not** need to quarantine if identified as a close contact with a COVID-positive individual.
- Unvaccinated students who are identified as a close contact will be required to quarantine per public health requirements.
- Unvaccinated students may **voluntarily participate** in COVID screening tests through Shield Illinois. Unvaccinated students are also eligible to participate in the **Test-to-Stay Program** and will not have to quarantine with negative COVID tests on day one, three, five, and seven after they have been identified as a close contact.
- Parents must self-certify in their Skyward Family Portal that their student(s) are coming to school without a temperature higher than 100.4 degrees or COVID-like symptoms. Parents will complete a one-time self-certification form at the beginning of the year (Parents will no longer have to complete a daily self-certification form).
- Classroom and common area seating will be spaced (3 feet) to the greatest extent possible and students should continue to maintain social distance in the hallways and common areas of the buildings.
- Classrooms and common areas will be cleaned and sanitized each evening. Hand sanitizer will be located in every classroom, hallway, and common area

MCHS BELL SCHEDULE

MCHS will return to a full day bell schedule similar to the 2019-20 school year. The “AIM” academic advisory period will also return for this school year. Our new bell schedule has several new features designed to support our new campus structure.

- AIM will be prior to Period 1 at the Freshman Campus so senior leaders can mentor 9th-graders.
- AIM will be prior to 4th period at the Upper Campus to provide schedule flexibility for 10-12th graders.
- The Freshman Campus will start and end 10 minutes earlier than the Upper Campus for transportation and so that freshmen can travel to the Upper Campus for after-school activities.

MCHS Freshman Campus			MCHS Upper Campus		
Period	Times	Minutes	Period	Times	Minutes
0	6:25-7:20	55	0	6:40-7:35	55
AIM	7:25-8:00	35	1	7:35-8:20	45
1	8:05-8:50	45	2	8:25-9:10	45
2	8:55-9:40	45	3	9:15-10:00	45
3	9:45-10:30	45	AIM	10:05-10:40	35
4	10:35-11:20	45	4	10:45-11:30	45
5	11:25-12:10	45	5	11:35-12:20	45
6	12:15-1:00	45	6	12:25-1:10	45
7	1:05-1:50	45	7	1:15-2:00	45
8	1:55-2:40	45	8	2:05-2:50	45

SEMESTER CALENDAR

MCHS will return to a semester calendar similar to the period prior to the pandemic. The school year will begin for students on Monday, August 16. Features of the first semester include the following:

- Early Release for staff development will return with dismissal at 1:15 p.m./1:25 p.m. (yellow dates)
- Parent Mini-Schedule to meet staff will be on Wednesday, August 25 from 7-9 p.m.
- PSAT Testing will also return this fall on October 13 & 14
- Final Exam days and Final Exam schedule will conclude the semester on December 16 & 17

M	T	W	Th	F	Tot
2	3	4	5	6	0
9	10	11	12 TI	13 TI	0
16*	17	18	19	20	5
23	24	25 MINI	26	27	5
30	31				2
				Tot	12

M	T	W	Th	F	Tot
		1 S	2	3	3
6 X=	7	8	9	10	4
13	14	15 S	16	17	5
20	21	22 S	23	24	5
27 H	28 H	29 H	30 H		4
				Tot	21

M	T	W	Th	F	Tot
				1 H	1
4	5	6 MTI	7	8	5
11 X=	12	13 PSAT	14 PSAT	15	4
18	19	20 S	21	22	5
25	26	27	28 PT - EV	29 PT=	4
				Tot	19

M	T	W	Th	F	Tot
1	2	3 S	4	5	5
8	9	10	11 W	12	5
15	16	17 S	18	19	5
22	23	24 X=	25 X=	26 X=	2
29	30				2
				Tot	19

M	T	W	Th	F	Tot
		1	2	3	3
6	7	8 S	9	10	5
13	14	15	16 ER FINALS	17 ER FINALS	5
20 =	21 =	22 =	23 =	24 =	0
27 =	28 =	29 =	30 =	31 =	0
				Tot	13/84

Labor Day	Mon.	09/06/21
Columbus Day	Mon.	10/11/21
Non-Attendance Day	Wed.	11/24/21
Thanksgiving Day	Thurs.	11/25/21
Non-Attendance Day	Fri.	11/26/21
Non-Attendance Day	Fri.	12/24/21
New Year's Day	Fri.	12/31/21
M.L. King's Birthday	Mon.	01/17/22
President's Day	Mon.	02/21/22
Casimir Pulaski Day	Mon.	03/07/22 *
Non-Attendance Day	Fri.	04/15/22
Memorial Day	Mon.	05/30/22
Non-Attendance Day (12-month Employees) TBD		
*(Waiver Used for Monday, March 7, 2022)		

