

SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND

Return to Learn 2020-2021

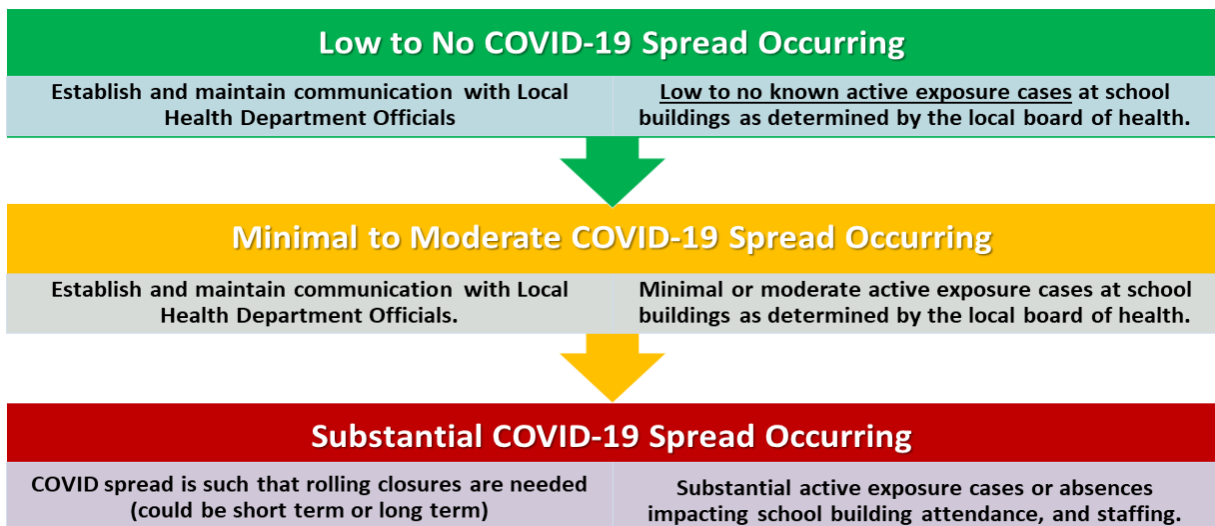
We need every parent to make sure to follow the new parameters for sending healthy students to school. And even beyond that, sending healthy students with healthy family members at home. It takes all of us working together to make sure we are protecting our schools from any illness.

That means we cannot send sick students, or students who are exposed to sickness. This will be true for our staff members as well. We need to do the hard work to keep our buildings healthy places to learn.

STOH SCHOOL REOPENING FRAMEWORK

Guided by information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Indiana State Department of Health and Local Board of Health, the School Town of Highland has ongoing plans that address the unique needs of our school community as we reopen our schools. The district is working through the guidelines from these organizations in order to do everything possible to protect those on our campuses due to COVID-19. Everything we are doing now is aimed at offering the safest experience we can to protect all members of our School Town of Highland community. This is a living document and could change as circumstances change. These are the steps we are taking to protect ourselves, protect others and protect our Highland community.

Level of Spread



OFFER INSTRUCTIONAL OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS DURING COVID-19

The opening of schools is guided by information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Indiana State Department of Health, and the Lake County Board of Health.

Plan A - Traditional School Schedule (Attendance on Campus)

- On campus learning with the traditional school schedule is accomplished following the CDC guidelines for students **who are COVID-19 symptomatic free**.
- Teachers will provide instruction on a traditional school day schedule.
- School buildings are open following the CDC guidelines with many additional cleaning, safety, and protective measures in place.
- Counselors are available for students.

Plan B - On-line Instruction (Attendance Online)

- On-line instruction Option is available for students/families who are high risk according to the CDC guidelines, which includes: Individuals with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring similar treatment.

OR

- Who do not feel safe or comfortable returning to the traditional school schedule (brick and mortar).

OR

- A student exhibits symptoms impacting consideration for exclusion from school, which include: A fever of 100.4° F or greater; Cough; Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; Chills; Repeated shaking with chills; Muscle pain; Headache; Sore throat; new loss of taste or smell. Communication with healthcare professionals and the school are critical.
- On-line instruction for our at-home students will be delivered by a trained and educated STOH teacher via Google Classroom or another on-line platform. While you will have access to our talented STOH instructors, the experience will be different than the past and different than what our students who choose to attend will be subject to in the classroom.

