

# **SCHOOL CITY OF WHITING RETURN TO LEARN COVID-19 RE-ENTRY PLAN 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR**



The School City of Whiting Return to Learn COVID-19 Re-Entry Plan is guided by information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Indiana State Department of Health, and Local Board of Health. The School City of Whiting plan addresses the needs of our students, staff, and community as we work to keep our schools open during the COVID-19 pandemic. The district is working with the guidelines from these medical experts in order to do everything possible to protect our students and staff from COVID-19. It is our goal to provide the safest learning and working environment we can to protect all members of our School City of Whiting community.

It will take cooperation from every staff member, student, and parent to make the plan successful. Staff will need to be diligent in following procedures and protocols during the school day. Parents will need to be diligent in following the guidelines for only sending healthy students to school. Support of the procedures and protocols in the plan and consistent enforcement are key to keeping our school and students safe. Everyone will need to practice good hygiene measures, social distance as much as possible, and wear a mask during all indicated times. It is up to us to keep our school community healthy.

# RETURN TO LEARN GOALS

- Provide a learning environment with enhanced safety measures in place to keep the health of all students, staff, and community members our first priority
- Provide in person instruction as well as support and intervention services to all SCW students that meet their educational, physical, social, and emotional needs
- Work together with our families to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within the School City of Whiting community by following CDC, Indiana State Department of Health, and Lake County Board of Health guidelines
- Work with the ISDH and Lake County Board of Health in seeking vaccination opportunities for staff, students, and families within the Whiting Community.
- Implement daily health and safety protocols and procedures in all departments district wide
- Maintain clear, consistent, and timely communication with our parents and families
- Maintain approaches that are adaptable and flexible throughout the school year in response to changes with COVID-19 spread in our community
- Work closely with the Lake County Board of Health to plan for contingencies if we experience a school closure

# PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

## Commitment to a safe environment and accountability for one's actions

Every member of the School City of Whiting Community will take personal responsibility for following the health and safety guidelines in the COVID-19 re-entry plan.

All staff and students will participate in COVID-19 awareness education to learn the required safety practices for returning and participating at school.

All students/families and staff will monitor for and report all symptoms of COVID-19 to the School City of Whiting. Each school's nurse will oversee our integrated health plan for monitoring the health and safety of our SCW Community.

All staff, students, and visitors to our district will practice personal health and safety measures including wearing face masks when directed to, enhanced personal hygiene practices including frequent hand washing and sanitizer use, adhering to safe social distancing practices, and following all safety instructions and signage.

[Employee Workplace Guidelines](#)

## COVID-19 Awareness Education and Training

At the beginning of the year, staff and students will be trained on new COVID-19-related expectations, such as:

- Knowing the symptoms of COVID-19.
- Doing a self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms before coming to school each morning.
- Proper hand-washing and the use of hand sanitizer.
- Proper wearing of masks along with how to properly take off and put on.
- Social distancing expectations.
- Disinfecting and sanitizing personal spaces
- When to seek medical attention and testing

# Mitigation Strategies

## Masks

### Vaccinated Individuals:

- Masks are optional indoors/outdoors for all fully vaccinated students and staff. Staff and students will be asked to provide a copy of their vaccination card in order to be unmasked during the school day.
- Masks are required on all school buses per current federal requirement for vaccinated students and staff.

### Unvaccinated Individuals:

- Masks are required indoors for all unvaccinated students and staff except when eating.
- Masks are required outdoors for all unvaccinated students and staff in any high risk situations when social distancing cannot be maintained such as contact sports.
- Masks are required on all school buses per current federal requirement for unvaccinated students and staff.

## Physical Distancing

## Hand Washing

- Classrooms will be arranged with all seats/desks facing the front of the room with as much distance between seats as possible.
- Proper social distancing, defined as 3-6 feet will be maintained:
  - Between adults in the building and between adults and students when in common areas
  - When masks cannot be worn, such as during meals
  - During activities when increased exhalation occurs, such as singing, shouting, band practice, choir, exercise, and sports
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds whenever hands are visibly soiled and in the following situations:
  - Before and after meals, after recess, after sharing supplies or equipment, and after using the restroom
- Build time into the day/schedule to allow for students to wash their hands
- Provide hand sanitizer throughout the buildings for student and staff use

# Instructional Model

## Instructional Guidance

The opening of the schools is guided by information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Indiana State Department of Health, and the Local Board of Health. Due to the availability of vaccines as well as the data from the 2020/2021 school year demonstrating that in-person instruction does not result in increased transmission of the COVID 19 virus, the School City of Whiting will resume 5 day a week in-person instruction for all students grades prek-12th for the 2021/2022 school year. Educational research also supports the effectiveness of in-person instruction for students and the importance of students having in-person social and emotional support services. We know that in-person instruction will be key in addressing student learning loss from the past year.

