

## **FAQs – Frequently Asked Questions – Related to School Reopening and Covid-19**

*1. Will students have to wear masks the entire school day?*

Students will be able to take their masks off at the discretion of the teacher. For example, when teachers are going to present their lesson to students, or give seatwork. When teachers want the students to discuss with each other, get in small groups, etc., the teacher will “direct” the students to put on their masks. (This is based on the current Health Department guidelines. Should those change, then students’ mask use could change, also.)

*2. With the assumption that all parents will be sending their children to school, how will social distancing work?*

As much social distancing as possible will be provided. Much will depend on the number of students whose parents are opting for on-line learning to determine how many students will be in a classroom. Because 6 feet of social distancing will not always be possible, masks are being worn as recommended by various health agencies.

*3. Did you consider a staggered/hybrid schedule?*

The most beneficial learning environment is students in school every day learning from their teacher with their peers. Anything less is not as effective.

*4. Will the teachers be live streaming for the students who stay home?*

Live streaming is when the streamed video is sent over the Internet in real time. Unfortunately, STOH does not have the bandwidth necessary to live stream a number of classrooms.

*5. Why were we only given a short amount of time to make the decision for on-line learning?*

In order for staff to be prepared to educate all students, we need to have a solid understanding of who will be with us in person and who will be utilizing on-line learning. We understand that this is a very important, personal decision. The deadline set by the district gives us a short amount of time to ensure we are ready to address the learning needs of ALL of our students. Much planning is necessary for us to be successful in this endeavor.

6. *What will be considered an acceptable mask?*

An acceptable mask can be any cloth face covering as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the cloth face covering coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice.

7. *Can the students wear masks that are more like neck scarves made to be pulled up over the face and nose in place of a mask?*

Yes

8. *Will there be regulations on patterns and designs or filters on the mask for appropriate breathing?*

Patterns and designs will be regulated similar to t-shirts i.e. no inappropriate images, references to drugs or alcohol, profanity, etc. The minimum standard will be cloth masks.

9. *Will there be consequences for a student not wearing a mask appropriately? (example: stubborn teenagers who push limits may walk around with the mask hanging from their ear, under their nose, under their chin, etc., or if a student forgets to put his mask on out of habit). What will those consequences be?*

There is always a progressive discipline procedure that begins with verbal direction, conversation, calling parents and proceeds towards more stringent consequences.

10. *Can students bring their own mask and/or home-bought hand sanitizer made from more natural ingredients?*

Yes

11. *Will sanitizing wipes be provided in the classrooms, and do they include harsh chemicals? Will students be provided gloves to wear while using the sani-wipes to clean their desks?*

No, wipes will not be provided. Instead we will use a sanitizing spray and paper towels. It does not include harsh or odorous chemicals but is an effective disinfectant. There is no need to use gloves when using the spray. We are not using a harsh chemical wipe like a Clorox wipe or 'bleach' type wipe. If we find anyone with reactions to the spray modifications will be made.

*12. How will hot lunches be provided in the pre-packed form? Will students have to select their weekly or daily lunch selections beforehand? Will there be options?*

There will be hot and cold options for both breakfast and lunch. There will be weekly meal menus and meal planning will continue as normally as possible. Accommodations will be made for allergies as normal. Meals will be pre-packed by kitchen staff as students come through the serving lines. Elementary students will be able to pick their lunch entrees ahead of time in their classroom but will be served all of the components of the menued meal during mealtime. Middle and High school students will be able to choose all components of their lunch meals; however, their meals will still be pre-packed into containers by kitchen staff as they come through the serving lines so that a clean and safe environment may be maintained. There will be no ala-carte lines.

