



# Columbus Community School District: Return to Learn Plan

The following plans will guide the Columbus Community School District throughout the 2020-2021 school year as we determine when it is best to utilize one of our three educational delivery models: On-site (at school), Hybrid (at school and at home), and Online (at home). This document will identify student learning practices, health and safety procedures, as well as lunch, recess, and transportation protocols. The district will work closely with the local public officials to determine the need to move from one delivery model to the next. These decisions could have a minimum notice of 24 hours. Some details of these plans may change as new information and guidance becomes available.

*Mission: The Columbus Community School District will ensure ALL students are successful, regardless of the educational delivery model, by providing a safe, flexible, and equitable learning environment. The health and safety of our students, staff, and families is top priority, along with accelerating student learning.*

## **Delivery Model 1: On-Site (At School)**

We will have 100% of our students in attendance during this time. Attendance is required as in a normal school year. Online learning accommodations or other methods can be discussed on an individual basis; certain guidelines and expectations must be met. It is the district's belief that face-to-face instruction is the best way for students to learn.

**Health and Safety:** The data we will use to support our plan will include coordination and communication with local public health and emergency management, the number and percentage of and reason for student absences, and a communication log of interactions with local public health and Iowa Department of Public Health (i.e. PPE needs, health risks).

Our health and safety team consist of Kristina Murphy, Elementary Principal; Mark Yeoman, JH/HS Principal; Barb Chaney, District Nurse; Jeff Maeder, Superintendent; and Christine Boyd, Head Custodian.

All employees of the Columbus Community School District will complete the Department of Education required health and safety modules to prepare for student health measures.

We have several measures in place to monitor the health and safety of our students and staff. The district has procured sanitizing equipment. The machines will be used at the completion of each school day and on buses after each route. Teachers will be provided with additional sanitation spray and wipes that can be used to disinfect tables, desks, and chairs regularly. Hand sanitizer dispensers are available in each classroom. When students (4-12) leave the room between class changes they are expected to sanitize their hands and desks. Elementary teachers will designate times throughout the day to sanitize hands and desks.

**Social Distancing:** We believe that social distancing is a necessary measure. As we all know a typical classroom is not built to provide constant social distancing measures of 6 feet. However, we will do our best to keep the greatest amount of space between each student. These measures will be done consistently in classrooms that can meet these expectations. When six feet social distancing is not possible, the use of facial coverings will be necessary.

Guidance from public health states that a “contact or an exposure” requires being within six feet of someone for a period of 15 minutes. Under that guidance, students can safely pass from classroom to classroom during passing times.

**Restrooms:** Restrooms will be disinfected regularly throughout the school day. Classrooms will be assigned bathrooms to lessen exposure.

**Drinking Fountains:** Drinking fountains will not be in use. Students will be asked to use personal water bottles at the water bottle filling stations or bring bottled water from home. No sharing will be allowed. Regular cleaning of water bottles is suggested.

**School Nurse:** The school nurse's office will have two rooms this coming year. The main room will treat students that have needs other than those with symptoms that are associated with COVID-19. Students that are assessed to have symptoms of COVID-19 by the District Nurse will be isolated in a separate room that is convenient for the nurse to provide adequate supervision.

The district has purchased several infrared digital thermometers to use as needed. Please do not give your child Ibuprofen or Tylenol to reduce a fever in order to send them to school. See *Return to School Following Illness* section for further explanation.

**Screening:** The current CDC guidelines do not require screening of all students or employees for COVID-19 prior to entering the school building. Districts are strongly encouraged to communicate information to families and employees about the symptoms of COVID-19 and require them to self-screen prior to coming to school. Students and employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 without other obvious explanations are prohibited from coming to school and, if they do come to school, they will be sent home immediately. Students will be required to wear face covering if they exhibit any of the “exclusion from school” symptoms.

**Exclusion from School:** Students and employees will be excluded from school if they test positive for COVID-19, exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 based on CDC Guidance that is not otherwise explained, or have been within close contact of a COVID positive person:

- fever (100.4 or higher) or chills
- cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- fatigue
- muscle or body aches
- headache
- new loss of taste or smell
- sore throat
- congestion or runny nose
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhea

**Return to School after Exclusion:** Once a student or employee is excluded from the school environment, they may return if they satisfy the recommendations of the CDC. Currently those guidelines are:

**Persons with symptoms of COVID-19 (this includes persons who test PCR positive and persons who are not tested) should:**

self-isolate until after these three things have happened:

- They have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers) AND
- Their other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath has improved) AND
- At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared.