- Teachers will provide in-person instruction Monday through Friday on a regular school day schedule.
- Teachers' desks will be in the front of the room facing students. Teachers should maintain social distancing during whole class instruction.
- All mitigation strategies (masks, social distancing, and hand hygiene) will be implemented throughout the school day.
- Enhanced cleaning of instructional settings, common areas, and high touch surfaces will take place throughout the school day.
- Students who are unable to attend school due to COVID-19 related reasons such as a quarantine due to a known exposure, exclusion due to exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, or testing positive for COVID-19 will be accommodated with remote learning and/or homebound instruction during their isolation/quarantine period.
- If a particular school is deemed by the local board of health to need closing due to exposure concerns, E-Learning would be utilized.
- Any changes to the Instructional format would be guided by the ISDH and Lake County Board of Health based on community spread levels and COVID19 positivity rates.

# PERSONAL HEALTH SAFETY PRACTICES AND PROTOCOLS

## Recognizing the Symptoms of COVID-19

Know the COVID-19 related symptoms impacting consideration for exclusion of students/staff from school. Administration and employees will be trained to recognize these as well.

- A fever of 100.4° F or greater
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Nasal congestion

Students and employees will be excluded from on-campus instruction if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit one or more of the symptoms of COVID-19 based on CDC Guidance **that are not otherwise explained by medical history**. Examples of this include: Students with symptoms that aren't related to COVID-19 may be a cough due to allergies or migraine headaches. Family healthcare providers may need to provide assistance. Consultation with the SCW nursing staff is recommended.

All parents must report their child off to the school offices each morning before 10am. Parents will be asked the reason for the absence and if there are any related COVID-19 symptoms. Parents are responsible for reporting known COVID-19 exposure to the school.

## Self-Screening

- **STAFF AND STUDENTS/FAMILIES MUST SELF-SCREEN FOR SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 BEFORE COMING TO SCHOOL EACH DAY**
- Staff, parents, and students must communicate information to the school when symptomatic.
- Students and employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 without being otherwise explained, are prohibited from coming to school and should see a physician.

<b>Good Hygiene Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach the importance of not touching your face, eyes, and mouth.</li> <li>• Teach and reinforce good hygiene practices such as proper hand washing, sneeze/cough etiquette, and keeping hands to oneself.</li> <li>• Teach the proper use and removal of masks.</li> <li>• Daily hygiene procedures will take place including hand washing.</li> <li>• Hand sanitizing should be done upon entering the building and new spaces, as well as whenever handwashing is unavailable.</li> <li>• Desk and surface cleaning with wipes/sanitizer for personal spaces and high touch surfaces as needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Supplies and Personal Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All desks will face the same direction with students facing the same direction whenever possible.</li> <li>• Social distancing will be implemented to the greatest extent possible in computer labs and science labs.</li> <li>• The use of shared supplies and materials will be minimized or eliminated when possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Group Gatherings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand sanitizer will be provided at all gatherings for students and staff.</li> <li>• Virtual options may be used for school related events and meetings if community spread levels are high.</li> <li>• Assemblies, performances, and field trips may be suspended when community spread levels are high.</li> <li>• Social distancing as well as masks for unvaccinated individuals will be required in all congregate settings.</li> <li>• Unvaccinated students will not be allowed to congregate in common areas without masks and social distancing.</li> <li>• Staggered schedules for student group gatherings (i.e. recess and school meals) will be implemented as needed to decrease group size and allow for social distancing.</li> <li>• Large spaces (i.e. gymnasiums, auditoriums, outside spaces – as weather permits) will be utilized for essential gatherings for social distancing as needed.</li> <li>• Limited attendance guidelines for group gatherings and events will be implemented as necessary.</li> </ul>

## Student or Staff Illness During the School Day

ALL STAFF AND STUDENTS SENT HOME WITH ONE OR MORE COVID-19 SYMPTOMS ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO SEE THEIR PHYSICIAN PRIOR TO RETURN TO SCHOOL AND WORK TO DETERMINE IF COVID-19 TESTING IS NEEDED

