



# BACK TO SCHOOL

## 2020-2021 FAMILY HANDBOOK

Updated August 31, 2020

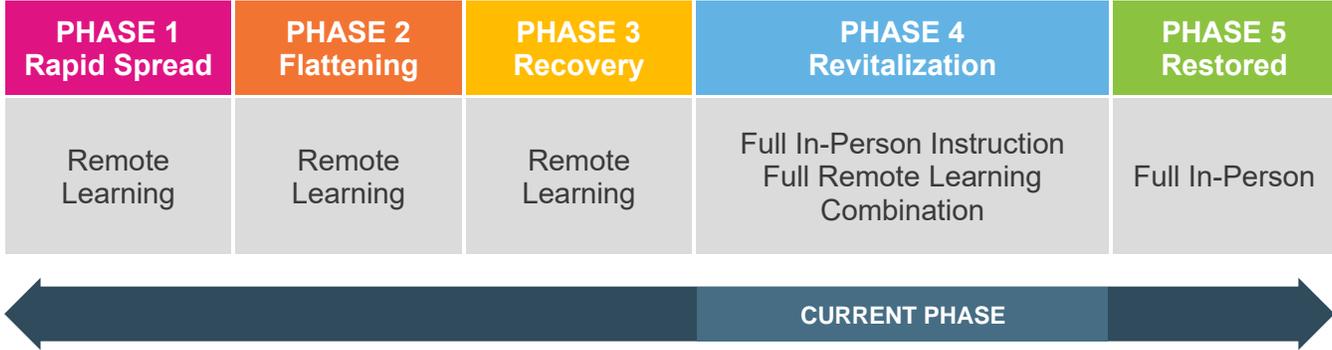
This handbook was developed to give families and staff a better idea of what to expect for both full-time remote instruction and in-person instruction.

**This handbook includes updates or new information in the following areas:**

- FAQs link (page 4)
- Changing learning option (page 4)
- Wednesday learning (pages 9-12)
- Face masks (pages 18-20)
- Health screenings (pages 20-21)
- Handling suspected/confirmed positive Cases of Covid-19 (page 21-22)
- Classroom cleaning (page 25)
- Device distribution (page 26)
- Visitor, volunteer & PTO guidelines (page 28)

We appreciate your patience during this time. Please understand that these plans could change before the start of school. Right now, we’re in Phase 4 of the governor’s reopening plans. If we regress to Phase 3, we will resume remote learning at all grade levels to ensure our students and staff remain safe.

**RESTORE ILLINOIS PLAN**



**We will continue to share updates through our usual channels.** You can find the latest information on [rps205.com/backtoschool](https://rps205.com/backtoschool). If you have questions or concerns about any plans outlined in this handbook, [please share them via Let’s Talk](#). These plans are a partnership with our families, students and staff, and we appreciate your continued support.

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## FAQs

Follow this link for a list of FAQs from staff and families:

[www.rps205.com/backtoschool/Pages/FAQs.aspx](http://www.rps205.com/backtoschool/Pages/FAQs.aspx)

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## Learning Options

School and district administrators developed a blended learning plan for staff and students for the 2020-21 school year. Families can choose to return to in-person instruction, or they can choose full-time remote learning:

**Full-Time In-Person Instruction:** Early Childhood & Elementary

**Combination In-Person Instruction and Remote Learning:** Middle & High School

**Full-Time Remote Learning:** Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle & High school

### LEARNING OPTIONS

#### **Can I update my choice now and move from in-person instruction to full-time remote instruction?**

At this time, families are unable to change their selection because of the way our staff have been assigned to either remote or in-person instruction and classes have been assigned to teachers. Please contact your school's main office staff with specific questions.

## FULL-TIME IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION

**Early Childhood programs (ages 3-4):** Students in our prekindergarten programs can attend in-person instruction, offered five days a week at their Early Childhood Center.

**Elementary (K-5):** Families can choose to attend in-person instruction five days each week at the student's zoned school or special program site.

## COMBINATION IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND REMOTE LEARNING

**Middle school & high school:** Families can choose in-person instruction two days each week at their zone or special program school – with remote learning the remaining three days. This includes special programs at Auburn (Gifted and CAPA), West (CAPA) and Thurgood Marshall (Gifted grades 6-8).

Instead of pairing students on A/B days for Monday/Thursday and Tuesday/Friday, all middle and high school students who chose in-person instruction will attend school on Mondays and Thursdays.

**Students will not attend in-person on Tuesdays and Fridays. This is beneficial for a few reasons:**

- Teachers will have in-person contact with students on two days, instead of four.
- Teachers can fully focus on in-person students two days a week, and fully remote students two days a week, instead of a combination each day.
- With fewer student attendance days, this adjusted schedule gives our custodial staff more time to ensure our schools are clean.

**Here's why the change was made:** We anticipated the need to divide students who chose in-person instruction into two groups to keep our class sizes small. But based on our survey results – with more than 90 percent of our families responding – many more families chose remote-only instruction than we estimated. We adjusted our plans to meet our families' needs, so now we have a significantly smaller group of students planning to attend school for in-person instruction. That means students will attend in-person on Mondays and Thursdays only, and full-time remote instruction will happen on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

We can still keep our classes to 20 students in a classroom. In some cases, classes will be significantly smaller. With the updated plan, all students will have a certified teacher leading their class, and we can still offer students the course variety that is so important to students' middle and high school education.

## WHAT IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION WILL LOOK LIKE

Students and staff will attend school within the health and safety guidelines outlined by the Illinois State Board of Education, Winnebago County Health Department, Illinois Department of Public Health and the CDC. This includes masks and social distancing. The district will provide face shields for teachers and staff to wear as a second barrier. The only time a shield can be worn alone is if 1) the staff member is at least 6 feet away from all students/staff and 2) it is necessary for instruction to see the staff member's face. In some cases, pediatric masks will be provided for students. Learn more in the In-Person Instruction Health Guidelines section.

