

FORT WAYNE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

2021-22

**RETURNING TO
THE CLASSROOM**

**A GUIDE TO
HEALTH & SAFETY PROCEDURES**



Sept. 7, 2021

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF FORT WAYNE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Dear Fort Wayne Community Schools Families,

I appreciate your support and flexibility as we navigated through the 2020-21 school year. It wasn't easy, but we made it through together.

We were optimistic that we would start the 2021-22 school year in a much different place. However, with cases on the rise again and low vaccination rates among students, we must take precautions. Our first priority for the school year is to keep students at all grade levels in school five days a week. We know students learn best in person, and we have a lot to do this year. To start the school year, we will require face masks for all inside FWCS buildings.

We remain committed to monitoring local case spread and following guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), the Indiana Department of Public Health (IDPH), Allen County Department of Health and other health organizations. If we learned anything over the past year, it is to remain flexible and extend grace. We will continue to learn and grow together.

In this Returning to the Classroom Plan, we outline continued safety protocols and expectations for the coming year.

I am excited to see full classrooms again when the school year begins on Monday, Aug. 16. We know many students need additional support to stay on track and reach their potential. We are here to support them and meet their academic and social-emotional needs. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's school if you need anything throughout the year.



Superintendent
Fort Wayne Community Schools

CONTACT INFORMATION

Family and Community Engagement Center	467-2120
COVID-19 Hotline	467-1907
District Main Office	467-1000
Help Desk	467-4357
Transportation	467-1900
Abbett Elementary School	467-5800
Adams Elementary School	467-5850
Arlington Elementary School	467-6000
Blackhawk Middle School	467-4885
Bloomington Elementary School	467-6700
Brentwood Elementary School	467-6775
Bunche Montessori Early Childhood Center	467-4790
Croninger Elementary School	467-6050
FWCS Career Academy	467-1010
Fairfield Elementary School	467-5900
Forest Park Elementary School	467-6850
Franke Park Elementary School	467-6925
Glenwood Park Elementary School	467-6200
Haley Elementary School	467-4510
Harris Elementary School	467-6300
Harrison Hill Elementary School	467-7000
Holland Elementary School	467-7075
Indian Village Elementary School	467-5200
Irwin Elementary School	467-5310
Jefferson Middle School	467-4825
Kekionga Middle School	467-6600
Lakeside Middle School	467-8625
Lane Middle School	467-4400
Levan Scott Academy	467-8050
Lincoln Elementary School	467-5400
Lindley Elementary School	467-5350
Maplewood Elementary School	467-7150
Memorial Park Middle School	467-5300
Miami Middle School	467-8560
North Side High School	467-2800
Northcrest Elementary School	467-5450
Northwood Middle School	467-2930
Northrop High School	467-2300
Portage Middle School	467-4500
Price Elementary School	467-4950
Shambaugh Elementary School	467-6150
Shawnee Middle School	467-6525
Snider High School	467-4600
South Side High School	467-2600
South Wayne Elementary School	467-8100
St. Joseph Central Elementary School	467-6100
Study Elementary School	467-8500
Towles Intermediate School	467-4300
Washington Elementary School	467-8150
Washington Center Elementary School	467-6250
Wayne High School	467-6400
Waynedale Elementary School	467-8820
Weisser Park Elementary School	467-8875
Whitney Young Early Childhood Center	467-8950

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INTRODUCTION

As we approach the 2021-22 school year, we start with many lessons learned during the ongoing pandemic. While Fort Wayne, Allen County, the State of Indiana and the United States of America are all in a better place now than one year ago, the pandemic remains a threat to public health. This plan was developed based on our experience since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March 2020, the emerging science as we continue to learn more about the virus, how it spreads and its effects, and frequent conversations with local leaders, the Allen County Department of Health (ACDH), Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), among other relevant agencies. All guidance and this plan are subject to change as new information emerges and as more people are vaccinated.

As an education institution, Fort Wayne Community Schools believes the academic success, as well as the physical, mental and social well-being of our students is critical. We are committed to maintaining the health and wellness of our students and staff.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our guiding principles should provide direction to our planning, decision-making and execution of plans as students return to the classroom for the 2021-22 school year.

Safety First – We will communicate regularly with ACDH, ISDH and IDOE to inform our decisions. Our primary goal is the health and safety of our students and staff.

In-Person Instruction Every Day – We know students learn best in person. We are committed to ensuring we make decisions that allow students to remain in classrooms.

Deep Learning – FWCS is committed to strong education that encompasses a whole-child approach. Students will receive high quality instruction that is guided by our curriculum and embraces the elements of Deep Learning and the 6 C's of Creativity, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Character, Communication and Citizenship.

Transparency in Communication – We will share what we know and what we don't know. We will try to do it in a timely manner.

