

Parents, Students, and Patrons:

The school district thought it would be helpful to answer some frequently asked questions regarding the start of the 2020-2021 school year. Here are some of the current questions and answers that you may have. As you know, recommendations and conditions have been in constant change throughout this pandemic and by the beginning of the school year, some of these responses could change.

Our goal is to start school as scheduled with all students attending and keeping school open unless we are told to close by local health officials, the Commissioner of Education, or the Governor. We have purchased additional cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, disinfectant sprayers, masks, face shields and will be putting up signs as reminders to practice safe hygiene.

Our goal is for your child to attend school all year. We know that face-to-face education is the best practice for learning. A plan is being developed for us to follow that is 3 tiered – Green (low/no spread), Yellow (minimal/moderate spread) and Red (substantial spread). Each tier will have recommendations and guidelines that we will follow.

Thank you for your patience and support.

Ron Wymore  
Superintendent  
“Cozad Creates Success”

## **2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR REOPENING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RELATING TO COVID-19**

### **Student/Parent Questions**

**Q. What learning will be utilized for the start of school?**

A. The district plans for all students to attend school in person when school starts on August 19, with our regular attendance policies in place.

**Q. Will there be an alternative digital learning option available if I do not want my child to attend?**

A. There is no plan to offer alternative digital learning unless your child is determined to need a different educational placement by law, such as a determination made by an IEP or 504 team, or they are under directed medical quarantine. In those circumstances, alternative arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis with the involvement of parents and the student.

**Q. Will my child be counted absent if they are under a quarantine directed by a medical provider?**

A. The school must receive a quarantine order or directive by a medical provider or authorized health official. Absences due to a quarantine order shall not be counted toward your child’s chronic absenteeism limit if the documentation is provided.

**Q. Will secondary students be required to wear masks?**

A. Currently masks will be optional. If there comes a time that masks go from optionable to required, all students in grades 6-12 shall wear them in school vehicles, during class, during passing periods, in lunch lines, and during any other times that social distancing is not possible. Some discretion will be given to

your child's principal and teachers based on unique circumstances that may arise. Any other exception will be those required by law.

**Q. Will pre-school and elementary students be required to wear masks?**

A. Currently masks will be optional. If there comes a time that masks go from optionable to required, all students in grades preK-5 shall wear them in school vehicles, to the extent possible during class, in lunch lines, and during any other times that social distancing is not possible. Some discretion will be given to your child's principal and teachers based on unique circumstances that may arise. Any other exception will be those required by law. Students will be isolated to their classroom groups during the day to minimize interaction with students in other classrooms.

**Q. If there comes a time that masks go from optionable to required under what circumstances will students be exempted from wearing masks?**

A. Exceptions may be made only as required by law, such as based upon the decisions of a student's IEP or 504 teams.

**Q. What if my child does not qualify for an exemption and I don't want them to wear a mask?**

A. If we go to where masks are required, it will be a rule adopted by the school board, similar to any other health and safety or dress code rules adopted by the board. Students who refuse to wear masks will face consequences consistent with the district's student discipline policies.

**Q. Will a mask be provided by the school or can I select one for my child to wear?**

A. Parents may provide a mask for their children, but the district will have them available. The masks must either be cloth or a multi-layered disposable mask.

**Q. What does "isolation by classroom groups" mean for elementary students?**

A. Elementary students may be required to eat lunch in their classrooms, have specials taught in their classrooms, play and have PE exclusively with students from their classroom.

**Q. Will staff be required to wear masks?**

A. Currently staff will not be required, but recommended to wear masks when not teaching. Wearing a face shield instead of a mask or not wearing any face covering may be necessary at times.

**Q. What other steps is the district taking to make attending school safe?**

A. Frequent hand-washing will be enforced in all buildings. The district will also increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting buildings. Visitors may be required to wear masks and parents will need to schedule appointments to meet with school staff. Electrostatic sprayers and bioesque have been purchased for each building and for busses.

**Q. Will parents be notified if there is a case of COVID-19 in my child's school or classroom?**

A. Not from the school, unless required by law and permitted by confidentiality laws. If contact tracing is determined to be necessary by our public health department, they will contact you.

**Q. Will schools close and move to digital learning if one or more cases of COVID-19 is discovered among school students or staff?**

A. Every effort will be made to keep schools open. One or more cases will not trigger an automatic closing of schools. The decision to close will be based on a number of factors and included consultation with our public health department and local medical providers.

**Q. Will the district's AfterZone program still be available?**

A. AfterZone will be offered but may not start at the beginning of the year. The district will communicate once plans are finalized.

**Q. What can I do as a parent to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 at school?**

A. It is very important that you monitor your children's health and keep them home when they don't feel well, even if illness has not been confirmed by a medical provider. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, muscle aches, breathing difficulty, coughing, and diarrhea in children, though symptoms can vary widely and some children exhibit few, if any, symptoms. Any student needs to be free of a fever for at least 24 hours after having a fever of 100 or more before coming to school.

***Note: Plans may change as new guidance becomes available from the Nebraska Department of Education, the CDC, and state or local public health agencies.***