

Dundy Co Stratton Schools 2021/22 School Year

Guide to reopening school buildings and maintaining operations

The purpose of this guide is to assist school decision makers when considering decisions regarding the reopening and the continuing of operations for Dundy County Stratton Schools. Our goal is to balance the health and well-being of our STUDENTS, STAFF, and COMMUNITY with the need to provide all students with an education we all know is essential for success in life.

The best place for students

Schools play an essential role in communities since they provide students with the essential education needed to be successful in life. The skill sets that students develop during their time in PK-12 education establishes the foundation upon which students build their future, and research clearly indicates that students who complete their PK-12 education do far better emotionally, economically, and socially than students who do not. Research also indicates that schools are extremely safe places for students because they provide structures, procedures, and routines which provide guidelines for safe conditions and behavior.

It is also important to point out that schools are always working to provide safe environments for students by providing health resources and education to students about cleanliness, healthy eating, and exercise. Even though schools spend a great deal of time and energy making schools safe and educating students about risks, risks still remain. When students go to school there are risks involved just as there are when they go anywhere. The schools will do their best to mitigate those risks, and while safety can be enhanced and improved it cannot be guaranteed. This document discusses the steps the school is taking to improve and enhance our safety for all students and staff. We are working hard to provide the safest environment we can.

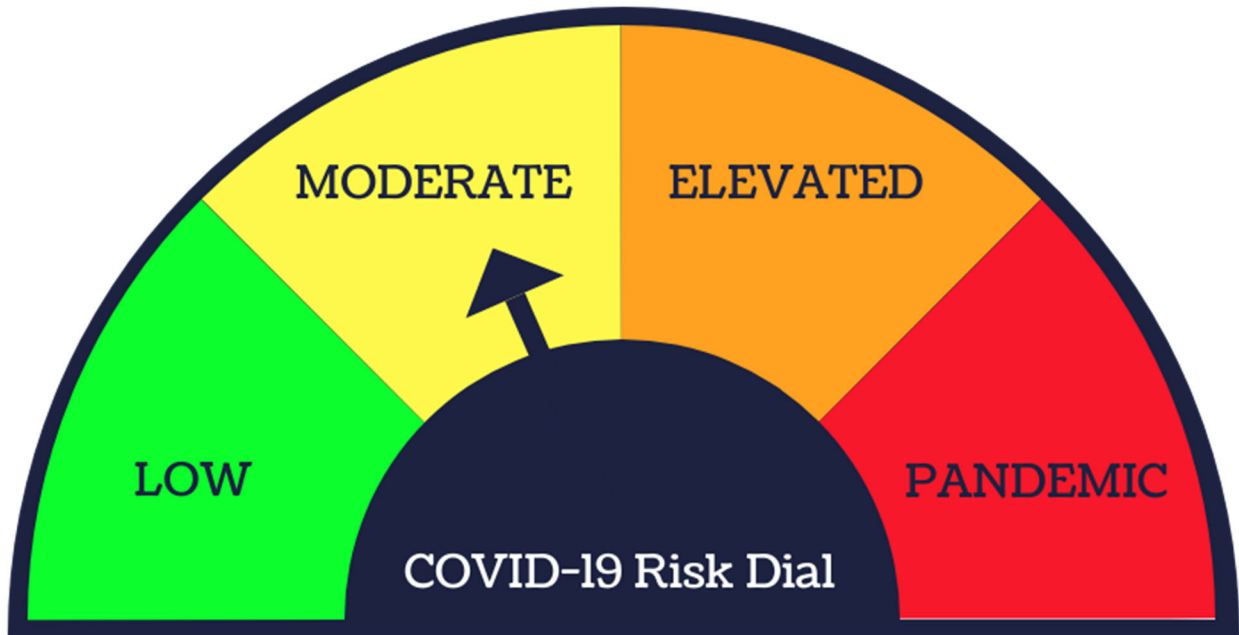
Teachers are essential for student success

Dundy County Stratton Schools have very caring teachers and staff members who are concerned about their students' safety and wellbeing. We are empowering our teachers to make good decisions on behalf of our students and we are doing our best to provide them with the support they need to be successful during this difficult time.....

Vaccinations are currently available for all persons 12 years and up. Research indicates that the most effective way to protect against the most serious illness and to mitigate the spread of disease is vaccination.

Dundy County Stratton Schools may hold vaccination clinics if there is a need.

Health Department COVID-19 Risk Dial



Green – No or Low Risk of Spread

Yellow – Minimal or Moderate Risk of Spread (Recommendations on safety practices)

Orange - Elevated risk of spread (Mandates on social distancing, masks, group size, could lead to short term school closure)

Red - Pandemic high risk of spread (School CLOSED... alternative learning)

The dial represents the current conditions in our local area and will be used to govern school operations. For example, if our local area is at an elevated level (orange/red) students and staff will be required to wear masks in class or in an environment where there is less than 6 feet of separation. Local conditions are determined by state and local health authorities. NOT BY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT!

