



Atwood Heights SD 125

2022 – 23 Safe Return to School Plan

Updated August 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 2022-23 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 2022-23 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 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, IDPH and ISBE's updated joint guidance regarding COVID-19 prevention in K-12 schools for all public and nonpublic schools in Illinois.

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

Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools

CDC said in a recent announcement: “We’re in a stronger place today as a nation, with more tools — like vaccination, boosters, and treatments — to protect ourselves, and our communities, from severe illness from COVID-19. We also have a better understanding of how to protect people from being exposed to the virus, like wearing high-quality masks, testing, and improved ventilation. This guidance acknowledges that the pandemic is not over, but also helps us move to a point where COVID-19 no longer severely disrupts our daily lives.”

- 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).

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. Schools may request proof of vaccination from parents for their children or from staff to determine vaccination status.

Masking

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.

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 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. This testing may allow students to avoid isolation or quarantine.

Isolation and Quarantine Guidance

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. Updated guidance from August 23, 2022 is on the next page.

COVID-19 INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS¹

Rev. August 23, 2022 Interim Guidance, Subject to updates

Decision Tree Recommendations for Evaluating Symptomatic Individuals from Pre-K, K-12 Schools and Day Care Programs

Isolate⁴ if **ANY** of the following symptoms² are present: Fever (100.4°F or higher), new onset of moderate to severe persistent headache, shortness of breath, new cough, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, new loss of sense of taste or smell

When suspicion of COVID-19 is high due to other symptoms, school health officials should isolate students/staff.

Testing is **Strongly Recommended** for **ALL** Persons with COVID-19-Like Symptoms, Regardless of Vaccination Status.

Status	Return to School Guidance (For recently vaccinated persons, see Post Vaccination Guidance)	Quarantine Close Contacts? ⁵	Additional Guidance
A. COVID-19 diagnostic test positive (confirmed with PCR test or probable with antigen test³) OR COVID-like symptoms without COVID-19 testing and exposed to confirmed case (probable case).	For those that can mask upon return, <u>isolate</u> for at least five calendar days ⁴ from onset of symptoms; return after the five calendar days AND if 24 hours with no fever (without fever-reducing medication), diarrhea and vomiting ceased for 24 hours AND improvement of symptoms AND consistent masking upon return through day 10. If unable to mask, isolate for 10 days.	No	The local health department may supply dates as to when a student or staff member can return to school, otherwise schools should permit return consistent with this guidance. Letter from local health department releasing the student or staff member from isolation or quarantine is not required.
B. Symptomatic individual with a negative COVID-19 diagnostic test <i>Negative COVID-19 diagnostic tests are valid only for the date on which they are collected; specimens collected within 48 hours of onset are acceptable for determining school admission status. If testing is not accessible or delayed, testing within 72 hours would be acceptable, but testing within 48 hours of onset should be promoted (Home Tests are Allowed).</i>	<u>Isolate</u> until symptoms have improved/resolved per return-to-school criteria for diagnosed condition, including fever free for 24 hours, symptoms improving and until 24 hours after diarrhea and vomiting have ceased. Follow provider directions, recommended treatment and return to school guidance as per school policies and IDPH Communicable Diseases in Schools .	NO	NAAT (PCR) testing/confirmation or serial antigen (2 or 3 test 48 hours apart) is recommended ⁶ , especially if the staff/student is a close contact to a confirmed case, the school is experiencing an outbreak, or the local health department is recommending due to high Community Levels (see CDC Testing Algorithm). For persons who have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days, antigen tests are recommended .
C. Symptomatic individual without diagnostic testing who is not a known close contact to a confirmed case.	For those who can mask upon return, isolate for at least five ⁵ calendar days from onset of symptoms; return if 24 hours with no fever (without fever-reducing medication), vomiting and diarrhea have ceased for 24 hours, AND improvement of symptoms AND consistent masking upon return through day 10. If unable to mask, quarantine for 10 days.	NO	If the ill individual is not tested within 24 hours of first notification of symptoms, household members do not need to be sent home unless COVID-like symptoms exists or develop over the next 10 days.

1 Based on available data and science, schools must make local decisions informed by local context in consultation with their local public health department. This chart provides recommendations that should be consider in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools.

2 New onset of a symptom not attributed to allergies or a pre-existing condition.

3 In most situations, a positive antigen in symptomatic person does not require a confirmatory test, should be

considered a probable case (follow Row A and D) and will not be discounted or deemed a false positive with a negative PCR.

4 Severely immunocompromised or severely ill may need to be isolated for 20 days as per guidance from the individual's infectious disease physician.

5 CDC no longer recommends quarantine for close contact but [recommends](#) masking and testing.

6 [FDA At Home COVID-19 Antigen Tests – Take Steps to Reduce Your Risk of False Negatives](#).

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.
- Individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 should wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days after exposure and should get tested on day 6. Extra masks are available at each school.
- Screening testing - AHSD 125 is working with University of Illinois to provide SHIELD and BinaxNOW screening testing. This offer requires informed consent from our parents.
- Optimize ventilation systems (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.
- Reinforce proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Staying home when sick and getting tested
- Utilize proper cleaning and disinfection procedures
- Review data from the CDC and CCDPH to closely monitor the level of transmission occurring in our communities.

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 which we refer to as e-Learning. The decision to move to an adaptive pause is made 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.