



Clarinda Community School District

Return to Learn

2021-2022

Dear Cardinal Families,

The administrative team, school nurse, Page County Public Health, nutrition staff, custodial staff and others have been keeping current on the latest guidance from the Department of Education, Iowa Department of Public Health, and CDC. We have been mindful of creating a safe learning environment for our students and staff. Similar to last year, we will invest time and energy on the tasks under our control and will shift our strategies based on data.

We have three main goals in our Return to Learn Plan. We want to keep students and staff safe, provide high levels of instruction, and stay in an in-person model when possible.

On August 5th, Dr. Ann Lebo shared Department of Education guidance aligned with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). With this in mind and per advice from legal counsel, our collaborative team determined mitigation efforts and identified strategies for our students, staff and families:

- Stay home, if you are sick. This is the best way to keep others and yourself healthy, as allergy and cold symptoms can be the same as COVID-19 and variant strains.
- Stay home from school until 24 hours after symptoms and fever have resolved.
- Do not use fever reducing medication prior to sending your child to school. Staff members will be expected to send students with symptoms to the nurse's office right away. Families will need to pick up sick students from school promptly. Temperatures will not be taken upon entrance to school buildings.
- Bring bottled water to school or utilize the cups/fill stations in each building. Staying hydrated is critical.
- Practice handwashing and sanitizing routines at school, home and in the community. Practice covering your cough with your elbow to minimize bacteria and virus spread.
- Masks will be available for staff or students, and the district strongly encourages employees and students to wear masks on buses and in school buildings. (Please note, the district received legal counsel regarding mask requirements. Also, the district improved HVAC systems for improved air quality.)

- Daily disinfecting of classrooms, lunchrooms, and other areas will occur. Manipulatives, hard surfaces, high touch areas such as door handles, etc. will be included. Classrooms will be deep-cleaned on Fridays and as needed throughout the week.
- Sharing of supplies will be limited.
- Lunch tables will be physically distanced as much as possible, and students will eat in the commons, outdoors, and other indoor areas. Self-serve items will be pre-packaged and/or grab-and-go.
- Parents will not be allowed in the buildings before and after school. Students will be met at the door.
- Parents/Guardians desiring their student be released from school early must call the school upon arrival. Students will be released from the building to walk to the vehicle.
- Scheduled visitors will be limited to those invited by school personnel to support the learning needs. Examples include Meet the Teacher Night, athletic or performing arts nights, etc.
- Students will be utilizing lockers to house their coats, backpacks, etc. Keeping these items clean and organized contributes to a healthy environment.
- Band and vocal will follow the recommendations of the Iowa High School Music Association.
- All athletics will follow the recommendations of the Iowa Boys and Girls Athletic Associations.

If you are interested in a home COVID test, we will have these available from Page County Public Health. Parental/Guardian consent is required to send a kit home with a student. All the instructions are included in the saliva-based PCR test, as well as the shipping label. There is no cost for families to utilize this service; however, it does take a little longer than rapid testing to receive results.

Vaccination clinics for staff and students is being explored and will be offered, if possible.

In respect to health and safety policies, the district will collaborate with families to provide appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities.

Our team appreciates each families' commitment to keeping our students safe.

Respectfully,

HT Adams, Activities Director
Chris Bergman, Superintendent
Luke Cox, 7-12 Principal
Lesley Ehlers, PK-6 Principal
Kelly Kline, School Nurse
Allie Wellhausen, Director of Special Education

COVID-19 and K-12 School Update for Fall 2021

Vaccination

While not required, vaccination for everyone who is eligible continues to be the most effective way to prevent COVID-19 illness and stop the spread of COVID-19.

- For COVID-19 Vaccine information visit: <https://vaccinate.iowa.gov/>

Testing

Individuals (including students, teachers, and other staff) can seek testing through their normal healthcare channels or through other sites that provide testing services (i.e., local pharmacies).

- Information about free at-home testing through SHL is available at: <https://www.testiowa.com/>

School Illness Reporting

IDPH continues to ask K-12 schools to report when >10% of students are absent due to illness. When >10% absenteeism is reported, IDPH will contact the Local Public Health (LPH) department in the county where the school administrative offices are located. Public health will contact the school to provide best practices and support tailored to the specific types of illnesses being reported.

- Schools should report >10% absenteeism at: <https://redcap.idph.state.ia.us/surveys/?s=LEFK7E779R>

Masks and Cloth Face Coverings

HF 847, signed by Governor Reynolds on May 20, 2021, prohibits a school district from adopting or enforcing a policy that requires employees, students, or the public to wear a mask while on school property. As such, masks must be optional for students, teachers, and visitors.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is IDPH currently performing COVID-19 positive case investigations for all positive reports or conducting contact tracing for COVID-19 exposed persons?

No. IDPH has adjusted COVID-19 surveillance to follow the influenza model; state case investigation and tracing efforts for COVID-19 now focus on outbreaks and vulnerable populations. Just like with other public health activities, these efforts will be continuously evaluated and adjusted as needed.

Will IDPH issue isolation and quarantine orders for COVID-19 positive or COVID-19 exposed students, teachers, or other staff members?

No. IDPH is not currently issuing isolation and quarantine orders for COVID-19 positive or COVID-19 exposed individuals.

Can LPH departments require schools to perform case investigations or conduct contact tracing on their behalf?

No. While some LPH are continuing to pursue case investigations, LPH cannot require schools to perform case investigations or contact tracing. School nurses do have a legal duty to assist a local board of health in a disease investigation. See 641 IAC 1.7.

Can Iowa schools require that masks be worn by students, teachers, other staff members, and visitors?

No. HF 847, signed by Governor Reynolds on May 20, 2021, prohibits a school district from adopting or enforcing a policy that requires employees, students, or the public to wear a mask while on school property.

Can schools allow students, teachers, staff members, and visitors to voluntarily wear a mask?

Yes. Schools should allow students, teachers, other staff members, and visitors who want to voluntarily continue to wear a cloth face covering for reasons that make sense for their family or individual health condition to do so.

Does the CDC mask order for public transportation apply to school buses?

Yes. The CDC issued an Order effective February 1, 2021, imposing a requirement for persons to wear masks while on public transportation conveyances, and in its Frequently Asked Questions document accompanying the Order the CDC indicates that “passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses, including on buses operated by public and private school systems, subject to the exclusions and exemptions in the CDC’s Order.” The Iowa Department of Education provided guidance to schools regarding this issue on a webinar in May 2021. School districts with additional questions about the applicability of the Order should contact their district’s legal counsel.

Can schools ask students, teachers, other staff members, or visitors for proof of COVID-19 vaccination?

No. HF 889, signed by Governor Reynolds on May 20, 2021, prohibits the mandatory disclosure of whether a person has received a COVID-19 vaccination as a condition for entry onto the premises of a governmental entity.

How long should COVID-19 positive students, teachers, or other staff members stay home?

COVID-19 positive persons can return to normal activities after:

- 10 days since symptoms first appeared and
- 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving*

*Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation

All other sick students, teachers, or other staff members should stay home in accordance with existing school procedures, generally until 24 hours after their symptoms resolve.

Questions for Department of Education should be directed to Melissa Walker at 515-281-5327 or melissa.walker@iowa.gov