In-person instruction will build on our traditional curriculum. Daily attendance and schedules will occur as normal. Content that students might have missed because of the spring school closure will be covered in this curriculum to help students catch up and address any learning loss.

Staff will introduce digital tools to students and families in the first few days of school in case we need to shift to remote instruction at any point in the school year. Families should expect students to be actively engaged in online platforms to turn in school work, communicate with teachers, and demonstrate learning.

**Building principals are developing school-specific plans to ensure students and staff remain safe. They will follow these general guidelines for in-person instruction:**

- No in-person field trips will be permitted for the 2020-2021 school year.
- Nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations are restricted.
- Activities that bring together large groups of people -- such as assemblies, in-person field trips, large groups on playground equipment, for example -- will be discontinued.
- School-sponsored parent groups, social events and many after-school activities will be canceled or held virtually.
- Facilities staff will install plexiglass barriers at security desks and at the public-facing office professional desks. Staff must still wear face coverings or masks.
- Elementary students will be placed in smaller cohorts within their class, so crossover will be limited. Middle and high school students will also be placed in cohorts to limit student crossover. A cohort can be designated by classroom, grade level or academy, for example.
- When possible, students can remain in classrooms and teachers can rotate to minimize movement within a school.
- Class activities will be moved outdoors, if possible.
- Students should use playground equipment only with other students in their cohort. This will limit the number of students on playground equipment at a time.

### **Students in transition periods:**

We recommend that students who are in transition periods – such as kindergarten, sixth grade and ninth grade – and all English Language Learners and students with IEPs choose in-person instruction. Having a face-to-face, personal connection will help ensure a solid transition and additional support during this difficult school year.

All students with disabilities who will return to a self-contained classroom in all grade levels (including the Transition Program for 18-21-year-old students) will be offered an in-person option five days a week, or a virtual option five days a week. Families with children who meet that criteria will receive letters in the coming days.

### **FULL-TIME REMOTE LEARNING**

We know families have various health and risk factors during this pandemic, and we want to ensure students are still able to learn, connect and grow during this time. That's why we're giving families a choice to participate in full-time remote learning five days a week. Families who choose the remote option must commit only to remote learning through the first semester (middle and high school) or trimester (elementary). Please note that if school is closed for any length of time, students at all levels will shift to full-time remote learning.

### **Students who choose full-time remote learning should note:**

- Attendance will be tracked, and students must be engaged in 5 hours of daily learning. That includes instruction and any independent student activity.
- Teachers will introduce new content in instruction, and students' work will be measured through progress monitoring and assessments. Student progress will be reported on a semester report card.
- It's possible some courses will not be offered remotely, depending on the materials required. Counselors will work with families to ensure academic schedules meet students' needs.

Remote instruction will follow the same curriculum scope and order as in-person instruction. Students will engage in content remotely -- using a Chromebook, iPad or other technology device -- through a weekly lesson outline that will cover all instructional areas.

Students will receive five hours of daily instruction through a mix of guided recordings, small groups that will meet virtually, and opportunities to connect for feedback and progress monitoring, plus practice with both digital and non-digital activities on their own.

**We know families are busy, and regular school hours might not work for all families.** To allow for flexibility, opportunities to participate in virtual small groups or real-time video conferencing will be offered at multiple times throughout the week, but they will not be required. Screen time will be limited and used thoughtfully for education. Content that students might have missed because of the spring school closure will be covered in this curriculum to help students catch up and address any learning loss.

## **The remote learning experience -- and expectations will differ based on students' grade levels:**

### **Early Childhood (ages 3-4)**

A weekly activity plan posted through the Seesaw app online will provide daily learning activities to support development in language and literacy, math and science, social-emotional learning, self-help, gross motor, and enrichment areas. Half-day students will be expected to engage in 2.5 instructional hours per day, while full-day students will be expected to engage in 5 hours per day.

At-home learning materials will be provided to families, as well as a suggested daily routine with all required components, explaining the rationale of that part of the daily schedule and the recommended length of time for each part.

Teachers will provide opportunities for students to participate in daily virtual read-alouds, three virtual small groups weekly, and daily virtual Family Meetings to discuss the learning activities for the day.

Families should use the Seesaw app to communicate with the teacher. Information will be provided to families on how to access and use the app. Teachers will also connect with families via phone calls or email to support learning.

### **Elementary (K-5)**

A weekly framework of learning will be structured around daily activities to help students manage time and engage in math, writing, fine arts, physical education, foundational literacy, and integrated literacy that includes elementary science and social science content.

Activities will include daily virtual online video lessons in math and literacy, daily writing in response to reading and learning, and weekly small groups for student connection, collaboration, and feedback.

Teachers will use Seesaw and/or Google Classroom to post learning activities and communicate with students and families. Teachers will also connect with families via phone calls or email to support learning.

### **Middle and High School (6-12)**

Students will receive 40-60 minutes of daily remote instruction per course in which they are enrolled. This includes core instructional courses such as math, science, social science, and English/language arts, but also pathway courses and elective courses such as world languages, fine arts, physical education and health.

Teachers will use Google Classroom and/or Schoology to post learning activities and communicate with students and families. Teachers will also connect with families via phone calls or email to support learning.

## LEARNING ON WEDNESDAYS

In our updated plan, released on Friday, Aug. 21, Wednesdays will be early dismissal days for ALL elementary students who chose in-person instruction, instead of Wednesday attendance potentially fluctuating from week to week. That means all K-5 students who chose in-person instruction will participate in what we're calling What I Need Wednesdays, or WIN Wednesdays. Beginning Wednesday, Sept. 23, Wednesdays will focus on intervention for students who need support, and additional rigor for students who are excelling. Students will follow a shortened schedule and leave school early. Then the rest of their five-hours of learning will be independent work and happen in the afternoon or evening. That remote work will not require a computer or electronic device.

