



Akron Central School District

COVID-19 HEALTH AND SAFETY

2021-2022 SCHOOL OPENING PLAN

Updated: August 30, 2021

Introduction

The Akron Central School District's goal is to return all students to 180 days of in-person learning, while best ensuring the safety, health and welfare of our students, faculty, and staff. We believe that following guidance and regulations from the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and New York State Education Department (NYSED), is both expected and necessary to achieve this goal. This plan was developed in collaboration with building level leaders and will serve as the foundation for specific building level plans that may be implemented throughout the school year.

Please note that this plan is subject to change as state, federal or county mandates change, and/or as the COVID-19 numbers change. All updates will be posted to the District website: <https://www.akronschools.org> and communicated via text message and email.

PLEASE MAKE CERTAIN THAT WE HAVE YOUR UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION

Largely, we are beginning where we left off at the end of last school year. The most significant change is in the physical distancing requirement and how it will be applied in contact. The required physical distancing between students has been reduced from 6 to 3 feet. This is important, as this change will provide us the opportunity to bring all students back to school, and should significantly reduce the number of students placed in quarantine.

For easy reference, our reopening plan is divided into key elements. In some sections, we have included notes for parental/guardian considerations.

MASKING

A. Indoors: The NYSDOH and ECDOH require indoor masking for all individuals age 2 years and older, including students, teachers, staff, bus drivers, bus aides, vendors, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status. Appropriate masks must be worn at all times in all classroom and non-classroom settings, including but not limited to hallways, school offices, restrooms, gyms, locker rooms, auditoriums, etc. Students may remove their mask during meals as long as they sit 3 feet apart, or to the extent possible. A seating chart will be kept in the event contact tracing needs to be applied.

*Parent/Guardian Considerations: Acceptable masks must be two layers of materials and may be cloth-based or surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose. **Bandanas, gators, and clear face shields are not considered acceptable face coverings.** The District will be providing masks to all faculty, staff and students that need one. Additional masks will be made available throughout the period that masks are mandated.*

B. Outdoors: The District strongly recommends but does not require masks be worn outdoors. Protocols and procedures will be utilized for students, faculty, and staff to ensure maximized

physical distancing, especially when masks are not being worn outside.

C. Bus Transportation: The NYSDOH and ECDOH require bus drivers, bus aides, staff, and students to wear a mask at all times while on school buses regardless of vaccination status. Seating charts will be utilized on the school bus.

Parent/Guardian Considerations: The District cannot ensure 3 feet of social distance for all students on every bus. To avoid the possibility of being identified as a “close contact” through contact tracing, parents may choose to drive their students, or if appropriate, allow them to walk to and from school.

D. Mask Breaks: Mask breaks will be taken by students while in the classroom. Students should be seated and stationary at their desks during mask breaks. If students are seated closer than 6 feet, their breaks will be staggered so that students closer than 6 feet are not taking breaks at the same time.

E. Exceptions: Persons who cannot safely wear a mask because of a disability or medical condition as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) should contact the building principal and school nurse to discuss a reasonable accommodation. We must require written documentation of a medical or physical condition from a physician or licensed medical provider before providing an exception.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

We will implement as much physical distance as possible throughout the school, but will not exclude students from in-person learning to meet a minimum distance requirement.

A. Students: The NYSDOH and ECDOH strongly recommend schools to maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms combined with mask wearing, regardless of vaccination status. We have been able to establish the recommended 3 feet of physical distance in all places, except potentially on the bus. When determining close contact status following an exposure, unvaccinated students within 3 feet from the positive COVID-19 case for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during a time the case was infectious will be quarantined regardless if masks were worn. As per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, fully vaccinated individuals who are identified as close contacts are not subject to quarantine.

B. Teachers/Staff: The NYSDOH and ECDOH strongly recommend schools to maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance between teachers/staff and students combined with mask wearing, regardless of vaccination status. Teachers/staff should carefully monitor their breaks, lunches and meetings, maintaining 6 feet of distance and adhering to masking at all times, regardless of an individual’s vaccination status. Staff meetings may be held virtually whenever 6 feet of physical distance cannot be established. When determining close contact status following an exposure, unvaccinated teachers/staff within 6 feet from the positive COVID-19 case for a

cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during a time the case was infectious will be quarantined regardless if masks were worn. As per CDC guidelines, fully vaccinated individuals who are identified as close contacts are not subject to quarantine.