**Persons with symptoms of COVID-19 who are tested and test PCR negative AND who are NOT a close contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19-**

- Can go back to daily activities 24 hours after their fever and other symptoms resolve.

**Persons with symptoms of COVID-19 who are tested and test PCR negative AND who ARE a close contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19,**

- Should continue to self-quarantine until 14 days after their last exposure to the confirmed case.

**Persons who test PCR positive for COVID-19 but do not experience symptoms:** should self-isolate until:

- At least 10 days have passed since the date of the first positive test AND
- They continue to have no symptoms (no cough or shortness of breath) since the test.

**Persons with no symptoms and are a close contact of a COVID positive person should:**

- Self-Isolate for 14 days.
- Seek medical care if develop symptoms.

## **Wearing Face Coverings and Other Personal Protective Equipment**

**(PPE):** It will be necessary for employees and students to wear face coverings unless six feet social distancing can be met. This is a recommendation by the CDC.

**Response to Exclusion from School or Self-Quarantine:** As soon as the district becomes aware of a student or employee that may have COVID-19 or that has been excluded from school or recommended to self-quarantine, the custodial staff will be informed so that all desks, lockers, and workspaces of the person can be thoroughly disinfected. If the school is not open when notification occurs, the custodial staff will wait 24 hours, or as long as possible, prior to disinfecting and will instead block off the area so that others do not have contact. However, if that is not possible or school is in session, the cleaning will occur immediately.

**Confirmed Case of COVID-19 in the School Building:** If there is confirmation that a person infected with COVID-19 was in a school building, the district will be in communication with the local health department. If there is a positive case, the Department of Public Health will communicate and be involved appropriately. The district will continue to work with the Department of Public Health to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and families.

**Lunch Procedures:** We will adjust schedules and the number of students in the lunchroom. Additional spaces will be used as needed.

**Recess:** Students will have recess. Groupings and scheduling considerations will be made.

**Transportation:** It is necessary for all students riding the bus to wear a mask. Seats will be assigned for the purpose of health and safety. If seating is limited, siblings and/or household members will be assigned to sit together. Buses will be disinfected following each route.

**Visitors:** Visitors will be limited in the buildings.

**Social/Emotional/Behavioral Health:** All staff will receive Trauma-Sensitive training on identifying and responding to symptoms of trauma in staff and students. Because research has consistently shown that trauma alters the brain's executive functioning capacity, we will be working with building leadership teams to incorporate trauma-sensitive, cognitive and social emotional interventions, into our current system of supports.

We may survey families, staff, and students. The survey results would be used to determine the social/emotional/behavioral health needs of those groups. Our counselors are putting together a list of

resources available to our students, staff, and families which will be available in August. Families are encouraged to reach out if additional concerns arise.

**Academic Requirements:** All students will move throughout the building. Elementary (PK-6) students will be provided music, art, PE, and access to the library. All secondary students will move to their respected classes throughout the school day which will also include music, band, art, PE, and exploratory classes. This will include classes with mixed grade level students at times. Students will have assigned seats that they will sit in daily or regularly throughout the day.

Teachers will analyze academic learning standards that students missed in March, April, and May of 2020. Teachers will use data for instructional decision-making. We will communicate gaps with families and students through email messages, text messages, online meetings, phone calls, or in-person parent-teacher conferences as feasible. **Therefore, it is very important for families to update and keep current their contact information.**

**Extra-curricular activities:** Extra-curricular activities may take place based on guidance from several state and local agencies, including the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa High School Athletic Association, Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union, and Iowa High School Music Association.

## **Delivery Model 2: Hybrid (At School and At Home)**

We will have 50% of our students at school while the other 50% are learning at home. This model allows us to expand on our health and safety protocols, but it will also allow for continued face-to-face education for all students. Our Hybrid Model will be an AM/PM model as we feel that it is important to meet face-to-face with every student every day. Additional learning at home may take place when students are not in attendance at school. The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) may have a mandated minimum seat time/instructional time requirement and we will adhere to the guidance provided by the IDOE.

**Health and Safety:** The data we will use to support our plan will include coordination and communication with local public health and emergency management, the number and percentage of and reason for student absences, and a communication log of interactions with local public health and Iowa Department of Public Health (i.e. PPE needs, health risks).

Our health and safety team consist of Kristina Murphy, Elementary Principal; Mark Yeoman, JH/HS Principal; Barb Chaney, District Nurse; Jeff Maeder, Superintendent; and Christine Boyd, Head Custodian.

All employees of the Columbus Community School District will complete the Department of Education required health and safety modules to prepare for student health measures.

