



**2021-2022 Return to  
School Plan  
(Draft)**

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| INTRODUCTION                                | 3  |
| VISITOR RESTRICTIONS                        | 4  |
| HEALTH SCREENING AND PROTOCOLS              | 4  |
| WHEN A STUDENT OR STAFF MEMBER BECOMES SICK | 4  |
| NURSE'S OFFICE PROCEDURES                   | 5  |
| GUIDANCE IF EXPOSED                         | 6  |
| QUARANTINE PROCEDURES                       | 7  |
| SOCIAL DISTANCING                           | 8  |
| FACE COVERINGS                              | 8  |
| COVID-19 TESTING                            | 11 |
| PERSONAL WORKSPACE/CLASSROOM PROTOCOLS      | 11 |
| SHARED WORKSPACE PROTOCOLS                  | 11 |
| CLEANING AND DISINFECTION PROTOCOL          | 11 |
| FOOD DELIVERY                               | 11 |
| BUS DRIVERS/TRANSPORTATION PROTOCOLS        | 12 |
| RESTROOM USAGE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY        | 12 |
| HANDWASHING AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE       | 12 |
| NEED FOR REMOTE LEARNING SERVICES           | 12 |

# MOKENA SCHOOL DISTRICT 159 - RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN - DRAFT

## INTRODUCTION

Mokena School District 159 has created this plan to aid in navigating the reopening of Mokena schools where employees, students, and families feel safe and to reduce the impact of COVID-19 conditions upon returning to the district. The guidelines referenced in this plan are based on guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Regular updates will be made to this plan based on information provided by the IDPH, ISBE, and applicable federal, state and local agencies. The health and safety of students, families, and educators are top of mind in all of the decisions made pertaining to the reopening of our Mokena schools.

Mokena SD 159's goal is to return to normal in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible, and we will prioritize the health and safety of students, staff, and their families first and foremost. In order to achieve this goal, the District will continue to implement the following COVID-19 prevention strategies:

- Promoting vaccination
- Requiring consistent and correct mask use
- Physical distancing
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Staying home when sick and getting tested
- Contact tracing, in combination with isolation and quarantine
- Cleaning and disinfection

These COVID-19 prevention strategies remain critical to protect people, including students, teachers, and staff, who are not fully vaccinated, especially in the event of sustained moderate-to-high community transmission levels. In the event that COVID-19 transmission is low in our local community the District may consider removing one prevention strategy at a time while monitoring for any outbreaks or increases in COVID-19 cases.

COVID-19 has greatly impacted the lives of students, teachers and families. Mokena SD 159 will continue to seek ways to help students, families and educators with social and emotional support as they address issues such as grief, stress, and missing social interactions. When students return in the fall Mokena SD 159 will be measuring where students stand academically and socially in order to provide the support necessary to help them get back on track.

Communicating with families and the community is a top priority. We want to partner with families and will prioritize communicating with them. We will be using our Skylert system to bring you critical information on a timely basis. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to reach out to your child's building principal or email us at [questions@mokena159.org](mailto:questions@mokena159.org).

## **VISITOR RESTRICTIONS**

Visitors are discouraged and will be restricted to authorized personnel only. Parents are encouraged to call the office to discuss any requested visit to the school. Visitors will remain in the main office or other designated area for the duration of the visit to the greatest extent possible. Students or staff will be asked to meet the visitor to conduct business as needed. Visitors will not have access to the building in general. This will be in addition to the normal sign in procedures.

## **HEALTH SCREENING AND PROTOCOLS**

Only students and staff who are healthy should report for in-person learning. It is important to note, students and staff will not be penalized for missing school and are encouraged to stay home when not feeling well. Students and staff with any of the following symptoms of COVID-19 must remain home:

- Cough
- Fatigue
- Fever or chills
- Headache
- Known close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 (if unvaccinated)
- Measured temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater
- Nausea or vomiting
- New loss of taste or smell
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat

Students with a fever or any of the symptoms above should stay home and seek medical advice. Each day you send your child to school, you are certifying that your child does not have any of the symptoms related to COVID-19.

