

Avenue City Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and

Continuity of Services Plan for 2021-22

The following plan is provided as required by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Federal offices at DESE that administers COVID-19 relief grant funding.

The plan addresses each of the mitigation strategies identified by the Department of Education. These strategies include:

- a. Wearing of masks
- b. Physical distancing (including use of cohorts/podding)
- c. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- d. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities
- e. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine
- f. Diagnostic and screening testing;
- g. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students
- h. Accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies.

The Avenue City R-IX School District had much success in 2020-21 dealing with the issues of the COVID-19 pandemic. We initiated 2020-21 with face-to-face instruction on the first scheduled day of school. We experienced two classroom quarantines in 2020-21. During those times students were engaged with virtual learning techniques and no learning time was lost.

Below you will find the plans which were implemented in 2020-21. The dates have been changed to 2021-22 however, the district will begin the 2021-22 school year as a typical school year. If, however, variants of the COVID-19 appear in our county to the extent that a mask mandate is implemented by our county or by the local health department, we will revert to the 2020-21 plan as described below. Until that time, we will be holding school in a face-to-face daily operation. This plan will be reviewed on a six month rotating basis until no longer required.

Students will not be required to wear masks at school. Masks may be required on school busses but that will also be determined by the number of COVID-19 cases in our county in August 2021. (A)

We will refrain from taking body temperatures as the students and teachers enter the building or board the bus for school.

We will adhere to additional cleaning and UV light sanitizing for maintaining a healthy atmosphere. (D)

We will continue to utilize non-touch fixtures in our restroom facilities. (C,D)

We will scale back our cleaning of our exterior playground equipment to a once a day operation rather than the multiple times per day we did in 2020-21. (D)

In order to deal with the social and emotional issues brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and our quarantines and early dismissal in 2019, we will expand our mental health/counseling position from a .4 FTE to a .6 FTE. (F,H)

Should the number of COVID-19 cases, or its variants, increase to the point that a mask requirement is imposed by our county, the district will utilize the below plan for 2021-22. This plan is written in a format which would be used to communicate to parents the day-to-day operations and expectations associated with reentry to school during or after a significant community health issue. (A)

The Avenue City School District has developed new procedures to help maintain a healthy school environment. Our plan involves many different layers of protection including cleanliness, modifications in our instruction, accommodations to the classroom environments, limiting access to outside visitors, recognizing signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and educational materials.

We have worked with the Andrew County Health Department, area professionals, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Center for Disease (CDC) guidelines, the district reentry committee, and the Board of Education to develop a district plan.

You can find out more about our district plan for reentry to school by viewing administration videos on the Avenue City Elementary PTO Facebook page or the district website www.avenuecityschool.org

Using many different resources we have developed four checklists that are intended to help parents, guardians, and caregivers, plan and prepare for the upcoming school year. The checklists are titled:

- Planning for Face to Face Instruction
- Cloth Face Coverings
- Mental Health & Social-Emotional Wellbeing Considerations
- Planning for Virtual At-Home Learning

Planning for Face to Face Instruction:

Going back to school this fall will require our school and families to work together even more than before. Teachers and staff will teach and encourage preventive behaviors at school. Likewise, it will be important for families to emphasize and model healthy behaviors at home and to talk to your children about changes to expect this school year. Although we plan to start the school year with face-to-face instruction it is important to prepare for the possibility of

virtual learning if school closes or if your child becomes exposed to COVID-19 and needs to stay home.

Reminders for parents as we begin the 21-22 school year:

- School hours will remain the same. (8:25 AM-3:08 PM; Doors to the building will open at 8:00 AM.
- When students' arrive, staff members will scan their temperature. If temperature is below 100.4 degrees F, students will then go directly to breakfast or to their classroom. (E)
- School Aged Childcare (after school) will NOT be provided the 1st quarter. We will reassess this decision at the beginning of 2nd quarter. (B)
- Extracurricular Activities: ACES will follow Missouri State High School Activities Association guidelines with regard to extracurricular activities. (B)

CDC has created a checklist to help with back to school planning for school year (SY) 2021-2022. We have modified these checklists to help our Avenue City Parents specifically.

Actions to Take and Points to Consider: (A-H)

- ✓ Check in with your child each morning for signs of illness. If your child has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, they should not come to school. Make sure your child does not have a sore throat or other signs of illness, like a cough, diarrhea, severe headache, vomiting, or body aches. Your child's temperature will be scanned before they get on the bus or before they enter the building. If their temperature is above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, they will not be able to attend school.
- ✓ If your child is ill, has signs for symptoms of COVID-19, or has close contact with anyone who has had COVID-19 you must contact the school. Your child should not come to school. You should discuss with Mrs. Russell when your child can return. The school district's point of contact is: School Nurse Shawnda Russell. Call her at 816-662-2305 or email at srussell@avenuecityschool.org
- ✓ Make sure the school is aware who to contact if your child gets sick while at school. (This can be done if you complete yearly registration forms.) Make sure your demographic information is current at school, including emergency contacts and individuals authorized to pick up your child(ren) from school.
- ✓ Make sure you are aware of local COVID-19 testing sites. (Nurse Russell can help you find a site – if needed.)
- ✓ Make sure your child is up-to-date with all vaccinations including for flu. All school-aged children should get an influenza flu vaccine every season, with rare exceptions. This is especially important this year because we do not yet know if being sick with COVID-19 at the same time as the flu will result in more severe illness.
- ✓ Review and practice proper hand washing techniques at home, especially before and after eating, sneezing, coughing, and adjusting a face cover. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in the trash. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands.
- ✓ Remember to immediately wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. Make hand washing fun and explain to your child why it's important.

