

American Rescue Plan: 2021-2022 Safe Return to School

July 27, 2021

Dear Parents,

One of the requirements for starting up the 2021-2022 school year for all Idaho school districts and charters to have a plan in place for students to receive as much face-to-face learning as possible. We reviewed input from various stakeholders, and this is an update of the plan published last year. The plan is fluid and will change as both national and local circumstances dictate the need to adjust to balance the risks.

Here are some of the facts and some assumptions we have based our plan on. We know COVID19 and its mutations will be something we have to live with for the foreseeable future and perhaps for years to come. We know that vaccines are effective against known COVID variants and protect against the more insidious side effects of COVID, but the vaccines are not infallible. We know children under 12 are not eligible for a vaccine at this time. For unknown reasons, children are currently far less likely to be hospitalized if they have COVID, but we don't know if they will suffer any long-term side effects. We know that people who have had COVID, but are unvaccinated, can still be infected by new variants and suffer the worst symptoms. We know some people can't take a vaccine and some people won't take a vaccine. We know that the new variants, while no more deadly than the original strain, are far more contagious and people who have one of the new COVID variants are carrying exponentially larger viral loads and spreading the disease faster. It appears that being outdoors is generally safer. We know Blaine County has a much higher vaccination rate than the general population of Idaho and therefore our local population is less likely to spread COVID. Statistics show COVID is more likely to be fatal to people who are unvaccinated. There are still many unknowns and the data that is being collected continues to reveal nuances.

Syringa's extended family covers a wide diaspora. We have newborns to ninety-year-olds who come to campus. Within our community there are diabetics and obese folks, folks who are fighting cancer and folks who are immunocompromised, transplant patients and people with end stage organ disease. This plan was designed to balance the risks for all community members.

Face Coverings: Properly fitting face coverings are highly recommended and encouraged (optional) for all unvaccinated staff, students, and visitors (CDC recommendation) when indoors and in crowded settings, when physical distancing cannot be maintained. If the Harvard Metrics [Harvard Metrics](#) move into the orange or red category for Blaine County, we will mandate masks be worn inside the building, where there is not adequate air exchange, until we understand the risks to our community.

Please be aware that students riding the Mountain Rides bus to and from school or on field trips around the Wood River Valley will be required to wear a mask.

We will keep you updated on if and when Mountain Rides changes the rules. Carrying at least two masks in a zip lock bag in your child's backpack is recommended.

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) School has access to disposable masks available in the office (or when you arrive for school at the drop off zone) for use by staff, students, and patrons electing to utilize a face covering. It is the recommendation of the CDC that a properly fitting mask be utilized in school by all unvaccinated individuals when indoors and in crowded settings, when air flow is inadequate or physical distancing cannot be maintained. Plexiglass barriers will continue to be utilized in high contact areas and at the request of staff and/or students.

Hygiene: Hand sanitizer will be made readily available throughout the school and/or students may elect to wash hands as they change activity or location. Each classroom and office are supplied with dispensers for hand sanitizing.

Social Distancing: Staff will maximize social distancing within classrooms and other inside areas to the greatest extent possible. CDC recommends maintaining 3 feet of physical distance between students.

Symptomatic students/staff: Any student or staff member displaying symptoms of COVID-19 will be excluded from school and all school related activities for 10 days. However, individuals tested after day five and receive a negative test result may return early (within 7-10 day) if no longer have symptoms of COVID. [When to quarantine.](#)

COVID Positive/Presumed Positive: Students and staff who are COVID-19 positive/presumed positive will be excluded from school and all school related activities for 10 days from the onset of symptoms. Students/staff may return after 10 days and fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

COVID-19 Exposure: Those identified as exposed will be contacted by the school and provided with information explaining the CDC recommendations regarding quarantining and monitoring for symptoms. Those who are vaccinated should follow these guidelines issued by the CDC. [Fully Vaccinated protocols](#)

COVID-19 Testing: We will provide a list of providers and ESSER funds will pay for testing provided the tests follow the CDC timelines and money is still available.

School Cleaning: Extra attention will be given to the cleaning of buildings with products approved to kill the COVID-19 virus. The school's custodian job will be to oversee the cleaning of surfaces during the school day.

Opening of School.

SMS will maintain face-to-face instruction to the greatest extent possible utilizing the health and safety strategies outlined above and designed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Schools will operate educational services in a regular fashion whenever feasible. This includes maintaining open campuses for in-person learning five days a week (except in instances of emergencies).

Continuity of Education: During times students are out of school with sickness or exposure, students will be able to continue in their coursework through the use of a distance learning platform as was made available during the 2020-2021 school year. Educators will be encouraged to provide students with support in these instances. These supports may include and are not limited to live streaming, videos of lessons, recorded tutorials, videos created by other educators on the content, packets of work, or interactive digital activities.

Digital Access: All students will have access to a device to take home to complete work remotely when excluded. In addition, the district will have access to Hotspots which parents and staff can check out for internet access during times they are excluded from school due to COVID-19, if they are in need.