

Kirksville R-III School District

June 2021

Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan (SRCSP) Pandemic Response Plan

The Kirksville R-III School District remains steadfast in our commitment to providing education with distinction while maintaining the safest possible environment. The Board of Education and district leaders worked diligently on plans to address the effects of the COVID-19 including actions to take should this virus become a threat in the future. We thank the parents, staff, and community volunteers who served on various planning groups for their invaluable insight and guidance. Although our students returned safely to on-site instruction in March of 2021, this document will provide general guidance in the event the District is forced to again alter our instruction due to the covid virus.

Our schools are designed to educate students through social, face-to-face interactions, in relatively close spaces and in large groups. The benefits of this approach to education are well accepted. We have heard from our community and access to school is important. We also know our community prioritizes student and staff safety, and expects thoughtful and continuous attention to managing any ongoing impact of recent pandemic. We continue to hold to the following priorities:

- Providing environments that are as safe as possible for students and staff
- Ensuring engaging and high-quality education

Plan Review/Revision:

All elements of the plan will be reviewed, at least every six months, (more frequently should conditions warrant). The review process includes consultation with the Superintendent's *COVID Advisory* group made up of board members, representatives from the Adair County Health Department; Northeast Regional Medical Center, ATStill University, local doctors, school administrators, and Kirksville Regional Economic Development, and the Kirksville Community Teachers Association. Additional input will be obtained from the *Superintendent's Student Advisory Committee*; High School Student Council; and Kirksville Area Teachers Association. Any proposed revisions to the SRCSP will be made available to the general public before they are put into effect.. Flexibility is key as we use a lens of equity in striving to meet the educational, physical, and emotional well-being needs of our students, staff, and community.

The following protocols were developed with consultation from health care professionals, guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Missouri and Adair County Health Departments, and Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). We are confident that our previous success with implementing mitigation strategies can quickly and effectively be deployed again should COVID-19 or other pandemic events resurface. *NOTE: Individual schools will have some flexibility in the application of the mitigation measures, and each school's plan will also be available on the school district website.*

Before arriving at school:

Safety precautions will be taken by school personnel and we ask that parents do the same. Just as parents should keep their child at home if they are ill, staff who are ill must stay home.

Daily self or parent scan: Any student or staff member with a fever of 100.4 degrees or greater or COVID-like symptoms should not be present in school. **Students will not be permitted to return to school or ride the school bus** until the individual is fever-free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours. These students will not be allowed to re-enter the school **or ride the bus** until the individual is **re-assessed by the school nurse** to be fever-free without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours and **symptoms are improving or the student has a written release from a medical doctor to return to school**. Parents/students and staff should perform a home self-scan each morning for the following possible **COVID-19 symptoms**:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sudden fatigue
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Close contact with a person with COVID-19 in the last 14 days

This list is subject to change as new symptoms of COVID-19 are identified.

The following link is a guide to help make decisions and seek appropriate medical care:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

School personnel will monitor students for signs and symptoms of illness as they enter

the school and/or classroom. *Temperature checks may be administered at individual buildings/offices.*

Physical/Social Distancing: School leaders will leverage space in innovative ways. Physical/Social distancing is an effective preventive measure and schools will strive to maintain the optimum physical distance within the schools. By observing physical distance in schools and reducing contacts, we can limit the number of children (and staff members) who will need to quarantine if a positive case occurs in school.

- Large spaces, such as multi-purpose rooms and auditoriums will be marked and utilized to account for appropriate physical distancing. Large gatherings (such as all-school assemblies and school-wide celebrations) will be limited or cancelled if necessary.
- The risk of transmitting the virus outdoors is much lower, so schools will utilize outdoor learning spaces as frequently as weather permits.
- In K-5 classrooms (and 6-12th grades when possible), every effort will be made to maintain cohort groups (children will remain in one classroom for learning). Ample time for children to use the restroom and be outside will be scheduled. A cohort is an individual's personal group who will be in their 6-foot perimeter and with whom they will usually interact (these are the people who they usually. Cohorting may not be feasible for middle and high school students and thus, assigned seating will help to reduce contacts among older students.
- Schools will use assigned seating, and keep records of those seating charts to assist with identifying close contacts in the event a member of the school community is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- If classes must rotate, schools will consider rotating teachers, rather than moving groups of students throughout the school building.
- Strict adherence to a specific size of student groups is discouraged, as this may limit the ability to provide in-person education.
- Students will be spaced as far apart as possible. Three to six feet is recommended. When six feet is not attainable face coverings will be used to help in mitigation.
- Desks will be placed facing forward in the same direction so students do not sit face-to-face.
- Schools will place physical distancing markers and cues throughout the building, which will remind and prompt students to remain six feet apart in areas where they are not stationary, such as hallways, cafeterias, restrooms and other locations where lines assemble.

