



## **ALLEN COUNTY SCHOOLS COMMON REOPENING AGREEMENT**

PREFACE: All Ohio schools closed for the remainder of the school year in mid-March, by order of the Governor and Director of the Ohio Department of Health in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This document is based on the most recent guidance available from the Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Department of Health regarding guidelines for schools to reopen for the 2020-2021 school year. School district superintendents from each public school district in Allen County, along with the Allen County Educational Service Center, the Apollo Career Center, the Allen County Board of Developmental Disabilities and Allen County Public Health came together to draft common practices for school reopening in Allen County.

These general principles will guide each school district as they move forward with reopening schools throughout Allen County:

1. Each school district will implement recommended safety protocols to the highest degree possible.
2. Each school district will work closely with Allen County Public Health to promote safety in each school building.
3. Each school district will be transparent with all stakeholders that some level of risk will always be present when students and school district employees occupy school district facilities.
4. School districts recognize the need for consistency in areas of operations while recognizing that individual differences in classroom sizes, school facilities, and building operations may lead to some inconsistencies.
5. School districts will strongly encourage daily symptom checks for staff, caregivers, and students. All staff and students who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will stay home and are strongly encouraged to be tested as soon as possible to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Allen County Public Health will inform school districts about current testing sites/availability.
6. Each school district will cooperate with Allen County Public Health's work in contact tracing.
7. Hand sanitizer is to be made available in high traffic areas including entrances to buildings and classrooms. Sanitation wipes or disinfectants labeled for use against SARS-COV-2 are to be available in each room and common space.



These principles will be common to all Allen County public school districts:

**When a student/staff member has been diagnosed with COVID-19**

Communication will be developed by Allen County Public Health outlining the following actions to be taken by schools when someone is diagnosed with COVID-19. **NO INFORMATION WILL BE RELEASED BY SCHOOLS UNTIL CONTACTED BY ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH.**

- To be as transparent as possible, permissible information will be shared with parents and staff, while at the same time, maintaining required confidentiality, and countering potential stigma and discrimination. The communication will explain/define what is considered a close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) to someone with COVID-19 that will result in quarantine.
- Any student or employee who is diagnosed with COVID-19 may not return until released by Allen County Public Health. The duration of the isolation for anyone sent home and/or diagnosed with COVID-19 will be based on the current CDC guidelines. As of June 2020, this includes absence of fever (under 100 degrees Fahrenheit) without the use of medication for 72 hours (three full days) AND improvement of all other symptoms for 72 hours AND at least ten days have passed since symptoms started. If the student or employee is positive with COVID-19 but has no symptoms, they will stay at home in isolation until after 10 days have passed since their positive test.
- 14-day quarantine will be required for anyone who is determined to have “close contact” to someone who has COVID-19. “Close contact” is to be determined by Allen County Public Health.

NOTE: Schools will develop their own policies/procedures to support the above steps that will be taken.

**Student and staff health issues that are NOT related to COVID-19**

- Districts will follow their usual procedures for student and staff medical issues/illnesses.
- Students or employees with a fever of 100 degrees or higher will be sent home. They may not return until they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. If the individual has had contact with someone confirmed or probable to have COVID-19, he or she must complete isolation or quarantine procedures in coordination with Allen County Public Health.



### **Food Service**

All districts will offer food service. Logistics will be determined by each district in compliance with Allen County Public Health and based on the Director of Health's Dine Safe Ohio. Recommendations include but are not limited to:

- Students at tables will be spread out as much as possible
- Tables spaced 6 feet or as far apart as possible
- No self-service foods or condiments
- Individually packaged condiments or staff add before serving
- Limiting capacity/occupancy of the school cafeteria
- Students should wash or sanitize their hands prior to and after eating.
- Cohort/assigned seating in the cafeteria is strongly encouraged to assist with contact tracing if needed.
- Consider students eating in classrooms if need to reduce the number of students and/or mixing in the cafeteria.