### Here's what elementary families can expect in September:

- **Tuesday, Sept. 8:** All remote-only elementary students will check in electronically for five hours of remote learning. In-person students with last names A-K will attend in person for a full day of school; students with last names L-Z will stay home. (Remote-only students will only participate in instruction and learning remotely; they will not attend school in-person.)
- **Wednesday, Sept. 9:** All remote-only elementary students will continue to check in electronically for five hours of remote learning each day. In-person students with last names L-Z will attend in person; students with last names A-K will stay home. (Remote-only students will only participate in instruction and learning remotely; they will not attend school in-person.)
- **Thursday, Sept. 10:** Full attendance day for all K-5 students who chose in-person instruction.
- **Friday, Sept. 11:** Full attendance day for all K-5 students who chose in-person instruction.
- **Wednesday, Sept. 16:** ALL K-5 students – remote-only and in-person – will participate in a remote learning day. Students will not attend school in person on Sept. 16. All K-5 students will participate in five hours of instruction and learning.
- **Wednesday, Sept. 23:** The shortened schedule will begin for ALL students. The elementary school day will start at 7:35 a.m. and dismiss at 11 a.m. The rest of students' five-hours of learning will be independent work and happen in the afternoon or evening. That remote work will not require a computer or electronic device. Again, all students will participate in WIN Wednesdays.

## How Schedules will Look Different

In-person instruction vs. remote-only instruction

### Elementary

In-person Instruction	Remote Model
Sept. 8: Kids A-K full day	Sept. 8: Begin remote instruction for all
Sept. 9: Kids L-Z full day	
Sept. 10: All kids (A-Z) in-person	
Sept. 16: Remote Learning	Sept. 16: Remote Learning
Sept. 23: Early release day: students attend 7:35 - 11 a.m. WIN Wednesday model begins	Sept. 23: Early release day: students engaged in remote learning WIN Wednesday 7:35 - 11 a.m. WIN Wednesday model begins

### Middle & High School

In-person Instruction	Remote Model
Sept. 8: Synchronous Remote Learning for <b>all</b> students (students will learn together in real time with a teacher)	Sept. 8: Synchronous Remote Learning for <b>all</b> students (students will learn together in real time with a teacher)
Sept. 9: Asynchronous Remote Learning for all students (students learn at their own pace, independently)	Sept. 9: Asynchronous Remote Learning for all students (students learn at their own pace, independently)
Sept. 10: In-person attendance	Sept. 10: Asynchronous Remote learning (students learn at their own pace, independently)
Sept. 11: Asynchronous Remote Learning (students learn at their own pace, independently)	Sept. 11: Synchronous Remote Learning (students learn in real time with a teacher)
Sept. 16: Asynchronous Remote Learning for all students (students learn at their own pace, independently)	Sept. 16: Asynchronous Remote Learning for all students (students learn at their own pace, independently)
Sept. 23: Early release day; students learn remotely Middle School: 9:15 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. High School: 8:20 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.	Sept. 23: Early release day; students learn remotely Middle School: 9:15 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. High School: 8:20 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.
WIN Wednesday model begins	WIN Wednesday model begins

## Wednesdays FAQs

### **What will be provided to students on Wednesdays?**

We're calling these WIN Wednesdays, or What I Need Wednesdays. The goal is to provide a much-needed social-emotional component and intervention/enrichment supports into our back-to-school plans.

### **Why are Wednesdays a shortened day for K-5 students?**

We want to give teachers additional time for professional development and planning each week.

### **Are Early Childhood students included in the shortened schedule on Wednesdays?**

No. Early Childhood students will follow a full five-day in-person or remote instructional plan. The shortened schedule on Wednesday is for K-12 students.

### **Will students in self-contained special education classes participate in the shortened Wednesday schedule?**

Students in a self-contained special education class will attend on Wednesdays for a full day of instruction and support. Students at all grade levels in self-contained special education classes will start with a full school day Sept. 8 and continue with a full five days each week.

## Athletics & Extra-Curricular Activities

All clubs and activities will follow all Phase 4 guidelines established by the Illinois Department of Public Health. RPS 205 will follow guidance from the IHSA and IDPH for recommendations about athletic activities.

**High school:** The IHSA has approved some fall offerings and modified season calendars. [Follow this link](#) for the latest announcement from the IHSA.

RPS 205 fall offerings: Boys/Girls Golf, Girls Tennis, Boys/Girls Cross Country, Girls Swimming & Diving, Scholastic Bowl, E-Sports, Robotics and Science Olympiad.

**Middle school:** The IESA has approved some fall offerings and modified season calendar. Unfortunately, middle school football and soccer are canceled. We are waiting for specific guidelines for cheer. Follow these links for the latest announcements from the IESA: [www.iesa.org](http://www.iesa.org) and [IESA Alternative Plan](#).

RPS 205 fall offerings: Boys/Girls Cross Country, Robotics and Scholastic Bowl.

**Elementary School:** Unfortunately, the Rockford Elementary Soccer League, or RESL, is canceled this fall. We will review the possibility of hosting the Rockford Elementary Basketball Association, or REBA, season in September. We will share an update as soon as we have one.

RPS 205 fall offerings: Robotics.

## Bilingual Education

All English-language learners are entitled to language acquisition instructional support. TBE and TPI programs can provide the proper support students need. Students' level of language proficiency, based on ACCESS scores, dictates their need to attend classes in person rather than remote learning. Every effort will be made to accommodate English Language Learners in small groups to provide the language support needed.

### **TBE (Transitional Bilingual Education)**

All self-contained bilingual students, in all grades, will follow the district's recommendations for classroom instruction. It is highly recommended for TBE students to attend in person rather than remotely.

### **TPI (Transitional Program of Instruction)**

All English as a second language (ESL) students are part of the general education population. These students will follow the guidelines established by the district for either in person or remote learning. It is highly recommended for ESL students to attend classes in person rather than remote learning.

