

HEARTLAND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Safe Return to School Plan

Approved August 9, 2021



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General Information

(Pursuant to the Federal American Rescue Plan)

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, Public Law. The ARP Act includes nearly \$122 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) Fund that allows state and local education agencies (LEAs) to take additional steps for continued safe in-person instruction and to address unfinished teaching and learning to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic. The ARP Act requires each school district that receives ARP ESSER funds to develop and make publicly available on the school district's website, no later than 30 days after receiving ARP ESSER funds, a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction, and continuity of services for all schools (Safe Return Plan). The ARP Act further requires that the district seek public comment on the Safe Return Plan and take those comments into account in finalization of the Safe Return Plan. A school district must periodically, but no less frequently than every six months through September 30, 2023, review and, as appropriate, revise its Safe Return Plan.

Please Note: The district plans to operate in a traditional learning environment during the 2021-2022 school year unless there is a state or federal mandate that requires school districts to implement the protocols listed below. If a widespread COVID-19 outbreak were to occur amongst students and/or staff, the administration and school board would look to implement some or all of the safety protocols listed below for a short timeframe (1 to 10 consecutive days that school is in session).

Wearing of Masks

Wearing of masks is strongly recommended for those not vaccinated and suggested for those that are vaccinated, but are not required. Masks may become required if there is a state or federal mandate that requires school districts to implement Universal & Correct Wearing of Masks, if there is a COVID outbreak amongst our student/staff population, or if a student has been exposed to COVID. If a COVID outbreak were to occur, the administration and school board would also look to implement some or all of the safety protocols listed below, including closure for a short timeframe (1 to 10 consecutive days that school is in session). If a student has been known to be exposed to COVID, the student will be subject to protocols as identified by the CDC, the state of Nebraska and/or the local health district, which may include the wearing of a mask and monitoring symptoms for a specific number of days.

Modifying Facilities to Allow for Physical Distancing

All students and staff may need to follow social distancing guidelines whenever possible.

Cleaning & Maintaining Healthy Facilities (Including Improving Ventilation)

The following essential actions will be taken to ensure that the facilities are safe for students and staff to inhabit. The district will:

- Change air filters regularly.
- Distribute wastebaskets, tissues, and CDC approved soap to every office and classroom so that these materials can be used upon entry and exit into any discrete location and during transition between classrooms (Pending availability).

- Post signage about frequent hand washing, cough etiquette, and nose blowing. Signage will be widely posted, disseminated, and encouraged through various methods of communication.
- Follow guidance from the CDC when performing all cleaning related duties.

Contact Tracing (Isolation & Quarantine)

The district will follow the contact tracing (Isolation & Quarantine) guidelines from the CDC, Public Health Solutions, and the state of Nebraska during the 2021-2022 school year.

Diagnostic

Students that are ill are asked to stay at home until they are well. Any student with a fever of 100.4°F or higher (or if the student is displaying other signs of illness) will need to stay home for up to 24 hours.

Efforts to Provide Vaccinations to School Communities

The administration will work with Four Corners (our local health district) to inform patrons about local vaccination clinics in our region and allow Four Corners the ability to use our facilities to provide vaccinations.

Accommodations for Children with Disabilities

Students qualifying for extra support through an IEP or through a 504 plan will continue to receive services and support according to their plans throughout the 2021-2022 school year. Accommodations, modifications, and related services will be provided as outlined in a student's plan during in-person learning.

Continuity of Services

The district has invested in technology for all PK-12 students and provided our teachers with remote learning trainings to ensure continuity of instruction will still occur should in-person learning not be possible due to a COVID-19 outbreak. In addition, students will continue to be provided accommodations as stated in their IEP or 504 plans during remote learning. Parent input will be sought to develop a plan for the provision of remote IEP services and student progress will be reviewed by the student's team when in-person learning resumes.

In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak, regular communication, using all available modalities, with students will be required of administrators and teachers to ensure the safety, academic engagement, and wellness of students. If in-person instruction is not possible, breakfast and lunch may be provided to students through a USDA approved system. School counselors and mental health support staff will be available online by appointment for any students or staff in need of assistance.

Closures

It is likely that there will be some uncertainty regarding what lies ahead this school year concerning the COVID-19 pandemic, but the district's plan is to operate in a more traditional learning environment during the 2021-2022 school year. Closures longer than a few days in line with guidelines stated above will be at the discretion of the Governor, the Nebraska Department of Education, local health officials, or by action of the school board.