All staff members may self-certify that they are free of COVID-19 symptoms and do not have a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher. Any student or staff member who begins to exhibit a high fever associated with COVID-19 like symptoms must report to the designated quarantine area on campus, following the building procedure. Students will be provided a face covering and will remain in the quarantine area until a parent or guardian picks the student up, or alternative transportation home is arranged. Staff will remain in the quarantine area until they are able to leave. Students and staff who have had contact with someone who is positive for COVID-19 must follow the IDPH guidelines for self-monitoring and self-quarantine.

## **WHEN A STUDENT OR STAFF MEMBER BECOMES SICK**

Mokena SD 159 will communicate with families and staff that any individual who tests positive for COVID-19, or who shows any signs or symptoms of illness, should stay home. Persons testing positive, and those unvaccinated individuals who had close contact (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes within the past 48 hours) will be required to self-quarantine. **Families and staff should also report possible cases to the school where the individual attends school or works, to initiate**



## MOKENA SCHOOL DISTRICT 159 - RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN - DRAFT

**contact tracing.** Information will be documented and shared with the health staff or other appropriate personnel and the local health department as required by school code.

In accordance with state and federal guidance, school community members who are sick should not return to school until they have met the criteria to return. Mokena SD 159 will use a symptom checklist for families and staff to determine if they are well enough to attend that day.

Students returning from illness related to COVID-19 should call to check in with their school nurse following quarantine. Staff members should contact their building principal. If you are unvaccinated, have symptoms that could be COVID-19, and do not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, it is assumed that you have COVID-19 and may not return to work until the three criteria listed above have been met.

### NURSE'S OFFICE PROCEDURES

All school Nurse's offices will:

- Allow for six feet of distance between students, separation area for sick students, sink for hygiene, appropriate lighting, and proper ventilation.
- Limit the number of individuals allowed in at one time.
- Use plastic barriers around staff desks and between student care areas or curtains.
- Provide a supervised quarantine space for students/staff who are experiencing COVID-19-like symptoms and may be awaiting evaluation and/or pickup. Students must never be left alone and must be supervised at all times while maintaining necessary precautions within the quarantine space.
- Disinfect a space after it is occupied by a student and deep clean daily.
- Implement strategies to reduce unnecessary visits from students, staff, and visitors; reduce Nurse's office congestion; reduce exposure to infection, and allow for separation.
- Supply staff with first aid supplies, such as bandages and gauze, in the classrooms. In certain situations, students may need to stay in place for an in-person evaluation by the school nurse.
- Treat healthy students reporting to the Nurse's office for medical management, such as medications, tube feeding, assessment of injury, or first aid, in a separate clean designated area inside or outside the Nurse's office to prevent contact with potentially ill children.
- Perform daily cleaning of high-touch surfaces in the Nurse's office with a disinfectant noted to kill the coronavirus.

Persons with common health conditions or those who need basic first aid should not report to the Nurse's office but may be managed in the classroom/alternate setting.

## MOKENA SCHOOL DISTRICT 159 - RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN - DRAFT

It is recommended that teachers call the Nurse's office before sending students to the nurse's office if the situation is not an emergency.

***Parents, guardians, or other authorized individuals should pick up ill students within a reasonable amount of time; students exhibiting COVID symptoms will not be allowed to utilize the school bus for the return home.***

### **GUIDANCE IF EXPOSED**

Contact tracing is used by health departments to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. In general, contact tracing involves identifying people who have a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 (cases) and people who they came in contact with (close contacts) and working with them to interrupt disease spread. This includes asking people with COVID-19 to isolate and their contacts to quarantine at home voluntarily. Fully vaccinated persons who remain asymptomatic and those with documented COVID-19 infection within the past 90 days are excluded from quarantine.

