



GIBBON PUBLIC SCHOOLS Return to School Protocols

The purpose of this document is to outline the protocols Gibbon Public Schools will deploy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the educational program during the 2022-23 school year. The original Return to School Protocol was created for use by teachers, students, parents, and the community of Gibbon.

The intent of the Return to School Protocols is to bring a predictable, consistent, and transparent response to a global pandemic. However, the district understands that COVID-19 is constantly evolving, and circumstances associated with its impact are ultimately unpredictable. Due to the evolving nature of COVID-19, the school district will consistently evaluate protocols and will modify practices as needed for the safety of all staff, students, and patrons.

[Maintaining Health and Safety](#)

Mitigation strategies listed below are required in the District's plan. By checking the box before each time, Gibbon Public Schools agrees to include information in the plan to address the components listed below:

- ✓ Universal and correct wearing of masks
- ✓ Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., including using of cohorts/podding)
- ✓ Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- ✓ Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation
- ✓ Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments
- ✓ Diagnostic and screening tests
- ✓ Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities
- ✓ Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies
- ✓ Coordination with state and local health officials. Including the needs for support and technical assistance to implement strategies consistent to the greatest extent possible, with relevant CDC guidance.

[Public Comment Requirements](#)

The original Return to Schools Protocols was placed on the district website for feedback on June 14, 2021.

Beginning June 14, 2021 and running until 4:00 p.m. June 30, 2021, the district conducted a survey to gather input on the return to school protocols. The feedback to the survey was used to make adjustments to the return to school protocols as needed. Both the survey and any revisions to the back to school program will be documented and will be retained for future reference.

Approximately every six months, the board of education reviews the Return to Schools Protocols to determine if appropriate changes should be made to the plan. Public comment is included on the agenda to secure feedback from interested patrons.

Uniform Format

Gibbon Public Schools ensures this plan is in an understandable and uniform format by using the template provided by the Nebraska Department of Education. This plan will be posted on the website to ensure easy access for the entire community of Gibbon. The district website has a feature that allows guests the ability to select their preferred language. Any individual who wishes to have the plan explained to them verbally may schedule a meeting with district administrators. A translator will be provided if needed to facilitate the discussion.

Contact Tracing and Quarantine

Gibbon Public Schools will work with local health departments to assist with contact tracing as needed.

Students and staff testing positive for COVID-19 will use the following protocol:

Isolation (5 Days from positive test or symptom onset. Isolate longer if not 24 hr. fever free, if symptoms not improving and/or if severely ill with COVID-19.)					Wear a Mask and May Return To School (5 Days)				
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10

Students and staff who have been exposed to COVID-19 can continue with their daily routines regardless of the vaccination status, as long as they remain asymptomatic. However, they should wear a mask for 10 full days, monitor themselves for symptoms, and take extra safety measures around vulnerable people.

Diagnostic and Screening Testing

Gibbon Public Schools will not provide or conduct testing for COVID-19.

Self-Screening and Temperature Checks

Students, parents, and staff will be asked to conduct a daily symptom check before coming to school.

Students and staff members are asked to not report to school if symptomatic or with a temperature above 100° F.

Students and staff who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms will be encouraged to call the school and stay home.

Pre-Screening Guide:

Please ask these questions to your student(s) daily before sending them to school.

If you answer YES to two (2) of these questions, you should stay home from school.

- a sore or scratchy throat
- muscle aches and pains
- headache
- congestion or runny nose
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhea
- fatigue

If you answered YES to one (1) of these questions, you should stay home from school.

- Individuals with fever (temperature above 100° F)
- a new intense, persistent cough
- an intense tightening in the chest and shortness of breath
- difficulty breathing
- loss of taste and smell

Please consult your student's health care provider to ask about your child's symptoms and if testing is necessary

[Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities](#)

Students' IEP teams will determine appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities and communicate those to the students' educational team as appropriate.

[Ensuring Continuity of Services](#)

Gibbon Public Schools will ensure continuity of services by providing in person instruction. The school calendar will continue to serve as a guide to indicate when school is in session. Students will be expected to attend school in-person on the days when school is in session unless they are home due to illness.

In addition, Gibbon Public Schools has purchased high quality instructional materials that offer virtual access for students who need to learn from home at any point during the school year. These high-quality instructional materials also provide opportunities for acceleration to support students who may have gaps in their knowledge. All students will have equitable access to rigorous grade level content.

The health needs of students and staff will be met by offering instruction in a safe and clean environment conducive for learning. In addition, students will receive guidance counseling services that support stress and anxiety management on a weekly basis by the school guidance counselor.

Staff emotional and mental health needs will be met through the district Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which offers up to five free sessions of various mental health services. Staff may access these services as needed throughout the year. Some of the services offered include counseling, stress and anxiety management, and holistic wellness services.