C. Band, Chorus, and Orchestra Practice and Lessons: The NYSDOH and ECDOH require that individuals participating in activities which involve projecting the voice (e.g., singing) or playing a wind instrument must be 6 feet apart during practice and lessons and must wear a mask when not singing or playing. Performances: to the extent practicable, individuals participating in activities that involve projecting the voice (e.g., singing) or playing a wind instrument must be 6 feet apart during all performances and must wear a mask when not singing or playing. ECDOH further requires, without exception, at least 6 feet of distance between the performers and the audience during all performances.

D. Busing and Transportation: We will follow the ECDOH's strong recommendations:

- A seating chart will be established with assigned seating
- Students from the same household will sit in the same seats
- Buses will be loaded from back to front.

E. Cohorting: Cohorting means keeping people together in a small group and having each group stay together throughout an entire day. To the extent possible and practicable, cohorting students will be implemented to limited exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Cohorting practices are more feasible within the elementary school. However, at the middle and high school, students' schedules and course assignments make cohorting impractical. In all buildings, we will apply a multi-layered approach that includes masking, social distance, handwashing, respiratory etiquette, and daily cleaning to prevent unnecessary risks.

HEALTH MONITORING

A. School Entry Screening: As was the case last year, daily health screenings are required. This includes temperature and a COVID-19 symptom check prior to entering the school of all students, faculty, staff, contractors, vendors, and visitors to identify individuals who may have COVID-19.

Parents are required to conduct the COVID-19 Health Questionnaire daily. The District is in the process of acquiring an easier to use app for parental use. If your child has any COVID-type symptoms, please keep them at home and contact our Health Office at 542-5036. If no one answers, please leave a message that includes your child's name, grade and phone number where you can be contacted. You will receive a call back shortly.

Faculty and staff attest to completing the COVID-19 Health Questionnaire daily by using their swipe card or answering the health questionnaire in the time management system. If a faculty or staff member has any COVID-type symptoms, they should stay home and call their supervisor immediately.

Parent/Guardian Considerations: If an individual has a temperature greater than 100.0°F, or has one or more COVID-19 symptoms, regardless of vaccination status, the individual will be denied entry into the building or sent directly to our dedicated isolation area prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home. COVID-19 symptoms include the following: fever, chills, rigors, muscle aches, headache, back pain, fatigue, runny nose, congestion, sore throat, loss of smell, loss of taste, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest pain, cough, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, dehydration, altered mental status/confusion, and seizures.

B. Questionnaire Screening: The daily COVID-19 Health Questionnaire for students, teachers, staff, and visitors reporting to school can be found at the end of this document (Appendix A).

C. Developing Illness at School: If a student or staff member develops COVID-19 symptoms while at school, regardless of vaccination status, the symptomatic person will immediately be placed in our isolation room located in our Health Center. A student must be picked up by a parent/guardian. A staff member will be sent home.

D. Isolation Areas/Rooms: We have established a COVID isolation room in our Health Office for individuals that are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms. Should you need to pick up your child from the isolation room, please report to the main entrance of the building and notify the security office of the purpose of your visit.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL FOLLOWING ILLNESS

A. COVID-19 Like Illness: In order for students or staff to return to school following a COVID-19-like illness, regardless of vaccination status, one of the three following criteria must be met:

1. A negative COVID-19 test is provided. OR
2. A note from the student/staff's medical care provider with an alternative diagnosis is provided. OR
3. There have been at least 10 days since the onset of COVID-19 symptoms.

The ECDOH offers free COVID-19 PCR testing to symptomatic Erie County residents and close contacts of confirmed cases. Please contact the ECDOH at 858-7690. Other local testing sites are listed at www.erie.gov/covidtestsites. COVID-19 diagnostic testing is fully covered by all health insurance plans per federal mandates.

A negative at-home COVID-19 test result will NOT be accepted to return a student to school or school staff to work.

B. COVID-19 Positive Case: Students or staff must meet all the following criteria in order to return to school following testing positive for COVID-19:

1. At least 10 days after COVID-19 symptom onset or 10 days from their first positive test if asymptomatic AND

2. Fever-free for at least 24 consecutive hours without the use of fever-reducing medications AND
3. COVID-19 symptoms are improving.

WHEN THE SCHOOL RECEIVES NOTICE OF A COVID-19 POSITIVE CASE

The District is required to notify the ECDOH COVID-19 School Team of all positive COVID-19 cases reported by staff, students, or guardians. The school is required to prepare a list of classroom, bus, sports, and extracurricular activities close contacts. Close contacts are defined as students who are within 3 feet or teachers/staff who are within 6 feet from the positive COVID-19 case for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during a time the case was infectious, regardless if masks were worn.

QUARANTINE

The ECDOH will use the close contact definition along with the duration of exposure, proximity, and presence of symptoms to determine who is an exposed contact and therefore subject to quarantine. **The District does not determine who is and is not required to quarantine.** The District is required to cooperate with contact tracers to determine close contacts and compile contact information. ECDOH will notify parents and staff who are considered to be contacts exposed to a COVID-19 case.