In Illinois, contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine is required per Part 690 Control of Communicable Disease Code, Subpart I. Further, the Communicable Disease Code also requires mandatory reporting of any suspect, confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 to the local health department immediately (within 3 hours).

For all individuals where exposure occurred outside of the classroom setting and for adults in the indoor P-12 classroom setting, CDC defines a close contact as an individual not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. For students in the classroom setting, contacts who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student do not require quarantine as long as both the case and the contact were consistently masked. If they were not consistently masked, then close contacts are classroom students who were within 6 feet of the infected student for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

In general, individuals who are solely exposed to a confirmed case while outdoors should not be considered close contacts.

The longer a person is exposed to an infected person, the higher the risk of exposure or transmission. The infectious period of close contact begins two calendar days before the onset of symptoms (for a symptomatic person) or two calendar days before the positive sample was obtained (for an asymptomatic person). If the case was symptomatic (e.g., coughing, sneezing), persons with briefer periods of exposure may also be considered contacts, as determined by local health departments.

***Persons who have had lab-confirmed COVID-19 within the past 90 days or those***

***fully vaccinated, according to CDC guidelines, are not required to quarantine if identified as a close contact to a confirmed case.***

Local health departments are the final authority on identifying close contacts.

## **QUARANTINE PROCEDURES**

Local health departments will make the final determination on who is to be quarantined and for how long. They also may determine that a close contact is not a candidate for modified quarantine due to a high-risk exposure (e.g., sustained close contact without masking).

The CDC describes three options for quarantine:

- Option 1: Quarantine at home for 14 calendar days. Date of last exposure is considered day 0.
- Option 2: Quarantine for 10 calendar days after the close contact's last exposure to the COVID-19 case. Date of last exposure is considered day 0.
  - The individual may end quarantine after day 10 if no symptoms of COVID-19 developed during daily monitoring.
  - SARS-CoV-2 PCR testing is recommended and may be required by the local health department.
  - The individual can maintain physical distancing and masking at all times when returning to school; for classrooms where masking is strictly adhered to as required, physical distance of 3 to 6 feet is acceptable for return.
- Option 3: Quarantine period is for seven calendar days after the last exposure if:
  - No symptoms developed during daily monitoring AND the individual has a negative SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic test (PCR) that was collected within 48 hours of exposure day 7 (starting on day 6 or after).
  - **The individual is responsible for obtaining a copy of the negative results for documentation purposes.**
  - The individual can maintain physical distancing and masking at all times when returning to school; for classrooms where masking is strictly adhered to as required, physical distance of 3 to 6 feet is acceptable for return.

**Regardless of when an individual ends quarantine, daily symptom monitoring should continue through calendar day 14 after the exposure. If any symptoms develop during or after ending quarantine, the individual should immediately self-isolate** and contact their local health department or healthcare provider to report their symptoms. The health department can provide guidance on how to safely quarantine and isolate within the household.

## SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social distancing is an effective way to prevent potential infection by eliminating close contact. Mokena SD 159 students and staff are expected to maintain social distancing (3-6 feet separation or greater) throughout the school day to the greatest extent practical. **In the classroom, students will be seated more than three feet apart. In most situations, however, students will not be more than 6 feet apart.**

Social distancing applies to all areas including the classroom, common areas and the main office. Student mixing will be reduced to a minimum. Students will remain with their grade level cohorts to reduce mixing grade levels within the building as much as possible. Building staff will review their student pick up and drop off procedures to maintain social distancing.

Every effort will be taken to create “bubbles” within each building for each classroom and grade level. This bubbling within the schools will allow for more precise contact tracing should a case of COVID-19 be confirmed at a location. This will also control the spread of COVID-19 to a specific grade level or classroom.

## FACE COVERINGS

Mokena SD 159 understands physical distancing will not be possible for all circumstances. There is significant evidence that face coverings provide protection and decrease the spread of COVID-19. Mokena SD 159 will maintain a supply of disposable face coverings in the event that a staff member, student, or visitor does not have one for use.