Equity for all Students – Our existing systems lay a foundation for equity ensuring that all students have opportunities to succeed.

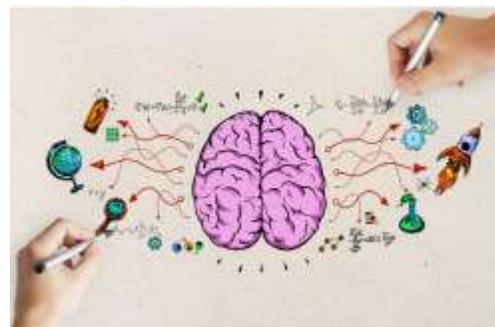
Flexibility – As we experienced many times last year, we must remain flexible as the situation changes. We will be decisive and fair in our approach.



Fort Wayne Community Schools educates all students to high standards enabling them to become productive, responsible citizens.

WHAT WILL LEARNING LOOK LIKE DURING THE 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR?

The physical and mental health and safety of our students and staff is at the heart of all our decisions. We understand how stressful and isolating the past year and a half have been for children and adults, which is why we encourage all students to return to in-person learning for the 2021-22 school year. We also understand, however, that for some students and their families, in-person learning is not the best choice for health reasons and other concerns. For that reason, we will offer the Fort Wayne Virtual Academy, a fully online school for kindergarten through 12th grades.



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROTOCOLS

MASKING/FACE COVERINGS

- Beginning Aug. 11, 2021, face masks are required for all students, staff members and visitors to FWCS school buildings while indoors or on a school bus.
- Masks must be worn properly, covering the mouth and nose.
- Masks are not required when outside.

ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES

- As time and resources allow, FWCS will participate in a free and voluntary COVID-19 screening program to identify students and staff who may have the virus and be contagious but don't have symptoms. This allows FWCS to take quick action to prevent further spread to other students and their families. Participation by students will require parental consent; staff members will also have the opportunity to opt-in.
- Physical distance of 3 feet between students while in the classroom should be implemented to the greatest extent possible. Cohorting is encouraged when 3 feet between all students cannot be achieved. If all students and staff are masked in the classroom at all times, quarantining close contacts is not required.
- Physical distance of 6 feet is desired in areas when masks can't be worn indoors, while eating, and during activities when increased exhalation occurs, such as singing/exercising (such activities should be conducted outdoors as much as possible). When 6 feet cannot be achieved, cohorting is encouraged to the greatest extent possible.
- In a situation where masks were not worn by all, if an individual is identified as a close contact to someone who tests positive for COVID-19, elementary students and unvaccinated adults will be required to quarantine for 10 days as long as they remain asymptomatic. Masks will be required at all times while at school for days 11-14. Six feet of social distancing is required when masks are removed for eating and drinking.

- Vaccinated adults identified as close contacts are not required to quarantine but must monitor symptoms for 14 days past exposure. If any symptoms of illness occur, the individual should stay home and contact the school nurse.

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL PROTOCOLS

MASKING/FACE COVERINGS

- Beginning Aug. 11, 2021, face masks are required for all students, staff members and visitors to FWCS school buildings while indoors or on a school bus.
- Masks must be worn properly, covering the mouth and nose.
- Masks are not required when outside.

ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES

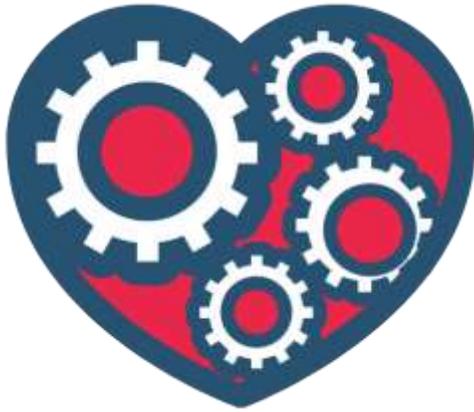
- Unvaccinated students and staff should maintain social distancing to the greatest extent possible at all times.
- If all students and staff are masked in the classroom at all times, quarantining close contacts is not required.
- In a situation where masks were not worn by all, if an individual is identified as a close contact to someone who tests positive for COVID-19, unvaccinated students and adults will be required to quarantine for 10 days as long as they remain asymptomatic. Masks will be required at all times while at school for days 11-14. Six feet of social distancing is required when masks are removed for eating and drinking.
- Vaccinated students and adults identified as close contacts are not required to quarantine but must monitor symptoms for 14 days past exposure. If any symptoms of illness occur, the individual should stay home and contact the school nurse.
- As time and resources allow, FWCS will participate in a free and voluntary COVID-19 screening program to identify students and staff who may have the virus and be contagious but don't have symptoms. This allows FWCS to take quick action to prevent further spread to other students and their families. Participation by students will require parental consent; staff members will also have the opportunity to opt-in. With masks optional, this random testing provides a safety net to prevent school-based outbreaks.