NOTE:

- Students must be on a traditional school schedule to participate in extracurriculars and athletics.
- Students and families must stay with the choice selected during the fall semester, and a change would only be granted due to a COVID-19 exclusion.

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF & STUDENTS

Vulnerable Populations - Elderly individuals and/or individuals with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy.

- Consultation with the healthcare provider should be had for students/families who are considered vulnerable on attending a traditional schedule.
- Provide on-line instruction opportunities for vulnerable student populations in consultation with parents and public health officials.
- Adhere to FERPA and HIPAA requirements.
- Adhere to state and federal employment law and extended leave allowances.
- Human Resources will work with individuals and supervisors on reasonable workplace accommodations, which may include alternative work schedules, special PPE, and/or physical alterations to work environments.

IMPLEMENT PERSONAL HEALTH SAFETY PRACTICES AND PROTOCOLS

Know the symptoms of Covid-19: employees will be trained to recognize these as well.

- A fever of 100.4° F or greater
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Students and employees will be excluded from on-campus instruction if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit one or more of the symptoms of COVID-19 based on CDC Guidance that is not otherwise explained. (Physician documentation required.)

- **Staff and students/families must self-screen for symptoms of COVID-19 before coming to school.**
- Staff and students must communicate information to the school when symptomatic.
- Students and employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 without being otherwise explained, are prohibited from coming to school, and if they do come to school, they will be sent home immediately.

Employees and students are required to have face masks in their possession at all times.

The CDC is advising the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. It is also critical to emphasize that maintaining 6-feet social distancing remains important to slowing the spread of the virus.

***When in Low to No COVID-19 Spread Occurring according to the Local Board of Health - Mask Rules are applied as follows:**

- All students must bring their own masks to school for everyday use. Classrooms will be supplied with replacement masks for students, if needed.
- Masks are required when entering school and walking hallways, when in bathrooms and with other students interacting face to face.
- Masks are required for students while talking or moving in the classroom. Students are to avoid face to face interactions without masks on.
- Classrooms will be aligned with all seats facing the front of the room with as much distance between seats as possible.
- Students can remove masks during class when all students are facing the same direction.
- Teachers and staff will wear masks when they cannot social distance or when in close, face to face interaction with student(s).
- Masks are required at bus stops and for all bus travel.
- Masks are required when not eating lunch and face to face interaction occurs.
- Staff and students who wish to wear masks at all times, may wear masks.

***When in Minimal to Moderate COVID-19 Spread Occurring according to the Local Board of Health - Mask Rules are applied as follows:**

- Masks are required throughout the day as directed by the local board of health.
- Masks are required at bus stops and for all bus travel.
- Masks are required when not eating lunch and face to face interaction occurs.

***When in Substantial COVID-19 Spread Occuring**

- School buildings are closed.
- Follow the directions of the authorities.
- Practice hygiene safety at home and in the community.

Good Hygiene Practices

- Teach the importance of not touching your face.
- Teach and reinforce good hygiene practices like hand washing, covering coughs, and hands to self.
- Teach the proper use and removal of masks.
- Daily hygiene procedures will take place including hand washing.
- Hand sanitizing should be done upon entering the building and new spaces, as well as whenever handwashing is unavailable.

Large Group Gatherings

- Providing hand sanitizer for students and staff.
- Limiting unnecessary congregations of students and staff.
- Abide by the maximum number of people allowed to congregate as defined by the Governor's current statewide Executive Order.
- Discourage the congregation of students in parking lots and common areas.
- Stagger the schedule for large group gatherings (i.e. recess and school meals).
- Identify and utilize large spaces (i.e. gymnasiums, auditoriums, outside spaces – as weather permits) for social distancing.
- Follow Indiana & IHSAA guidelines for performing arts and sporting events and practices. (See the STOH Athletic Plan.)

Supplies and Personal Space

- All desks face the same direction with students facing the same direction.
- The use of shared supplies and materials will be minimized.
- Students and staff are encouraged to bring water bottles from home. WATER FOUNTAINS WILL BE TURNED OFF.