The level of risk will be posted with any changes on our district web page. Students will also be notified and communications will be sent home via an automated caller system, through Infinite Campus Notifications, and on social media if the risk level changes.

Start of the 2021-2022 School

Normal start of the year with NO CLOSURES (Level Green and Yellow)

DCS Schools will have a normal start to the year if our risk level is green or yellow. This means that teachers will start the school year on August 16 with students starting on August 18th. We believe that having school operating under normal procedures or as close to normal procedures as possible will provide the very best learning environment for Dundy County Stratton students.

First day of school

Alert Level Green

- Students will enter buildings through designated entry points. We will not perform temperature checks unless the risk level rises.
 - Students and parents are asked to self-monitor and stay home if they are not feeling well, coughing or running a fever. Temperatures may be taken if students complain of a headache or other symptoms. If symptoms persist, the student will be sent home and parents will be notified.
 - Hand sanitizing stations will remain in place and students will be asked to sanitize at entry, lunches and after recesses.
 - Parents entering the buildings will hand sanitize upon entry.
- All other processes will return to more typical procedures. Masks are optional, student separation distances will not be enforced, but heightened cleaning and disinfecting practices will be continued.

Alert Level Yellow

- Each building will have designated entry points where students will receive a temperature check before entering.
 - Students who are identified as having a high temperature will be isolated for a short period of time and then have their temperature reassessed to see if the temperature reading is consistent with the previous reading.
 - If a high temperature remains the student will be sent home and parents advised to seek medical care.
 - Students admitted into the buildings will sanitize their hands and proceed directly to their classrooms.
- Where possible, parents of young children should remain in vehicles or outside of the building where their students will be brought to them.
- If parents must enter the building, they are to wash their hands or use a hand sanitizer upon entry.
 - **We request ALL parents notify the school when they will be coming into our building prior to their arrival.**

- Any person with cough or respiratory symptoms should wear a mask, and if feasible refrain from entering any school facility.

Normal start of the year WITH CLOSURES

This means that teachers will start the school year on August 16 with students starting on August 18th. We believe that having school operating under normal procedures or as close to normal procedures as possible will provide the very best learning environment for our students. We do recognize that the potential for a local Covid-19 epidemic breakout is possible, if such a scenario occurs after the start of the school year, and our local RISK conditions change to a level **orange** or **red**, we will have to adjust our instructional practice to protect student & staff well-being. This may require a building or buildings to close for short periods of time to allow for those with the illness to be identified by the health department. Once the schools risk level is reduced back to where we are approved to return to the buildings, the school will be reopened.

Delayed start of the year (Level **red)**

DCS Schools will have a delayed start to the year if we are unable to meet all of the essential elements of reopening. This means that the school calendar will change to provide additional time to come into alignment with all of the necessary requirements for reopening. A delayed calendar will be developed and shared with patrons in the event a delay is deemed necessary. If the school does delay the start of the school year, the school year could end at a later date in May or early June.

Districts' Goal for Level "Orange"

It is our districts' goal to have the students attending school in person according to the adopted school calendar. However, if we are categorized on the risk dial as orange, we will be required to show that we are able to; social distance our students in the classrooms and at lunch, wear masks where and when mandated, temperature check students several times during the school day, implement additional hand sanitization practices, and sanitize the facilities/busses to the standards required by the Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. This goal IS fluid due to the fact that our educational plan lies in the hands of the Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department and their decisions involving community health and safety. If we are not able to satisfy the SWNPHD with these practices than we will be forced to consider COHORTING our days and student groupings.

Alternative school schedule - Cohorting

School buildings will need to develop alternate schedules in the event the District is directed to reduce the frequency of large gatherings, and to limit the number of attendees per gathering. The purpose of this action is to reduce the mixing of students, which limits the spread of the illness in the school and community.

Cohorting is a process of grouping students together for the purpose of minimizing the mixing of students together.

Option 1: One option of cohorting may look something like this, a normal first grade classroom of 20 students is divided into two groups of 10. One group would be named group A and the other would be named group B. Group A would attend school together on Mondays and Tuesdays and group B would attend school together on Wednesdays and Thursdays. When either group is out of school, they would have e-Learning activities or packets to do at home. Those students who are transported on school vehicles will also be divided equally to allow for social distancing on the bus. Students will be required to wear face masks on the bus at all times.

In the example just provided, the school building and classrooms would be thoroughly cleaned on the evening between the groups in addition to light sanitation daily.

Option 2: The second option of cohorting would be Group A and Group B coming to school on alternate weeks, with thorough cleaning taking place on the weekends. Bussing would be the same as described in option A.