- A designated isolation room will be used to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-19 like symptoms during the course of the school day.
- Any student or staff member that becomes ill during the school day will report to the isolation room to be screened by the school nurse.
- School nurses and healthcare aides will use universal precautions and wear appropriate PPE while caring for ill students or staff exhibiting any COVID-19 like symptoms.
- Local health officials, staff, and families will be notified of a possible case of COVID-19 within the school environment while maintaining confidentiality consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable federal and state privacy laws.
- The isolation room and any other areas used by a sick person will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after use and prior to use by any other individual.
- Advise sick staff members and children not to return until they have met CDC/ISDH criteria to discontinue home isolation.
- Inform those who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and follow state ISDH guidance if symptoms develop. If a person does not have symptoms, follow appropriate state ISDH guidance for home quarantine.
- [COVID-19 Screening Guidance for Schools](#)

## Quarantine and Isolation

- Quarantine is utilized for individuals who may have been exposed to COVID19.
- Close contacts identified during contact tracing should be quarantined unless they are fully vaccinated, or have tested positive for COVID19 in the past three months and do not have any symptoms.
- All fully vaccinated individuals who are asymptomatic do not need to quarantine but should monitor for symptoms for 14 days following their exposure.
- Close contacts who are unvaccinated **MUST** quarantine.
- Quarantine Options:
  - Asymptomatic close contact may return after day 10 with enhanced precautions in place for days 11-14 (masks, social distancing, lunch eaten separately)
  - Asymptomatic close contact may return after day 8 with a negative PCR test on day 5, 6, or 7 or a negative BinaxNOW in school on day 8. Continue enhanced precautions in place for days 8-14.



- Isolation is utilized for individuals with COVID19 illness.
- Individuals with a positive COVID19 test will be directed to stay home for at least 10 days following the onset of symptoms or the positive test result.
- Individuals may return after 10 days as long as symptoms are improving, and they are fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of medications.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY CHANGES IN BUILDINGS & SUPPORT DEPARTMENTS

### Corporation Wide Prevention Standards

#### [Visitor Screening Tool](#)

- New social distancing procedures will be in place, with one-way traffic through the buildings, where possible.
- Mark spaced lines to enter the building and designate entrance and exit flow paths.
- Appropriate signage for social distancing, hygiene procedures, and masks will be posted throughout the corporation buildings.
- Visitors to the buildings are only upon appointment. If something needs to be dropped off, it will be left at the main entrance where office staff will retrieve it.
- All scheduled visitors will be screened in the main office and will be requested to wear a face mask and use hand sanitizer.
- Clean/disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects after each use.
- Conduct deep cleaning of schools prior to students/staff returning.
- Schedule additional cleanings during weekends, after events, or school holidays/breaks.
- Develop building specific procedures for student pick/drop up to ensure proper social distancing.
- Masks must be worn by all staff and students on buses.
- Events and student activities may be held outdoors weather permitting.

## **Classrooms and Common Areas**

- All common areas such as cafeteria, gymnasium, playground, and auditorium will be prepared prior to the opening of schools to ensure safe usage and proper social distancing.
- Classroom Measures:
  - Distance desks as far apart as possible in the classroom.
  - All unnecessary furniture will be removed to maximize space for social distancing.
  - Seating charts will be maintained and accessible.
  - All desks must face the same direction.
  - The use of shared supplies and materials will be minimized or eliminated if possible. Sanitization will occur between each use if shared.
- Large common areas such as gymnasiums and the auditorium will be utilized as instructional space as needed.
- In classrooms, as much social distancing space as possible will be maintained between instructional staff and students.
- Appropriate accommodations will be made to protect unvaccinated staff and students during necessary small group intervention (see-thru barriers, face shields, masks etc.).
- Playground Measures:
  - Recess times are staggered.
  - Open playgrounds with separate zones for sanitization purposes.
  - Equipment (balls, hula hoops, etc) is cleaned between use.

## **Nurse's Office/Isolation Room**

- Students who do not display symptoms of COVID-19 can be seen and treated during the school day in the regular nurse's office.
  - These would include students who are injured during the school day or students with special health care needs such as those with chronic health conditions (i.e. - diabetes or asthma), those requiring medical treatments (medication or nebulizers), and those with individual health plans
  - Each school will have an isolation room separate from the nurse's office where students or employees who are feeling ill are evaluated or wait for pick up.
    - All waiting staff and students must wear a cloth face covering.
    - Only essential staff assigned to the room may enter wearing appropriate PPE.
    - A record will be kept of all persons who entered the room and the room will be disinfected several times throughout the day in between patients.

### **Confirmed Case of COVID-19 on School Property**

- When there is confirmation that a person infected with COVID-19 was on school property, the district/school will follow state guidelines on reporting cases to the ISDH through the state portal.
- Parents of students identified as close contacts will be contacted by the nurse and given guidance for quarantine and/or testing.
- As soon as the district/school becomes aware of a student or employee who has been exposed to or has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the maintenance/operations staff will be informed, so that impacted building or bus areas, furnishings, and equipment are thoroughly disinfected.