Persons are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 ≥ 2 weeks after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or ≥ 2 weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson & Johnson [J&J]/Janssen).

A. Fully Vaccinated Close Contacts: Per CDC guidelines, fully vaccinated individuals who are identified as close contacts are not subject to quarantine. However, these individuals should monitor for COVID-19 symptoms. Fully vaccinated persons who have a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should get tested 3-5 days after exposure and should wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result. If they begin to experience COVID-19 symptoms, they must follow the “Returning to School Following Illness” protocol detailed in the above section.

B. Unvaccinated Close Contacts: Per CDC guidelines, unvaccinated students within 3 feet or unvaccinated teachers/staff within 6 feet from the positive COVID-19 case for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during a time the case was infectious, regardless if masks were worn, will be considered a close contact and quarantined for 10 days from the last day of exposure to the positive COVID-19 case.

Persons who are not fully vaccinated should be tested immediately after being identified, and, if negative, tested again in 5-7 days after last exposure or immediately if COVID-19 symptoms develop during quarantine.

Seating charts for classrooms, buses, and other activities will be kept in the event there is a case.

If there is no seating chart, all unvaccinated individuals in the class will be considered unvaccinated close contacts and must be quarantined for 10 days from the last day of exposure to the positive COVID-19 case.

Regardless if a seating chart is maintained, if there are two or more cases in a classroom during a 10-day period, all unvaccinated individuals in the class will be quarantined for 10 days from their last exposure to the positive COVID-19 case, regardless if masks were worn.

ATHLETICS

The following guidelines apply to COVID-19 moderate and high-risk youth sports. Definitions for COVID-19 moderate and high-risk youth sports can be found at the NY Forward web site. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/SportsAndRecreationMasterGuidance.pdf>

ECDOH requires schools to notify the ECDOH COVID-19 School Team of all youth sport positive COVID-19 cases reported by coaches, staff, students, or guardians.

ECDOH requires masking for all youth sport players during all youth sport activities whenever the players are not actively participating in game play or practice. ECDOH further requires masking of all youth sport coaches and staff during all youth sport activities while not directly engaged in physical activity. ECDOH strongly recommends masking for all youth sport players during game play and practice unless they are unable to physically tolerate masking. In addition, ECDOH strongly recommends that athletes and coaches who are not engaging in physical activity (i.e. sitting on the bench or sidelines) maintain a distance of at least 3ft.

If there is one COVID-19 case on a team that is present while infectious, all unvaccinated players and coaches/staff are required to pause for 10 days from the last exposure. Vaccinated players and coaches/staff may continue game play and team activities during a team pause.

Pause means no practice, games, or team activities for the affected team, but players and coaches/staff not identified as unvaccinated close contacts are able to go to work and school.

If there are two or more players or coaches/staff who test positive during a 10-day period, all team activities must pause for 10 days from the last date of exposure to the first confirmed COVID-19 case. All unvaccinated players and coaches/staff are required to quarantine for 10 days from their last date of exposure to a COVID-19 case. Vaccinated players and coaches/staff can still go to work and school.

If a school or district shifts students to a full virtual learning model because of the number of COVID-19 cases in a building or district, all sports associated with the school are required to stop for the duration of the virtual learning period.

Athletes are required to wear acceptable masks at all times when not playing or practicing. Athletes are strongly encouraged to wear masks during play and/or practice unless they are unable to tolerate masking for physical activity. Coaches, trainers, and other individuals who are not directly engaged in physical activity are required to wear masks at all times.

COVID-19 VACCINATION

Health officials strongly recommend the COVID-19 vaccination for all eligible students. Fully vaccinated individuals will not be subject to the same quarantine requirements as those who are not fully vaccinated in most circumstances.

COVID-19 SCREENING TESTING

The District is looking to partner with the ECDOH to provide screening testing. At this time, we are exploring multiple screening testing strategies. All of which would be voluntary and require parental consent. We are considering implementing a testing program in early October, and will share further information with you regarding this in the near future.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Throughout the course of the pandemic, our entire Buildings and Ground staff has been trained to effectively remove any potential virus that may be on surfaces. Our staff uses disinfectants on the Environmental Protection Agency COVID-19 list to effectively remove any remaining germs on surfaces. Any classroom or area that has had someone who tested positive for COVID-19 is completely sanitized prior to being used again.