In both options 1 and 2, Fridays would be used as teacher prep time to plan and prepare lessons for both the in-school learning and also e-learning for those who will be working from home. This prep time is necessary due to the additional work involved in preparing two diverse lessons for two groups of students in two different locations at the same time.

School Operations During a Pandemic

Confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school

If there is ever a time when we have a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school the first thing the school will do is contact local health department officials. These officials will provide guidance to the school concerning our next steps.

Parents should be prepared for short to medium term dismissals. This initial short-term dismissal allows time for the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school. This allows the local health officials to help the school determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19.

- Local health officials' recommendations for the scope (e.g., a single school, multiple schools, the full district) and duration of school dismissals will be made on a case-by-case basis using the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the specific cases in the community.
- During school dismissals, also cancel extracurricular group activities, school-based afterschool programs, and large events (e.g., assemblies, spirit nights, field trips, and sporting events).
- Staff, students, and their families will be discouraged from gathering or socializing anywhere. This includes group child care arrangements, as well as gathering at places like a friend's house, a favorite restaurant, or the local shopping mall.

Communication with staff, parents, and students. Coordinate with local health officials to communicate dismissal decisions and the possible COVID-19 exposure.

- This communication to the school community should align with the communication plan in the school's emergency operations plan.
- Plan to include messages to counter potential stigma and discrimination.
- In such a circumstance, it is critical to maintain confidentiality of the student or staff member as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

Clean and disinfect thoroughly.

- Close off areas used by the individuals with COVID-19 and wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area. If possible, wait up to 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
- Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.

- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.
 - A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available.
 - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
 - Additionally, diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted. Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
- Additional information on cleaning and disinfection of community facilities such as schools can be found on CDC's website.

Make decisions about extending the school dismissal. Temporarily dismissing child care programs and PK-12 schools is a strategy to stop or slow the further spread of COVID-19 in communities.

- During school dismissals (after cleaning and disinfection), child care programs and schools may stay open for staff members (unless ill) while students stay home. Keeping facilities open: a) allows teachers to develop and deliver lessons and materials remotely, thus maintaining continuity of teaching and learning; and b) allows other staff members to continue to provide services and help with additional response efforts. Decisions on which, if any, staff should be allowed in the school should be made in collaboration with local health officials.
- Child care and school administrators should work in close collaboration and coordination with local health officials to make dismissal and large event cancellation decisions. Schools are not expected to make decisions about dismissal or canceling events on their own. School dismissals and event cancellations may be extended if advised by local health officials. The nature of these actions (e.g., geographic scope, duration) may change as the local outbreak situation evolves.
- Administrators should seek guidance from local health officials to determine when students and staff should return to schools and what additional steps are needed for the school community. In addition, students and staff who are well but are taking care of or share a home with someone with a case of COVID-19 should follow instructions from local health officials to determine when to return to school.

Implement strategies to continue education and related supports for students.

- Ensure continuity of education.

- Review continuity plans, including plans for the continuity of teaching and learning. Implement e-learning plans, including digital and distance learning options as feasible and appropriate.
- Determine, in consultation with school district officials or other relevant state or local partners:
 - If a waiver is needed for state requirements of a minimum number of in-person instructional hours or school days (seat time) as a condition for funding;
 - How to convert face-to-face lessons into online lessons and how to train teachers to do so;
 - How to triage technical issues if faced with limited IT support and staff;
 - How to encourage appropriate adult supervision while children are using distance learning approaches; and
 - How to deal with the potential lack of students' access to computers and the Internet at home.
- Contact tracing
 - The school, along with the health department, will conduct contact tracing to identify potential for spread.
- Ensure continuity of meal programs.
 - Consider ways to distribute food to students.
 - If there is community spread of COVID-19, design strategies to avoid distribution in settings where people might gather in a group or crowd. Consider options such as “grab-and-go” bagged lunches or meal delivery.
 - If possible, meal services **WILL** serve those who wish to participate Monday – Friday on all school calendar approved days. Distribution methods TBD.

Classroom environment

Students should be seated in a manner that provides each student with as much personal space as possible. Teachers will need to think critically on how to provide themselves and students with as much separation from others as possible. Student belongings should also be spaced apart from the belongings of other students.

Desk arrangement should allow for students to have as much space as possible, which means some classrooms may need to alter the contents of their room to provide for more student space. Desks should also be facing in the same direction and if possible.

Keeping doors open and air handling units operating will help with classroom ventilation.

Post signs in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that promote protective measures such as sanitizing/washing hands, wearing face masks and social distancing.

Teachers should dedicate time to teaching students about the importance of slowing and stopping the spread of the virus, and engaging in discussions about the different methods that can be employed to protect themselves and others from infection.