- Schools will require hand hygiene before and after students move from one space to another within the building. Proper hand hygiene information will be taught to students of all ages and all staff.
- Posters and signs to remind students and staff about cough etiquette and hand hygiene will be displayed in bathrooms, cafeteria, classrooms etc. In addition, parents/guardians will receive similar information through school communication forums such as newsletters, social media postings, etc., and will be reminded to keep sick children home from school.
- Visitors to the buildings will be limited and properly screened.

Contact Tracing

In conjunction with the Adair County Health Department, the District has trained between 10-12 employees as contact tracers. These tracers work in assigned buildings with schedules that are flexible enough to allow a very swift response to identifying close contact students and staff. From communication with the Health Department close contacts to positive cases are notified of the length of their quarantine and are only released upon the consent of the Health Department.

Special Education

Every child and adolescent with a disability is entitled to a free and appropriate education and is entitled to special education services based on their individualized education program (IEP). Students receiving special education services may be more negatively affected by distance-learning and may be disproportionately impacted by interruptions in regular education. It may not be feasible, depending on the needs of the individual child and adolescent, to adhere both to distancing guidelines and the criteria outlined in a specific IEP. Attempts to meet physical distancing guidelines may require creative solutions, often on a case-by-case basis.

- All special education students will be provided instruction relative to their IEP goals.
- A child's case manager will work with families to ensure a child's IEP is being met.
- Services will be provided in a pull-out and/or push-in model to ensure the student's IEP goals are being addressed.

Large gatherings will be limited based on current CDC recommendations. This may result in:

- Students report to a classroom or designated area upon arrival, instead of gathering in common areas such as the cafeteria, hallways, gyms, etc.
- Altered cafeteria procedures
- Limited attendance and/or guidelines at sporting or other events
- Concerts and performances in small groups
- Cancellation or modification of school dances or parties

Masks and Face Coverings: Recommendations from health professionals regarding face coverings are an important strategy to reduce transmission of virus infections from both the wearer and others nearby. Any required use of masks will be upon the advice of the medical community partners, and local health department mandates. Persons will remain free to wear masks at any time, even if there may not be a school requirement to do so. Published guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics has indicated that “cloth face coverings can be safely worn by all children 2 years of age and older, including the vast majority of children with underlying health conditions, with rare exception.”

When necessary to pivot to Level 1 or Level 2 the wearing of face masks will become the expectation depending upon the school and level of operations.

- *School staff* members will wear masks at Levels 1 and 2, as the data indicates COVID-19 transmission is more likely from adult to student, than from student to adult. Face coverings should be worn by staff members at all times when they are in close proximity to students or other staff members. In lecture formats, where the teacher is stationary and appropriately physically distanced from students, face coverings may not be necessary.
- In some circumstances, such as when working with young children or deaf or hard of hearing students, the need to convey facial expressions and mouth movements is important; in these circumstances, the use of a clear face shield will be expected.
- **Face coverings for students are highly recommended and may be mandatory in some buildings/situations.**
- Older children, such as those in middle and high school, are likely to be able to follow guidance regarding proper mask usage. Additionally, these students are less easily cohorted. Thus, the use of face coverings can provide an additional layer of protection against the spread of infection. Staff and students will be instructed on the proper manner in which a face covering should be worn.
- Efforts will be made to destigmatize the wearing of face coverings through classroom conversations, student led organizations, social media, etc.

- Face coverings may be expected for 5th grade and under age groups during periods when students are not cohorted or cannot physically distance (e.g. in hallways or during entry and dismissal times).
- Students with medical conditions that prohibit them from being able to wear face covering will be exempt as long as they have a document from their medical provider.
- As noted above, it is also expected for all students to wear masks or face coverings while riding the bus.