### **Maintenance/Operations: Cleaning and Disinfecting**

#### **[CDC Cleaning Guidance](#)**

- Soap and hand sanitizer will be available throughout the building and in each classroom.
- Sanitizing/disinfecting wipes will be available for cleaning desks and common touch areas in the classrooms as needed.
- Routine cleaning will be performed on a regularly scheduled basis by district operations and maintenance staff assigned to that building or area. Routine cleaning includes daily cleaning and disinfecting of all restrooms, scheduled sweeping of all floors, sanitizing of cafeteria tables, emptying trash and other building based tasks.
- Student and staff restrooms will be cleaned on a schedule during the school day.
- Supplemental cleaning is performed by operations staff over and above what is considered routine. Supplemental cleaning is focused on cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces, specifically for the purpose of preventing spread of disease.
- Monitor changing of filters in AHUs
- Open windows and doors when possible to increase ventilation as needed.
- Clean drinking fountains frequently if they are being used.
- Disinfect conference rooms after all meetings.
- Emergency cleaning: The emergency cleaning plan will be implemented at the direction of the Superintendent or designee in response to an actual infection located at or attributed to a particular school or location or when directed by County or State health authorities.
- Upon direction to implement an emergency cleaning plan, the facility will be closed and plans for the length of closure will be communicated to the public and staff.

## Food Service

- All unvaccinated food service personnel are required to wear masks.
- Gloves will be worn by all food service personnel.
- Plexiglass barriers will be in place for all cashiers.
- Provide a schedule with alternate serving areas in the building for students to social distance as much as possible while eating.
- Floor is marked to space students while they wait in line to receive their meals.
- Masks must be worn by unvaccinated students unless they are seated and eating.
- Spaced socially distanced seating as practicable and appropriate.
- Assigned seating for all students and seating charts will be maintained.
- Allow student hand washing before and after meal service
- Provide hand sanitizer for students and staff
- Pre-packaged boxes or bags for each student instead of traditional serving lines may be utilized when community spread levels are high.
- Disposable trays and utensils will be used.
- No sharing of food between students will be allowed.
- Students go in small groups to dispose of trash in cans spread throughout the cafeteria.
- Conduct cleaning of cafeterias and high-touch surfaces throughout the school day
- All chairs and tables will be disinfected in between lunch periods.
- No contact Grab and Go meal service will be provided during any mandatory school closure.

## Transportation

- Drivers and aides will be assigned to the same bus and route.
- Parents need to ensure that their children social distance while waiting at bus stops.
- Masks are required at bus stops and while traveling to and from on the bus.
- Students refusing to wear a mask will be refused transportation. Parents will be notified that another form of transportation to and from school will need to be made.
- All students will be assigned to one bus with assigned seating.
- Limit students to one route whenever possible.
- Seating charts for bus routes will be maintained for contact tracing.
- Field trips may be limited or suspended during high levels of community spread.
- Athletics and extracurricular groups must abide by social distancing, seating charts, and mandatory masks on buses.
- Cleaning of vehicles is performed daily. Supplemental cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces on the bus is performed between routes.

## Technology

- Students will be assigned an individual device for use during the school day.
- Devices will be picked up in the first period classroom and returned to the same room at the end of the day.
- Seating charts will be maintained in all computer labs and students will be assigned to one computer.
- Social distancing should be maintained as much as possible in computer labs. Students will be required to wear masks in computer classrooms that cannot social distance.
- Headphones will be issued to each individual student.
- Students will be assigned seats and socially distanced as much as possible during all online Testing situations-NWEA, ILearn, WIDA

# INTERVENTION PLANNING

## Intervention Planning

### Identification of Academic Baseline and Learning Loss

- Administration of formative assessments (NWEA) toward the start of the school year to identify students' current levels.
- Ongoing collaboration meetings with teachers to review assessment data and identify where students are academically will be held during early release days.
- Curriculum maps will be adjusted to meet students' current levels.
- Essential concepts/skills/academic standards will be identified at each grade level.
- Class time will be structured to provide appropriate time for review and guided practice.
- Advisory time will be utilized for remediation and skill building.
- Extended learning opportunities through before/after school tutoring will be provided.
- Students with disabilities will receive specific targeted skills instruction upon reentry.
- The case conference committee will convene to discuss any concerns with regression and revise the IEP goals accordingly.
- Additional targeted interventions and instructional supports will be provided to:
  - Students at-risk of not graduating on time.
  - Students who struggled in the prior distance/remote learning environment (i.e. early grades, English Learners, etc.).
  - Other students identified as being behind academically by teachers and parents.