Each classroom will need a create and follow a schedule for routine cleaning. Any surface that is frequently touched should be cleaned frequently.

Students should not need to share supplies and any supplies or classroom items that are handled by multiple students should be sanitized frequently.

Each classroom will have a posting of how to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Lockers

Students will need to refrain from congregating at lockers and move quickly during passing time to their next class.

Student Drop-off and Pick-up

In an effort to help reduce the potential of spreading the COVID-19 virus infection we request parents stay in their cars when dropping off and picking up students at school. If parents must come into the school, they are requested to wash or sanitize their hands before entering, keep at least a 6 foot separation from other students and from staff members, and wear a mask or face shield. We also request that any parent who needs to come into the school building notify the school before their arrival. Doing so will allow the school to take the necessary steps to protect parents, students and staff from possible exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

Entering the Building

Students will enter the school building at their designated entry door and are directed to maintain proper social distancing as they enter the building. Once

students are in the building, they will be directed to go to their classroom and sanitize their hands.

Exiting the Building

Students will exit the school building through their designated exit door and are directed to maintain proper social distancing as they leave the building. Each building will have an established release order. First, bus students will be dismissed, followed by students who are walking, and finally students who are getting picked up will be dismissed.

Student check in & Prescreening

Each building/bus will temperature check each student as they enter the building/bus at the designated entry points. Entry points will be selected by building level leadership. This temperature check will be completed by school staff assigned to that task. Students who have a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher will be isolated and then rechecked 5 mins later. If the student maintains a temperature of 100.4 or higher, they will be sent home, and students whose temperature is below 100.4 degrees will be allowed to go to class. Students will also be asked about how they are feeling. Students who report that they feel sick will be isolated until a decision concerning the student's attendance can be made.

Parents are requested to screen their children at home for temperature, runny nose, cough, and other symptoms. If students show symptoms they should remain home and call into the school as ill and contact their medical provider. Parents are asked to be honest when reporting an absence of their student. If they are ill, please provide symptoms. If there are other reasons for the absence, simply state what they are and the school will be fine with them. The reason for this request is because we are required to report daily our absences due to illness to the Southwest Nebraska Department of Health. If we report 10% or more of our students being absent due to illness, there is a possibility we could be moved to a higher level of risk. A higher level WILL result in mandated restrictions and the possibility of a temporary closure.

Teachers are directed to screen themselves at home for temperature, runny nose, cough, and other symptoms. Teachers who have symptoms are not to come to school if symptomatic and call their medical provider.

Lunch

Students will have a lunch plan designed for each building in accordance with their needs and the current local conditions (COVID-19 Dial). Each school site will need to develop a plan that adheres to the directed health measures of the state of Nebraska.

This may require students to be socially distanced and strict occupancy requirements followed.

Local COVID-19 conditions will impact how school lunches are served and where students eat. It is also important to note that teachers are required to have an interruption free 30-minute lunch period.

Things to consider

- COVID-19 conditions dial (Green, yellow, orange, red)
- Lunch service protocols
- Grouping the same students at each lunch
- Low occupancy rate percentages.

Recess

Considering the negative social impact that COVID-19 quarantines have had on students across the country, recess will be one of the most important times of the day once school starts up again. Children absolutely need time to play and interact together for their mental well-being, so recess will be an important part of every school day.

Keeping students safe during the pandemic will still be a concern for schools, so while students will have recess their interactions may be limited to the students from their own class if we are in a heightened risk level. Doing this will prevent the mixing of students and the spread of the COVID-19 virus if any students come to school infected.

Decisions about recess will be made based on local data concerning the spread of the virus in our area. The more the local cases the more restrictive the social interactions will be.

Passing Periods

Each building will design a plan for how students will navigate the school building. This means that students will be given specific instructions on how to travel through the hallways and other spaces. This might mean student traffic flow requires students to only travel in specific directions or to stay on one side of the hallway to reduce congestion and interaction.

Library

Students may be required to enter the library with their classroom groups during designated times.

Movement of Staff

Staff movement will be controlled by building level leaders. The goal will be to limit the contact that staff have with specific groups of students. Teachers will teach one group of students when possible and paraprofessional staff will also be assigned to specific groups of students to limit potential exposure and the spread of infection.

Teachers and staff who are exposed to large numbers of students will need to take special precautions during the day to protect themselves and students from the spread of infection. These precautions include washing hands at the start of the school day and between every class, possibly wearing a face mask and/or shield, and maintaining at least a 6-foot separation from students whenever feasible.

Contact Tracing

The school will assist the Southwest Nebraska Department of Health with contract tracing whenever a student or staff member has been positively identified as having been infected with the COVID-19 virus. School nurse will be trained on how to conduct contact tracing and will identify students and staff the infected individual came in contact with during the school day. The school will make sure to take precautions to protect medical information concerning any student or staff member who is identified as having a COVID-19 infection.

