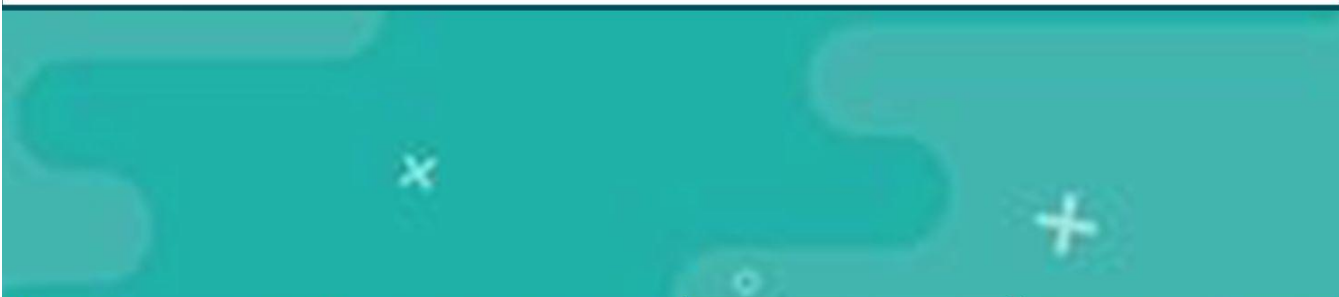




McHenry Elementary School District 15

FULL RETURN TO IN-PERSON LEARNING PLAN 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR



McHenry School District 15 Full Return To In-Person Learning Plan 2021-22 School Year



On September 7, 2021, Illinois State Superintendent of Education, Carmen Ayala, made the following Declaration:

“Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, all schools must resume fully in-person learning for all student attendance days, provided that, pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-30 and 105 ILCS 5/34-18.66, remote instruction must be made available for students who are excluded by a school pursuant to 77 Ill. Admin. Code 690.30, or students who are under isolation, quarantine, or adaptive pause consistent with guidance or requirements from a local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health.”

Therefore, per this Declaration, District 15 plans to operate a full, five days a week, in-person learning model for the 2021-2022 school year. District 15 has also adopted the McHenry County Interim School Guidance from the McHenry County Department of Health, which can be reviewed [here](#).

The 2020-2021 school year was unprecedented in education and has impacted all of us in various ways. Because of this, District 15 has been working diligently on reintroduction plans for our staff and students that meet the spirit of the Declaration in an effort to mitigate and address the impact of COVID-19. Our planning efforts encompass extensive health and safety measures along with implementing academic and social-emotional structures and supports that will assist students and families as they navigate back to school. Throughout our planning, the following points have served as our guiding principles:

- Follow the regulations and spirit of guidance from the CDC, ISBE, MCDH and the IDPH
- Prioritize the health and safety of all students and staff
- Maintain an emphasis on prioritizing in-person learning for all students
- Develop return to learn plans that recognize the impact COVID-19 has had on staff, students, and families
- Focus on social-emotional and mental health supports that will support a successful transition back to in-person learning
- Focus on academic supports that mitigate the impact COVID-19 has had on students
- Be able to develop contingency plans that allow for last-minute changes from ISBE, MCDH, the State, IDPH

Our goal is to provide support for all of our stakeholders during this transition back to full in-person learning. To that end, this document serves as a support to families in that regard as it describes in more detail the school environment that students will participate in this year.

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As stated above, current data and guidance supports District 15 return to a full in-person learning model. In our return to learn plans, we have reviewed recommendations, guidelines, and requirements outlined by the CDC, IDPH, Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and the McHenry County Department of Health, and have fully adopted all guidance from those agencies. As a reminder, District 15 will not have a remote learning option unless a student has not received a vaccination or is not eligible for a vaccination AND is quarantined under state and health department guidelines. Additionally, if a student tests positive for COVID-19 they will also be eligible to receive remote learning services.

Similar to pre-pandemic options, if parents do not wish to send their child(ren) for in-person instruction, they may:

- Home school their child(ren)
- Seek a doctor's approval for homebound instruction due to the student having a medical condition [click here](#) for additional information

School Hours

Students will attend in-person each day school is in session for the full day.

- Duker, Edgebrook, Hilltop: 8:35 AM - 3:15 PM
- Landmark, Riverwood, Valley View: 9:10 AM - 3:50 PM
- MMS, Parkland: 7:35 AM - 2:20 PM

Layered Prevention Strategies

In all District 15 school buildings and buses, multiple layered prevention strategies will be implemented that can include but are not limited to:

- Promoting COVID-19 immunization for all eligible staff and students.
- Per Executive Order, require all teachers, staff, students and visitors to wear a mask while indoors, regardless of vaccination status.
- Facilitate physical distancing to the greatest extent possible to the best of our ability.
- Promote and adhere to hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Improve ventilation throughout all buildings.
- Increased efforts and adherence to cleaning and disinfecting.
- Requiring individuals who are sick to stay home and get tested for COVID-19.
- Require contact tracing in combination with isolation of those with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and quarantine of close contacts, in collaboration with the local health department.
- Exploration of options for COVID-19 testing for students and staff.
- Completion of school year COVID-19 certification

School Year COVID-19 Certification

Parents and guardians will be required to complete a one-time symptom [self-certification form](#) prior to the start of school instead of completing the form daily through Skyward Family Access. Parents are asked to fill out one form for each student who attends a District 15 school.