*13. The reentry plan stated that payments will not be taken during lunch. What other options, besides making online payments, are there?*

On-line payments are the preferred method of payment. Elementary students are encouraged to drop payments off with the kitchen staff in the morning during breakfast service. There is a cashier on duty at breakfast to collect payments and apply them to student meal accounts. At the middle and high school cafeterias, there will be a kiosk with a cashier during breakfast hours that will collect and apply payments into student meal accounts. We ask parents for their help to make the payment process efficient and safe during this time. Online payments are the preferred method of payment. Checks made out to School Town of Highland are gladly accepted. Please also note that we will apply all cash payments to an account. For safety reasons, we do not want to make change.

*14. How will students be safely spaced in the cafeteria?*

If students cannot be spaced 6 ft. apart in the cafeteria, schools will provide additional areas for students to eat (i.e., the commons area at the high school) to provide as much distance as possible. Schools may also increase the number of lunch periods.

*15. Will the district provide meals for on-line students. REVISED 7/17/20*

We will be offering up to 5 days of meals (breakfast and lunches) to online learners. USDA guidelines require parents and guardians to provide written consent for this service and a form will be available with registration documents along with a sign-up form for those online students who will be participating so that we may prepare and provide accurate meals.

USDA guidelines allow **only** parents or guardians (no grandparents, caretakers, siblings, neighbors, relatives) to pick up the meals for students, otherwise, meals can be denied. Students will NOT have to be present to receive meals. Meals will be "charged" for each

of the 5 breakfasts and 5 lunches based on each students' respective meal eligibility status (FREE (free breakfast/free lunch); REDUCED (free breakfast/\$0.40 each lunch); PAID (\$1.50 each breakfast/\$2.00 or \$2.25 each lunch). Charges will be deducted from student Mealtime accounts. Staff will not accept payments at the time of meal distributions and we highly recommend those families utilize online payments. Rosters verifying student names will be used and checked off to distribute meals.

Specific planning is still underway and information concerning day(s), location, and time of meal pick-ups will be posted once that information has been decided. Only those online students who have completed the necessary forms will be able to access meals through the online meal distribution service based on the USDA rules and requirements that we have to follow to be in compliance.

*16. With the NO SHARING of school supplies, added teacher workloads, added cost of cleaning supplies for transportation and schools, packing of lunches, etc., ...will our registration fees and lunch costs increase?*

There is no increase in lunch fees, and there are no additional fees at this time associated with COVID protocols.

*17. Will all classrooms be social distanced to 6 feet?*

No, to do that would result in only about 10 students per classroom. However, unnecessary furniture will be removed to create more space. Also, there will be classrooms with fewer students due to choices for on-line learning by some students.

*18. Will larger spaces be used to increase social distancing?*

Music might be held in the auditorium. When not in use for meals, the cafeteria could be used to allow for more spacing of classrooms. If gyms are not being used for p.e., they could be used for social distancing purposes, also.

*19. Will there be plexiglass dividers on desks to help protect our children?*

No

*20. Will teachers be supportive of students who choose to wear masks in the classrooms?*

Absolutely

*21. How will fine arts/P.E. classes operate?*

The fine arts/p.e. (specials) classes will 'look' different this year and past practices will most likely change. For instance, P.E. may not use the equipment it has in the past, to

avoid multiple students touching it. Students would not be asked to do more than minimal exertion level physical exercise while wearing masks. At the elementary schools, students are being asked to bring art boxes so they can take their regular classroom crayons, scissors, etc. to art and not have to share supplies. Students may have to wear masks while singing, or move to a larger area (i.e. the auditorium at the high school) so they can social distance. If students are asked to use the same equipment/supplies, it would have to be sanitized after each use.

*22. Will school libraries be open? How will books be sanitized? How will social distancing be followed?*

Libraries can remain open. When books are returned to the library, they will be held for an appropriate amount of time (5 days) to avoid any contamination concerns. We also have ways of disinfecting books, if needed. Social distancing will occur in libraries.

*23. High School Students: What will be the protocol for students who need to drop or change their schedules due to course load or grades?*

Unfortunately, we are not going to be able to permit schedule changes at this time. Our schedule is student selection driven and staffing needs are based on that information. Adding the ability to change courses at this time would create a cascade effect of staffing changes, needs, and possible elimination or addition of courses and/or positions. While it is understandable that people change their minds after considering options, we cannot allow any changes after our Spring Change Window due to staffing concerns.

