

Vandalia CUSD #203

Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

2021-2022 School Year

Updated 2.22.22

Introduction

COVID-19 caused substantial disruption in our lives and the lives of our children. Recognizing that students across remote and in-person settings faced significant academic, social, emotional, and mental health challenges as a result of the interrupted education and the trauma caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Congress made emergency funds available to local school districts to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. Most recently, funds available through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act require that school districts develop a *Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services*. As such, this plan has been developed in accordance with the ARP Act. Taking the public's input into account through our strategic planning process and parent working groups during hybrid learning during the 20-21 school year, this plan was developed through meaningful consultation with a collaborative of parents, school and district administrators (including special education administrators), teachers, school staff, food service staff, transportation service staff, labor association leaders, and county health department officials.

The plan will be made publicly available on the district's website. School strategies in this plan may be removed based upon local conditions, levels of community transmission (i.e., low, moderate, substantial, or high), local vaccine coverage, use of screening testing to detect cases in K-12 schools, and consultation with local public health officials to determine the prevention strategies needed. School officials will communicate any changes in plans to staff members, students, and parents through the district's regular communication platforms.

Maintaining the Health and Safety of Students, Educators, and Other Staff

All **Vandalia CUSD #203 schools will be open fully for in-person learning for the 2021-22 school year.** Vandalia CUSD #203 schools will be in operation in accordance with the CDC's updated (July 9, 2021) *Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Kindergarten (K)-12 Schools*. These guidelines include the following:

1. Face coverings/Mask Use

- Mask use is recommended indoors for students, staff and visitors. In general, masks do not need to be worn for outdoor activities (e.g., participating in outdoor play, recess, physical education, sports, extra curriculars) unless the activities involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission.

2. Physical Distancing

- Physical distancing will be to the extent possible within school and classroom structures so that it does not exclude students from full day in-person learning.
- Physical distancing measures are to be done in an equitable manner that does not perpetuate academic, racial, or other tracking (e.g., separating people into fully vaccinated and non-fully vaccinated cohorts).

3. Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

- School staff will monitor and reinforce frequent handwashing and respiratory etiquette by
 - continuing to teach handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;

- assisting young children with handwashing;
- reminding everyone in the facility to wash hands frequently;
- using hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol (for teachers, staff, and older students who can safely use hand sanitizer) when handwashing is not possible;
- continuing to teach respiratory etiquette (e.g., covering coughs and sneezes); and
- 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).

4. 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.
- Maintenance staff will continue to regularly replace school ventilation system filters by using high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters. Although regular tests indicate a high quality of indoor air in our schools, aged ventilation systems are being replaced by new systems to improve the control and reliability of air circulation.
- When possible, staff will open doors and windows, use child-safe fans, and may have activities, classes, or lunches 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.

5. Symptomatic Students and Staff

- Practices will align with IDPH Rule 77-690.361
<https://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/077/077006900D03610R.html>
- The authority to quarantine or issue isolation orders comes from the Fayette County Health Department or IDPH.
- 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.
- 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 student handbook); 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. Remote instruction will only be made available to students while they are under quarantine consistent with guidance or requirements from a local public health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health..
- To the extent allowable by privacy laws and other applicable laws, school health care professionals will collaborate with Fayette 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.
- Students and staff suspected of having COVID-19, whether they were tested or not, are to follow the CDC guidelines to determine when they can return to school.
- Following quarantine, students and staff returning from illness related to COVID-19 are to call to check in with the school’s nurse.

6. Vaccination

- The CDC states that vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Vandalia CUSD #203 will continue to work with the Fayette County Health department to share information with families regarding vaccine availability and clinics. Information regarding vaccines is also available at [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).

7. 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).
- 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.

8. Collaboration with Public Health Officials

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

9. Plan Review

- Through September 30, 2023, this plan will be reviewed and revised as appropriate based on school, community, and county positivity numbers and after consultation with local public health officials and considering public 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.
- To provide feedback on this plan please email Dr. Garrison: jgarrison@vandals203.org.