Gibbon Public Schools has hired a school psychologist and a school speech pathologist to assist with mental health needs and provide appropriate interventions for students. Beginning with the

2021-22 school year, Gibbon Public Schools will address mental health, utilize curriculum to support needs in the area of mental health, and will offer a School Pantry for students who require additional assistance beyond the school day.

Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks

To start the 2022-2023 school year, wearing masks are optional at Gibbon Public Schools. This includes during the school day, before and after school activities, transportation, and athletics and activities events.

This pertains to all students, administrators, educators, support staff, and every guest who visits our schools or district buildings, regardless of vaccination status.

Students and their families still have the ability to choose to wear a mask while at school and at school events (outside of normal school hours). It is the responsibility of the family to provide their own mask for themselves and their student(s) to use as the school district will no longer be providing masks. There will be a supply of masks available at each school in the nurse's office to be accessed on an as needed basis.

The board of education, district administrators and the school nurse will review the health and safety protocols throughout the year to determine any changes that may need to be made in the continued management of COVID-19 within our learning environments. Gibbon Public Schools will continue to monitor the health status of our community and work closely with the Two Rivers Public Health Department.

These changes may be revised at any given time should there be an outbreak of infections within Gibbon Public Schools. Face masks may be required temporarily for staff and students within a specific timeframe if COVID-19 cases rise and the administration and local health department believes that this safety precaution is necessary to prevent further spread and a possible school closure.

How will the district approach the decision to wear masks?

- Use protocols developed by the district,
- Situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with guidance from Two Rivers Public Health Department and CDC,
- When the school district is unable to keep our certificated teaching staff in the classroom and/or we are unable to secure enough substitute teachers to cover the number of teachers out ill,
- We will evaluate in 14-day cycles, and
- A review panel consisting of the board president, vice president, school nurse and the superintendent will conduct the 14-day evaluation to determine if conditions require an immediate move to wear masks, shutdown the school, or move into a remote learning environment.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

Proper handwashing, cough, and sneeze etiquette will be taught, reinforced, and monitored throughout the school year.

Hand sanitizer will be readily available to students and staff throughout the school day. (Hand sanitizer will be made up of at least 60% alcohol)

Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities

Our district custodial staff will continue to clean all buildings up to our EPA standard thoroughly and frequently during the day and in the evening.

Efforts to Provide Vaccinations to School Communities

Vaccinations are the decision of each individual family. Gibbon Public Schools will continue to monitor information regarding vaccinations and provide updates to staff, students, and parents when necessary. A mandatory requirement of vaccination will not be enforced by the school district.

Gibbon Public Schools will work with local health departments to provide a location for health departments to administer COVID-19 vaccinations as well as use district communication platforms to share information regarding vaccine clinics to the school community.

Coordination with State and Local Health Officials

Gibbon Public Schools will continue to collaborate with the Two Rivers Public Health Department, Nebraska Department of Education, and other government agencies on a regular basis while monitoring case levels and remaining in compliance with any and all Directed Health Measures.

Return to School Protocols - Timeline		
Date	Group	Focus
June 4 through July, 2020	District Team	Review models for re-opening, consider best practice & formulate a draft of the Return to School Protocols.
Monday, July 13, 2020	Board of Education	Discuss, consider, and review components of the Return to School Protocols for feedback and suggestions.
Wednesday, July 15, 2020	Student Leaders	Share the proposed Return to School Plan with students for feedback and suggestions.
Wednesday, July 15, 2020	Key Communicators - Parents	Share the proposed Return to School Plan with parents for feedback and suggestions.
Friday, July 15, 2020	Gibbon Public Schools	Digitally share proposed Return to School

	Staff & Administration	Plan with GPS Staff for feedback and suggestions.
Thursday, July, 2020	District Team	Review and revise the draft of the Return to Schools Protocols.
Friday, July 31, 2020	District Team	Revise and prepare to publish the final draft of the Return to Schools Protocols.
Friday, July 31, 2020	Principals & Superintendent	Begin weekly communication of “risk dial operational zones” and corresponding information regarding the operational status of the school to all stakeholders (parents, students, staff, public) through the school’s messaging system. This communication will be weekly or as needed throughout the 2020-21 school year.
Monday, August 3, 2020	Community of Gibbon	Publish the Return to School Protocols on the District Website.
Wednesday, September 9, 2020	School Improvement Team	Review and Revise the Return to School Protocols
Thursday, September 10, 2020	Superintendent	Publish revision of the Return to Schools Protocols on the district website.
Monday, June 14, 2021	The original plan drafted for the 2019-20 School Year was used to solicit feedback from the community.	Publish the original draft of the Return to Schools Protocols on the website to collect feedback from the community. Add letter and survey to the website.
June 30, 2021	Close and review feedback collected via the survey	Publish first draft of revised copy. Revisions included a section for the coordination with state and local health officials, and efforts to provide vaccinations to the school community.
July 14 and 15, 2021	Review the Return to Schools Worksheet provided by NDE to ensure all required components were included in the district’s protocols.	Final draft with the following revisions to reflect requirements highlighted in the Return to Schools Worksheet: 1) Maintaining Health and Safety, 2) Modifying Facilities to allow for Physical Distancing,

