



In conjunction with the Governor's Office, the Indiana State Department of Health, the Indiana Department of Education, and Marshall County Health Department.

Pathway for the New School Year
2021-2022

Where Kids Come First

Questions: Email questions@argos.k12.in.us or visit our website at www.argos.k12.in.us

July 2021

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ARGOS SCHOOLS

- ☐ We anticipate providing the standard 180 days of instruction during the 2021-2022 school year. If necessary, we will review and adjust the calendar. These decisions will be made based on the current community health status.
- ☐ We continue to review all policies and procedures to provide more flexibility and remove punitive measures for absences when there is determined illness, a localized outbreak, or exposure of a contagious disease.
- ☐ Using our preparedness plan, we have established predetermined thresholds for mitigation strategies if there are cases in our schools and/or community spread.
- ☐ The superintendent is provided with health reports as necessary to review with the Marshall County Health Department and will make determinations if further mitigation is warranted. Data tracked may include, but is not limited to:
 - Reasons for student and staff absences.
 - Positive cases of COVID-19 in the schools.
 - Data regarding COVID-19 spread in the community.
- ☐ Staff has been trained on non-interventive screening procedures to help identify symptoms which may need to be addressed.
- ☐ Student and staff daily schedules have been adjusted to provide adequate time for handwashing, sanitizing desks, sanitizing frequently touched objects, social distancing practices and other good hygiene practices.
- ☐ The school nurse clinic has developed additional safety procedures.

- ❑ Extra-curricular and co-curricular guidelines have been developed so that sports and other extracurricular programs may continue to take place while reducing risk of disease spread.
- ❑ Relevant training has been provided to certified staff, non-certified staff, and substitute teachers to address a variety of COVID-19 related issues, such as identifying symptoms, providing remediation, and addressing academic losses last school year.
- ❑ Custodial staff is trained on effective methods of cleaning and disinfecting work and play areas and the time schedules for cleaning.
- ❑ Our Argos Schools website regularly provides updates for students, parents, and stakeholders. In addition, other methods of communication have been employed to ensure that stakeholders are aware of any noteworthy developments.

HEALTH @ HOME

STOPPING THE SPREAD

It is essential for the school community to work together to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the school environment and in the community while still providing a quality education program.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Some people can be infected with COVID-19, but show no or few signs of illness even though they are contagious and can spread the disease to others. Argos families can help stop the spread of COVID-19 by stressing good hygiene at home.

- Handwashing and avoiding touching your face, eyes, nose, or mouth are also important steps a person can take to avoid becoming sick or spreading germs to others. Families are encouraged to stress with their children thorough hand washing and covering coughs or sneezes with the inside of the elbow if facial tissue is not available.

State statute gives public school districts the authority to exclude students who have a contagious disease such as COVID-19 or are liable to transmit it after exposure (IC 20-34-3-9). In addition, the local health department has the authority to exclude students from school and may order students and others to isolate or quarantine (IC 16-41-9-1.6). As such, districts/schools are encouraged to work closely with their local health departments.

SYMPTOMS IMPACTING CONSIDERATION FOR EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL

Parents, students, and employees should self-screen for the following COVID-19-related symptoms:

- A fever of 100.4° F or greater
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose
- Diarrhea
- Nausea

Students and employees should not enter the school buildings if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit one or more of the symptoms of COVID-19 that is not otherwise explained. Students and employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 without being otherwise explained are prohibited from coming to school, and if they do come to school, they will be sent home immediately.

- If a parent tells the district/school that a student is ill, the district/school **may legally ask** the parent whether the student is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19. It is the personal responsibility of every school family to comply with this policy and to report any symptoms to the school so any illness trends in the school populations can be appropriately addressed.
- **Students and staff that are fully vaccinated will not need to be excluded for a quarantine period, if symptom free.**

RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER EXCLUSION

Once a student or employee is excluded from the school environment, they may return if they satisfy the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Currently those guidelines are:

Untested

Persons who have not received a test proving or disproving the presence of COVID-19 but experience symptoms may return if the following three conditions are met:

- They have not had a fever for at least 24 hours (that is one full day of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers); and
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved); and
- **At least 10 calendar days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.**

Tested Positive- Symptomatic

Persons who experienced symptoms and have been tested for COVID-19 may return to school if the following conditions are met:

- The individual no longer has a fever 24 (without the use medicine that reduces fevers); and
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved); and **at least 10 calendar days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.**

Tested Positive- Asymptomatic

Persons who have not had symptoms but test positive for COVID-19 may return when they have gone ten calendar days from the testing date and have been released by a healthcare provider. Students may also return if they are approved to do so in writing by the student's health care provider.