Masks

Following the new [Executive Order](#), universal indoor masking is **required** for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status. Masks do not need to be worn outdoors; however, in areas of high transmission or in crowded outdoor settings, it is recommended that unvaccinated people wear masks. Masks are required for all students and staff on school buses, regardless of vaccination status. Mask exemptions for medical conditions remain available. Masks will be required for all indoor extracurricular activities and athletics, as well. These guidelines are subject to change based upon changes in applicable factors including an increase or decrease in COVID-19 rates or revised public health guidance.

Transportation

We encourage our parents to transport their children if they are able to do so to minimize the number of students on a bus. At this time, buses will return to their full capacity and will not be capped at 50 people to prioritize in-person learning for all students. Masks will be **required** to be worn on the school bus for all students and staff regardless of their vaccination status. Additionally, buses will be cleaned and disinfected regularly. When weather permits, windows will be opened on school transportation to aid in air ventilation. Seating charts will be required on all school buses.

Questions about transportation services should be directed to officetr@d15.org or 779-244-1090.

Health Measures

In addition to the layered prevention strategies listed earlier, McHenry D15's health measures will include but not be limited to:

- General and close contact notifications of positive COVID-19 cases
- COVID-19 Dashboard for confirmed cases in District 15 schools
- Continued use of supervised isolation rooms
- Contact tracing in conjunction with local health departments
- Implementing quarantine guidelines for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals
- Vaccinated staff and students are not required to quarantine but testing is recommended 3-5 days after exposure

Building Capacities & Learning Spaces

- Students fully engage in all content areas including core subjects, specials, and exploratories
- Teachers may work with small groups of students in closer proximity
- Blending the best of pre-COVID and COVID learning to create safe, respectful learning environments where students are engaged and challenged
- Students leverage technology devices to support independent and group learning
- Access to before and after school activities in compliance with CDC/IDPH guidelines
- Use of locker spaces will be determined by individual schools and follow CDC/IDPH recommendations

Social Distancing

Students and staff will be encouraged to maintain proper social distancing. The CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing, to reduce transmission risk. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance

of at least 3 feet, schools will layer multiple prevention strategies to prevent the risk of possible COVID-19 cases.

Lunch

At this time, all meals will continue to be at no-cost to students in the 2021-2022 school year. Cafeterias and food service will operate utilizing mitigation guidance to the greatest extent possible. Seating charts will be required in the cafeterias. Increased cleaning and disinfection protocols will be practiced.

Recess

Recess will continue to be held outdoors as long as weather permits. Use of playground equipment will be allowed. Social distancing will be enforced outside as well as proper hand washing/sanitizing at the beginning and end of recess. At this time, masks will not be required outside. During inclement weather students will be assigned to indoor spaces for recess and we will implement preventative mitigation measures to the greatest extent possible.

Hallways/Restrooms

Each building will establish restroom and hallway procedures to maintain social distancing and health guidelines in the safest way possible.

- Bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected thoroughly throughout the day. Standard procedures have been modified to accommodate more frequent cleaning and disinfection. Each building has a bathroom cleaning protocol with a maintenance log.
- Bathroom usage will be monitored and regulated to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

Physical Education

Physical Education will be offered in accordance with ISBE/CDC/IDPH guidelines. It has yet to be determined when middle school students will begin changing for Physical Education. Schools will communicate this with their students when this process is reintroduced.

Band, Chorus, and Music Education

Band, chorus, and music education will be offered in accordance with ISBE/CDC/IDPH guidelines.

Shared Materials

Appropriate hygiene will be encouraged before and after the use of shared materials. At this time, drinking fountains will not be in service except for bottle fillers. Students will be allowed to bring water bottles from home.

Visitors

We will continue to minimize visitors in the school buildings. Health and safety measures must be adhered to by all visitors, staff, and students. Special education (IEP) meetings will continue to be scheduled virtually with families. When visitors enter a school building it is required they wear a face mask regardless of their vaccination status.