### District / School Resources:

- <https://casel.org/>
- <https://www.doe.in.gov/sebw>

Acknowledgement of experience and feelings related changes due to COVID-19 along with treating all individuals equally by showing respect, kindness, and love.

- Emphasize to your students that they are safe at school. Remind them that you and the adults at their school are there to keep them safe and healthy.
- Let your students talk about their feelings surrounding the COVID19 pandemic and help reframe their concerns into appropriate thoughts.
- Give students information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child.

### First Week SEL activities:

- Examples of how the first few days of schools could be used to focus on building community, connection, resilience, and social and emotional skills:
  - [Primary Template](#)
  - [Secondary Template](#)

### Continued SEL/mental health services and build resiliency

- Community and trust building:
  - Classroom meetings to set clear expectations
  - [Guidance for adults facilitating these classroom meetings](#)
  - Work with your school's student support team to ensure that tier 2 and tier 3 social and emotional supports are available for those needing additional intervention, consulting with community mental health providers, as needed.
- <https://www.projectawarein.org/resources/>

Use social and emotional learning as a way to create a safe and supportive environment for all students. Below are strategies, connected to each of Indiana's Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies, that can be implemented in the first few weeks back to school.

### Insight:

- Help students identify their personal strengths.
- Direct them to reflect on what they may have learned about themselves while being at home/out of school (i.e. strengths within their family role, new skills/talents, adaptability.etc.).

- Help students name their feelings. Provide a list of emotions and ask students to choose one or two each day which they identify with in order to build emotional awareness, vocabulary and empathy.

**Sensory-Motor Integration:**

- Facilitate deep breathing exercises (such as [Square Breathing](#)) and prioritize physical activity opportunities.

**Regulation:**

- Help students understand how their brains work and can react to stress. Use [this video](#) teaching the hand model of the brain.
- Encourage students to think about how feelings are connected with their body using the How [Does my Body Feel?](#) handout.

**Collaboration:**

- Provide opportunities for collaborative learning games and facilitate the creation of group expectations with specific roles/responsibilities for each student before beginning.

**Connection:**

- Create adult to student and/or student to student mentoring opportunities to serve as an additional system of support for students.

**Critical-Thinking:**

- Help students identify a cause or problem that arose in their community over the past few months. Ask students to come up with action steps or solutions to these issues.

**Mindset:**

- Praise students' process rather than students' outcome
  - For example, "I can tell you practiced!" or "I noticed you supported your friend in need today."
- Act to remove anxiety about academic performance and prioritize the healing and belonging that will foster academic learning.
  - When speaking about the coming year's academics, reassure students that the goal will be to "close the gap", not "catch-up with additional work"
- Assess your strengths and areas to develop as you promote SEL through distance learning and at-home assignments
  - Teacher self assessment.

# ATHLETICS, EXTRA-CURRICULARS, AND CLUBS

## Guidelines for returning to Athletics, Extra-Curricular, & Clubs

Athletics, extra-curriculars, and clubs promote citizenship and sportsmanship for students who participate. Activity programs instill a sense of pride in school and community, teach lifelong lessons and skills of teamwork and self-discipline and facilitate the physical and emotional development of the nation's youth.

All extra-curricular activities and Clubs will be required to follow CDC guidelines and SCW safety procedures and protocols in place for the academic day. Guidance received from the IHSAA regarding COVID19 safe practices for athletics will be utilized as a planning resource.

# ANTICIPATE AND PLAN FOR CONTINGENCIES

## Anticipate and Plan for Contingencies

Plan for the possibility of an outbreak of COVID-19 within the school buildings.

The SCW Administrative Team will develop a range of contingency plans based on situations and circumstances that might occur and that may require the School City of Whiting to pause or shut down some or all of our activities.

- Contingency planning is necessary to take into account what is happening in the surrounding community, and federal and state guidelines.
- To prepare for future scenarios of the virus's spread, however likely or unlikely, the SCW is taking into careful consideration the Local Board of Health's guidance on quarantining, contact tracing, and school closures based on data and protocol they are required to follow during COVID-19.



# COMMUNICATION PLAN

## Communication and Resources

In order to maintain consistent, clear, and timely information with all of our families, we will:

- Share all updated COVID-19 information and resources via the School City of Whiting website: <https://www.whiting.k12.in.us>
- Engage in ongoing use of Apptegy email and call system to keep families informed of changes in a timely manner
- Utilize school social media (twitter and Facebook) to post updates
- Encourage all parents to download SCW app to their smartphones to receive push notifications and text messages
- Provide translated materials to our non-English speaking families