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3) Contact Tracing and Quarantine, 4) Diagnostic and Screening Testing, 5) Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities, 6) Ensuring Continuity of Services, 7) Public Comment Requirements, 8) Uniform Format <p>Publish Final Draft – July 15, 2021.</p>
September 13, 2021	<p>During the September BOE Meeting, discussed and deliberated with action taken on a process for making decisions to wear masks. Recommendations came from the Operations Team and Buffalo Council. This process was also vetted by the District Team and the Administrative Team.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) When 5% of the student population has tested positive for COVID-19 or one of the variants, When we are unable to keep our certified teaching staff in the classrooms and/or we are unable to secure enough subs to cover for the number of teaches out ill, 3) We will evaluate in 14-day cycles, and 4) A review panel consisting of the board president, vice president, school nurse and the superintendent will conduct the 14-day evaluation to determine if conditions require the immediate move to wear masks, shutdown the school, or move into a remote setting.
October 11, 2021	<p>During the October BOE meeting, discussed the practice of using 5% of the student population having tested for COVID as one consideration for wearing masks. We found that this has created some confusion with the community and is difficult to be consistent because each situation is different.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Board members agreed that the 5% caused confusion and should be removed from the decision-making process. 2) Replaced with the following language - Use protocols developed by the district, 3) Situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with guidance from Two Rivers Public Health Department and CDC

November 30 through December 17, 2021	Placed Return to Schools Survey on the District website.	Closed the survey. Reviewed information. No changes were made to the Return to Schools Protocols.
December 13, 2021	Committee of the Whole meeting prior to regular board meeting. Presented the Return to Schools Protocols. Provided time for public comment.	There were no comments from the public. No changes were made to the Return to Schools Protocols.
June 12, 2022	Committee of the Whole meeting prior to regular board meeting. Presented and reviewed the Return to Schools Protocols. Provided time for public comment.	There were no comments from the public. No changes were made to the Return to Schools Protocols.
August 30, 2022	Special Board Meeting. Presented and reviewed revisions made to the Return to Schools Protocols. Time for public comment was available and identified on the agenda.	There were no patrons in attendance. Not comments were made.
December 13, 2022	Committee of the Whole meeting prior to regular board meeting. Presented and reviewed the Return to Schools Protocols. Provided time for public comment.	There were no comments from the public. No changes were made to the Return to Schools Protocols.
June 13, 2023	Committee of the Whole meeting prior to regular board meeting. Presented and reviewed the Return to Schools Protocols.	Two questions – 1) Regarding the need to continue posting the Return to Schools Plan on the website, and 2) If isolation and mask guidelines were still in effect. Emailed Jim Kent from NDE. This was the response -

	<p>Provided time for public comment.</p>	<p><i>“If you review your plan for next fall within 6 months of Sept. 30, 2023 you:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Don’t have to review again,</i> <i>2. You can take Return to Learn off the website after Sept. 30, 2023.”</i> <p>Visited with Two Rivers Public Health Department regarding masks. TRPHD recommends following CDC requirements that are currently outlined in the Return to Schools Protocols.</p> <p>https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html</p> <p>No changes were made to the Return to Schools Protocols.</p>
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RESOURCES

American Academy of Pediatrics
<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<https://www.cdc.gov/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (SPANISH VERSION)
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/index-sp.html>

LAUNCH Nebraska
www.launchne.com

Nebraska State Education Association (NSEA)
https://www.nsea.org/sites/default/files/content_images/COVID19/NSEA-Guidance-for-a-Safe-Return.pdf

Two Rivers Public Health Department
<https://www.trphd.org/resources/district-risk-assessment.html>

Nebraska Association of School Boards (NASB)

https://nasb.envisiams.com/docs/default-source/covid19/nasbdistldrshpteamcontingencyplanning.pdf?sfvrsn=843baff9_2

Nebraska School Activity Association (NSAA)

www.nsaahome.org

NSAA Return to Activities Information Sheet

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/11w0fExiC2JT1KrsrpGEkAQRYrBcgYEV8/view?usp=sharing>