

Overview

SCH successfully navigated through the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2020-2021 school year, in part, by creating and following a Return to Learn plan that was developed by staff, administration and healthcare professionals. Throughout the school year, the plan was adjusted to meet recommendations and requirements set forth by national, state and local governmental health officials.

As a result, SCH was able to alter mitigation strategies when appropriate. As SCH prepares for the 2021-2022 school year, the plan has been amended to reflect the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic and will serve as a guiding document for school operations. It incorporates the latest guidance from the CDC and the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH).

Due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, this document may be revised and updated on a regular basis.

SCH administration will continue to provide information through email, ParentSquare and district website updates.

SCH will return to five-day (full-time) instruction during the 2021-2022 school year.

2021-2022 School Day Hours

Elementary Schools: 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Secondary Schools: 7:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

School Calendar

SCH will follow the school calendar that was adopted on May 4, 2021. The school calendar is available on the SCH website.

2021-2022 COVID-19 Plan

Due to the low Lake County vaccination rate, the rise in COVID variants, and the fact that this is the first time SCH will be at full capacity since March of 2020, we are recommending a phased approach to mask wearing in our schools. Therefore, the following guidelines will be implemented as School City of Hammond starts the 2021-22 school year.

- All SCH students will be required to wear a mask to begin the 2021-2022 school year.
 - Masks will be provided to any student who requires one.
 - If the schools are remaining safe and healthy at fall break, we will allow students who provide proof of vaccination to go maskless.

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- SCH employees will be required to wear a mask unless they provide proof of vaccination to the SCH Health Service Department.
 - Parents, guests, and visitors will be allowed back into our buildings, but they must wear a mask at all times.
 - SCH schools will remain open for the entire year unless a school can no longer be adequately staffed. In that case, only that individual school would be moved to remote learning until the staffing issue can be resolved.
 - All parents should still have a backup plan for remote learning in the event a school would need to have an emergency closing.

Health Protocols

- [COVID-19 Testing Information](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Information](#)

Isolation = Exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms

Quarantine = A known close contact to a COVID-19 case (within 6 feet for 15 min).

COVID-19 Related Symptoms

Students and/or staff members who are symptomatic and experiencing any of the following should report them to the school nurse and/or their personal healthcare provider for further guidance:

- Cough or Shortness of Breath
- Sore Throat
- Headache (particularly new onset of severe headache)
- Diarrhea, Nausea or Vomiting/Abdominal Pain
- New Loss of Taste or Smell

Exclusion (Isolation and/or Quarantine) from School/Work

SCH will notify parents of a close contact that occurs inside school. Unvaccinated students/staff that are exposed to the virus will be required to quarantine for 10 days.

Students/staff that are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms will be required to isolate for 10 days or until a medical release is provided. Students and staff members will be excluded from school/work if they test positive for COVID19.

Vaccinated individuals will not be required to quarantine unless symptomatic. Exclusionary timelines established by the CDC, Indiana Department of Health and/or Lake County Health Department will be followed at all SCH locations.

Return to School After Exclusion

Once a student or employee is excluded from the school environment, they may return if they are asymptomatic at day 10 or are released by a physician (medical documentation required).

Self-Screening

SCH students and staff members are strongly encouraged to self-screen before arriving at school/work each day. Students and employees exhibiting COVID-19 related symptoms without being otherwise explained should not attend school until they are released by a healthcare provider or have completed the 10 days of isolation.

Student Attendance

SCH personnel will request specific symptom information when absences are reported along with COVID-19 diagnoses and/or potential COVID-19 exposure. Information obtained will only be shared with our health services staff.

Staff Attendance

SCH employees who experience the onset of any COVID-19 symptoms at work should immediately notify health services personnel and their supervisor. Since COVID-19 vaccines are readily available, staff absences due to COVID-19 quarantine will be addressed through the use of the staff member's accumulated benefit days.

Preventative Measures**COVID Monitoring**

SCH will track attendance trends daily to determine any patterns of absence due to illness throughout the corporation. In addition, Indiana law requires schools to track and monitor attendance to assist in the determination of a viral outbreak within the SCH schools. Positive cases will be reported to the Lake County Board of Health and the Indiana State Department on Health as requested.