At-Risk Students

It is essential that students who are the most susceptible or at-risk of experiencing mental stress during this time are contacted by school staff. These students must be identified and contacted to ensure their needs are being met. The students in need should be identified by the SAT/MTSS team, and then a contact person assigned to each student. A record of who made contact and when should be kept up to date by the SAT/MTSS team chairperson

Students with IEPs

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meetings will be held according to state and federal law. The locations of meetings will be adjusted to meet the health needs of the individuals involved with the meeting.

Equitable Accessibility

Plan for ensuring that all teachers and students have accessibility to learning opportunities no matter how lessons are developed and shared with students.

- Students should have access to any and all necessary technology needed to engage with learning activities; in the absence of technology due to conditions outside the control of the school, students will be provided learning materials that are of a high quality.

- Alternative education lessons will be of quality design and focus on essential learning objectives all students need to master to be successful in the next grade and in life.

Health

Basic Health Guidelines

At a minimum, any child or school staff member who develops respiratory symptoms should be provided and wear a surgical mask, be transported and quarantined in a health isolation area that the District identifies, and sent home until cleared to return to school by a qualified health professional.

Who are Immunocompromised

Based on what we know now, those who are immunocompromised or at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are:

- People aged 65 years or older
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facilities.

People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including:

- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- People who have serious heart conditions
- Cancer treatment
- Smoking
- Bone marrow or organ transplantation
- People with HIV or AIDS
- Prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
- People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease

Students who are immunocompromised

The parents of students who are immunocompromised are advised to visit with their health care professional about how they should proceed concerning school attendance. Once parents have had this discussion with the health care professional, we request parents visit with their child's school leadership to ensure that plan is in place that protects their safety and provides for their continued education.

Plans should include actions to take if the community conditions change concerning the spread/infection rate of COVID-19.

Staff who are immunocompromised

Staff who are immunocompromised are advised to visit with their health care professional about how they should proceed concerning school attendance. After visiting with your health care professional, you should meet with your building level leader to design a plan that will allow you to teach in a manner that safeguards your health.

Plans should include actions to take if the community conditions change concerning the spread/infection rate of COVID-19.

Staff health -

For the school systems to succeed in achieving their mission, classroom staff need to be healthy so that they can provide consistent quality instruction. Students suffer academically and social-emotionally when their teachers are frequently ill and not in the classroom providing quality instruction. **Due to the importance of staff being in the classroom as much as possible, it is essential for staff to take the necessary precautions to safeguard against illness.** Below are some guidelines all staff should follow to avoid becoming ill.

1. Wash hands 4 to 5 times a day.
2. Wear a mask whenever feasible to do so.
 - A. Masks help to minimize exposure to airborne viruses.
 - B. Masks prevent the wearer from touching his or her face with hands.
1. Watch for the signs of illness in students and respond to concerns immediately.
 - a. Test student temperatures upon arrival. Frequently observe students for signs of illness or fatigue.
 2. Maintain social distancing when appropriate.
 3. Clean surfaces frequently.
 4. Avoid unnecessary exposure to those who may be ill.
 5. Practice healthy lifestyle behaviors
- a. **Exercise Diet..... Sleep**
 2. Address any preexisting health conditions

It is important to note, staff illness could have a devastating impact on student achievement since any teacher that is infected with COVID-19 will miss at least 10-14 days of school providing there are no complications. This, coupled with the fact that substitute teacher shortages exist, compound issues related to teacher absences. If multiple teachers become sick at the same time, the situation is further complicated and could prompt un-wanted school closures.

School Absence Surveillance Report

This is a document that is important for the tracking of all illnesses. It will be filled out and sent to the Southwest Nebraska Department of Health on a daily basis. Parents are asked to report student illnesses and symptoms for this report. Please be honest when reporting your student's absence. For other absence reasons, report the facts, and the district will accept your student's absence.

Student & Staff Mental Health

Self-care during Covid 19

Tips for supporting student wellness during Covid-19

Say Something anonymous reporting (Suicide Prevention) or Call 1-844-5-SAYNOW.

Social and Emotional Supports

Our current global situation has left many processing information differently. You and your student may be concerned or anxious about COVID-19. It is our goal that all of our families will stay safe and healthy. While a lot has been communicated on what we can do to protect our health, we want to make sure we address good mental health practices during these unprecedented times.

It is very important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. If parents seem overly worried, children's anxiety may rise. Parents should reassure children that health and school officials are working hard to ensure that people throughout the country stay healthy. However, children also need factual, age appropriate information about the potential seriousness of disease risk and concrete instruction about how to avoid infections and spread of disease. Teaching children positive preventive measures, talking with them about their fears, and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infection can help reduce anxiety. On the links above you will find social-emotional supports to help you.

