

Aug 25, 2021

Dear Richland Community,

As expected, the start of school with a return to full-day, full capacity learning during the COVID19 pandemic has created some unique challenges. We appreciate our staff, parents, and students who have all pitched in to help when buses were late or other challenges arose. We are happy to report that our students, families, and staff have complied with our masking requirements and other mitigations while on the bus and on campus. THANK YOU! While not perfect, we are striving to maintain the safest environment possible for students and staff so that we can maintain in-person learning for all.

Part of maintaining a safe environment is being proactive in identifying possible cases of COVID19 and in communicating with families when students have potentially been exposed to COVID19 or are showing symptoms of COVID19. Our nursing staff is working diligently day, night, and weekends to identify and communicate when students need to quarantine and/or visit with their physician. We know it can be frustrating when these calls, emails, or letters come, but our staff is doing their job, which is to communicate the news and to ask for your assistance in getting students cleared to return to school as quickly as possible. Our staff has no control over the exclusion rules/guidelines set by various agencies, but we are required to follow and enforce them. Please be courteous and respectful to the staff when they have to share this news.

If your child is a close contact you will hear from the school directly. The notifications you may receive via letter (sent through email via Blackboard) are simply an FYI that someone in your child's grade level or bus has tested positive for COVID19. We send these so that you can keep an eye out for any symptoms, and are aware of what is happening. These letters DO NOT mean that your child has been directly exposed. Again, if we have that information, we will contact you directly.

This brings us to another critical piece of information we need at school - working contact information. Please make sure that the school has working phone numbers (with voicemail boxes that are not full), email addresses, and emergency contacts at all times. In an emergency situation, these are critical pieces of information we need in order to be able to reach someone who can assist us with your child's needs. It is also imperative when you receive phone calls or emails from our nursing staff asking you to contact them, that you respond quickly so that we can get information to you and from you.

If your child is absent from school, please be sure to call to report their absence and include information about the reason for their absence so we can determine if any follow-up is needed.

We understand that this is a difficult time for everyone. We appreciate the cooperation and flexibility of all of our school stakeholders during this stressful process. We can do this - if we work together on behalf of our students!

Sincerely,

Joseph Simpkins, Superintendent

25 de agosto de 2021

Estimada comunidad de Richland,

Como se esperaba, el comienzo de la escuela con un regreso al aprendizaje de jornada completa y plena capacidad durante la pandemia de COVID19 ha creado algunos desafíos únicos. Agradecemos a nuestro personal, padres y estudiantes que han contribuido a ayudar cuando los autobuses llegaban tarde o surgían otros desafíos o problemas. Nos complace informar que nuestros estudiantes, familias y personal han cumplido con nuestros requisitos de mascarillas cuando estaban en el autobús y en la escuela. ¡GRACIAS! Si bien no es perfecto, nos esforzamos por mantener el entorno más seguro posible para los estudiantes y el personal para que podamos mantener el aprendizaje en persona para todos.

Parte de mantener un ambiente seguro es ser proactivo en la identificación de posibles casos de COVID19 y en la comunicación con las familias cuando los estudiantes hayan estado potencialmente expuestos a COVID19 o están mostrando síntomas de COVID19. Nuestro personal de enfermería está trabajando diligentemente día, noche y los fines de semana para identificar y comunicar cuándo los estudiantes necesitan ponerse en cuarentena y/o visitar a su doctor. Sabemos que puede ser frustrante recibir estas llamadas, correos electrónicos o cartas, pero nuestro personal está haciendo su trabajo, que es comunicar la noticia y pedir su ayuda para que los estudiantes puedan regresar a la escuela lo antes posible. Nuestro personal no tiene control sobre las reglas/pautas de exclusión hechas por varias agencias, pero estamos obligados a seguirlas y hacerlas cumplir. Sea cortés y respetuoso con el personal cuando tenga que compartir esta noticia.