### **Newcomers**

Newcomer students in middle and high school will receive in-person instruction four days a week. This will provide students and teachers with the opportunity to interact in small groups and work on activities that students who are new to the country need in order to become proficient in English. Elementary Newcomer students will follow the general education class schedule.

### **Remote learning choice for English Learners**

Bilingual and ESL students whose parents choose for them to participate in remote learning, instead of the recommended in-person sessions, will adhere to the district's guidelines.

## High School Seniors

**High School Seniors:** [Follow this link for a senior toolkit](#). It includes graduation requirements, senior checklists and deadlines for post-secondary plans, FAFSA and scholarship info, plus contact information to help support you during your senior year.

## Physical Education, Gymnasiums, Swimming pools and Locker Rooms

**Physical activity can support students' overall health and well-being and help reduce stress and anxiety. School staff and students will follow these general guidelines for physical education:**

- Face coverings must be worn. No more than 50 individuals may be in one space at any one time during Phase 4.
- Games and sport activities that require close guarding and any potential physical contact must be avoided. Physical contact is prohibited.
- Weather permitting, staff should select outdoor physical education activities that allow natural social distancing.
- Use partitions in open spaces, utilizing markings on the gymnasium floor/wall/field to maintain distance between participants.
- Schools with swimming pools will follow IDPH guidance on swimming facilities.
- Aside from students participating in swimming, students will not use locker rooms.
- Students and staff should perform hand hygiene at the start and end of each class period.
- Students should perform hand hygiene after using each piece of equipment.

## Special Education

Every child and adolescent with a disability is entitled to a free and appropriate education and is entitled to special education services based on their individualized education program (IEP). Students receiving special education services may be more negatively affected by distance learning and may be disproportionately impacted by interruptions in regular education. It may not be feasible, depending on the needs of the individual child and adolescent, to adhere both to distancing guidelines and the criteria outlined in a specific IEP. Attempts to meet physical distancing guidelines should meet the needs of the individual child and may require creative solutions, often on a case-by-case basis.

All students with disabilities who will return to a self-contained classroom in all grade levels (including the Transition Program for 18-21-year-old students) will be offered an in-person option five days a week, or a virtual option five days a week. Families with children who meet that criteria should have received a letter that outlines their options.

**According to ISBE and IDPH's June 23, 2020 Joint Guidance, special education teams should collaborate with parents/guardians to consider the following when determining if a student with a disability can sustain in-person instruction:**

- whether the student's medical condition is conducive to in-person attendance or if needs would best be met remotely;
- the student's behavior and capacities, including controlling secretions, cover mouth/nose when sneezing and coughing, their ability to maintain distance from other classmates, ability to tolerate wearing a face covering, ability to wash hands with/without assistance, and ability to safely use hand sanitizer;
- the number of students per classroom and ability to maintain a 6-foot distance, when possible; and
- consultation with individual student health care providers, if applicable, and IEP teams to determine the best modality to meet students' needs.

The federal government has recognized that COVID-19 and the need to keep students safe and healthy will include delivery of services in a blended/hybrid or remote instruction model and are part of a child's "circumstances" during this time. Moreover, the Department of Education has stated, "School districts must provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students. The flexibility provided allows staff to factor in the student's unique circumstances to determine the most appropriate mode of instructional delivery.

To assist parents in their understanding of what individual services their child will be provided, a Remote Instruction Plan will be created for every student with an IEP that is enrolled in either blended/hybrid instruction or remote instruction. The plan will consist of the amount and mode of specialized instruction, the amount and mode of related services, an explanation of the data used

to determine said services, and any additional factors used to determine the content of the Remote Instruction Plan.

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## Special Programs

RPS 205 plans to accommodate students who are enrolled in special programs for remote and in-person instruction. The level of remote instruction that's connected specifically to each special program might depend on the number of students who choose remote learning. There's no guarantee that all aspects of special programs will be available for full-time remote learning.

**Students who choose remote learning will keep their seat in their special program.** Once remote options end and the district returns to full-time in-person instruction, any student who does not return in-person within 30 days will be reassigned to their zone school.

**Students who choose their zone school, homeschool (unaffiliated with RPS 205), or a private school will forfeit their seat in their special program.** This applies to the STEAM Academy at Haskell, Two-Way Language Immersion at Barbour, Gifted Academy (grades 1-12), Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) and Maria Montessori at Marsh.

If a student leaves their special program, they can return to that special program within 12 months without reapplying for the program, according to administrative regulation 7.55R. The student may only re-enter if a seat is available.

- The parent or guardian must reach out to the principal or program representative to request re-entry. The principal will determine if a seat or full schedule (for middle and high school students) is available and initiate the re-entry process.
- If a student wants to re-enter the program and the seat has been filled from the waitlist, or if there is no seat available, the student must complete the eligibility process again to receive a waitlist spot or a seat the following year.

# In-Person Instruction Health Guidelines

## SOCIAL DISTANCING AND MINIMIZING EXPOSURE

Social distancing (also called physical distancing) means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. Social distancing is a critical tool in decreasing the spread of COVID-19. Follow this link for the [CDC's Social Distancing info and tips](#). Schools should create as much space between staff and students as possible during the day, recognizing that it is not always feasible to have 6 feet of social distancing during primary instructional time in the classroom.