The following guidance is based on updated CDC guidance for COVID-19 prevention in K-12 schools and the State of Illinois updated Executive Order. **Executive Order 2021-18 requires that masks be worn indoors by all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to P-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.** The State of Illinois also requires all public and nonpublic schools to comply with contact tracing, in combination with isolation and quarantine, as directed by state and local public health departments.

**All persons, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a face mask at all times when in transit to and from school via group conveyance (e.g., school buses), unless a specific exemption applies.** This is in accordance with the CDC Order, in effect as of February 1, 2021, which requires “the wearing of masks by people on public transportation conveyances or on the premises of transportation hubs to prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.”



## MOKENA SCHOOL DISTRICT 159 - RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN - DRAFT

Exceptions to universal consistent use of face masks include the following limited situations:

- When eating.
- If using a face shield when other methods of protection are not available or appropriate. (View guidance on appropriate use of face shields.)
- For children while they are napping with close monitoring to ensure no child leaves their designated napping area without putting their face mask back on.
- For staff when alone in classrooms or offices with the door closed.
- For individuals who are younger than 2 years of age.
- For individuals who have trouble breathing; or those who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face mask without assistance.
- For persons with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of the disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), including:
  - A person with a disability who, for reasons related to the disability, would be physically unable to remove a mask without assistance if breathing becomes obstructed. Examples might include a person with impaired motor skills, quadriplegia, or limb restrictions.
  - A person with an intellectual, developmental, cognitive, or psychiatric disability that affects the person's ability to understand the need to remove a mask if breathing becomes obstructed.
- For individuals who have a condition or medical contraindication (e.g., difficulty breathing) that prevents them from wearing a face mask.
- For fully vaccinated staff when meeting with other fully vaccinated staff outside of settings where unvaccinated persons are present.
- For staff and students when they are outdoors. However, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission, staff and students who are not fully vaccinated should wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated.

Staff and students who remove their face mask in these limited situations should be monitored and should maintain physical distancing to the greatest extent possible given the space in their facilities, with at least 3 feet recommended, but not required, between students and at least 6 feet recommended, but not required, between adults or between students and adults. Individuals who have a condition or medical contraindication (e.g., difficulty breathing) that prevents them from wearing a face mask are required to provide documentation from the individual's health care provider. These persons may wear a face shield in lieu of a face mask; however, physical distancing will be maintained. Measures to reduce risk of exposure for these persons shall be implemented, where possible.

**Most students, including those with disabilities, can tolerate and safely wear a face mask.** Students with an Individualized Education Program or 504 Plan who are

## MOKENA SCHOOL DISTRICT 159 - RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN - DRAFT

unable to wear a face mask or face shield due to a medical contraindication shall not be denied access to an in-person education if the school is offering in-person education to other students. Staff working with students who are unable to wear a face mask or shield due to a medical contraindication will wear approved and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) based on job-specific duties and risks and maintain physical distancing as much as possible. Other students should also remain distant from students who are unable to wear a face mask or face shield due to a medical contraindication.

The face mask should have two or more layers to stop the spread of COVID-19 and should be worn over the nose and mouth, be secured under the chin, and should fit snugly against the sides of the face without gaps. Reusable face masks should be machine washed or washed by hand and allowed to dry completely after each use. Face masks with exhalation valves or vents will not be acceptable because they do not prevent the user from spreading respiratory secretions when they breathe, talk, sneeze, or cough.

Face shields do **not** provide adequate source control because respiratory droplets may be expelled from the sides and bottom. They may only be used as a substitute for face masks in the following limited circumstances:

- Individuals who are under the age of 2.
- Individuals who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face mask without assistance.
- Students and staff who provide a health care provider's note as documentation that they have a medical contraindication (a condition that makes masking absolutely inadvisable) to wearing a face mask.
- Teachers needing to show facial expressions where it is important for students to see how a teacher pronounces words (e.g., English Learners, early childhood, world language, etc.). However, teachers will be required to resume wearing face masks as soon as possible. Preferred alternatives to teachers wearing face shields include clear face masks or video instruction. There must be strict adherence to physical distancing when a face shield is utilized in lieu of a face mask.