We would like to encourage you to help your child navigate this time by:

- Limiting your student's exposure to the media and be prepared to calmly discuss fears and/or concerns
- Having deliberate conversations with them about changes in their routine and the new structure of their day
- Modeling emotional management to your student by sharing your feelings with them about what is going on and asking how it makes them feel
- Continuing to review online safety with your student given the additional time using technology

Finally, we want to encourage you to contact your child's school if you have any questions. Know that we will continue to support your student's social-emotional and academic needs the best we can.

Protective Measures

School actions that help to reduce the potential of spreading infection.

Reduce community spread

Potential exists for schools to be a hub of spread for a community because of the large percentage of individuals who go in and out of the school buildings every day and due to close student-to-student and teacher-to-student proximity; therefore, it is essential that schools take measures to help reduce the spread of germs and viruses within the building and temporarily close down buildings when an active case occurs.

Important behaviors that will reduce the spread of COVID-19:

1. Maintain 6 feet of separation from others when possible.
2. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing or coughing.
3. Wear a cloth mask.
4. Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
5. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
6. Stay home when sick except to get medical treatment.
7. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
8. Sanitize your hands with approved alcohol-based products.

Social Distancing

Enhanced social distancing procedures will be in place during the 2020-2021 school year. When feasible, students and staff will follow all social distancing guidelines in place for schools. This means that if possible, students will be kept in small groups throughout the day to limit student to student interactions. When students are on campus or in a school vehicle, they are to be 6 feet apart when possible. Students who cannot be socially distanced due to a lack of space will be grouped or paired and may be requested to wear a mask or face shield.

Elementary students will be assigned to a classroom and those classrooms will have limited interactions with other students in the school. This will be done to lessen the likelihood of spreading illness throughout an entire building.

High School and Jr. High students will have more interaction with other students than elementary students; however, actions should be taken to reduce contact between students when possible.

Medical Information is Private

In accordance with federal law, the school will not share a student's medical condition with unauthorized individuals.

Masks

- Masks are recommended for students riding on busses or in other school vehicles where a six-foot separation is not possible.
- The school district has purchased 3 washable cloth masks for every student and staff member. Parents may provide their own mask for their student if they wish.
- Moderate conditions (yellow), masks are recommended.
- Masks may be required if students spend 15 minutes or more in a space that does not allow for social distancing.
- Elevated conditions (orange) masks are required.
- Students and staff who show any symptoms such as a temperature or have a cough will be required to wear a mask and self-report to the office.
- Schools will be a mask safe zone. We will not tolerate “mask shaming.” Masks will always be encouraged.
- Students who wish to wear a mask even when not required are encouraged to do so.
- The school requests that parents who are entering a school building first notify the building prior to arrival and to wash their hands prior to entry. Parents are also asked to maintain 6 feet of separation from other adults and students, and wear a mask or face shield while in the school building.

Rationale for wearing cloth masks

“Asking everyone to wear cloth masks can help reduce the spread of the coronavirus by people who have COVID-19 but don't realize it. And countries that required face masks, testing, isolation and social distancing early in the pandemic seem to have had some success slowing the spread of the virus.” Mayo Clinic Staff. “Covid-19: How much Protection to Face Masks Offer”. Mayo Clinic 28 May, 2020, www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/coronavirus-mask/art-20485449

“We conclude that wearing of face masks in public corresponds to the most effective means to prevent interhuman transmission, and this inexpensive practice, in conjunction with extensive testing, quarantine, and contact tracking, poses the most probable fighting opportunity to stop the COVID-19 pandemic, prior to the development of a vaccine. It is also important to emphasize that sound science should be effectively communicated to policy makers and should constitute the prime foundation in decision-making amid this pandemic.” Zhang, Renyi., Zhang Y., L., Annie, Wany, Yuan, Molina, J., Mario, “Identifying

airborne transmission as the dominant route for the spread of COVID-19.” Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 30 June, 2020, www.pnas.org/content/117/26/14857

Water Fountains

Students are encouraged to not take drinks directly from the water fountains; students are encouraged to bring water bottles from home and use water bottle fill stations while at school.

Hand Washing and Hand Sanitizer

All staff and students are directed to wash their hands at the start of the school day and to wash or sanitize their hands between each class period when possible. Students and staff are also directed to wash their hands prior to lunch and any time they enter the building.

Isolation

Any student or staff member who shows symptoms of a COVID-19 infection will be sent to a designated isolation room to limit the potential of spreading the virus while waiting for further examination or for parents or family members to pick them up. Parents are encouraged to seek medical advice anytime they or their child shows symptoms of COVID-19.

Classrooms where a symptomatic student or staff member spent time will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized.