### Other general guidelines:

- Social distancing floor/seating markings will be displayed in waiting and reception areas, such as lobby and main office. Physical guides – like tape – can be placed on floors and sidewalks to define one-way routes.
- Administrators will review and evaluate classroom capacity with the goal of creating as much space between people as possible, recognizing that it is not always feasible to have 6 feet of social distancing during primary instructional time in the classroom.
- Administrators can create one-way hallways and stairwells to reduce close contact. Passing periods should be staggered to limit the number of students moving through the hallways at a time. Floors will be marked with 6 feet of spacing on floors to remind students and staff to always stay apart.
- Each school will designate specific entry and exit points based on student cohorts. Students will be monitored at arrival and dismissal times to curtail congregating and ensure students go straight from vehicle to their classroom, and vice versa.
- Staff will minimize opportunities for exposure by ensuring social distancing of at least 6 feet between people whenever possible.
- Classroom desks and chairs will be arranged, whenever possible, so students are separated from each other by 6 feet. If it is not possible to space seating, student chairs and/or desks will be facing the same direction, rather than facing each other.
- Furniture in common areas should be spaced out, if possible, to minimize crowding. Multiple groups will not be allowed in common areas.
- Hall lockers at middle and high schools will not be used. Physical education lockers will only be available for students participating in swimming, and students will be assigned lockers in a manner to maintain social distancing.
- Hall lockers will be used at elementary schools. Students will go to their lockers in the morning and at the end of the day. They will continue to follow social distancing guidelines. Student pick-up and drop-off will happen outside, whenever possible.

**Early Childhood:** In Early Childhood classes, where social distancing will be a challenge, students and staff will focus on:

- Hand hygiene.
- Independent play/reducing classmate interactions.
- Infection prevention education for staff and families.
- Adult physical distancing from one another.
- Adults wearing both face shields and masks.
- Use smocks or aprons to be left at school each day.
- Separating groups of students into cohorts who remain together.
- Spending time outdoors.
- Use dividers at nap time.

## FACE COVERINGS OR MASKS

All staff and students are required to wear a face covering or mask while inside the school building. Wearing a face mask is most important when students and staff cannot maintain 6 feet of distance between each other. Face coverings do not need to be worn outside if students and staff can safely remain at least 6 feet apart.

### Appropriate Face Masks or Coverings

Cloth face coverings or masks must completely cover the nose and the mouth. Each mask or covering must follow the district's dress code policy. These can include disposable masks or cloth masks. New research shows that bandanas and neck gaiters are only a single layer of fabric and are not as effective, so those face coverings are discouraged.

### Face coverings should not be placed on anyone who:

- Has trouble breathing or is unconscious.
- Is incapacitated or unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
- Students who provide a physician's note as documentation that they have a medical contraindication (a contraindication or condition that makes masking absolutely inadvisable) to wearing a face covering.

## Medical Exemptions

Any student who is seeking a medical exemption from wearing a face mask will require a note from their physician. In addition, the District's nursing staff may need to discuss potential accommodations for the student with the student's physician. In order to ensure the health and safety of all students and staff, these will be handled on an individual basis. Remote instruction may be the safest environment.

## Students with IEPs/504 Plans

### **How should schools handle students with IEPs or 504 plans who cannot tolerate a face covering or a face shield?**

Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan who are unable to wear a face covering or face shield due to a medical contraindication may 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 covering or shield due to a medical contraindication should wear approved and appropriate PPE based on job specific duties and risks and maintain social distancing as much as possible. Other students should also remain socially distant from students who are unable to wear a face covering or face shield due to a medical contraindication. Schools should consult with their local public health department regarding appropriate PPE for these situations.

## Behavioral Concerns

If a student refuses to wear a face mask, this behavior concern will be addressed by building administrators.

Students who are unable to wear a face mask for medical reasons should consider signing up for full-time remote instruction. If there is a medical reason why a student cannot wear a mask, parents should consider whether remote instruction will need to occur or they will need to reach out to the Executive Director of Special Education in order to discuss and determine whether the student can be accommodated in a safe manner during in person instruction.

## Teachers & Facial Expressions

Teachers needing to show facial expressions where it is important for students to see how a teacher pronounces words (such as English learners, early childhood, foreign language, etc.). However, teachers will be required to resume wearing face coverings as soon as possible. Preferred alternatives to teachers wearing face shields include clear face coverings or video instruction. There must be strict adherence to social distancing.

## HAND WASHING

Students and staff will be encouraged to use soap and water for handwashing. To supplement hand washing, hand sanitizer stations will be stationed throughout each building. Refillable hand sanitizer bottles will be available in every classroom.

## HEALTH SCREENINGS

### Monitoring and Excluding for Illness

Regular screening for symptoms and ongoing self-monitoring throughout the school day can help to quickly identify signs of illness and help reduce exposure. Staff and students should be encouraged to self-monitor symptoms throughout the day.

- Staff and students will do daily self declaration stating that said individual is free from fever and signs and symptoms of Covid19.
- Temperature checks will be conducted on a random basis as staff and students enter the building.
- No touch thermometers will be available at each school -- and in each classroom -- for staff and students to check their temperature throughout the day.
- Staff or students who develop symptoms during the school day must notify school health services or another identified point of contact in the school building immediately.

The CDC does not currently recommend universal testing for students or staff entry into school. Viral testing only determines infection at the point in time the test occurs, and it might miss cases in the early stages of infection. It is not known whether previous infection and recovery from COVID-19 illness protects people from reinfection. **Do not come to school or work if you:**

- Have a temperature at or above 100.4 degrees
- Have taken medication to reduce a temperature that's above 100.4 degrees
- Have any of the following symptoms: Fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or running nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea
- Have recently traveled to any high-risk locations
- Have been in close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19

**Students and staff who display symptoms at school or fit these criteria will be sent home or must be picked up by a parent or guardian.** RPS 205 is following advice from the Illinois Department of Public Health. All students and staff who are sent home with COVID-19 symptoms should be diagnostically tested and remain home from school until they receive negative test results for COVID-19.

## **Administrators have developed the following protocol for staff and student temperature screenings:**

**Students:** Staff will screen students at various entry points: when students exit the school bus or when they enter the school building at a set number of doors, depending on the school layout. Screening could happen at six doors at the high schools, and three or four doors or entry points at our middle and elementary schools. The goal is to screen every third student to ensure their temperature is not above 100.4 degrees. No-touch thermometers will also be available in classrooms for temperature checks throughout the day for students who were not initially screened.