Mask Policy

All students will be required to wear a mask to start the year. School staff members will work with students on correct mask wearing procedures and expectations. If a student chooses not to adhere to the guidelines, the situation will move to progressive discipline:

- First incident - Verbal warning and parent notification
- Second incident - Principal referral and parent notification
- Third incident - Virtual meeting with parent, teacher and principal

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- Any student who is non-compliant after 3 incidents, will be subject to further disciplinary action, including being placed in a virtual learning environment outside of the school building.

Daily Operations

Arrival/Dismissal

Buildings may utilize signs and other visual cues to direct traffic flow and encourage social distancing for students and staff. Individual buildings will provide direction to the appropriate pickup and drop off locations for students.

Visitors

Parents, visitors and guests shall be allowed to enter the building, but a mask must be worn for the entire duration of the visit. School City of Hammond will not be validating our guests vaccination status, so a mask requirement is reasonable to keep everyone safe.

Special Education Case Conferences & 504 Committee Meetings

Case Conference Committee (CCC) & Section 504 meetings are deemed essential and require a parent/guardian to meet with the team on an as-needed basis. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, parents may request to participate in a CCC or 504 meeting telephonically or via a virtual meeting option. The decision to participate via an alternative format rests with the parent/guardian. Necessary modifications will be made to minimize health risks and maximize access for students determined to be medically at risk (medical documentation required).

Meals

In the elementary schools breakfast will be served in the classroom. It will be ready and waiting for all students as they enter their assigned class. In middle and high school, breakfast will be a combination of eating in the cafeteria and grab and go meals.

For lunch, students will have an assigned seat. Plastic dividers will be utilized since many of our tables require students to face each other. Dividers will be cleaned between meal services.

Recess

SCH believes recess is an important part of the school day for elementary and intermediate students. Visual cues will be adopted to remind students of social distancing requirements and sanitation stations will be set up for students entering and leaving the playground. Recess aides will be trained in identifying risky student behaviors.

Room Configurations/Set-up

All classroom spaces will have the desks facing the same direction. We will maximize the space between desks in all directions. All students must have an assigned seat K-12, to assist with contact tracing. Desk dividers will not be used to begin the school year and will only be used if it is determined that there are significant outbreaks occurring in the schools and we need an additional layer of protection.

Building Cleaning & Sanitation

Building custodians have established enhanced, deep cleaning routines and accountability checklists to minimize the spread of potential contagions. All common areas and classrooms will be sanitized each day.

The School City of Hammond has conducted an HVAC audit. Based on these results, SCH will utilize ESSER funds to improve the air quality of the buildings and is looking to add in-room air filtration devices.

Personal Hygiene

Soap, water, and sanitization stations are readily available to all students and staff. They are expected to sanitize on a regular basis per CDC guidelines.

Students will be taught to cover their cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.

Hallways/Passing Periods/Transition Periods

Students will be expected to move quickly from one class period to the next. Congregating in large groups will not be tolerated and students will be dispersed.

Elementary Grading Scale

Last school year, SCH utilized a modified grading scale for elementary students due to the pandemic and recognizing that not every student received the same level of support at home. SCH will return to a traditional A-F grading scale for this school year for all elementary students grades 1-6.

Extra-curriculars/Sports

All extra-curricular activities and sports will commence as scheduled for the 2021-22 school year. Coaches and sponsors will be responsible for ensuring mask guidelines are followed when practical. As a general rule, masks should be worn when not engaged in strenuous physical activity. Unvaccinated athletes will be forced to quarantine if a team member or coach is found to be positive for COVID-19.

Transportation

For many SCH students, the school bus is a student's first contact with the school in the morning and the last point of contact in the afternoon. All students who utilize SCH Transportation will have an assigned seat to assist with contact tracing.

Masks

As per CDC regulations, all persons utilizing a public transportation option, such as a school bus, must wear a mask for the entirety of the trip.

Field Trips

Field trips will resume in the 2021-22 school year. Parents who are uncomfortable with their child attending a field trip may indicate that on the permission slip. Alternative assignments will be issued to students who cannot attend a field trip for any reason.

Bus Cleaning & Sanitization

All buses will be cleaned and/or sanitized at the end of every day using a CDC approved virucidal agent. They also undergo deep cleaning once a week.