Quarantine/Isolation Requirements

The McHenry County Department of Health (MCDH) will make the final determination on who is to be quarantined and for how long. MCDH may determine that a close contact is not a candidate for modified quarantine (options 2-4 above) due to a high-risk exposure (e.g., sustained close contact without masking). MCDH may remove use of options from schools if it is determined that compliance for the option is not occurring or not possible for the school. MCDH may remove use of options from schools based on level of community transmission. Updated as of September 3, 2021:

- **Option 1:** Quarantine at home for 14 calendar days. Date of last exposure is considered day 0 (standard quarantine).
- **Option 2:** Quarantine for 10 calendar days after the close contact's last exposure to the COVID-19 case, **providing the close contact tested negative for COVID-19 using a negative SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic test (PCR) that was collected on day 9 or 10. The earliest the close contact can return to school is day 11, on the condition that documentation of the negative PCR test result (from day 9 or 10) is provided to the school; the close contact cannot return to school until this documentation is received.** Date of last exposure is considered day 0. This can only be used for return to classroom, not extracurricular activities. Please see the [ISBE and IDPH joint guidance](#) for additional criteria that must be met for this option.
- **Option 3:** Quarantine for 7 calendar days after the close contact's last exposure to the COVID-19 case, providing the close contact tested negative for COVID-19 using a negative SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic test (PCR) that was collected on day 6 or 7. The earliest the close contact can return to school is day 8, on the condition that documentation of the negative PCR test result (from day 6 or 7) is provided to the school; the close contact cannot return to school until this documentation is received. Date of last exposure is considered day 0. This can be only be used for return to classroom, not extracurricular activities. Please see the [ISBE and IDPH joint guidance](#) for additional criteria that must be met for this option.
- **Option 4:** Test to Stay Strategy; if close contact is tested on days one, three, five, and seven from date of exposure by a PCR or rapid antigen or molecular emergency use authorization (EUA)-approved test, close contact is permitted to remain in the classroom as long as the results are negative. Results must be obtained within 24 hours from specimen collection, otherwise Test to Stay cannot be used and close contact must be placed on quarantine using option 1, 2, or 3 above. Date of last exposure is considered day 0. In general, close contact can return to extracurricular activities if using this option. Please see the [ISBE and IDPH joint guidance](#) for additional information regarding this option, including criteria that must be met for this option. Schools must notify MCDH of all students and staff that have successfully completed testing and remained negative through the School Surveillance REDCap Test to Stay Reporting Form (choose "Test to Stay Reporting Form" under "Surveillance System Selection").
 - **While McHenry County is in high transmission of COVID-19, students cannot use this option to return to high-risk extracurricular activities. Students can use this option to return to the classroom and extracurricular activities that are not considered high risk. High-risk extracurricular activities are defined by [CDC](#) as those in which increased**

- exhalation occurs, such as activities that involve singing, shouting, band, or exercise, especially when conducted indoors.
- While McHenry County is in high transmission, anyone using options 2-4 above cannot use the school bus for 14 calendar days after the close contact's last exposure to the COVID-19 case.
 - While McHenry County is in high transmission, modified quarantine (options 2-4 above) cannot be used for close contacts who meet all of the following criteria:
 - Exposure occurred in the cafeteria
 - The COVID-19 case or close contact was not engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitting masks (such as while eating)
 - While unmasked, the COVID-19 case and close contact were within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes while in the cafeteria
 - All external (i.e. outside of school) exposures will be investigated on a case-by-case basis. MCDH will determine whether modified quarantine options (options 2-4 above) can be used based on its investigation. If it is determined that the close contact meets criteria for modified quarantine, MCDH will notify the school liaison. Otherwise, all external exposures should quarantine at home for 14 calendar days (option 1 above).

COVID-19 Communications

District 15 will no longer send emails to staff and parents about positive COVID cases; however, students identified as a close contact will continue to be notified by the school and/or health department. COVID-19 health metrics in our buildings can be found on the [District 15 COVID Dashboard](#) which is updated weekly.

Remote Learning Experience For Students In Quarantine

In the event that your student is placed in quarantine or tests positive for COVID-19, they will be offered remote learning during this time. If either of these events occur, your school will work with you to set up the schedule and technological supports necessary.

Medically Necessary Home/Hospital Instruction

Only for approved applications due to a medical need

District 15 will continue to provide home/hospital services to qualifying students with medical conditions for which a doctor certifies that the child can not attend school. Home/Hospital instruction provides 1 hour a day (or 5 hours a week) of instruction. Please contact Kelli Catini, Executive Director of Student Services, if you have any questions regarding home/hospital instruction.

[ISBE Home/Hospital Q&A](#)
[Medical Certification for Home/Hospital Instruction](#)

Facilities Management

The custodial staff has increased cleaning and disinfection of commonly used areas and materials. Appropriate cleaning supplies such as electrostatic sprayers are used to disinfect rooms on a regular basis. Contact cleaning occurs in classrooms during the day as needed by teachers. Disinfectant has been provided to all staff so cleaning can occur throughout the day. Students may assist in wiping down their workspace or eating area during the day.

Students and staff will use hand sanitizer throughout the day, especially as they enter and exit classrooms. Hand washing will occur as needed and before and after lunch. Students will be limited to small groups in the bathrooms.

Please note that this plan will be updated as ISBE/IDPH guidelines change.