**Staff:** All staff will also be screened on a routine basis. Daily screenings will target an estimated third of staff, and those groups will rotate so all staff are captured for screenings throughout the week.

**Please note:** Any staff who registers a fever will be sent home. Any student who registers a fever will go to the Special Purpose Room. The nurse will be notified and reach out to students and staff with the assistance of the Winnebago County Health Department.

### **Handling Suspected or Confirmed Positive Cases of Covid-19**

- Each school nurse and administrator will work closely with local health authorities regarding positive or probable COVID-19 cases and any staff or student exposures to someone with COVID-19.
- Any symptomatic staff or students will be isolated until they're able to go home.
- School administrators will contact the district's health services coordinator for guidance on notifying any necessary staff, families and the public, as needed, if a person with COVID-19 was at school.
- School administrators continue to work with local health officials – including the Winnebago County Health Department – for their guidance and support with contact tracing, necessary notification and determining whether an exposed individual needs to isolate or self-quarantine. That decision is made based upon the extent and nature of the exposure.

**If a student or staff member tests positive:** Exposed individuals will not be told the name of the individual who has tested positive for COVID. However, the district's nursing supervisor works closely with the Winnebago County Health Department to provide contact tracing and to determine whether an exposed individual needs to self-isolate or quarantine. **Exposed individuals will be informed of the need to self isolate.** This decision is made based upon the extent and nature of the exposure.

### **Protocol for students or staff returning to school or work after a positive case of COVID-19:**

Students and staff who are confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19 must complete 10 calendar days of isolation from the date of the first symptom and be fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications. Other symptoms also must have improved before returning to school.

## CLASSROOM/BUILDING HVAC

We're following guidance from the CDC and are working closely with the Winnebago County Health Department to ensure our heating, ventilation and air conditioning resources are appropriate during this time.

The district's COVID response plan includes running HVAC units two hours before and two hours after students occupy each building to flush building HVAC systems, classrooms, hallways and common areas. This plan will help introduce additional outdoor/fresh air into our buildings, in conjunction with the required ventilation that happens over the course of the day.

The Winnebago County Health Department has advised us to run ceiling fans in reverse to pull air toward the ceiling and prevent air from being pushed directly onto a group of people. This will also help increase circulation in our schools. Our facilities team is currently reviewing which fans are able to run in reverse.

Any stand-alone fans – such as box fans, floor fans or desk fans – are permitted as long as they are not blowing air directly on students or staff.

Window air conditioning units can run as long as the diffuser is directed toward the ceiling. The district's window A/C approval process will be unchanged this school year; it requires a medical professional's recommendation, plus approval from the district's human resources and health services staff.

## WARM WEATHER DAYS

Administrators are considering using remote instruction days for students who choose in-person instruction when temperatures and the heat index are particularly high. Administrators are aware of the additional PPE that students and staff will wear, which could add to discomfort in some of our schools without air conditioning.

## Cleaning Procedures

Rockford Public Schools has established increased cleaning and disinfection protocols at all district buildings that align with the CDC and Winnebago County Health Department recommendations.

The district is using disinfectants that are proven effective and registered with the EPA. Those chemicals also comply with the district's safety standards.

### **Increased cleaning and disinfection protocols include four categories:**

**Daily Cleaning:** Performed each day by the district's cleaning contractor, including trash removal, spot cleaning of floors and surfaces, and room inspections.

**Weekly Cleaning:** Weekly cleaning is performed by the district's cleaning contractor and includes trash removal, spot cleaning of surfaces, wiping of surfaces and high-touch objects with disinfecting wipes, spot cleaning floors, dusting and room inspections.

**Supplemental Cleaning:** Supplemental cleaning has been performed on a daily basis since the pandemic started. It's done in addition to routine and weekly cleaning and goes over and above what's considered routine. Supplemental cleaning is focused on cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces (e.g. handrails, drinking fountains, door handle push bars leading to common areas) specifically for the purpose of preventing spread of disease. This includes disinfecting high-touch areas in the morning and again in the early afternoon. After-school cleaning includes building-wide disinfection and deep cleaning each night.

**Emergency cleaning in case of a suspected or reported case of illness:** In addition to routine, weekly and supplemental cleaning, emergency cleaning will happen when a suspected or reported case of illness has been identified in a classroom or building. This will include all touchable surfaces, windows will be opened to increase circulation or HVAC will be configured to increase air turnover.

### **Please note:**

- All classrooms are subject to routine, weekly and supplemental cleaning.
- Early childhood and special education classrooms are subject to special case cleaning, in addition to routine, weekly and supplemental cleaning.
- Areas used for after-school programs will be subject to the same routine and supplemental cleaning procedures as regular-use classrooms.
- Special education bathrooms will be cleaned every two hours.
- Early Childhood classrooms will be electrostatically disinfected between the morning class and afternoon class.
- Cleaning in the evening will focus on building-wide disinfection and deep cleaning, especially in areas where access is limited during the day

**Routine High-Touch Cleaning Includes:**

- Restroom stalls and dispensers
- Toilets, sinks and faucets
- Cafeteria tables
- Drinking fountains
- Student desks, light fixtures and door handles/push plates

**Supplemental High-Touch Daily Cleaning Includes:**

- Door handles and knobs/push plates to common areas (including exterior)
- Handrails
- Student locker handles
- Refrigerator handles
- Microwave handles
- Library tables

**Emergency High-Touch Cleaning Includes:**

- Doors knob/handles
- Door push plates and crash bars
- Arms on chairs
- Backs of chairs
- Phones
- Desk, tabletop and edges
- Countertops
- Light switches and room controls
- Furniture
- Cabinet and drawer handles
- Elevator buttons
- Vending machines
- Drinking fountains
- Microwaves
- Refrigerator handles
- Computer keyboards and mouse

**Cleaning chemicals and solutions include:**

- Orbio Multi-Surface Cleaner
- Orbio MultiMicro Cleaner Disinfectant
- Bioeques Botanical Disinfectant Solutions
- Clorox Commercial Cleaning Solutions, Clorox Total 360 Disinfectant Cleaner
- Oxivir TB Wipes, U.S. EPA # 70627-60

- Virex II 256 One Step Disinfectant Cleaner and Deodorant

### Classroom Cleaning and Sanitation Supplies

#### **Every classroom will be provided with:**

- Spray bottles with EPA approved disinfectant
- Paper towels
- Hand sanitizer

Teachers and staff may request refills of these materials at any time from school administration.

