

Bond County CUSD #2

Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

August 12, 2021

Introduction

COVID-19 has caused substantial disruption in our lives and the lives of our children. Recognizing that students across remote and in-person settings faced significant academic, social, emotional, and mental health challenges as a result of the interrupted education and the trauma caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Congress made emergency funds available to local school districts to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. Most recently, funds available through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act require that school districts develop a *Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services*. As such, this plan has been developed in accordance with the ARP Act and the Illinois State Superintendent of Education declaration of July 9, 2021; is aligned with guidance provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and addresses adjustments needed in response to evolving COVID-19 pandemic circumstances. Taking the public's input into account, this plan was also developed through meaningful consultation with a collaborative of students, parents, school and district administrators (including special education administrators), teachers, school staff, food service staff, transportation service staff, labor association leaders, and county health department officials. Opportunity for the public to provide input was provided from July 15-20 through a web-based comment platform. Upon request, this plan will be provided in an alternative format accessible to parents who are individuals with a disability as defined by the ADA. This plan will also be made publicly available on the district's website. School strategies in this plan may be removed based upon local conditions, levels of community transmission (i.e., low, moderate, substantial, or high), local vaccine coverage, use of screening testing to detect cases in K-12 schools, and consultation with local public health officials to determine the prevention strategies needed. School officials will communicate any changes in plans to staff members, students, and parents through the district's regular communication platforms. We all play a role in limiting the spread of COVID-19 so our children can return to regular school days and activities.

Maintaining the Health and Safety of Students, Educators, and Other Staff

In accordance with the Illinois State Superintendent of Schools July 9, 2021 declaration, **all Bond County CUSD #2 schools will be open fully for in-person learning for the 2021-22 school year**. Under the declaration, remote learning is only required to be provided to students who have not received a COVID-19 vaccine or who are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, only while they are under quarantine consistent with guidance or requirements from a local public health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health. If a student does not meet the above criteria, but requests remote learning due to a medical condition, the request for remote learning will be evaluated under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If the student has a qualifying medical condition, the student may be provided home/hospital instruction. Absent an order from the Illinois State Board of Education and/or the Illinois Governor's Office, Bond County CUSD #2 schools will be in operation in accordance with the CDC's updated (July 9, 2021) *Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Kindergarten (K)-12 Schools*, also adopted by the IDPH on July 9, 2021. These guidelines include the following:

1. Face coverings/Mask Use

- On August 4th a mask mandate was issued by Governor JB Pritzker. As a result, mask use is required indoors for students, staff and visitors. Mask use is also required while on district transportation. In general, masks do not need to be worn for outdoor activities (e.g., participating in outdoor play, recess, physical education, sports, extra curriculars) unless the activities involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission.

2. Physical Distancing

- To the extent possible within school and classroom structures so that it does not exclude students from full day in-person learning, school staff are to help students commit to physical distancing as much as possible by:
 - arranging furniture, play spaces and naptime materials to model and reinforce physical distancing of at least 3 feet and movement, when possible;
 - providing assigned seating for students and encouraging students to remain in these seats to the greatest extent possible; and
 - developing marked paths of travel in classrooms and corridors.
- School staff will maximize physical distance as much as possible when moving through food service lines and while eating indoors. Aside from the cafeteria, additional spaces for mealtime seating will be utilized when available and feasible (e.g., weather permitting). Students and staff who are fully vaccinated do not need to distance while eating.
- Physical distancing measures are to be done in an equitable manner that does not perpetuate academic, racial, or other tracking (e.g., separating people into fully vaccinated and non-fully vaccinated cohorts).

3. Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

- School staff will monitor and reinforce frequent handwashing and respiratory etiquette by
 - continuing to teach handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
 - assisting young children with handwashing;
 - reminding everyone in the facility to wash hands frequently;
 - using hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol (for teachers, staff, and older students who can safely use hand sanitizer) when handwashing is not possible;
 - continuing to teach respiratory etiquette (e.g., covering coughs and sneezes); and
 - providing adequate handwashing and hand sanitizer supplies that are safely stored (up, away, and out of sight of young children and used only with adult supervision for children under 6 years of age).

4. Facility and Transportation Cleaning, Disinfection and Ventilation

- School custodial staff and transportation staff will continue to clean surfaces daily. To further reduce the risk of spreading infection, these staff will also use disinfectants on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency COVID-19 “List N” to disinfect spaces occupied by someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours.
- Maintenance staff will continue to regularly replace school ventilation system filters by using high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters. Although regular tests indicate a high quality of indoor air in our schools, aged ventilation systems are being replaced by new systems to improve the control and reliability of air circulation.
- When possible, staff will open doors and windows, use child-safe fans, and may have activities, classes, or lunches outdoors when circumstances allow.

