

August 2, 2021

Dear Parents and Students:

I hope you are as excited as I am to start the 2021-2022 school year. Wednesday, August 11 will be here before we know it and we want to make sure we are as prepared as possible for the beginning of the school year. In July, we shared via a Connect 5 message, our draft version of the "Safe Return to Learn Framework" that outlined information about the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year and allowed opportunities for parents to provide feedback.

Since that time, additional information and data from the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, University of NE Med Center, and East Central District Health Department have all recommended that students and staff wear masks in school regardless of their vaccination status. **Currently, we are not mandating masks, but we are recommending masks for students, staff and any visitors who aren't fully vaccinated.** We will certainly consider national and state guidance, but we will rely on our local health districts and hospitals that are closest to our students and communities when making decisions.

We will be proactive regarding COVID and practice several safety protocols from the 2020-21 school year including frequent handwashing, providing school sanitizer in classrooms and hallways, encouraging frequent disinfecting of high touch classroom surfaces and post COVID signage in the hallways, classrooms and restrooms. We are asking parents to check for COVID-related symptoms before your children leave for school or ride the school bus. We will also use seating charts in classrooms, buses and lunchrooms for contact tracing reasons.

We want parents to know that we will monitor health conditions closely with the possibility that plans could change quickly for the health and safety of our students and staff. We will do our very best to communicate this information in a timely manner. We understand that not everyone will agree with all our decisions, but we will do what is in the best interest of our students and staff.

As we move forward, the advice from the local health experts will mean the most when it comes to making decisions or changing protocols about the school year. Attached is information from the East Central District Health Department to help parents understand what will be expected should students have COVID. It remains our goal to keep students in school for learning and prioritizing education, while mitigating the possible spread of COVID.

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please stop by, call us, email us as we are here to help make the 2021-2022 school year an awesome experience for every student.

Mr. Sjuts
Mr. King
Mr. Kirby

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Updated Recommendations to Limit COVID-19's Impact on Schools

East Central District Health Department (ECDHD) wants Nebraska schools to stay open and students to be in school. We recognize and value the unique nature of schools' role in the economic and mental well-being of children and adults.

ECDHD remains committed to working with our schools to keep students, faculty, and staff safe from COVID-19. Continued communication and partnership between schools and public health remains critical to our shared fight against COVID-19.

Consistent with the remediation of all communicable diseases (e.g. whooping cough, norovirus), ECDHD will issue guidance to schools to institute a mask mandate for a period of no less than 14 days in those buildings with an 11% absenteeism rate due to any illness. Absenteeism due to illness will be reviewed on a weekly basis thereafter and mask recommendations extended as needed.

THE BASICS:

Schools Can Avoid COVID-19 Outbreaks



- Actively encourage students and staff to get vaccinated for COVID-19.
- Encourage and enable frequent hand washing and sanitizing by staff and students.
- Continue to follow enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols.
- Ask students and staff to screen daily for COVID-19 symptoms.
- Require students or staff who are sick to stay home.
- Continue to follow social distancing protocols.
- Continue to issue assigned seating to students.

THE BASICS:

Individuals Can Help Their Schools Avoid COVID-19 Outbreaks



- Get vaccinated for COVID-19.
- Wear a mask, consistent with CDC guidance.
- Stay home when sick.
- Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 is required to isolate.
- Students and staff who are not vaccinated, and have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, self-monitor for 14 days and wear a mask.