Si su hijo/a es un contacto cercano, recibirá contacto directamente de la escuela. Las notificaciones que puede recibir por carta (enviadas por correo electrónico a través de Blackboard) son simplemente información de que alguien en el nivel de grado de su hijo/a y/o en el autobús ha dado positivo por COVID19. Enviamos estos para que pueda estar atento a cualquier síntoma y sean conscientes de lo que está sucediendo. Las cartas NO significan que su hijo/a haya estado expuesto/a directamente. Nuevamente, si tenemos esa información, se lo haremos saber directamente.

Esto nos lleva a otra información fundamental que necesitamos en la escuela: información correcta ya actualizada para poder ponernos en contacto con ustedes. Asegúrese de que la escuela tenga números de teléfono que funcionen (con buzones de correo de voz que no estén llenos), direcciones de correo electrónico y contactos de emergencia en todo momento. En una situación de emergencia, estos son datos críticos que necesitamos para poder comunicarnos con alguien que pueda ayudarnos con las necesidades de su hijo/a. También es imperativo cuando reciba llamadas telefónicas o correos electrónicos de nuestro personal de enfermería pidiéndole que se comunique con ellos, que responda rápidamente para que podamos enviarle información a usted. Si su hijo/a está ausente de la escuela, asegúrese de llamar para informar sobre su ausencia e incluir información sobre el motivo de su ausencia para que podamos determinar si se necesita algún seguimiento.

Entendemos que este es un momento difícil para todos. Agradecemos la ayuda y flexibilidad de todos en nuestra escuela durante este proceso estresante. Podemos hacer esto, ¡si trabajamos juntos en nombre de nuestros estudiantes!

Atentamente,

Joseph Simpkins, Superintendent

Health and Safety Protocols

- 1. All staff, students, and visitors to the school will be required to follow the most current guidance regarding face masks/social distancing/etc.**
 - Students repeatedly not complying with the face mask requirements may be assigned disciplinary consequences.
- 2. Frequent and proper handwashing/sanitizing will be encouraged throughout the school day.**
 - Hand washing/sanitizing will be encouraged after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing; following restroom use; before and after eating; upon return from recess.
 - Classrooms with sinks will be stocked with antibacterial soap.
 - Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol will be available for use under the supervision of staff.
 - Parents will be encouraged to have their student(s) wash or sanitize their hands before arriving at bus stops or exiting cars in the car-rider line.

Responding to Infectious Disease Symptoms (COVID19)

- 1. Any infectious disease symptoms observed during the school day will be addressed immediately.**
 - The school nurse(s) will be available to assess students as needed.
 - Nurses will sanitize offices between visitors.
 - Students suspected of having COVID19 will be quarantined and monitored until parents/guardians pick them up from school.
 - Students should be picked up within one hour of notification from the school nurse.
 - If symptoms of an infectious disease (COVID19) are present in staff or students, they will be sent home.
- 2. All individuals identified as "close contact" with a confirmed case of COVID19 will be notified.**
 - Close contact means the individual was unmasked and within 3 ft. of the individual with symptoms for more than 15 minutes cumulatively in a 24-hour period.
 - Individuals with close contact with a symptomatic student or staff member will receive information outlining IDPH guidelines for monitoring for symptoms.
- 3. Symptomatic staff and students may not return to school unless they have met the IDPH guidelines.**
 - Students/staff who have been out of school due to illness for 3 or more days must present a doctor's note to return to school.
 - Medically fragile and immunocompromised students should consult with their medical provider before returning to school.

Responding to Confirmed Cases of Infectious Disease (COVID19)

- 1. Staff members with a confirmed case of COVID19 will be required to report their diagnosis to their administrator as allowable under current law, labor agreements, and school board policy.**
 - Staff members must report a COVID19 diagnosis.
 - Employee confidentiality will be maintained as required by Federal and State Law.
- 2. Parents/guardians of a student with a confirmed case of COVID19 will report a COVID19 diagnosis to the school nurse or administrator.**
 - Student confidentiality will be maintained as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family Education Rights, and Privacy Act, state law, and the Illinois School Code.
- 3. Local health officials will be notified of any known confirmed case of COVID19.**
 - The school district must notify the Will County Department of Public Health of any known confirmed cases of COVID19 within any school or district administration building.

