



Atwood Heights SD 125

2021 – 22 Safe Return to School Plan

Updated February 23, 2022

Atwood Heights SD 125 believes that the best way for children to learn is in person. This Safe Return to School Plan is designed to create the safest environment for our students and staff and keep our schools open to in-person learning. We believe this plan supports the needs of our students, staff, and families while acknowledging the current risk to the health and safety concerns within the community and the schools. Additionally, this plan meets all requirements of the American Rescue Plan.

Atwood Heights SD 125 will continuously review and update the 2021-22 Safe Return to School Plan throughout the school year as new research emerges and more guidance is provided to our school district from the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and the U.S. Department of Education.

During the 2021-22 school year, protocols and requirements may change for a specific school building, program, classroom, bus route, or a setting based on the number of positive cases, contact tracing, community test positivity rate, community conditions, and risk of spread. Each school will monitor its internal factors (student & staff contact tracing data) and community factors to determine what safety measures need to be implemented.

The COVID Response Team will continue to monitor each school's status and determine what safety measures will be implemented based on the data collected. Appropriate measures will be communicated to students, staff, and parents in a timely manner. Safety measure considerations will be determined by the COVID Response Team.

Any changes made to the **Safe Return to School Plan** will be communicated ahead of time through the AHSD website, email, and social media.

As was stated in our Smart Restart Plan in August, 2020 and it still remains paramount today, “The one guiding principle that has become our North Star as we plan for returning to school, is protecting the health, safety, and wellbeing of our students and staff.”

Sincerely,

Mrs. Lisa Cole
Superintendent



AHSD Safe Return to School Plan

(Adopted from the Cook County Department of Public Health and CDC's updated guidance regarding COVID-19 prevention in K-12 schools for all public and nonpublic schools in Illinois.

Table of Contents	Page #
CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools	2
Vaccination	3
Masking	3
Physical Distancing	4
Testing	4
Contract Tracing and Quarantine	5
Remote Learning	5
AHSD125 Prevention Strategies	6
Adaptive Pause and FAQs for Parents and Caregivers	7

CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools

- CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning with layered prevention strategies in place.
- Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction is a priority.
- Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports.
- Screening testing, ventilation, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing, and cleaning and disinfection are also important layers of prevention to keep schools safe.
- Students, teachers, and staff should stay home when they have signs of any infectious illness and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.
- This guidance emphasizes implementing layered prevention strategies (e.g., using multiple prevention strategies together consistently) to protect people who are not fully vaccinated, including students, teachers, staff, and other members of their households.
- COVID-19 prevention strategies remain critical to protect people, including students, teachers, and staff, who are not fully vaccinated.
- Localities should monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies (e.g., physical distancing, screening testing, etc).
- New CDC guidance has reduced the recommended time for isolation and quarantine periods to five days with some exclusions. For details see CDC's page on [Quarantine and Isolation](#).

Vaccination

Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are at low risk of symptomatic or severe infection. The CDC and IDPH strongly encourage all individuals eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine to be vaccinated. Vaccination benefits not only the individual, but also schools and communities by reducing transmission. For example, if you came into close contact with someone with COVID-19 and you are in one of the following groups, you do not need to quarantine.

- You are ages 18 or older and have received all [recommended vaccine doses](#), including [boosters](#) and [additional primary shots](#) for some immunocompromised people.
- You are ages 5-17 years and completed the [primary series](#) of COVID-19 vaccines.
- You had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (you tested positive using a [viral test](#)).

D125 will test on day 6 before symptomatic students and/or staff return as a precautionary measure.

Schools may request proof of vaccination from parents for their children or from staff to determine vaccination status. New CDC guidance has reduced the recommended time for isolation and quarantine periods to five days. For details see CDC's page on [Quarantine and Isolation](#).

Masking

- As of February 23, 2022, masks will be recommended but not required. We will continue to consult with the Cook County Department of Public Health concerning positive cases and whether we may need to pivot back to mask usage if an outbreak occurs or if the metrics are a cause for concern.

Physical Distancing

CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to reduce transmission risk. Because of the importance of in-person learning, schools where not everyone is fully vaccinated should implement physical distancing to the extent possible within their structures but should not exclude students from in-person learning to keep a minimum distance requirement. Schools should maximize physical distance as much as possible when students are moving through the food service line and while eating (especially indoors). Using additional spaces outside of the cafeteria for mealtime seating such as the gymnasium or outdoor seating can help facilitate distancing.

Testing

Screening tests for COVID can support in-person learning by identifying infected persons who are asymptomatic and without known or suspected exposure to COVID. Screening tests are performed to identify persons who may be contagious so that measures can be taken to prevent further transmission. Atwood Heights will continue to offer the SHIELD Illinois saliva test and BinaxNOW rapid antigen testing to those interested, but this offer will require informed consent. Testing can be used to keep students in school when identified as a classroom close contact through the Test to Stay protocol. This allows students to avoid isolation or quarantine by testing on days one, three, five and seven after exposure as long as they continue to test negative.

