

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.

2021-2022 School Day Hours

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

Elementary Schools: 9 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

Mask Guidelines

The following guidelines will be implemented for the School City of Hammond for 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.
- SCH employees will be required to wear a mask regardless of vaccination status.
 - Vaccinated instructional staff may unmask if they are more than 6 feet away from students and the lesson requires students to see the entire face of the teacher.
- Parents, guests, and visitors are welcomed 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 or tests positive for COVID-19

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 any 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

Students and Staff:

- If a COVID-19 test is positive, students and staff will be required to isolate for 10 days after the date of the positive test and may return to school/work on day 11 if symptom-free. Students and staff will be required to provide a medical release or a negative test.
- Per IHSAA, students that participate in sports must have medical clearance and a negative test to return to sports.
- SCH staff will be cleared by the Director of Health Service or Assistant to return to work.
- Per ISDH guidance, students and staff who are following proper masking guidelines will not be asked to quarantine if they are a close contact. If a student or staff member has not been wearing their mask appropriately, they will be quarantined for 14 days after the date of close contact.
- If traveling domestically or internationally, unvaccinated students and staff must self-monitor upon return. Students and staff must get tested 3-5 days after his/her return date of travel. Staff and students must have a negative test prior to returning to school. Students and staff must ensure that the Health Services Department is provided a copy of the test results.

Self-Screening

SCH students and staff members are strongly encouraged to self-screen before arriving at school/work each day. Students and staff 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.

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

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 of Health as requested.

Mask Policy

All students will be required to wear a mask while inside our schools.. 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 the parent, teacher, and principal
- Any student who is non-compliant after 3 incidents, will be subject to further disciplinary action, including removal from school (suspension).

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 directions to the appropriate pickup and drop-off locations for students.

Visitors

Parents, visitors, and guests are welcomed back into our buildings, but a mask must be worn for the entire duration of the visit. School City of Hammond will not be validating our guest's 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 meetings 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).

Daily Operations (cont.)

Meals

In 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 for tables that require students to face each other. Dividers and tables 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

Classroom spaces will have desks facing the same direction when feasible. Students will have an assigned seat, to assist with contact tracing. Desk dividers may be used during the school year.

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 at least twice a day and then deep cleaned at night.

Personal Hygiene

Soap, water, and sanitization stations are readily available in all hallways 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.

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. 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.

Daily Operations (cont.)

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. As per CDC regulations, all persons utilizing a public transportation option, such as a school bus, will 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.