## **COVID-19 TESTING**

Mokena School District 159 may participate in on-site COVID-19 testing. This will be determined at a later date and will require parental consent.

## **PERSONAL WORKSPACE/CLASSROOM PROTOCOLS**

All teachers and students are asked not to visit another classroom outside of their team or grade level. Employees are encouraged to disinfect their own personal workspace using district-approved cleaning products (teacher desk, phone, etc) throughout the day, giving special attention to commonly touched surfaces.

## **SHARED WORKSPACE PROTOCOLS**

Employees are encouraged to disinfect their own workspace multiple times throughout the day using district-approved cleaning products, giving special attention to commonly touched surfaces. Mokena SD 159 has alcohol-based hand sanitizers throughout the workplace and in common areas. Cleaning sprays and wipes are also available to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as telephones and keyboards.

## **CLEANING AND DISINFECTION PROTOCOL**

Sanitation, hygiene, and PPE supplies will be ordered and stockpiled for employee access. Building custodians and cleaning personnel will conduct daily cleaning and disinfection. An EPA-approved cleaner will be used for disinfection along with our standard cleaning protocols. All frequently touched surfaces (e.g., door handles/knobs, desktops/tabletops, countertops, light switches, pencil sharpeners, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, phones, toys, cubbies/coat and backpack areas, sinks and faucets) will be cleaned on a regular basis. Restrooms, hallways, cafeterias, and high touch common areas will be cleaned throughout the day. Soft surfaces such as carpets and rugs will be cleaned daily.

## **FOOD DELIVERY**

Special events such as classroom parties will be postponed until further notice due to limiting visitors to the building. The delivery of items for student birthdays is also suspended indefinitely. We ask that there is no food delivered to school from outside sources. If a student forgets their lunch, a parent or other emergency contact may drop off the school lunch as normal in the office.

## **BUS DRIVERS/TRANSPORTATION PROTOCOLS**

Current ISBE and IDPH guidance does not limit the number of students to ride a bus to school. While this is permitted, it is very difficult to maintain social distancing with ridership at full capacity. **Mokena SD 159 strongly recommends that any families that can provide transportation for their student to and from school do so.** If bus riders are only those students that cannot otherwise arrange transportation to school, the distances between students will be increased and student safety will be enhanced.

Mokena SD 159 is working to ensure procedures are in compliance with all applicable expectations under state and federal guidelines. **All individuals on a bus must wear a face covering** and social distancing will be maintained to the greatest extent possible.

## **RESTROOM USAGE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

All students and staff should maintain social distancing when in the restrooms. Teachers will schedule/coordinate restroom and handwashing breaks when possible. High touch areas will be cleaned throughout the day. When returning to a workspace or classroom the use of hand sanitizer is recommended.

## **HANDWASHING AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE**

All staff, students, and visitors must practice appropriate hand hygiene when inside district facilities including all of the following guidelines:

- Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least twenty (20) seconds. When soap and running water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands that are visibly soiled.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Practice effective respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.

## **NEED FOR REMOTE LEARNING SERVICES**

Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, all Illinois public schools are required to resume fully in-person learning for all student attendance days, provided that, pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-30 and 105 ILCS 5/34-18.66, remote instruction be made available for students who have not received a COVID-19 vaccine or who are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, only while they are under quarantine consistent with guidance or requirements from a local public health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health. Students may not opt into remote learning but may qualify for remote learning in limited circumstances. If you would like to inquire about remote learning you should contact Dr. Cohen at [cohenm@mokena159.org](mailto:cohenm@mokena159.org).