*24. What's your plan for WHEN a case of COVID happens? WHEN it happens, how fast will we, the parents, be alerted to a positive case?*

Everyone will be dependent on the speed at which a COVID test is taken and identified. However, school nurses have very specific protocols to follow from the Health Department. Students with COVID symptoms will not be re-admitted until a determination is made from a test. For a positive COVID, the Health Department will conduct contact tracing based on seating charts as to which students might have to be quarantined.

*25. In the event of a school(s) closure (or a classroom(s)), how will instruction occur?*

The on-site teachers and students impacted and required to quarantine at home for a period of time would do on-line learning until they return to school/classroom.

26. *If a child tests positive for COVID, how will the child's attendance records be affected?*

The absence days would be excused. The child would be able to make up all missed assignments. (If the student is positive but asymptomatic, he/she could continue with on-line assignments at home.)

27. *Will students and teachers be tested regularly for Covid?*

The district will not require students and/or teachers to be tested on a regular basis. (Guidelines on testing are included in the Framework.)

28. *What are the supporting number ranges or percentages that reflect the Green, Yellow and Red zones in the district's reopening framework?*

There are no set number ranges or percentages for the green, yellow and red zones. The colors are used to illustrate that depending on a level of Covid cases (determined by the Lake County and/or Indiana Health departments) different responses will be taken, particularly in regard to on-site (traditional) learning.

29. *How will we cover absent teachers with substitutes?*

At this time, the majority of our substitutes have indicated they still want to sub. We have also had a few applications from new substitutes. We may contact any of our Highland college students that are doing on-line learning due to COVID to see if they would want to substitute.

30. *What's the plan for "on-line learning" if I choose that for my child?*

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. On-line learning will be aligned with in-school instruction as it takes place on a daily/weekly basis. There will be different instructional strategies used depending on grade level and subject area. More specific descriptions for on-line learning at each level (elementary, middle school and high school) will be available the week of July 20.

31. *If a parent chooses on-line learning for his/her student, why does that decision have to be for a semester...why not allow the student to change to on-site learning at the quarter (nine weeks)?*

Teacher assignments will be made and classroom assignments determined based on the number of on-line and on-site students. Allowing students to change prior to the end of the semester could create a significant imbalance in classes.

*32. How do I register my child for on-line learning?*

Registration for both traditional on-campus and on-line learning will be done starting August 1, 2020, through Parent Access on RDS.

*33. How will classrooms and desks be sanitized between classes?*

At the elementary schools, where students remain in the same desk for most of the school day, custodians will sanitize rooms when students are at specials and/or recess. The district has purchased spray sanitizers for every school that enable us to sanitize an entire classroom (or bus) in a short amount of time. The middle school, custodians will sanitize teachers' rooms when the teacher is on prep period. At the high school level, to avoid students changing classes frequently, we hope to move to a block schedule (this would lengthen periods and shorten the number of class switches each day). At both the middle and high school, teachers will have spray sanitizer that can be used on desks, too. Custodians will sanitize empty classrooms throughout the day.

*34. How will you attend to the cleaning and sanitizing of bathrooms?*

Bathrooms will be cleaned and sanitized throughout the school day.

*35. Will there be hand sanitizer available for students?*

The district has purchased hand sanitizer dispensers to be placed throughout the school buildings. Students may bring their own hand sanitizers.

*36. How will services be provided for students with IEPs during distance learning?*

Students will be provided services from special education teachers, support staff, and related service staff. Staff may use google classroom and other on-line platforms available to all students. Instruction may consist of virtual meetings/instruction and supplemental resources/on-line instruction and will vary according to each individual student's grade level, needs and goals.

*37. Will on-line students be allowed to participate in athletics and extracurriculars?*

Yes. (Must have a current physical on file.)

NOTE: Answers could change as circumstances change.

7/19/2020