COVID-19 Screening/Response to Symptoms

- An isolation room will be used to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-like symptoms.
- School nurses will use Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions when caring for sick people.
- Notify local health officials, staff, and families immediately of a possible case while maintaining confidentiality consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable federal and state privacy laws.
- Advise sick staff members and parents/guardians of children not to return to school until they have met ISDH criteria.
- Inform those who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and follow state ISDH guidance if symptoms develop. If a person does not have symptoms, follow appropriate state ISDH guidance for home quarantine.
- Inform ISDH and IDOE of any student/staff member testing positive for Covid-19.

UNTESTED

Return to school after having one symptom and NO COVID-19 test:

Persons who have not received a test proving or disproving the presence of COVID-19 but experience symptoms may return if the following three conditions are met:

1. They have not had a fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers); and
2. Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved); and
3. At least 10 calendar days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

The state website has a list of over 200 testing facilities, their location, and hours of operation. This list is updated frequently.

Local testing sites include:

- Methodist Hospital - Merrillville
- Methodist Hospital - Gary
- ISDH Drive-Thru - Gary
- Physicians Urgent Care - Highland
- HealthLinc - East Chicago
- Family Urgent Care – Schererville

SYMPTOMATIC

Return to school after having one symptom and testing negative for COVID-19:

Return when the fever has been gone for 72 hours without the use of medicine that reduces fevers or upon feeling better.

TESTED POSITIVE - SYMPTOMATIC

Return to school after having one symptom and testing POSITIVE for COVID-19 with symptoms:

Persons who experienced symptoms and have been tested for COVID-19 may return to school if the following conditions are met:

- The individual no longer has a fever (without the use of medicine that reduces fevers); and
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved); and
- At least 10 calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared; or
- The individual has received two negative tests at least 24 hours apart.

TESTED POSITIVE - ASYMPTOMATIC

Return to school after having no symptoms and testing POSITIVE for COVID-19 with symptoms:

Persons who have not had symptoms but test positive for COVID-19 may return when they have gone 10 calendar days without symptoms and have been released by a healthcare provider. Students may also return if they are approved to do so in writing by the student's health care provider.

HOUSEHOLD MEMBER - SYMPTOMATIC

If someone in your home has symptoms or is being tested for COVID-19:

Students and employees should remain home for 72 hours if someone in the household has COVID-19 symptoms or is being tested for COVID-19.

HOUSEHOLD MEMBER - TESTED POSITIVE

If someone in your home has tested positive for COVID-19:

If an individual in one's home has COVID-19 or is isolated because of COVID-19, those in the household should also stay home for a minimum of two weeks. This could be longer if the student becomes symptomatic. Return to school after documented infection with COVID-19 should be directed by the individual's health care provider.

TESTED POSITIVE - IMPACT ON SCHOOL OPERATIONS:

Work with the local health department in following the CDC guidance.

CONTACT TRACING:

The local health department will work to determine who has been in close proximity (closer than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) to trace for exposure. STOHS will maintain seating charts for classrooms, buses, and the cafeteria.

READY BUILDINGS, COMMON SPACES FOR ACTIVITIES

The layout and design of school buildings and facilities are being assessed one-by-one to ensure proper health and safety updates are made, appropriate signage is posted.

- New social distanced queueing procedures will be in place, with one-way traffic through the buildings, where possible.
- Visitors only upon appointment. If something needs to be dropped off, it will be left at the drop off zone in the secure vestibule. If a necessary visit, call the front office before coming, screening visitors, requesting use of face coverings/masks, etc.
- Ventilation systems will increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, when practicable based on outdoor air conditions.
- Clean/disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects after each use.
- Conduct deep cleaning of schools prior to students/staff returning; schedule additional cleanings during weekends or school holidays/breaks.
- No facility rental from outside groups will be permitted until further notice.
- See protocol for students/staff who feel ill/experience symptoms when they come to school (see When a Child, Staff Member, or Visitor Becomes Sick at School).
- Establish a protocol for student pick up/drop off: staggered entry and release (by grade, class, or bus numbers), marked spacing for pickup.
- Playground: Recess times are staggered and equipment is cleaned between use.