## Technology & Internet Access

Every student will be assigned a digital device for the 2020-21 school year. Devices will be issued by the students' assigned school or special program site at the start of the school year. Families that choose the full-time remote option must schedule a pickup at their school. **Schools are working hard to distribute devices and school materials to remote learners before the start of school. Your school staff will share more information as soon as details are finalized.**

**Early Childhood, kindergarten, first and second grades:** Students will be assigned an iPad. Students should take iPads home if we switch to remote learning. Each iPad will have a case.

**Third, fourth, fifth grades:** Students will be assigned Chromebooks. Students should take their Chromebooks home if we switch to remote learning. Each Chromebook will come with a charger and work-in case. The device does not need to be removed from the protective bag to use or to charge.

**Sixth through 12th grades:** Students will be assigned a Chromebook. Students should take their device back and forth with them, between home and school, so it's accessible whether they're working at school or at home for remote work.

**Graphics & Project Lead the Way students:** Students who require Windows computers for PLTW and computer labs will receive a service that allows them to access the necessary applications from their Chromebook via a virtual, high-performance Windows computer hosted through Amazon Web Services.

**RPS 205 has options for families who need Internet access.** Comcast Internet Essentials: Comcast offers in-home installed internet at \$9.95 each month for qualified families: [apply.internetessentials.com](https://www.comcast.com/internetessentials) RPS 205 is working with families who meet specific criteria to cover the service cost for Internet Essentials or provide TMobile Wifi Hotspots. For information on these options or to find out if you qualify, email [connected@rps205.com](mailto:connected@rps205.com).

**Technology support:** The RPS 205 Help Desk is designed to support staff, parents and students with technology-related issues. There's a new prompt to support students and their families. Staff are available from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday for the start of the school year: 815-966-3112.

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## FINE ARTS

Fine arts are essential for students in terms of academic and social/emotional health. RPS 205 teachers are prepared to manage this instructional shift and have worked over the summer to develop multiple ways to deliver instruction.

In accordance with the Winnebago County Health Department, the CDC and our district health professionals, instruments that have a mouthpiece are not to be played indoors. Music classes will be held outside when possible. All students must continue to wear face masks indoors, but may remove them when playing instruments outdoors and while keeping appropriate distancing.

Indoor classroom learning will be a mixture of learning platforms focusing on the many fundamental aspects of music. Keyboards, percussion, and other non-aerosol emitting instruments will be utilized in the classroom setting. Performance lessons will be taught remotely, and students are always encouraged to practice at home.

Visual Arts classes will look very similar to what students are used to, only with smaller class sizes and distance between students. Students should not share supplies when possible.

### **Other general Fine Arts guidelines, beyond traditional classroom guidelines:**

- Students will maintain a six-foot distance whenever possible and face the same direction.
- Students should not share supplies and materials when possible. Any shared equipment should be cleaned and sanitized between classes/student use. Every student has access to an individual instrument for band and orchestra. Piano and guitar students will share instruments, but they will not be shared during class. Pianos and guitars will be disinfected between classes.
- Clay, plaster and other wet materials will not be used unless they are provided in single-use packages.
- Instruction in many cases will shift from large ensemble to solo or small-group instruction.
- Indoor group or ensemble singing is prohibited. If singing is individualized, quiet, and controlled, students can still practice certain physical vocal skills, such as humming and adjusted vocals. Teachers should adjust instructional practices and use all aspects of the curriculum during instruction.
- Skills assessments can be done virtually.
- School performances should be streamed online without live audiences.
- Dance students should come to school dressed appropriately for class since locker rooms will not be used.
- Please note that this is an opportunity for students to focus on individualized learning and develop skills and master standards on a personalized level.

## TRANSPORTATION

Rockford Public Schools will provide transportation for K-12 students. We are prioritizing transportation for families who have no other option to get to school. **If you are able, please find alternative transportation for your student(s).** Our driver pool is limited, and we've also limited the number of students on each bus to 48. It's possible a bus will not be available at all times. If a bus route is changed or canceled, parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible.

There are several new requirements and safety guidelines from the state because of the COVID-19 pandemic response. We need help and support from our families to keep our students and staff safe. For a student to board the bus, parents/guardians must confirm each day that their student is free of any COVID-19 symptoms and has not been in contact with someone with COVID-19.

### Students must:

- Wear a face covering over the mouth and nose. Students without a mask will not be allowed to board the bus.
- Carry an extra face covering in case one is lost.
- Load the bus from back to front.
- Sit in an assigned seat and sit two students per seat.

## Start Times

Start times for the 2020-21 school year have been approved. [Follow this link.](#)

## Visitor, Volunteer & PTO Guidelines

Please follow this link to the Fall 2020 visitor, volunteer & PTO guidelines:  
[www.rps205.com/backtoschool/Pages/FAQs-Visitor-Volunteer-PTO.aspx](http://www.rps205.com/backtoschool/Pages/FAQs-Visitor-Volunteer-PTO.aspx)

## Emergency Drills

Each school will still perform the required safety drills, such as tornado, fire, active shooter and shelter-in-place, although the drills will be modified. We're working out details with the Boone-Winnebago Regional Office of Education.

## Meals

Breakfast and lunch will be available for ALL students, regardless of which learning plan they choose. All vending machines, districtwide, will be turned off.