- ✓ Pack a reusable water bottle with a lid in your child's backpack. Your child will NOT be able to use water fountain, but the refill stations will be available.
- ✓ Pack a cloth face mask in your child's backpack. Practice using the mask.
- ✓ Talk to your child about precautions to take at school. Children should be advised to:
 - Wash and sanitize their hands more often.
 - Keep physical distance from other students.
 - Wear a cloth face covering at different points in the day,
 - Avoid sharing objects with other students, including water bottles, devices, writing instruments, and books.
 - Use hand sanitizer.
 - Monitor how they feel and tell an adult if they are not feeling well.
- ✓ The school district will communicate with families if your child has been exposed to a positive case of COVID-19. We will use the school website, PTO Facebook page, and our school communication system (text /email / phone call) for these announcements. Please note that individual student privacy will be upheld.
- ✓ Plan for possible school closures or periods of quarantine. If transmission is increasing in our community or if multiple children or staff test positive for COVID-19, the school building might close. Similarly, if a close contact of your child (within or outside of school) tests positive for COVID-19, your child may need to stay home for a 2-week quarantine period. You may need to consider the feasibility of teleworking, taking leave from work, or identifying someone who can supervise your child in the event of school building closures or quarantine. If this is an extended period of time – the district will make arrangements for continuation of your child's education.
- ✓ Plan for transportation:
- ✓ If your child rides the bus, they MUST wear a cloth face covering on the bus and they must stay in their assigned seat.
- ✓ If you plan to carpool, plan on every child in the carpool and the driver to wear cloth face coverings.
- ✓ If your child has a specialized plan such as an IEP, 504, Speech / Language Therapy, or Remedial Reading, your child's case worker will reach out to you letting you know how we plan to meet your child's needs.
- ✓ Consider limiting your child's in-person out-of-school interactions with other peoples. If they do participate in out-of-school activities, make sure social distancing guidelines are followed.
- ✓ Should you need information regarding vaccination opportunities you may contact the School Nurse Shawnda Russell. Call her at 816-662-2305 or email at srussell@avenuecityschool.org

Cloth Face Coverings

Avenue City School is requiring that all students bring a cloth face mask to school. There will be specific activities and times that the district requires your child to wear a mask. (for example: while on the bus or when social distancing guidelines cannot be followed.) If you prefer for your child to wear a mask the entire time they are at school; we support you in that decision.

- ✓ Have multiple cloth face coverings, so you can wash them daily and have back-ups ready. Choose cloth face coverings that

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- Completely cover the nose and mouth
- Are secured with ties or ear loops
- Include multiple layers of fabric
- Allow for breathing without restriction
- Can be washed and machine dried without damage or change to shape
- Label your child's face mask with permanent marker.
- ✓ Practice with your child putting on and taking off cloth face coverings without touching the cloth.
- ✓ If you have a young child, help build their comfort wearing a cloth face covering and become comfortable seeing others in face covers.
 - Praise your child for wearing a cloth face covering correctly.
 - Put a cloth face covering on stuffed animals.
 - Draw a cloth face covering on a favorite book character.
 - Show images of other children wearing cloth face coverings.
 - Allow your child to choose their cloth face covering.
- ✓ Consider providing your child with a container (labeled) to bring and store their face mask in.

Mental Health & Social-Emotional Wellbeing Considerations:

Since the school experience will be very different from before with desks far apart from each other, teachers maintaining physical distance, etc., it is unlike anything your child is used to. Before school is in session, you may want to talk to your child and explain that all these steps are being taken to keep everyone safe and healthy. The list below provides actions and considerations regarding your child's mental health and emotional well-being as they transition back to in-person school.

- ✓ Talk with your child about how school will look different (e.g., desks far apart from each other, teachers maintaining physical distance, Anticipate behavior changes in your child.
- ✓ Watch for changes like excessive crying or irritation, excessive worry or sadness, unhealthy eating or sleeping habits, difficulty concentrating, which may be signs of your child struggling with stress and anxiety.
- ✓ Avenue City School District has contracted with our school counselor to be present in our building more to help with these situations. If your child is having trouble socially or emotionally adjusting, please reach out to your child's teacher or the school counselor Ms. Stormie Milne. Call 816-662-2305 or email smilne@avenuecityschool.org
- ✓ You can be a role model for your child by practicing self-care:
 - Take breaks
 - Get plenty of sleep
 - Exercise
 - Eat well
 - Stay socially connected

Planning for Virtual or At-Home Learning:

We certainly hope we do not have to break from face to face instruction and resort to virtual at-home learning, however it is a possibility. It is important to prepare for this possibility of virtual learning if the district closes or if your child becomes exposed to COVID-19 and needs to stay

home. At some point in the school year, the district with guidance from the Andrew County Health Department might have to send home a group of students or the entire school for an extended time. If this is the case the district will provide Virtual or At-Home Learning: Things to consider as you get ready for virtual or at-home learning.

- ✓ Stay up to date with announcements via the school website, the PTO Facebook page, etc.
- ✓ Create a schedule with your child and make a commitment to stick with it. Structure and routine can greatly help your child from falling behind with assignments.
- ✓ Try to find a space where you live that's free of distractions, noise, and clutter for learning and doing homework.
- ✓ Identify opportunities for your child to connect with peers and be social—either virtually or in person, while staying social distant.
- ✓ Your child's teacher will communicate with you the following:
 - Times of regular and consistent opportunities during each day for staff and student check in.
 - What communication application the teacher will use to communicate about classroom instruction.
 - Times of regular and consistent (daily) live video instruction.
 - What to do if your family has technology barriers to learning from home and how the district can help with this.
- ✓ If your child has a specialized plan such as IEP, 504, Speech / Language Therapy, or Remedial Reading Plan the case worker will reach out to you to let you know how we will meet the needs of your child. (H)

ESOL assistance is available upon request, should you or someone you know need that help.