

Mercer County #404

Return to School 2021-2022

(Adopted Mercer County BOE August 12, 2021)

ISBE School Guidance Document (issued July 9):

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/covid19.aspx>

ISBE School Guidance FAQs (issued August 9 pursuant to Executive Order 2021-18)

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Updated-Public-Health-School-Guidance.pdf>

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has fully adopted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Kindergarten (K)-12 Schools released on July 9, 2021. The guidance takes effect immediately for all Illinois schools, public and nonpublic.

- [View the CDC guidance.](#)
- [View the IDPH press release.](#)
- [View the Executive Order Number 18](#)

Key points from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance below:

- Achieving high levels of COVID-19 vaccination among eligible students as well as teachers, staff, and household members is one of the most critical strategies to help schools safely resume full operations. In addition, vaccinated individuals are exempt from close contact quarantine unless they become symptomatic.
- The health and safety of our students, educators, and families remains our number one priority. The current guidance for Illinois schools is that we should work with local public health officials to determine the prevention strategies needed in our area by monitoring levels of community transmission and local vaccine coverage and by using screening testing to detect cases in K-12 schools. Removing any of the prevention strategies based on local conditions should happen one at a time and be monitored closely for any increases in COVID-19 cases.
- While the CDC continues to recommend masking and physical distancing as key prevention strategies Executive Order 2021-18 for the State of Illinois.
 - **Requires** universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place.
 - Masking is universally **required** on buses and school-related transportation. The CDC's order **requires** that regardless of the mask policy at school, passengers and drivers **must** wear a mask on school buses.

Guiding Principles

Student and Staff Safety
Food Security

In-Person Instruction
Social Emotional Health

Regular Learning

- All students are expected to attend in-person learning.
- Students who are unable to attend in-person learning will need to provide medical evidence of risk in order to receive remote learning instruction.
- Only in-person learners may participate in extracurricular activities.
- Online registration will close at 11:59 PM on Thursday August 5, 2021 in order to make busing decisions.

Student Attendance

- Attendance will be taken on a daily basis using Teacher Ease. Remote learners or quarantined students will need to log in to their TeacherEase Parent or Student Portal to check in for their daily attendance.
- Bus routes and pick-up times will be determined once the registration window for in-person learning closes.
- Parents are encouraged to transport their own students.
- Bus riders are required to wear masks and will be assigned seats with siblings when possible.
- PPE and disinfecting products will be available on all buses.

Grading

- Grading will be consistent with normal district and building level policies. Students will be expected to complete all assignments as required by their instructor.

Technology

- Chromebooks will be available to all students and teachers. Assistance with internet access is available.
- If you are a remote learner and need a device, please contact your school office on or after Monday, August 2.
- If you require assistance with internet access, please contact your school or district office on or after Monday, August 2.
- Students in grades 3-12 will continue to use Google Classroom.
- Students in grades PK-2 will continue to use Seesaw or Google Classroom

Health and Safety Protocols

- Masks are **required for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.** Medical exemptions apply.
- Touchless water bottle fillers are available. Students are encouraged to bring personal water bottles.
- Signage will be posted regarding masks, handwashing, and social distancing.
- Hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, and gloves will be available in all classrooms.
- Social distancing will be maintained to the greatest extent possible utilizing the 3' guidelines.
- Locker use will be discouraged to enhance social distancing, and students will be encouraged to keep belongings in a backpack.
- Playgrounds will be utilized according to building guidelines.
- Quarantine areas have been designated in all buildings and contact tracing will continue in the event of a positive case.
- Temperature checks are not required, and daily screening is **no longer recommended. Students and staff who do not feel well should stay home and not return to school until they are symptom free for 24 hours.**
- Rapid testing will be available for symptomatic individuals **and for Test to Stay Protocol in the event of a student being identified as a close contact.**

Schoolwide Cleaning and Disinfection to Prevent the Spread of Infection

- Electrostatic cleaning will take place daily on buses and as needed in facilities.
- Increased cleaning and disinfecting will occur for all outside facilities.
- Enhanced building sanitation will also take place throughout the school day.
- **Measures have been taken to improve air quality in all district buildings.**

Our teams are continuing to meet to discuss details related to many issues including: busing, food service, athletics, pre-k, cleaning, movement within buildings, internet access, transitioning back to partial in-person or full remote learning, and many other evolving issues.