Busing & Transportation

The District’s transportation procedures will need to comply with local and state guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic. This may result in interruptions or the cancellation of normal transportation services. The District will work to resolve transportation issues in an effort to provide a safe environment. Students on the bus might need to wear a mask due to the close proximity to other students and the close contained environment.

Bus Capacity Management

Students and staff will maintain a 6-foot separation on buses and when riding in other school vehicles whenever feasible. When such a 6-foot separation is not possible, it is recommended all occupants of the bus or vehicle wear a mask.

A heightened level on the risk dial will mandate social separation and the wearing of masks on all district transportation.

Students will also have their temperature checked before they take their seats.

Students will be assigned a seat on all route busses by the bus driver, and by a sponsor or teacher for activities or field trips.

Cleaning

- Wear disposable gloves to clean and disinfect.
- Clean surfaces using soap and water, then use disinfectant.
- Cleaning with soap and water reduces the number of germs, dirt and impurities on the surface. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces.
- Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces.
- More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be required based on level of use.
- Surfaces and objects in public places, such as door handles and point of sale keypads should be cleaned and disinfected before each use.

High touch surfaces include:

- Tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.

For soft surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes

- Clean the surface using soap and water or with cleaners appropriate for use on these surfaces.
- Launder items (if possible) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
OR disinfect with an EPA-registered household disinfectant. meet EPA's criteria for use against COVID-19.
- Vacuum as usual.

For electronics, such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines

- Consider putting a wipeable cover on electronics.
- Follow manufacturer's instruction for cleaning and disinfecting.
 - If no guidance, use alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol. Dry surface thoroughly.

For clothing, towels, linens and other items

- Launder items according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry from a person who is sick.
- Dirty laundry from a person who is sick can be washed with other people's items.

- Do not shake dirty laundry.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance above for surfaces.
- Remove gloves, and wash hands right away.

Cleaning and disinfecting your building or facility if someone is sick

- Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
 - Companies do not necessarily need to close operations, if they can close off affected areas.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Wait 24 hours before you clean or disinfect. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines.
- Vacuum the space if needed. Use a vacuum equipped with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, if available.
 - Do not vacuum a room or space that has people in it. Wait until the room or space is empty to vacuum, such as at night, for common spaces, or during the day for private rooms.
 - Consider temporarily turning off room fans and the central HVAC system that services the room or space, so that particles that escape from vacuuming will not circulate throughout the facility.
- Once an area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be opened for use.
 - Workers without close contact with the person who is sick can return to work immediately after disinfection.
- If more than 7 days since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.
 - Continue routine cleaning and disinfection. This includes everyday practices that businesses and communities normally use to maintain a healthy environment.

Extracurricular Activities

An important part of student development and school operations are extracurricular activities. In order for our students to benefit from these experiences it is essential that the school provide a safe environment for participation. DCS schools will follow the directives of the Southwest Nebraska Public Department, the Nebraska Department of health, and the Nebraska Scholastic Activities Association when engaging in any and all extracurricular activities.

Communication Plan

- Upon notification, Southwest Nebraska Public Health regarding the need for pandemic procedures, the School Safety Team will:
 - Develop a communication plan to all stakeholders to include:

- Any relevant information provided by the County Health Department or Southwest Public Health.
- A pandemic fact sheet containing information to help stop the spread of the virus.
- Notice information containing hygiene information regarding hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes will be placed:
 - On media resources
 - entrances
 - notice boards
 - restrooms

School Communication

- DCS Schools will work with Southwest Nebraska Public Health, as well as the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services pandemic recommendations in order to coordinate an appropriate response and to avoid causing unnecessary concern and panic. DCS Schools will rely on and work with the Dundy County Health services or Southwest Public Health in establishing a variety of communications channels.
- DCS Schools will communicate and educate faculty/staff/students/parents/guardians about effective hygiene habits before any outbreaks occur. This information will include standard precautions pertaining to good hand washing as well as coughing/sneezing etiquette.
- The Superintendent or his/her designee will act as spokesperson(s) for the District. Communications channels will be used according to the nuances of the pandemic which may include: district website, school websites, district newsletters, e-mail, district social media, and the District's automated messaging system.

Employee Communication

- The pandemic plan will be communicated to staff. The building principal will advise his/her employees in advance with information about the pandemic.
- Communications specific to staff will be made via the District's email and/or other automated communication systems.
- Links to the Southwest Public Health and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and/or the CDC will be disseminated via email, or website link.
- Educational communications regarding best health care practices will be provided to encourage employees to acquire and maintain personal, regular healthcare services that address any pandemic event that may occur.

Students/Parents/Guardian Communication

- The dissemination of information pertaining to the District's pandemic preparedness and response plan can be found on the district's web site.