To facilitate safe participation in sports, extracurricular activities, and other activities with elevated risk (such as activities that involve singing, shouting, band, and exercise that could lead to increased exhalation), CDC recommends schools implement screening testing for participants who are not fully vaccinated. Sports guidelines can be found at:

<https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/sports-safety-guidance.html>

Contract Tracing and Quarantine Guidance

The CDC updated their [COVID-19 isolation and quarantine recommendations](#) with shorter isolation (for asymptomatic and mildly ill people) and quarantine periods of 5 days to focus on the period when a person is most infectious, followed by continued masking for an additional 5 days.

CDC Recommended Quarantine Period for Close Contacts to Someone with COVID-19

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 18 or older and have received all recommended vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people. • Ages 5-17 years and completed the primary series of COVID-19 vaccines. • Confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (you tested positive using a viral test). 	<p>Quarantine not required</p> <p>Wear a mask around others for 10 days¹</p> <p>Test on day 5, if possible</p> <p>If a person develops symptoms, they should immediately isolate until a negative test confirms symptoms are not caused by COVID-19</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 18 or older and completed the primary series of recommended vaccine, but have not received a recommended booster shot when eligible. • Received the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine (completing the primary series) over 2 months ago and have not received a recommended booster shot. • Unvaccinated or have not completed a primary vaccine series. 	<p>Stay home and mask around others for 5 days. After that, continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days²</p> <p>Test on day 5, if possible</p> <p>If a person develops symptoms, they should immediately isolate until a negative test confirms symptoms are not caused by COVID-19.</p>

¹ Children who have received the primary vaccination series and are not eligible for booster doses after 5 months for Pfizer, 6 months for Moderna, or 2 months for Johnson and Johnson should not be excluded from school after close contact unless they develop symptoms and test positive for COVID-19. If masks need to be removed (e.g., for lunch), ensure 6 feet of physical distancing until 10 days after exposure.

District 125 will no longer require the exclusion of asymptomatic students; however, we will monitor symptoms and if a student and/or staff member is COVID-19 positive, our current COVID-19 mitigations as it relates to positive cases can be enforced. We will also attempt to notify individuals if we believe a close contact has occurred in order to monitor for symptoms.

Remote Learning

A child qualifies for home or hospital/remote instruction if it is anticipated that, due to a medical condition, the child will be unable to attend school, and instead must be instructed at home or in the hospital, for a period of 2 or more consecutive weeks or if the child's medical condition is of such a nature or severity that it is anticipated that the child will be absent from school due to the medical condition for periods of at least 2 days at a time and multiple times during the school year totaling at least 10 days or more of absences. In order to establish eligibility for

home or hospital/remote instruction, a student's parent or guardian must submit to the District a written statement from the student's health care provider stating the existence of the medical condition, the impact of the medical condition on the child's ability to participate in education, **and** the anticipated duration or nature of the child's absence from school.

For students who are unable to return to in-person instruction due to a medical condition as described above, please ask your child's/family's physician to complete the **DISTRICT 125 PHYSICIAN CERTIFICATION FOR HOME OR HOSPITAL/REMOTE INSTRUCTION** and return it to your building principal. A copy is provided on the District webpage.

Remote instruction will include a minimum of 5 hours per week of instructional time with a certified educator. Students will be provided with their weekly classwork / assignments. Your building principal will notify you of your child's specific learning plan. If you qualify for remote instruction, you will be required to provide a doctor's authorization if you want to return to in-person instruction.

AHSD125 Prevention Strategies

- Promoting vaccination (AHSD 125 has hosted vaccination clinics for our community members (ages 12 and up) with the Illinois Emergency Management Agency.
- Recommendation of mask usage. Extra masks are available at each school. **Masks are still required on school buses.**
- Screening testing to promptly identify cases, clusters, and outbreaks. AHSD 125 is working with University of Illinois to provide SHIELD and BinaxNOW screening testing. This offer requires informed consent from our parents. **Ask your school principal if you want to sign up for this offer.**
- Ventilation (AHSD 125 continues to invest ESSER funds to make HVAC improvements across the District). HEPA Air Purifiers are utilized in all classrooms.
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Touchless water bottle filling stations are available at each school or students may bring in their own clear water bottles.
- Hand sanitizers in every entrance, classroom and hallways
- Staying home when sick and getting tested
- Contact tracing and/or isolation/quarantine requirements (per Cook County Department of Public Health)
- Cleaning and disinfection

- Review data from the CDC and CCDPH to closely monitor the level of transmission occurring in our communities.
- **Passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses per Federal mandate.** There is no COVID-19-related capacity limit for passengers on school buses.

Adaptive Pause and FAQs for Parents and Caregivers

What is an adaptive pause? Why are we taking one?

An adaptive pause is a strategy that allows for movement into any level of remote learning to prevent disease transmission during a pandemic. Due to outbreaks of COVID within our district, we may have to take an “adaptive pause” from in-person learning. This means students will not attend school in person. Students will remote learn from a device at home. The decision to move to an adaptive pause is made in in consultation with the Cook County Department of Public Health.

What if we do not have Internet at home?

Families who do not have Internet access should contact building principals for assistance.

What about my child's activities?

All extracurricular activities will be postponed during an Adaptive Pause. There will be no practices and no games for any sport if that school is on an Adaptive Pause. Your building principal will notify you when extracurricular activities may resume.

Why does the CDC Guidance for schools keep changing?

CDC guidance for K–12 schools changes because what we know about COVID-19 continues to change. This means guidance is updated as CDC learns more about what works best to reduce the risk of getting or spreading COVID-19.