



South Fork #14
Full Return to In-Person Learning
August 17, 2021

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VISION

Learning today for a better tomorrow

MISSION

South Fork will work together and lead by example to create positive, productive members of society, within a safe and creative learning environment, where all are encouraged to achieve success.

***Required by the American Rescue Plan Act - (ESSER III)**

Introduction

Sweeping through the world in early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in major upheaval to all aspects of life, including unprecedented school closures in the spring and fall of 2020. To open schools for in-person instruction required strict health and safety protocols which created barriers and limitations to teaching and learning.

Recognizing that students across remote and in-person settings faced significant academic, social, emotional, and mental health challenges as a result of the interrupted education and the trauma caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Congress made emergency funds available to local school districts to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. Most recently, funds available through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act require that school districts develop a Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services. As such, this plan has been developed in accordance with the ARP Act and the Illinois State Superintendent of Education declaration of July 9, 2021; is aligned with guidance provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and addresses adjustments needed in response to evolving COVID-19 pandemic circumstances.

Taking the public's input into account, this plan was also developed through meaningful consultation with a collaborative of parents, school and district administrators, teachers, school staff, food service staff, transportation service staff, and labor association leaders. The South Fork Board of Education reviewed the plan in its July 22, 2021 meeting. This plan will also be made publicly available on the district's website. School strategies in this plan may be removed based upon local conditions, levels of community transmission (i.e., low, moderate, substantial, or high), local vaccine coverage, use of screening testing to detect cases in K-12 schools, and consultation with local public health officials to determine the prevention strategies needed. School officials will communicate any changes in plans to staff members, students, and parents through the district's regular communication platforms.

Maintaining the Health and Safety of Students and Staff

In accordance with the Illinois State Superintendent of Schools July 9, 2021 declaration, all South Fork CUSD #14 schools will be open fully for in-person learning for all student attendance days for the 2021-22 school year. Remote instruction will only be made available for students who are under quarantine as directed by the local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Absent an order from the Illinois State Board of Education and/or the Illinois Governor's Office, South Fork CUSD #14 schools will be in operation in accordance with the CDC's updated (July 9, 2021) Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Kindergarten (K)-12 Schools, also adopted by the IDPH on July 9, 2021. These guidelines include the following:

1. Mask Use

South Fork will implement a phased approach to masking in the school. The current phase utilized will be determined by South Fork Administration in conjunction with South Fork Board of Education, and will be based upon the current COVID19 conditions locally. Recommendations, guidance, and data from the national, state, and local agencies will be considered throughout the process.

Currently the district is under a mask mandate from the state of Illinois. During this mandate, the following apply. Upon lifting the mandate, the districts phased approach would be applied

- Mask use is **mandatory** indoors for students, staff and visitors regardless of vaccination status. Mask use is **recommended** outdoors during activities (e.g., participating in outdoor play, recess, physical education, sports, extra curriculars) that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission.
- Passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses.

PHASE I

- Mask use is **recommended** indoors for students, staff and visitors who are not fully vaccinated. Mask use is **recommended** outdoors during activities involving sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission.
- Passengers and drivers must wear a mask while on school transportation

PHASE II

- Mask use is **required** indoors for students, staff and visitors who are not fully vaccinated. Mask use is **recommended** outdoors during activities involving sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission.
- Passengers and drivers must wear a mask while on school transportation

PHASE III

- Mask use is **required** indoors for all students, staff and visitors. Mask use is **recommended** outdoors during activities involving sustained close contact with other people, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission.
- Passengers and drivers must wear a mask while on school transportation

2. Physical Distancing

- To the extent possible within school and classroom structures so that it does not exclude students from full day in-person learning, school staff are to help students commit to physical distancing as much as possible by:
 - arranging furniture, play spaces and materials to model and reinforce physical distancing of at least 3 feet and movement;
 - providing assigned seating for students and encourage students to remain in these seats to the greatest extent possible; and
 - developing marked paths of travel in classrooms and corridors.
- School staff will maximize physical distance as much as possible when moving through food service lines and while eating indoors. Aside from the cafeteria, additional spaces for mealtime seating will be utilized when available and feasible (e.g., weather permitting).
- Physical distancing measures are to be done in an equitable manner that does not perpetuate academic, racial, or other tracking.

3. Hand washing and Respiratory Etiquette

- School staff will monitor and reinforce frequent hand washing and respiratory etiquette by
 - continuing to teach hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
 - assisting young children with hand washing;
 - reminding everyone in the facility to wash hands frequently;
 - using hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol (for teachers, staff, and older students who can safely use hand sanitizer) when hand washing is not possible;
 - continuing to teach respiratory etiquette (e.g., covering coughs and sneezes); and
 - providing adequate hand washing and hand sanitizer supplies that are safely stored (up, away, and out of sight of young children and used only with adult supervision for children under 6 years of age).

4. Facility Cleaning, Disinfection and Ventilation

- All schools and buildings will be cleaned and disinfected daily and between uses in accordance with the CDC and IDPH recommendations. All hard surfaces will be cleaned.

All frequent-touch surfaces will be cleaned, then sanitized using approved disinfectants. Following all cleaning of classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, etc., disinfect misters will be used as a further precaution.