VACCINATIONS

Vaccination against COVID-19 is currently approved for children and adults ages 12 and older. Please visit www.supershot.org or www.coronavirus.in.gov/vaccine to find a location.



OUR STUDENTS' SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING IS A CRITICAL FOCUS



While the physical safety of our students and staff is always a priority, we recognize that the health and wellness of our students and staff also includes their social and emotional well-being. We will continue to follow the Indiana Department of Education Social-Emotional Learning Competencies, which includes focusing on mindset, collaboration, critical-thinking, connection, insight and regulation.

When the school year begins, teachers will spend time helping students readjust to school. Each month, students and staff engage in lessons focused on self-awareness and well-being.

Accommodations will be made, as needed and as appropriate, for students with special needs.

CO-CURRICULARS & ATHLETICS

Fort Wayne Community Schools believes co-curricular activities and athletics enhance the academic experience for students.

Eligible students are encouraged to receive the vaccination for COVID-19 to prevent interruption to co-curricular and athletic seasons.

Students, coaches, advisers and others participating in co-curricular activities are expected to self-monitor and report any COVID-19 symptoms to their coach, director, advisor or supervisor. Water bottles, clothing and personal equipment should not be shared, and proper, routine hand washing and hand sanitation are expected. Equipment and athletic gear should be sanitized before and after use.

Face masks are not required outdoors or while participating in strenuous activities.

Those attending co-curricular activities outside are not required to wear a face mask. Guests at indoor co-curricular events will be required to wear a mask. Social distancing should be practiced at all events.



HEALTH & WELLNESS PROCEDURES

To maintain the health and safety of our students and staff, wellness procedures must start at home. If we all do our part, we are hopeful we will avoid large scale outbreaks and keep our schools open.

Screening for COVID-19

Parents must notify their child's school if the student or a family member living in the same household has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19.



Parents and students should monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 before arriving at school each day. Check for the following symptoms:

- Temperature greater than 100.4 degrees
- Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Unexplained fatigue, muscle or body aches
- Unexplained headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat, congestion/runny nose
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting

Students should remain at home if:

- They have any of the above symptoms.
- They have been identified as a close contact needing to quarantine.
- They have tested positive for COVID-19.

If a student or staff member becomes ill at school:

- Temperatures will be checked with a touch-free thermometer.
- They will be sent home as soon as possible.

- They will be isolated from well individuals and students being treated for injuries, chronic health conditions or routine health services.
- Rapid COVID-19 testing can be done with parental consent.

Returning to School:

When a student is absent or sent home because of symptoms of COVID-19, a school nurse will call the family to discuss when the student may return. If a student returns earlier than permitted by guidelines, parents will be called and expected to pick up the student immediately.

Hand-Washing & Hand Sanitizing

- Wash hands often for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content.
- Always wash or sanitize hands before touching your face, after coughing, sneezing or using a tissue, after using the restroom and before eating.
- Clean Hands In; Clean Hands Out! Students should use hand sanitizer as they enter and exit the school bus, classrooms, playgrounds and other areas.
- Students are permitted to wash hands as needed.

Water Bottles

All schools are equipped with bottle-filling stations. Drinking fountains will not be available so students are asked to bring a water bottle to fill and use while at school.

CAFETERIAS

Schools will be able to use cafeteria space for serving meals or classroom space, as needed to meet the needs of their students. Check with your child's school for specific meal procedures.

PROCEDURE - POSITIVE CASE IDENTIFIED

The Allen County Department of Health (ACDH) is a key partner in assisting FWCS in making appropriate decisions regarding school opening, closing and how to handle positive cases. ACDH's expertise and guidance provides the best opportunity to continue educating students in a safe learning environment.

Positive Cases

When a positive case is identified, the FWCS Health and Wellness Department will notify ACDH immediately. Contact tracing will be conducted by school staff with the support of the FWCS Health and Wellness Department. Close contacts (those who were closer than 6 feet for longer than 15 minutes when one or more individuals was not wearing a mask) will be notified. Unvaccinated students and adults identified as close contacts will be required to quarantine for 10 days as long as they remain asymptomatic. Masks will be required at all times while at school for days 11-14. Six feet of social distancing is required when masks are removed for eating and drinking. Vaccinated students and adults identified as close contacts are not required to quarantine but must monitor symptoms for 14 days past exposure.

The FWCS Health and Wellness Director will inform the Chief Operations Officer of positive cases or suspected cases and any need to quarantine additional employees or students. The Chief Operations Officer will keep the FWCS Superintendent informed, as needed.