### **Classroom Occupancy**

- Districts will inform parents that safety protocols are in place, but any student who attends school will incur some level of risk. Districts will decrease the likelihood of infection with hygiene, cleaning, and safety procedures, but being in a public place carries a certain level of risk that cannot be eliminated.
- Classroom occupancy will be determined based on each individual circumstance with the maximum amount of safety considerations possible.
- Students will be spaced as far apart as possible/feasible.
- Cohort students and use seating assignments.
- Face coverings are highly recommended for students in grades 3-12.
- School employees will be required to use a face covering, with limited allowable exceptions documented in writing.

### **Remote learning**

- School districts will offer remote learning for parents who do not wish to send their child to school.
- Parents may choose from the following two options:
  1. Send their child to school (assume some level of risk), or
  2. Agree to remote learning from home.
- School districts will determine when and how often a student may switch from a traditional classroom to online and back.
- School districts will determine what an online education system will encompass.



West Central  
Learning Academy





### **Visitors/Volunteers/Parties/Field Trips**

There are different levels of school visitors. Therefore, each district will make decisions based on their particular situations. However, the following guidelines are recommended:

- Visitors are generally discouraged from being in school district facilities
- Safety protocols, such as taking temperatures, screening for symptoms, requiring face coverings, washing and/or sanitizing hands upon arrival will be implemented for all visitors.
- Volunteers should be assigned one consistent work area rather than “floating” or rotating between classrooms or areas of the building.
- No Food, other than pre-packaged, is to be provided to students outside of lunches.
- Field trips will be severely limited.

### **Transportation**

- Allen County School Districts will allow two students per seat and in some instances three students if the children are younger and therefore smaller.
- Districts will attempt to seat siblings together.
- Assigned seats/seating charts should be used to assist with contact tracing if that is needed.
- Buses should be loaded back to front and unloaded front to back to reduce exposure to others.
- Face coverings are required for drivers and highly recommended for students. If a district requires students to wear a face covering, the district may refuse to transport a student who refuses to wear one.
- Windows may be slightly opened to allow for fresh air ventilation.
- In the event State policies require school districts to use alternative schedules, districts may adopt minimum requirements for transportation to reduce the number of students who are eligible for school district transportation.
- Plan for the least amount of mixing and/or bus transfers, especially when transporting students to other schools.
- School districts will establish cleaning and sanitizing protocols for buses including frequently touched surfaces.

### **Recess**

- School districts will make every effort to maintain consistency with other safety procedures.
- This may mean that districts limit student access to certain pieces of playground equipment and restrict activities that are “high touch” and difficult to clean or maintain social distancing.



- All districts will work toward “structured” recess activities, such as nature walks that limit students’ physical contact with others.
- Students must wash or sanitize their hands before and after recess.
- Parents may “opt out” of recess.

During these challenging times, we encourage students and staff to talk with people they trust about their concerns and how they are feeling.

The Allen County School Joint Reopening Agreement is subject to change, without notice, throughout the school year and the duration of the pandemic.

- Mr. Mel Rentschler, Superintendent, Allen East Local Schools
- Mr. Rich Dackin, Superintendent, Bath Local Schools
- Dr. Greg Denecker, Superintendent, Bluffton Exempted Village Schools
- Mr. Doug Westrick, Superintendent, Delphos City Schools
- Mr. Joel Mengerink, Superintendent, Elida Local Schools
- Mrs. Jill Ackerman, Superintendent, Lima City Schools
- Dr. Kelly Schooler, Superintendent, Perry Local Schools
- Mr. James Kanable, Superintendent, Shawnee Local Schools
- Mrs. Cindy Endsley, Superintendent, Spencerville Local Schools
- Mr. Keith Horner, Superintendent, Apollo Career Center
- Ms. Mindy Schulz, Superintendent, West Central Learning Academy
- Mrs. Theresa Schnipke, Superintendent, Allen County Board of Developmental Disabilities
- Mr. Craig Kupferberg, Superintendent, Allen County Educational Service Center
- Mrs. Kathy Luhn, Commissioner, Allen County Public Health