We have several measures in place to monitor the health and safety of our students and staff. The district has procured sanitizing equipment. The machines will be used at the completion of each school day and on buses after each route. Teachers will be provided with additional sanitation spray and wipes that can be used to disinfect tables, desks, and chairs regularly. Hand sanitizer dispensers are available in each classroom. When students (PK-12) leave the room between class changes they are expected to sanitize their hands and desks. Between AM and PM sessions, a more thorough cleaning routine of high-contact areas and surfaces will occur.

**Social Distancing:** We believe that social distancing is a necessary measure. As we all know a typical classroom is not built to provide constant social distancing measures of 6 feet. However, we will do our best to keep the greatest amount of space between each student. These measures will be done consistently in classrooms that can meet these expectations. When six feet social distancing is not possible, the use of facial coverings will be necessary. The hybrid model allows for increased social distancing. The recommended social distance guidelines will be followed to the best of our ability throughout the building.

Guidance from public health states that a “contact or an exposure” requires being within six feet of someone for a period of 15 minutes. Under that guidance, students can safely pass from classroom to classroom during passing times.

**Restrooms:** Restrooms will be disinfected regularly throughout the school day. Classrooms will be assigned bathrooms to lessen exposure.

**Drinking Fountains:** Drinking fountains will not be in use. Students will be asked to use personal water bottles at the water bottle filling stations or bring bottled water from home. No sharing will be allowed. Regular cleaning of water bottles is suggested.

**School Nurse:** The school nurse's office will have two rooms this coming year. The main room will treat students that have needs other than those with symptoms that are associated with COVID-19. Students that are assessed to have symptoms of COVID-19 by the District Nurse will be isolated in a separate room that is convenient for the nurse to provide adequate supervision.

The district has purchased several infrared digital thermometers to use as needed. Please do not give your child Ibuprofen or Tylenol to reduce a fever in order to send them to school. See *Return to School Following Illness* section for further explanation.

**Screening:** The current CDC guidelines do not require screening of all students or employees for COVID-19 prior to entering the school building. Districts are strongly encouraged to communicate information to families and employees about the symptoms of COVID-19 and require them to self-screen prior to coming to school. Students and employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 without other obvious explanations are prohibited from coming to school and, if they do come to school, they will be sent home immediately. Students will be required to wear face covering if they exhibit any of the “exclusion from school” symptoms.

**Exclusion from School:** Students and employees will be excluded from school if they test positive for COVID-19, exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 based on CDC Guidance that is not otherwise explained, or have been within close contact of a COVID positive person:

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- headache
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**Return to School after Exclusion:** Once a student or employee is excluded from the school environment, they may return if they satisfy the recommendations of the CDC. Currently those guidelines are:

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- Can go back to daily activities 24 hours after their fever and other symptoms resolve.

**Persons with symptoms of COVID-19 who are tested and test PCR negative AND who ARE a close contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19,**

- Should continue to self-quarantine until 14 days after their last exposure to the confirmed case.

**Persons who test PCR positive for COVID-19 but do not experience symptoms:** should self-isolate until:

- At least 10 days have passed since the date of the first positive test AND

- They continue to have no symptoms (no cough or shortness of breath) since the test.
- Persons with no symptoms and are a close contact of a COVID positive person should:**
- Self-Isolate for 14 days.
  - Seek medical care if develop symptoms.

## **Wearing Face Coverings and Other Personal Protective Equipment**

**(PPE):** It will be necessary for employees and students to wear face coverings unless six feet social distancing can be met. It is expected that employees and students wear face coverings in order to prevent the spread of the virus. This is a recommendation by the CDC.

**Response to Exclusion from School or Self-Quarantine:** As soon as the district becomes aware of a student or employee that may have COVID-19 or that has been excluded from school or recommended to self-quarantine, the custodial staff will be informed so that all desks, lockers, and workspaces of the person can be thoroughly disinfected. If the school is not open when notification occurs, the custodial staff will wait 24 hours, or as long as possible, prior to disinfecting and will instead block off the area so that others do not have contact. However, if that is not possible or school is in session, the cleaning will occur immediately.

**Confirmed Case of COVID-19 in the School Building:** If there is confirmation that a person infected with COVID-19 was in a school building, the district will be in communication with the local health department. If there is a positive case, the Department of Public Health will communicate and be involved appropriately. The district will continue to work with the Department of Public Health to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and families.