Transportation: While bus transportation is available, due to COVID-19 physical/social distancing recommendations, it is highly recommended that parents consider providing transportation for their own children.

School bus transportation may not readily allow for physical distancing. However, strategies to reduce contact on buses and risk of infection will include:

- *Face masks will be required.*
- Screening of COVID-19 symptoms at home prior to getting on the bus.
- Encouraging hand hygiene upon boarding the bus.
- Assigning students to seats so contacts are stable.
- Seating siblings together.
- Loading the bus from back to front.
- Having windows open when safe and weather-permitting.
- Bus drivers and bus aides will use personal protective equipment, such as face masks and face shields and/or eye protection, as long as these do not impair driving.
- Busses will be frequently sanitized.
- Bus routes are subject to change.

Screening, Triage, and Vaccination: All possible precautions for absolute safety will be taken by all school personnel.

- Students and staff who have a fever (100.4 or higher without fever-reducing medication) and/or cough will be asked to stay home and report the absence to the building attendance office or supervisor.
- Students and staff who have been traveling must complete a daily self-screening (travel is defined as any place outside of Adair County). This self-screening outlines that you should not enter a building if, in the past 14 days, you have experienced:
 - A fever (100.4 or higher) or a sense of having a fever (you don't feel well)

- Chills, cough, sore throat, headache
- New loss of smell or taste, new muscle aches
- You or a close contact has been diagnosed or presumptively diagnosed with COVID-19
- Anyone allowed into the school buildings may be screened by school personnel.
- Individuals who are identified to have symptoms will be instructed to wear an appropriate mask, use hand sanitizer, and go to a designated area to be picked up by parents and sent home as soon as possible.
- Individuals suspected of being exposed to COVID-19 may be excluded from entry into the building.
- Health Services staff regularly keep a log of health room visits. The name and phone/number/address of all persons seen with fever and new cough will be recorded. Due to student privacy, these records are not public, however, information may be shared with the Adair County Health Department, as required. These students will not be allowed to re-enter the school until the individual is fever-free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours.
- Our onsite medical CaresCenter will continue to offer student screenings as well as help coordinate vaccination requests for students or staff who seek them. Vaccine clinics in partnership with local pharmacy providers and the Adair County Health Department will continue to be hosted by the district and individual vaccines will be available through the CaresCenter.

Contact with those with COVID:

The Adair County Health Department will provide guidance on students and staff who have had contact with people who are suspected COVID-19 positive. In the event of a suspected case of COVID-19, the following protocols will be followed:

SCENARIO: An employee or student doesn't feel well and visits the school nurse. The nurse determines symptoms may be COVID related. The employee or student will be temporarily separated from others.

STUDENT: The school nurse will contact the parent. If medically stable, the student will be monitored while in isolation until their parent/guardian is able to pick them up. When the parent arrives, the nurse will encourage the parent to have the child tested. The nurse will offer to assist the parent with making phone calls to the healthcare provider. The District on campus clinic: CFM Cares Center can provide testing for students at no charge. The healthcare provider will arrange for the student to be tested. If the student

tests positive for COVID, the healthcare provider will contact the parent. The Health Department will then contact the parent and conduct a risk assessment (contact tracing). The parent will be asked about any close contacts the student may have had from the 48 hours prior to symptoms up to and including the day the student began isolation measures. They will direct the parent on what the student and any other person at possible risk of being infected with what to do. If the student has been told to self-isolate, the family will be requested to call the school.

EMPLOYEE: The employee will contact their primary healthcare provider and the provider will arrange for testing. If the employee tests positive for COVID, the provider that ordered the test will call the employee with the positive result. The Health Department will also contact the employee and conduct a risk assessment (contact tracing). If the employee resides in a county other than Adair, then that county's Health Department will contact the employee. The Health Department will ask the employee about all close contacts the employee had from the 48 hours prior to symptoms up to and including the day the employee began isolation measures. They will direct the individual and any other person at possible risk of being infected with what to do. If the employee has been told to self-isolate, they should contact his/her/their direct supervisor/principal.