- Additional cleaning materials will be available for all staff members to use throughout the school day.
- The entire custodial staff of South Fork CUSD #14 received training on how to properly clean, to sanitize, and disinfect rooms and other locations throughout the school building. Staff will be trained on appropriate PPE usage necessary for cleaning, how to properly clean all locations in buildings, and how to certify an area has been cleaned and disinfected. Training will be ongoing with the custodial staff as necessary.
- Maintenance staff will continue to regularly replace school ventilation system filters.
- In addition, staff can use child-safe fans, and have activities, classes, or lunches outdoors when circumstances allow.

5. Transportation

- School transportation will be offered to all eligible students.
- Buses will be sanitized between routes.
- Normal bus capacity for South Fork buses is right around 55 passengers.
- All persons will be required to wear face coverings while accessing school transportation as stated in the CDC guidance.
- Masks will be provided to students if they don't have them as they enter the bus.

6. Contact Tracing in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine

- Students and staff, who have symptoms of infectious illness or COVID-19, should stay home and contact their healthcare provider for testing and care.
- Individuals in our school environments who show symptoms of COVID-19 are to immediately report to or be escorted to the office to be sent home. Students and staff are required to wear masks while in the safe area. Parents should ensure that ill students are picked up from school within 30 minutes of being notified. Ill students will not be allowed to utilize the school bus to return home. Student will have two days to present a negative test before absence from school becomes unexcused.
- District will follow IDPH and ISBE's joint Public Health Guidance for Schools recommendation on quarantines

- The school administration will review the recommended illness protocol as set forth by the Illinois Department of Health. Based on experiences from last year, this document is subject to change. The document can be found at: <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/>
- Decision Tree can be found at: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IDPH-COVID19-Exclusion-Decison-Tree.pdf>
- If parents need to report their child/ren as having a positive test result(s), they are to communicate this to the school office.
- If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 from a student or a staff member, the respective school administrator will then contact trace and report to the local health department who will then be responsible for contacting parents to quarantine students if needed.
- All communications regarding a positive case and closures will be made following the guidance from CDC.
- Student absences related to a COVID-19 isolation or quarantine will be recorded as excused. Remote instruction will be made available for students under quarantine as directed by the local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health.
- To the extent allowable by privacy laws and other applicable laws, the school administration will continue to collaborate with the local health department officials to confidentially provide information about people diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19.
- The Superintendent will inform the school community of outbreaks while maintaining student and staff confidentiality rights.
- Students and staff suspected of having COVID-19 are to follow test to determine when they can return to school in a timely manner.

6. Screening Testing

- The district will prescreen staff and students before boarding the bus and entering the school. Prescreening will include symptom checks and temperature readings.
- When community transmission is at moderate, substantial, or high levels, parents can request COVID-19 screening testing information for their students who have not been fully vaccinated by contacting the school's office.
- At any level of community transmission, any staff member who has not been fully vaccinated can request COVID-19 screening testing information by contacting the school's health care professional.

7. Promoting Vaccination

- In the spring of 2021, the district worked with the Christian County Public Health to host COVID-19 vaccination clinics for the community and staff.
- The district will consider working with the local health department to host additional vaccination clinics.
- Respectful of peoples' varying levels of vaccine confidence, those who want to get vaccinated against COVID-19 can visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find out where they can get vaccinated in our community.

8. Disabilities or Other Health Care Needs

- Parents of students who need accommodations, modifications, or assistance related to COVID-19 safety protocols, disabilities, underlying medical conditions, or weakened immune systems should contact their student's case manager and/or Mid-State Administrator to discuss the need(s).
- Staff members who need accommodations, modifications, or assistance related to COVID-19 safety protocols, disabilities, underlying medical conditions, weakened immune systems, or a sincerely held religious belief or practice (covered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) should contact their school's Principal to discuss the need(s). Staff members with weakened immune systems are advised to contact their healthcare professional about the need for continued personal protective measures after vaccination.

9. Visitors

- Non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations with people who are not fully vaccinated are discouraged from visiting schools.

10. Collaboration with Public Health Officials

- The school administration will continue to collaborate and consult with Christian County Health Department officials throughout the pandemic on various logistics and decision-making including, but not limited to, school health and safety protocols, screening testing, contact tracing, vaccine clinics, and emergency school closings.

11. Plan Review

- Through September 30, 2023, this plan will be reviewed no less frequently than every six months and revised as appropriate after seeking and considering public input. Revisions will address the most recently updated safety recommendations by the CDC, provided in an alternative format accessible to parents who are individuals with a disability as defined by the ADA, and made publicly available on the district's website.

12. Continuity of Services and Other Student Needs Students' Academic Needs

- All students will return to school five (5) days a week of in-person instruction
- The school day will be normal, 8:20 am - 3:01 pm
- For students with medical issues that require them to remain home for a non-quarantined longer period of time, that student would be eligible under Section 14-13.01(a) of the School Code. School Code indicates that services are to be provided when a homebound or hospitalized student is unable to attend school due to a condition certified by a medical statement that indicates that the student will or is anticipated, due to the student's medical condition, to be out of school for a minimum of 10 days of school with at least two days at a time multiple times during the school year for two weeks or more or on an "ongoing intermittent basis," which are expected to total 10 days or more.