**Lunch Procedures:** When the AM cohort is being dismissed, they will be able to get a “Grab and Go” lunch (student account will be charged). They will be able to eat this lunch when they are home. The PM group will arrive at school at 11:45 and get the same lunch in a “Grab and Go” bag/container (student account will be charged). Again, students will proceed to their designated area and eat lunch there as social distancing will be met in this environment.

**Transportation:** It will be necessary for all students riding the bus to wear a mask. Seats will be assigned for the purpose of health and safety. If seating is limited and we are not able to assign individual seats, siblings and/or household members will be assigned to sit together. Buses will be disinfected following each route.

**Visitors:** Visitors will be limited in the buildings.

**Social/Emotional/Behavioral Health:** All staff will receive Trauma-Sensitive training on identifying and responding to symptoms of trauma in staff and students. Because research has consistently shown that trauma alters the brain’s executive functioning capacity, we will be working with building leadership teams to incorporate trauma-sensitive, cognitive and social emotional interventions, into our current system of supports.



We may survey families, staff, and students. The survey results would be used to determine the social/emotional/behavioral health needs of those groups. Our counselors are putting together a list of resources available to our students, staff, and families which will be available in August. Families are encouraged to reach out if additional concerns arise.

**Academic Requirements:** Students will be assigned an AM or PM attendance time 8:00-11:15 & 12:15-3:30. This will allow us to continue to run our bus routes once per day.

AM/PM groups have not yet been determined, but will be completed in early August after registration. When completed, they will be shared for possible scheduling purposes.

(PK-4) During this time the academic focus will be on Literacy and Math. Material that pertains to Social Studies and Science concepts will be integrated into the Literacy curriculum. Specials may be delivered in a nontraditional manner during this time.

(5-12) During this time these grades will include all subject areas by alternating morning and afternoon classes every other day. For example, Periods 1-4 will be taught both AM and PM on Monday; Periods 5-8 will be taught both AM and PM on Tuesday, etc.

(11:15-12:15) Staff will be provided this time to have a duty-free lunch and time to clean.

**Extra-curricular activities:** Extra-curricular activities may take place based on guidance from several state and local agencies, including the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa High School Athletic Association, Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union, and Iowa High School Music Association.

## **Delivery Model 3: Online (At Home)**

In response to school closure, we will have 100% of our students learning at home through our online learning platform or through other methods.

**Academic Requirements:** **Attendance is required** and will be taken remotely. Teachers will provide instruction through the online learning platform (PK-4 Seesaw or 5-12 Canvas) or other methods. They will be available during regular school contract hours. Assignments will be given, submitted, and grades will be assigned. A shortened schedule will be utilized to maximize learning and minimize screen time.

## Remote Learning Recommendations During COVID-19 Emergency

Grade Level	Minimum	Maximum	Recommended Length of Sustained Attention
PreK	20 minutes/day	60 minutes/day	3–5 minutes
K	30 minutes/day	90 minutes/day	3–5 minutes
1-2	45 minutes/day	90 minutes/day	5–10 minutes
3–5	60 minutes/day	120 minutes/day	10–15 minutes
6–8	Class: 15 minutes/day Total: 90 minutes/day	Class: 30 minutes/day Total: 180 minutes/day	1 subject area or class
9–12	Class: 20 minutes/day Total: 120 minutes/day	Class: 45 minutes/day Total: 270 minutes/day	1 subject area or class

Source: [Illinois State Board of Education, 2020](#)

**Student Access:** The school district is working on a plan to provide Internet access points for those who may have a lack of connectivity in the home. Further information will be available at a later date.

**Social/Emotional/Behavioral Health:** Teachers and counselors will use a virtual check-in system to evaluate the social-emotional needs of students. We may survey families, staff, and students. The survey results would be used to determine the social/emotional/behavioral health needs of those groups. Our counselors will continue to assist with resources needed. Families are encouraged to reach out if additional concerns arise.

**Extra-curricular activities:** Extra-curricular activities may take place based on guidance from several state and local agencies, including the Iowa Department of Education, Iowa High School Athletic Association, Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union, and Iowa High School Music Association.

# **Appendix**

Page 1: ***Reopening Iowa's Schools Safely and Responsibly***

**State of Iowa, Iowa Department of Education, and  
Iowa Department of Public Health**

Page 2: ***Evaluating Sick Students and Staff***

**State of Iowa, Iowa Department of Education, and  
Iowa Department of Public Health**

# RETURN TO LEARN

## Reopening Iowa's Schools Safely and Responsibly

### COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION: NONE TO MINIMAL

0-5% positivity in county on average over the past 14 days

\* Healthcare resources remain stable

#### SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

- Stay home if you are sick or exposed to someone confirmed to have COVID-19
- Practice frequent hand-washing
- Stay 6 feet from others as much as possible
- Use face coverings when able to do so safely and correctly
- Maintain frequent cleaning schedule using EPA-approved cleaning products
- Monitor absenteeism among teachers, staff, and students

#### RETURN-TO-LEARN MODEL(S)

On-Site Learning following DOE, IDPH and CDC guidance.