- For a more expanded view of the entire 2021-22 school calendar click [HERE](#)

GRADING

MCHS will continue to observe the district policy on grading consistent with the *period prior to* the sudden closure of school on March 13, 2020. Students will be required to complete work and demonstrate proficiency in the standards and targets to receive credit for courses during the 2021-2022 school year. Please review the following grading policy requirements:

- **Final exams and the final exam schedule will return in December of 2021. The value of finals will be reduced to 10%.**
- Course teams will administer a common final exam/culminating experience for their classes. This will be a culminating exam, project, paper, or other meaningful demonstration of skills and student understanding of the course curriculum, standards, and targets.
- Semester grades shall be based upon a weighting of 100% for the semester grading period (80% academic, no more than 10% for behavior grade categories, 10% for final exam).
- Teachers will identify deadlines and due dates for all assessments and assignments. They will enter the “missing” flag or lowest mark in the grade book for all items that are not completed by set deadlines to indicate “no evidence” of learning until evidence is provided.
- All specific grading and retake procedures will be determined commonly by individual course teams.

MEDICAL EXEMPTION

The expectation is that all students will return to in-person instruction this fall. Students who are medically fragile or who are unable to return for in-person instructional days can apply for a Medical Exemption. Medical Exemption forms ([click here](#)) must be certified and completed by a physician and returned to the school. Students who are approved for a Medical Exemption will be provided an alternative educational program and will not be allowed to participate in school, extra-curricular activities or athletic programs. If you have questions regarding the Medical Exemption or alternative educational program, please call or email Shae Gibour, Director of Special Services, at 815-759-2024 or email GibourShae@dist156.org.

TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation Department will operate our normal bus schedule. MCHS will continue to operate shuttles and activity buses for athletics and activities after school. The ISBE and IDPH require all students regardless of their vaccination status to wear a mask while riding a bus. School buses will have the normal capacity limit of 71 students however, they will socially distance to greatest possible based on ridership. Students, regardless of their vaccination status, must wear a mask while riding district transportation.

For Bus Route Information please click here: [Versatran Student Route Login](#). If you have any questions, please contact the Transportation Department at 779-244-1090

ATHLETICS

We will continue to follow all IDPH and IHSA guidance. We will continue to monitor guidance from the IHSA concerning the Fall Athletic Season, and coaches will communicate any updates with athletes.

FOOD SERVICE

Food service will be offered in our cafeteria. We will have multiple areas for students to eat lunch, and we will social distance to the greatest extent possible. All juniors and seniors in good standing will be allowed to obtain open campus permission forms and leave school during their lunch period. The cafeteria and other common eating areas will be cleaned and sanitized throughout the day.

ACCESS TO WIFI OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

MCHS has several free hotspots that can be provided on loan at no cost to families who meet the criteria for economic disadvantage. For more information on details and availability, please call the district IT office at **815-759-5137**. Please click the following links for more information on [low-cost wifi options](#) or to view the [map of locations](#) with free WIFI.



MCHS HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES TO RETURN TO SCHOOL

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has issued guidance in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) that school districts must follow in order to reopen their school buildings to students and staff members. In order for us to keep our students and staff safe, District 156 will adhere to and follow the guidance of ISBE, IDPH, and our local public health department. If we begin to experience an escalation that extends outside of the CDC or MCDH current community transmission threshold or an outbreak occurs in our buildings we will have to adjust our mitigation efforts and strategies in response.



VACCINATED STUDENTS

Fully vaccinated students will not be required to quarantine if they are determined to be in close contact with an individual who tests positive for COVID-19. Parents can submit vaccination status and upload their proof of vaccination in their Skyward Family Access Portal.

MEDICAL SELF-SCREENING

Parents will be asked to complete a self-certification form in their Skyward Family Access Portal at the beginning of the school year stating that they will ensure that their student(s) are coming to school without a temperature higher than 100.4 degrees or COVID-like symptoms. This parent certification will only have to be completed one time and not daily.

SICK STUDENT(S)

When a student is sick, they should **STAY HOME** from school. For the health and safety of others, it is important for families to keep students home if they are exhibiting COVID-like symptoms that could potentially infect others. Any student who begins to show symptoms while in school will be referred to the school nurse for evaluation. The nurse's evaluation will take place in a designated quarantine area.

HAND SANITATION / HYGIENE

Hand sanitizer is available in every classroom, and dispensers are mounted on walls in hallways and common areas throughout both campuses. Students will be encouraged to wash their hands and use hand sanitizer throughout the day. Please reinforce this with your students.

SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Classrooms and other common areas will be configured to maximize the physical space between individuals (3 feet) to the greatest extent possible. Student use of common areas will be monitored and whenever possible minimize the number of individuals using those spaces at the same time. Students will be expected to follow these guidelines and instructions from staff members.

MASKS

Governor Pritzker issued an Executive Order on Wednesday, August 4 that **requires** masks to be worn indoors by all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to PreK-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status **effective immediately**.

- **Masks will be required for all students, staff, and visitors while inside District 156 school buildings regardless of vaccination status.** Masks will not need to be worn outdoors or while eating lunch.
- All students, regardless of their vaccination status, must wear a mask on the bus or district transportation. This is a requirement from the state.
- Visitors will be limited and required to wear a mask regardless of vaccination status.

RESPONSE TO SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED COVID CASE(S)

A student or staff member exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 will be referred immediately to the school nurse for evaluation and placed in a designated quarantine room. For all confirmed or suspected cases, the McHenry County Department of Health (MCDH) will be notified and consulted. The district will implement MCDH recommendations on a case-by-case basis. Potential responses include temporary closing/quarantine of the classroom, or temporary quarantine of specific individuals as determined through contact tracing and MCDH requirements. Information about cases will be communicated to the appropriate families in accordance with MCDH requirements, applicable health information, and student privacy and records laws.

Close Contact

For teachers, staff and adults in the indoor K-12 classroom setting, CDC, IDPH, MCDH defines a close contact as an individual not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

- Classroom students who were within 3 to 6 feet of the infected student are *not* treated as close contacts as long as both students were engaged in consistent and correct use of a well-fitting masks *and* other K-12 school prevention strategies (such as universal and correct mask use, physical distancing, increased ventilation) were in place in the K-12 setting.
- Only classroom contacts within 3 feet require quarantine as long as both the case and the contact were consistently masked.
- If students are not consistently masked, then close contacts are classroom students who were within 6 feet of the infected student for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

Quarantine

The local health department will make final determinations on who is to be quarantined, for how long, and whether modified quarantine options are available for the individual. The quarantine options are:

1. 14 calendar days
2. 10 calendar days (no symptoms, return with masking and distancing)
3. 7 calendar days, no symptoms, and negative PCR test at day 6 (no symptoms, return with masking and distancing)
4. Unvaccinated students are also eligible to participate in the Test-to-Stay Program and will not have to quarantine with negative COVID tests on day one, three, five, and seven after they have been identified as a close contact.

COVID SCREENING AND TESTING

- Unvaccinated students may **voluntarily participate** in COVID screening tests through Shield Illinois. Students who are symptomatic or considered a close contact may also request a COVID test in our Health Office.
- The buildings will send additional information when screening and testing will be available for students.
- Parents will be required to submit a waiver before students can access COVID testing or screening in the building.

MCHS FACILITIES CLEANING AND SANITATION

- The district will adopt all CDC-recommended cleaning practices and use certified EPA sanitation products.
- All classrooms and common areas will be regularly sanitized using Electrostatic Disinfectant machines.
- Additional PPE, sanitation, and hygiene supplies have been ordered and stockpiled for immediate access and use.
- Common areas, restrooms, hallways, cafeterias and other high traffic areas will be cleaned throughout the day.

- Newly installed HVAC unit ventilators, air handlers, and optimized HVAC Building Automation Systems will increase our intake of fresh air and promote better air circulation in the buildings.
- Hand sanitizer is available in every classroom and touchless stations have been installed in hallways and common areas throughout the buildings.
- Acrylic shields or guards are installed in reception areas and other high traffic areas in the buildings and district office.
- Touchless water bottle fillers will remain available for use in all buildings.
- Restrooms will be cleaned in accordance with CDC guidelines for prevention of illness.
- Importance of hand-washing and hand-sanitizing after restroom use will be reinforced regularly.

SCHOOL CLOSURE

The district will monitor public health metrics and the impact to our school community. We will follow recommendations from MCDH, IDPH and the CDC regarding potential closures of our school buildings for confirmed cases, outbreaks, cleaning, disinfection, and/or contact tracing. In the event we must close our schools, the district will notify families and staff members immediately.

DISTRICT ONGOING COMMUNICATION

The district will send out regular communications to families and update our Return to School Plan when necessary. Dr. Prickett and his building administrative team will be sending students and families building-specific plans associated with the Upper Campus and Freshman Campus. This Return to School information will focus on student expectations, operational logistics, health and wellness procedures, school events, student activities and department or course-specific information in greater detail.

Thank you for your understanding as we continue to process updated guidance from the state and work with our staff members and public health officials to ensure we are in compliance with all public health guidance and requirements while safely bringing our students back for full in-person instruction.

WE ARE WARRIORS WE ARE ONE!