### **Early Childhood meal guidelines:**

- Each student will receive one pre-packaged meal and one carton of milk.
- Students will wash their hands before eating.
- Students with dietary restrictions will be on a roster that includes where and when they will receive their meals, and that roster will be shared with Nutrition Services staff to ensure each student's meals are correct. The school nurse will provide a list of all students with a physician's statement on file for a special diet to Nutrition Services staff.
- Food will not be shared. Uneaten food will be thrown away; food will not be saved on a share cart.
- Tables will be sanitized before and after each meal service.
- If a student leaves school early for an appointment, the student can bring a meal home. If a student is half-day morning and has not been served breakfast, they could take a breakfast home. If they are half-day afternoon, they could take a lunch and snack home if they leave before it is served. If they are full-time and leave before breakfast is served, a breakfast, lunch and snack could be sent home.

### **Elementary, middle and high school lunch guidelines:**

- Students are still welcome to bring lunch from home.
- No more than 50 students can eat lunch in one location.
- Students should be divided into cohorts to eat lunch to minimize student crossover.
- Additional areas – including outdoor spaces – can be used for meal service.
- Students will have two meal choices: traditional and vegetarian.
- All items will be served in a pre-packaged container and placed on carts for distribution.
- Students will be encouraged to use hand sanitizer before entering the school cafeteria or designated alternative eating sites.
- Spaces will be marked on the floor to help students with physical distancing.
- Students with dietary restrictions will be on a roster that includes where and when they will receive their meals, and that roster will be shared with Nutrition Services staff to ensure each student's

meals are correct. The school nurse will provide a list of all students with a physician's statement on file for a special diet to Nutrition Services staff.

- Students will receive one pre-packaged meal and one carton of milk. Students will not receive a second meal or milk.
- All staff will wear a mask and disposable gloves during meal distribution.
- Uneaten food will be thrown away; food will not be saved on a share cart.
- Tables will be sanitized before and after each meal service.
- If a student leaves school early for an appointment, the student can bring a meal home. If a student arrives late to school, a meal can be saved for that student.

### **Breakfast**

Students will be provided the next morning's breakfast at the end of each school day. This will ensure students can eat breakfast at home and not have to eat at school and remove their mask or face covering.

#### **For middle and high school students participating in in-person instruction:**

When students are not at school, families can still pick up breakfast and lunch for students. Each school will establish a time and distribution site for parents/guardians to pick up meals for multiple days from the child's assigned school.

#### **Meal Distribution for students in full-time remote learning:**

Students participating in full-time remote learning can receive a breakfast and lunch each day. Each school will establish a time and distribution site for parents/guardians to pick up meals for multiple days from the child's assigned school. A central location will be established for families with multiple students participating in remote learning.

## Resources for Families

211

This United Way toll-free, private and confidential number connects you to a community resource specialist for needs such as food, shelter, clothing, housing, employment, education, healthcare support groups, and more. For a complete list of providers in Rockford please [visit this site](#).

### Call4Calm

Illinois residents experiencing stress and mental health issues related to COVID-19. Speak with a mental health professional, text “TALK” to 5-5-2-0-2-0, or for Spanish, “HABLAR” to the same number: 5-5-2-0-2-0. For information on how to navigate and access additional support and services, individuals can also text keywords such as “unemployment” or “food” or “shelter.”

### Connecting with local organizations for additional supports

[Rock River YMCA Welcome Back Guide](#)

[Rockford Park District](#)

[Northwest Community Center](#)

[Patriots Gateway](#)

[Rockford Public Library Youth Programming](#)

[AARC @ Booker T. Washington Center](#)

### Resources to help your child and family during the pandemic

[Tip Sheet for Helping Your Child During the Pandemic](#). Also available in [Spanish](#). Sourced from The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations.

[Parent Guide to Helping the Family Cope with COVID-19 from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)

[Helping Children Cope with Changes Resulting From COVID-19 from the National Association of School Psychologist](#)

[COVID-19 Pandemic Response Resources from the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress](#)

[Age-Related Reactions to Traumatic Events from from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)

## **Resources to help talk to your child about COVID-19**

[Answering a Young Child's Questions About COVID-19 from Zero to Three](#)

[When a Loved One Dies from COVID-19 from the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress](#)

[Finding the Right Words to Talk with Children and Teens about Coronavirus from the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress](#)

## **Parenting Resources**

[Positive Parenting Tips for Addressing and Promoting Positive Behaviors at Home from the CDC](#)

[A Parent's Resource Guide to Social and Emotional Learning from Edutopia](#)

[Understanding Child Traumatic Stress from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)

[Understanding Child Emotions and Behaviors from KidsHealth](#)

[Handwashing: A Family Activity for Parents of EC and Elementary Children from the CDC.](#)  
Available in [Spanish](#).

## **Remote Learning Supports**

[Resources, Strategies, and Activities for Learning at Home from the Illinois Early Learning Project](#)

[Family Staycation Activity Toolkit from Talking is Teaching](#)

[Cyberbullying Warning Signs from StopBullying.gov](#)

## **Resources for Students with Autism**

[Remote Learning Resources: Autism Spectrum Disorder from ASD Nest Support Project](#)

[Supporting Individuals with Autism Through Uncertain Times from Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules](#)

[Resources from the Center for Autism Research Excellence](#)

[My Staying Healthy Story from STAR Autism Support](#)

## **Stress Management Resources**

[\*Belly Breathing with Elmo for EC/Elementary Students from Sesame Street\*](#)

[\*Stress: You're Not Alone from Teens Health\*](#)

[\*When Stress Is Serious from Teens Health\*](#)

[\*Relax and De-Stress from Teens Health\*](#)

[\*Managing Stressful Situations from Teens Health\*](#)

[\*Managing Difficult Emotions from Teens Health\*](#)

[\*Anxiety is Also Contagious: Here's How to Calm Down from Mindful\*](#)

[\*How to Meditate from Mindful\*](#)

[\*25 Fun and Mindful Activities for Children and Teens from Positive Psychology\*](#)