Hybrid Learning as necessary based on:

- Parent or guardian preference
- Student quarantine

### COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION: MINIMAL TO MODERATE

6-14% positivity in a county on average over the past 14 days

\* Healthcare resources remain stable

#### SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

- Continue above strategies
- Reduce group events/gatherings
- Limit inter-school interactions
- Ensure student and staff groupings/cohorts are as static as possible and that interactions among groups of students and staff are limited

#### RETURN-TO-LEARN MODEL(S)

On-Site Learning following DOE, IDPH and CDC guidance.

Hybrid Learning as necessary based on:

- Parent or guardian preference
- Student quarantine

### COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION: SUBSTANTIAL CONTROLLED

15-20% positivity in a county on average over the past 14 days AND 10% absenteeism among students expected for in-person learning

\*Healthcare resources remain stable

#### SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

- Continue above strategies
- Consider regular health checks for any on-site students/staff if feasible
- Cancel school events/gatherings
- Close communal spaces (e.g., cafeterias, media centers)

#### RETURN-TO-LEARN MODEL(S)

Hybrid Learning as necessary based on:

- Parent or guardian preference
- Student quarantine

Temporary Continuous/Remote Learning for an entire school building or district for up to 14 days may be requested:

- Please contact the Department of Education by submitting your information via the CASA system.
- Only the Departments of Education and Public Health can make the determination and provide temporary authorization to move to 100% online or remote learning.

### COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION: SUBSTANTIAL UNCONTROLLED

>20% positivity in a county on average over the past 14 days with healthcare resource capacity concerns

#### SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

State and local education and public health officials should work closely together to make decisions on school operations.

#### RETURN-TO-LEARN MODEL(S)

Temporary Continuous/Remote Learning for an entire school building or district for up to 14 days may be requested:

- Please contact the Department of Education by submitting your information via the CASA system.
- Only the Departments of Education and Public Health can make the determination and provide temporary authorization to move to 100% online or remote learning.



# EVALUATING SICK STUDENTS AND STAFF

## Reopening Iowa's Schools Safely and Responsibly

### HIGH RISK SYMPTOMS

New cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell

### LOW RISK SYMPTOMS

Fever, headache, muscle and body aches, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, congestion, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea

Students and staff members should remain home when sick. Students or staff members with any high-risk symptom or two or more low risk symptoms should stay home and are advised to seek an evaluation by a health care provider.

### EVALUATION BY HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

#### NEGATIVE COVID-19 TEST

Return to school after 24 hours with no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine) and symptoms improving

#### ALTERNATIVE DIAGNOSIS

#### POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST

Return to school after 24 hours with no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine) and symptoms improving and 10 days since symptoms started

### IDENTIFYING CLOSE CONTACTS FOR COVID-19 CASES

Close Contact: Individuals who've been within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes with a positive COVID-19 case during the infectious period. Contact may occur in a classroom, lunchroom, free period, during transportation to or from school, at practices or games, and during extracurricular activities.

#### SCHOOL WILL:

- Notify local public health department
- Identify close contacts and quarantine exposed students and staff
- Notify appropriate school administration, families and staff (without identifying the COVID-19 case)
- Provide Public Health with list of close contacts

#### PUBLIC HEALTH WILL:

- Recommend quarantine for all household contacts of COVID-19 case
- Work with school to determine which students and staff should be quarantined

#### STUDENTS

- If no symptoms develop, students can return to school 14 days from their last contact with the COVID-19 case
- If symptoms develop, students should be evaluated by a health care provider
- If a student tests positive for COVID-19, they should isolate for 10 days
- If a student tests negative for COVID-19, they must still complete their 14-day quarantine before returning to school

#### STAFF

- Staff may be considered critical personnel and can be allowed to return to work if there are staffing shortages as long as they remain asymptomatic
- Staff should take their temperature and screen for symptoms at the start and end of each day, and wear a mask at work
- If symptoms develop, they must isolate immediately

#### INDIVIDUALS PREVIOUSLY POSITIVE

- Those who have been previously diagnosed positive for COVID-19 within the past 12 weeks, and were exposed to a COVID-19 case, do not need to quarantine