- When it does not pose a safety risk, transportation staff will keep vehicle windows open at least a few inches to improve air circulation.

5. Contact Tracing in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine

- The authority to quarantine or issue isolation orders comes from the Bond County Health Department or IDPH.
- Students and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as influenza (flu) or COVID-19, should stay home and contact their healthcare provider for testing and care.
- Individuals in our school environments who show symptoms of COVID-19 are to immediately report to or be escorted to the school's office to be either sent home or be quarantined in the school's supervised safe area while awaiting pickup/evaluation. Students and staff are required to wear masks while in the safe area. Parents should ensure that ill students are picked up from school promptly upon being notified. Ill students will not be allowed to utilize the school bus to return home. To facilitate COVID-19 diagnosis and inform the need for quarantine of close contacts and isolation, a rapid COVID-19 test can be administered on site only with parental consent.
- Students and staff who are not fully vaccinated should quarantine after a recent exposure to someone with COVID-19. Fully vaccinated people who were in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but do NOT have COVID-19 symptoms do not need to quarantine or be tested. Quarantine decisions will be made and communicated by Bond County Health Department officials.
- Student absences related to a COVID-19 isolation or quarantine will be recorded as excused. To ensure continuity of services, school work missed during such an absence can be requested and made up in accordance with the school's policy (refer to student handbook); social, emotional, mental health, or other needs will be provided in accordance with a student's IEP or 504 Plan. Parents of students who have social, emotional, mental health, or other needs outside of an IEP or 504 Plan should contact their child's principal to discuss needs. Remote instruction will only be made available to students who have not received a COVID-19 vaccine or who are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, only while they are under quarantine consistent with guidance or requirements from a local public health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health..
- Absent COVID-related leave days previously provided by Federal law, staff absences related to a COVID-19 isolation or quarantine will be recorded in accordance with the district's sick leave policy and related professional negotiations agreements. To ensure continuity of services, staff members should contact their principals to discuss support for social, emotional, mental health, or other needs.
- To the extent allowable by privacy laws and other applicable laws, school health care professionals will continue to collaborate with Bond County Health Department officials to confidentially provide information about people diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19, including making notifications to staff and parents as soon as possible regarding those who were in close contact of someone in the school who tested positive for COVID-19.
- The school's health care professional will inform the school community of outbreaks while maintaining student and staff confidentiality rights.
- Students and staff suspected of having COVID-19, whether they were tested or not, are to follow the CDC guidelines to determine when they can return to school. Please see the COVID-19 Return to School Flowchart attached as Exhibit A.
- Following quarantine, students and staff returning from illness related to COVID-19 are to call to check in with the school's nurse.

6. Screening Testing

- When community transmission is at moderate, substantial, or high levels, parents can request COVID-19 screening testing for their students who have not been fully vaccinated by contacting the school's health care professional.
- At any level of community transmission, any staff member who has not been fully vaccinated can request COVID-19 screening testing by contacting the school's health care professional.

7. Promoting Vaccination

- The CDC states that vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic.
- BCCU#2 will continue to work with the Bond County Health department to share information with families regarding vaccine availability and clinics. Information regarding vaccines is also available at [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).

8. Disabilities or Other Health Care Needs

- Parents of students who need accommodations, modifications, or assistance related to COVID-19 safety protocols, disabilities, underlying medical conditions or weakened immune systems should contact their student's case manager to discuss the need(s).
- Staff members who need accommodations, modifications, or assistance related to COVID-19 safety protocols, disabilities, underlying medical conditions, weakened immune systems, or a sincerely held religious belief or practice (covered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) should contact their school's principal to discuss the need(s). Staff members with weakened immune systems are advised to contact their healthcare professional about the need for continued personal protective measures after vaccination.

9. Visitors

- Nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations with people who are not fully vaccinated are discouraged from visiting schools.

10. Collaboration with Public Health Officials

- District officials will continue to collaborate and consult with Bond County Health Department officials throughout a pandemic on various logistics and decision-making including, but not limited to, quarantines, school health and safety protocols, screening testing, contact tracing, vaccine clinics, and emergency school closings.

11. Plan Review

- Through September 30, 2023, this plan will be reviewed no less frequently than every six months and revised as appropriate based on school, community, and county positivity numbers and after consultation with local public health officials and considering public input. Revisions will address the most recently updated safety recommendations by the CDC, provided in an alternative format accessible to parents who are individuals with a disability as defined by the ADA, and made publicly available on the district's website.