- The District will have communications aligned with the Southwest Public Health and/or the Center for Disease Control (CDC). The purpose of student and parent communication will be to provide exact detail and reduce the possibility for fear, anxiety, and misinformation.
- To the greatest extent possible, the District will disseminate information for parents about the potential impact of a pandemic on school functioning (Ex: parents/guardians may have to arrange for childcare in the event of school closures.)
- To the greatest extent possible, the District communications will be culturally and linguistically appropriate to meet the needs of all students/families.

Collaborative Partners

Schools are a community organization and require input from multiple entities when making decisions concerning health and safe operations. Below is a list of essential partners to collaborate with when making decisions about school operations, as well as, services to students and staff during this time.

- Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department
- DCS Schools Board of Education
- Local Health Services Agencies
- Local Mental Health Agencies
- STAFF

Grading and instructional expectations

Logistics will be determined by the building Administrators and Superintendent given the circumstances presented at various times during the year. However, we will be committed to maintaining the highest level of academic achievement with our students at all times.

RESOURCES:

What you should know about COVID-19

- What should I know about COVID-19?
 - Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person.
 - The virus that causes COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has spread throughout the world.
 - COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness
- How is it Spread?
 - You can become infected by coming into close contact (about 6 feet or two arm lengths) with a person who has COVID-19. COVID-19 is primarily spread from person to person.

- You can become infected from respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- You may also be able to get it by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then by touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.
- How can I protect myself?
 - There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.
 - Stay home as much as possible and avoid close contact with others.
 - Wear a cloth face covering that covers your nose and mouth in public settings.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- What does it mean to practice social distancing?
 - Buy groceries and medicine, go to the doctor, and complete banking activities online when possible.
 - If you must go in person, stay at least 6 feet away from others and disinfect items you must touch.
 - Get deliveries and takeout, and limit in-person contact as much as possible.
- How can I prevent the spread of COVID-19 if I am sick?
 - Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.
 - Avoid public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.
 - Separate yourself from other people and pets in your home.
 - There is no specific treatment for COVID-19, but you can seek medical care to help relieve your symptoms.
 - If you need medical attention, call ahead.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus.

People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- New rash of unknown origin
- Conjunctivitis or Pink eye (red and itchy eyes)

This list may not include all possible symptoms.

CDC: Considerations for Wearing Cloth Face Coverings

- The school is planning on following its Board approved 2021-2022 school calendar.
- Adjustments to the school day and calendar may occur as conditions in our schools and local area change with the rise and fall of COVID-19 cases.
 - DCS Schools will follow the guidance of state and local health department officials when considering changes to school operations.

Masks will be required

- When students are riding in a school vehicle where social distancing is not possible with the COVID-19 Risk Dial indicates elevated (orange), and/or pandemic conditions (red).
- When a student or staff member exhibits COVID-19 symptom

Masks are encouraged

- All of the time
- Whenever a student or staff member chooses to put one on.

Social Distancing

- Students and staff are directed to socially distance (6 feet apart) whenever feasible.
- Students will be paired or placed in small groups with little to no mingling with other groups if possible.

Drop-off and Pick-up

- Parents are asked to check their student's health before leaving for school to ensure they do not have COVID-19 symptoms.
- Parents are to remain in their vehicles during drop-off and pick-up.
- Students are to socially distance as they enter and as they leave the building.
- Students and staff will have their temperatures checked as they enter the building.
- Parents are asked to contact the school before coming into the building to pick up their child, and to abide by the school visitors guidelines found below.

Hand Washing and Sanitizer

- Students will wash their hands whenever they enter the school building.
- Students will wash their hands or use sanitizer between classes and before leaving the building.
- Students will wash their hands or use sanitizer before and after lunch.

What happens if a Student or Staff Member Has a Positive COVID Identification

- Southwest Nebraska Department of Health officials will be collaborated with concerning school operations.
- Students or staff who show symptoms of a COVID-19 infection will be sent home. Parents of a student who is displaying symptoms will be contacted.

Water Fountains & Water Bottles

- Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles to school everyday since water fountains will not be in use.
- Water bottles should be clearly labeled with the student's name on it and have a lid that will keep water from leaking out if tipped over.

School Visitors Should

- Notify the school before entering the building.
- Wash or sanitize their hands before entering the buildings
- Socially distance while in the building.
- Wear a mask while in the building or make special arrangements with the school before entering.

Busses and School Vehicles

- Students may be temperature checked before taking their seat.
- Students might be required to wear a mask while in the bus or other school vehicle if there is not enough room to socially distance.
- Students will be given assigned seating.

Extracurricular Activities

- It is our intent to allow students to engage in extracurricular activities during the 2021-2022 school year whenever it is deemed appropriate and safe to do so.
- All activities will function in accordance with guidelines from local and state health department agencies, and in alignment with the rules established by the Nebraska Scholastic Activities Association and the Nebraska Department of Education