4. **The school district will coordinate with local health officials to determine if and to what extent the school must be closed.**
 - The school district will consider recommendations from local and/or state health officials' regarding the scope of school closures, i.e. single classroom quarantine, multiple classroom quarantine, single school closure, multiple school closures, entire district closure, and the duration of those closures (days, weeks).
 - Interruptions to school will be handled on a case-by-case basis working collaboratively with the local health department.
5. **Schools will communicate regularly to their respective school communities**
 - Weekly Metrics will be provided on the school website
 - Individuals identified as "close contacts" will be contacted by the school
 - Letters will be sent to impacted families notifying them of a positive case in their child's grade level or bus. These letters are informational only - they do not require any action on the part of the family.
6. **Individual classrooms, identified areas within a school or entire school buildings will be cleaned and disinfected thoroughly before re-opening.**
 - Any area used by a staff member or student with a confirmed case of COVID19 will be immediately closed off until proper cleaning and disinfecting procedures have been completed.
 - The school district will follow all Will County Health Department, IDPH, and ISBE recommendations for sanitizing schools before re-opening.
 - Portable UV light units and/or disinfectant foggers may be deployed to sterilize surfaces or entire rooms.

Transportation

1. **Bus capacity**
 - Bus riders will practice social distancing to the greatest extent possible which may not be 3 feet
2. **All students will be assigned a seat.**
3. **Students will be encouraged to practice social distancing at bus stops.**
 - Students should maintain social distancing at bus stops.
 - Parents will be encouraged to monitor their student(s) social distancing practices at bus stops.
4. **To address reduced bus capacity, parents may choose to transport their student(s) to school.**
 - Families should notify the school if they do not intend to have their student(s) ride the bus.
5. **All bus drivers and students will be required to wear masks while occupying the bus.**
 - Any other employee assigned to assist on a bus route will also be required to wear a face mask.
 - School staff will work directly with parents of students for whom wearing a face covering may cause harm.
 - STUDENTS WITHOUT A FACE COVERING MAY NOT BOARD THE BUS.
6. **Windows may be opened as weather permits.**
 - To increase fresh airflow during operation, bus windows may be open as weather permits.
7. **Buses will be sanitized between bus routes to the greatest extent possible.**
 - High-touch areas will be sanitized between each route.
 - Parents are encouraged to have students sanitize their hands before arriving at the bus stop.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols

- 1. The school district will follow all recommendations from IDPH and ISBE for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting buses, equipment, classrooms, and buildings.**
 - The school district will utilize cleaning products that are known to combat COVID19 and are approved by the EPA for safe use in school.
- 2. Cordless electrostatic sprayers for quick and effective infection control will be utilized as recommended.**
 - Sprayers will be used when students are not present on buses or within school buildings.
 - Sprayers reduce the amount of time required to disinfect an area.
 - Sprayers will not replace other effective cleaning practices such as wiping down high-touch surfaces.
- 3. Portable UV light units may be deployed to sterilize surfaces or entire rooms.**
 - Portable ultraviolet light units may be used to sterilize classrooms and/or restrooms when those spaces are unoccupied and no students or staff (except trained operations staff) are present in the building.
- 4. Classrooms and restrooms will be sanitized throughout the day.**
 - Frequently touched classroom surfaces and restrooms will be cleaned and sanitized during the school day.
- 5. Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and sanitized frequently throughout the day.**
 - Frequently touched surfaces including but not limited to doorknobs and stair railings will be cleaned and sanitized throughout the school day.
- 6. All schools and the district office will be disinfected nightly.**
 - Sanitation procedures per recommendation from IDPH will be followed nightly to disinfect schools before use the next day.

STUDENT EXCLUSION & QUARANTINE PROTOCOLS

[Decision Tree for Symptomatic Individuals in Pre-K, K-12 Schools and DayCare Programs \(Click here for most up-to-date information\)](#)