FOOD SERVICE

Implement standard operating procedures while taking preventative measures such as:

- Parents please assist STOHS by eliminating cash transactions and utilize online payments as much as possible. NO payments will be accepted during meal service to ensure the health and safety of students and staff.
- Provide a schedule with alternate serving and/or eating areas in the building for students to social distance as much as possible while eating.
- Spaced seating (utilize outdoor space as practicable and appropriate).
- Allow student hand washing before and after meal service.
- Providing hand sanitizer for students and staff.
- No self-serve service lines are available.
- Pre-packaged boxes or bags for each student instead of traditional serving lines. Pre-portioned condiments will be used.
- Students go in small groups to dispose of trash in cans spread throughout the cafeteria.
- Conduct cleaning of cafeterias and high-touch surfaces throughout the school day.
- Students and staff wear face masks/coverings while in large group gatherings when not eating with face to face interactions.

CLINICAL SPACE COVID-19 SYMPTOMATIC

- Each school will have an isolation room or separate from the nurse's clinic where students or employees presenting with Covid-19 symptoms are at all times.
- All staff and students must wear a cloth face covering.
- Only essential staff assigned to the room may enter wearing appropriate PPE. A record will be kept of all persons who entered the room and the room will be disinfected after each use.

CLINICAL SPACE NON-COVID-19 RELATED

- Students who do not display symptoms of COVID-19 can be seen and treated in the nurse's clinic.
- This is students who are injured during the school day or students with special health care needs such as those with chronic health conditions (i.e. - diabetes or seizures), those requiring medical treatments (i.e. - suctioning, tube feeding, or nebulizers), and those with individual health plans.

CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID-19 ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

- When there is confirmation that a person infected with COVID-19 was on school property, the district/school will contact the local health department immediately. The district will also notify the Indiana Department of Education. Unless extenuating circumstances exist, the district/school will work with the local health department to assess factors such as the likelihood of exposure to employees and students in the building, the number of cases in the community, and other factors that will determine building closure.
- As soon as the district/school becomes aware of a student or employee who has been exposed to or has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the custodial staff will be informed, so that impacted building or bus areas, furnishings, and equipment are thoroughly disinfected.

IMPLEMENT CDC GUIDELINES FOR CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

- Soap and hand sanitizer are available throughout the buildings.
- Routine cleaning is performed on a regularly scheduled basis by district custodial staff assigned to that building or area. Routine cleaning includes daily cleaning and disinfecting of all restrooms, scheduled sweeping of all floors, sanitizing of cafeteria tables, emptying trash and other building-based tasks.
- Supplemental cleaning is performed by custodial staff over and above what is considered routine. Supplemental cleaning is focused on cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces, specifically for the purpose of preventing spread of disease.
- Playground—recess times are staggered and equipment is cleaned between use.
- Emergency cleaning: The emergency cleaning plan will be implemented at the direction of the Superintendent or designee in response to an actual infection located at or attributed to a particular school or location or when directed by County or State health authorities.
- Upon direction to implement an emergency cleaning plan, the facility will be evacuated and plans for the length of closure will be communicated to the public and staff.

TRANSPORTATION

We encourage parents to drive students to and from school, if possible.

- **Staff and students must wear masks.**
 - Student drop off and pickup: Parents are to remain in cars when dropping off and picking up students.
 - **Parents need to ensure that social distancing is utilized at bus stops.**
 - Seating charts used.
 - No field trips until further notice.
 - Cleaning is performed daily. Supplemental cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces on the bus is performed between routes.
 - Airing out buses when not in use.

The STOH will share the latest information via the School Town of Highland website:

<https://www.highland.k12.in.us/SchoolReopening>

Recognizing that School Town of Highland has a responsibility to support the health and safety of the Highland community, we will engage with a broad range of stakeholders to encourage the adoption of the tenets of the STOH Reopening Framework — which may be more stringent than those experienced or witnessed within the outside community — beyond the borders of our school campuses.

We will collaborate and partner with leaders of the Highland and Lake County communities on ways to create a healthy and safe environment that protects the STOH and our neighbors.