COVID-19 Screening for Parents

Every morning before you send your child to school please check the following:

- 1 Your student does **NOT** have a fever greater than 100.4 degrees (may be lower based on your school's policy) OR lower if your child is not feeling well.
- 2 Other signs of illness such as:
 - CONGESTION OR RUNNY NOSE
 - FEVER 100.4*
*or school board policy if threshold is lower
 - COUGH
 - SHORTNESS OF BREATH OR DIFFICULTY BREATHING
 - DIARRHEA
 - HEADACHE
 - NAUSEA OR VOMITING
 - SORE THROAT
 - MUSCLE PAIN AND FATIGUE
 - CHILLS
 - NEW LOSS OF TASTE OR SMELL
- 3 Were you in close contact (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) with anyone confirmed with COVID-19 within the last two weeks?

➔ If the answer is **YES** to any of the questions, **DO NOT** send your student to school. Instead, begin quarantine of your child and contact your healthcare provider. Strongly consider COVID-19 testing.

CLEANING PROCEDURES



Sodexo, FWCS' contracted custodial services provider, will perform targeted, enhanced cleaning of classrooms, restrooms and other student and public areas to address frequently touched surfaces, such as locker handles, door knobs, plumbing fixtures, desks and chairs.

All products used are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19.

Additional product will be available in each classroom for student and staff use to periodically clean desktops and frequently touched surfaces, as needed throughout the day.

Each classroom will have hand sanitizer available in addition to multiple hand-sanitizing stations around the building in common areas. All restrooms have been reviewed and checked for proper soap dispenser operation.

Sharing of student materials will be limited to the greatest extent possible. When materials must be shared, they should be disinfected between use.

VENTILATION



Ventilation systems have been thoroughly checked, cleaned and adjusted over the summer to provide multiple fresh air exchanges and corresponding exhaust air exchanges. All system air filters have been changed and are scheduled to be checked every 60 days.

SIGNAGE

FWCS will post signs throughout schools and buildings to encourage safe and healthy habits, including proper hand-washing, safe distancing, mask wearing and other key messages. Signs on entrances will remind visitors not to enter if they have any symptoms of illness.

COMMENTS

Any individual interested in commenting on this guidance may use the Let's Talk system on the FWCS website, www.fortwayneschools.org/lets-talk. The FWCS Board of School Trustees meets at 6 p.m. the first and third Mondays of most months in the Grile Administrative Center, 1200 S. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, IN 46802.

TRANSPORTATION

Face masks continue to be required for all students and staff, whether vaccinated or not, while riding an FWCS school bus in compliance with Center for Disease Control and Prevention orders.

To prepare for the new year, all FWCS school buses and transportation vehicles have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Before school starts, bus drivers receive eight hours of COVID-19 training, including:

- Specific information regarding COVID-19, how it spreads, symptoms and risk of exposure.
- Who to contact if a student or the driver exhibits symptoms of COVID-19.
- FWCS' requirement for personal protective equipment (PPE) to be worn, how to wear them correctly, how to dispose of equipment properly and how to maintain cleanliness of non-disposable items.
- The appropriate methods, tools and products for cleaning buses, including opening doors and windows for effective air circulation
- Hand hygiene expectations of staff.

All active buses will be disinfected regularly. Only FWCS-issued disinfectant will be used to ensure the proper chemical agents are used to kill the COVID-19 virus and other germs. The following steps will be used to maintain a clean bus environment:

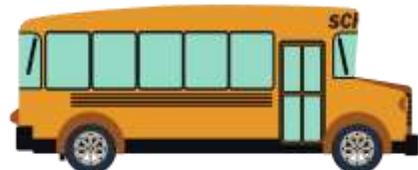
- Disinfect seat backs, seat belts, safety equipment, railings and frequently touched areas.
- Empty and disinfect trash containers frequently.
- Use of disposable gloves is encouraged while cleaning and disinfecting.
- Hand sanitizer provided to students as they board the bus (managed by the driver).

Face Masks:

- Students and transportation or school staff are required to wear face coverings at all times while on the bus. If a student does not have a face covering, one will be provided.
- Students who refuse to wear a face covering while on board the bus will be reported to their school.
- Students are strongly encouraged to wear face covering at bus stops.

Social Distancing:

- Students will be assigned to one bus stop and must use the assigned bus stop each day (morning and afternoon)
- At the bus stop, students and parents are strongly encouraged to social distance
- Students will load the bus in order of bus stops, starting from the back and progressing to the front. Students will unload from the bus starting in the front of the bus and progressing to the back.
- All students will be assigned to a seat. Students must sit in their assigned seat each day and remain seated, facing forward during the entire bus ride.
- If the bus is equipped with seat belts, all students are required to wear the seat belt at all times while on board the bus.
- When exiting the bus, students will unload one seat at a time and allow for sufficient distance between each student.





WE ARE YOUR SCHOOLS