Tested Negative

Persons who have had symptoms of COVID-19 and received a negative test result may return to school when they have not had a fever for at least 24 hours (that is one full day of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers), along with a doctor's note that it is safe to return to school.

Someone in Household Tests Positive

Additionally, students and employees should remain home if someone in the household has COVID-19 symptoms or is being tested for COVID-19. Even without symptoms, if a student or employee has recently had contact with a person with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, has someone in their home being tested for COVID-19, or has recently traveled from somewhere considered to be a "hot spot" by the CDC, ACS may choose to exclude the student or employee from the school building and recommend that they self-quarantine for 10 calendar days. The amount of time out of school could be longer if the student then becomes symptomatic.

SCHOOL BUILDING

HEALTH AT SCHOOL: PROTECTING OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Besides home-based prevention techniques, Argos Schools has implemented safety protocols at school to protect our students and staff.

Tracking Community Spread

The Superintendent will track community cases of COVID-19 and communicate regularly with the Marshall County Health Department to determine if adjustments in the school schedule or policies need to be made to protect our school families.

Medical Inquiries

Federal law typically limits the type of medical inquiries that can be made, but given the nature of the pandemic more leeway has been given to districts/schools in this circumstance to make additional medical inquiries of staff and students than would otherwise be allowed.

- If a parent tells the district/school that a student is ill, the district/school may ask the parent whether the student is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19.
- If an employee calls in sick or appears ill, the district/school can inquire as to whether the employee is experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.
- If a person is obviously ill, the district/school may make additional inquiries and may exclude the person from school property.

School Preparedness Plan

Argos is required to have a preparedness plan to address challenging situations. With the COVID-19 pandemic, we have taken aggressive mitigation steps when necessary. Our preparedness plan addresses these issues.

If Confirmed Case of COVID-19 on School Property

When there is confirmation that a person infected with COVID-19 was on school property, we contact the local health department immediately.

If a closure is determined necessary, we will consult with the Marshall County Health Department to determine the status of school activities including

extracurricular activities, co-curricular activities, and before and after-school programs.

As soon as Argos becomes aware of a student or employee who has been exposed to or has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the custodial staff is informed, so that impacted building or bus areas, furnishings, and equipment are thoroughly disinfected.

Mental Health Issues

Argos provides support for students and staff who may develop mental health difficulties due to the stress and anxiety brought on by COVID-19. These resources include access to school counselors, curriculum-related materials to provide students and families with suggestions for coping mechanisms, or other strategies to reduce the stress created by this situation.

SCHOOL BUILDING **HEALTH AT SCHOOL: CLASSROOM/ LEARNING GUIDELINES**

Safe at School

At Argos, we employ flexible policies and procedures to keep the school environment safe. Because the situation surrounding COVID-19 in communities is often rapidly changing, our policies and procedures must allow for adjustment.

Adjustments may include (list not exhaustive):

- Rearranging of classroom set-up to allow for greater space between students
- Reducing the number of people students interact with on a daily basis for

overall risk reduction

- Implementing measures to decrease students congregating in one location
- Using assigned socially distanced seating in classrooms
- Students all face same direction in classrooms
- Placing social distancing reminders on the floor to remind students of appropriate space
- Reducing the amount of materials, supplies, and personal belongings going to and from school
- Reducing student exposure to high-touch, shared resources at school
- Digital learning options available (stay at home)

Hygiene at School

Argos insists that employees and students wash their hands often and if soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer. Argos schools incorporates key times into the school day when all persons should wash their hands.

Reinforcing healthy habits regarding handwashing is expected. These key times should be done in a staggered class pattern to maintain social distancing between students and include:

- Start of the school day
- Before and after eating
- After using the restroom
- After blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After using shared equipment
- After playground recess time

Traditional water fountains are not utilized in schools until further notice. Water bottle fill stations are accessible and disposable cup fill dispensers

are available. Surfaces and student hands are cleansed after using.

Masks are currently recommended for all when students and staff are not able to practice social distancing. Masks are recommended by Argos Community Schools in order to attend school at this time.

Cleaning at School

Custodial staff at all schools receive training regarding how to clean and disinfect surfaces to prevent the spread of COVID-19. High-touch objects and surfaces are cleaned more often and a more vigorous cleaning schedule is adhered to.

Staff and students cleanse desks and tables at the beginning of each new class period. Air filters are cleaned and replaced frequently and increased outdoor fresh air is circulated in all Argos classrooms.

SCHOOL BUILDING

HEALTH AT SCHOOL: NUTRITION SAFETY

At Argos, we have reviewed our food service guidelines and adjusted to keep our students as safe as we can during meals provided in our schools.

Hand washing hygiene

Prior to any meal service, all students and staff utilize hand washing or sanitizing to ensure safe eating practices.

Food service changes

Options may include:

- Keeping all lunch groups scheduled with social distancing during serving and seating to minimize exposure
- Changing the ways meals are served
- Disposable food containers and plates (may be used)
- Using disposable napkins and silverware (may be used)
- Providing PPE to all food service staff

Environmental Risk Reduction

- Employing social distancing methods to reduce transmission of germs
- Seating adjustments (all students face same direction and physically distanced as much as possible in classrooms)

TRANSPORTATION

HEALTH ON THE BUS: STUDENT TRANSPORTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The School bus is often the student's first contact with the school in the morning and the last point of contact in the afternoon.

Argos pays particular attention to protocols used in student transportation to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and protect both students and employees.

All buses and transportation vehicles have been thoroughly disinfected. In addition, we provide parents with the passenger expectations and the role students play in minimizing infection.

Preparation and Cleaning

- All buses have cleaning supplies available.
- Bus drivers wear masks or shields as needed.

- All buses and transportation vehicles are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before and after routes.

Training

Drivers and maintenance/cleaning staff will be properly trained regarding:

- Correct information about COVID-19, how it spreads, symptoms, and risk of exposure will be provided.
- Whom to contact if a student or the driver exhibits symptoms of COVID-19.
- The appropriate methods, tools, and products for cleaning buses, including opening doors and windows for effective circulation and to avoid extensive exposure to cleaning fumes.
- The hygiene expectations of staff.
- Using gloves when handling and disposing of trash.
- Avoiding touching surfaces often touched by passengers.

Other Transportation Considerations

- Students may be restricted to only riding their assigned bus route.
- Seats may be assigned.
- Bus stops and routes may be adjusted.
- Masks are required for all Argos Transportation vehicles at this time (medical exceptions permitted).

EXTRACURRICULARS

HEALTH AFTER SCHOOL:

EXTRACURRICULAR CLUBS AND SPORTS

Important points to remember:

- ☐ Activities are optional, per state rules
- ☐ Activity in extracurriculars will follow the State's guidance.
- ☐ **All participants and coaches MUST be symptom-free.** Participation is strictly prohibited by anyone exhibiting any of the COVID-19 symptoms,

which include:

- A fever of 100.4° F or greater
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose
- Diarrhea
- Nausea

☐ Additional guidance for a specific activity/club/sport will be provided by the coach or sponsor. Please contact them or the athletic director if you have questions.

SCHOOL BUILDING

HEALTH AT SCHOOL: SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Argos recognizes that there are certain situations that may require special attention. Areas of concern may be:

- Special education/SLP
- 504 conditions
- Classes with unique challenges, such as choir or band
- Students or staff at high-risk due to age or medical condition

If you have questions/concerns about any of these special situations or anything else not covered in this document, please see the contact information provided

below.

Questions?

Email questions@argos.k12.in.us or visit our website at www.argos.k12.in.us