VENTILATION

Properly functioning HVAC systems are an important component of the District's COVID-19 prevention strategy. These systems can significantly reduce the number and concentration of virus particles in the air when functioning properly. Through the capital project, the District has invested in upgrades to our HVAC system and maintains regular inspection and maintenance of all air handling units. The highest filter rating (MERV 8) applicable to our system is utilized and these filters are replaced routinely. In addition, the fresh air introduction settings have been increased significantly and a minimum of 25% fresh air is introduced at all times.

Parent/Guardian Considerations: Please note that with our upgraded HVAC units, that opening windows diminishes the system's capabilities, actually causing less fresh air to be circulated.

Appendix A

COVID-19 HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

Daily temperature and questionnaire screenings are currently required for all individuals entering District premises.

DATE: _____

NAME: _____

QUESTIONS:

1. Have you experienced symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever (temperature of 100°F or above) or chills, muscle or body aches, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, headache, sore throat, nasal congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, or new loss of taste and/or smell in the past 10 days?

Please answer "yes" only if you are experiencing a new onset of symptoms OR you are experiencing a change in symptoms from your baseline if you have a known pre existing medical condition (e.g. asthma, allergies).

No Yes

2. Is your temperature 100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater today?

No Yes

3. Have you tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 10 days?

No Yes

4. Have you had contact with anyone confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19 in the past 10 days?

No Yes

If you checked YES to any of the above questions, please STOP and notify administration immediately

Please sign below certifying that you have read, understand, and will adhere to this daily health screening protocol. Your cooperation is appreciated and essential as we work to ensure the safety of staff and students.

SIGNATURE: _____

Appendix B: Return to School Document

Patient's/Student's Name: _____ DOB _____
Name of School District: _____ Name of School: _____
Onset of Symptoms: _____ Last Day in School: _____

SYMPTOMATIC / NOT TESTED / NOT A CLOSE CONTACT¹ TO A POSITIVE CASE

_____ 1.) Student found to have another source of symptoms, SARS-CoV2 testing was NOT done, and may return to school when they are 24 hours fever-free² with no antipyretic use and other symptoms are improving. (**Provider is confident the illness is not COVID-19**).

_____ 2.) Student NOT found to have another source of symptoms or they have a source for their symptoms but the provider is not confident that COVID-19 is excluded & SARS-CoV2 testing was NOT done. Patient may return to school after a MINIMUM of **10 days** from the onset of symptoms with the last 24 hours fever-free² with no antipyretic use and other symptoms improving.

SYMPTOMATIC / NEGATIVE COVID-19 TEST / NOT A CLOSE CONTACT¹ TO A POSITIVE CASE

_____ 3.) Student had a NEGATIVE test for SARS-CoV2, as well as another source for symptoms, and may return to school when they are 24 hours fever-free² with no antipyretic use and other symptoms are improving.

_____ 4.) Student had a NEGATIVE test for SARS-CoV2, with high suspicion of possible false negative test based on provider's judgement, so may return to school after a MINIMUM of **10 days** from the onset of symptoms with the last 24 hours fever-free² with no antipyretic use and other symptoms improving.

POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST WITH OR WITHOUT SYMPTOMS

_____ 5.) Student had a POSITIVE test for SARS-CoV2 and must stay home for a MINIMUM of 10 days from the onset of symptoms with the last 24 hours fever-free² with no antipyretic use and other symptoms improving.

_____ 6.) Student is asymptomatic but had a POSITIVE test for SARS-CoV2 and must stay home for **10 days** from the date of the test. If symptoms develop, the student must THEN stay home for a MINIMUM of 10 days from the onset of symptoms with the last 24 hours fever-free² with no antipyretic use and other symptoms improving.

CLOSE CONTACT¹ TO A COVID-19 POSITIVE PERSON

_____ 7.) Non-fully vaccinated student who is ***asymptomatic*** and has had close contact¹ to someone with COVID-19 must quarantine for **10 days** from the date of the last exposure to the positive case. If the positive COVID-19 case is a household member and the student is unable to quarantine from the case, the student's quarantine date will be extended 10 days past the last contagious day of the positive case.

-If symptoms develop, the student may return to school after a MINIMUM of 10 days from the onset of symptoms with the last 24 hours fever-free² with no antipyretic use and other symptoms improving.

*****Fully vaccinated students identified as close contacts as long as they are asymptomatic are not subject to quarantine.***

The **EARLIEST** this patient may return to school is: _____ (To be verified by ECDOH)

Physician's Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Office name & phone: _____

If testing is PENDING, please complete the form only after results are available. A student may not return while a test is pending.

¹***Close contact is defined as students who are within 3 ft or teachers/staff who are within 6 ft for ≥ 15 minutes in a 24-hour period regardless if masks were worn. Fully vaccinated asymptomatic individuals are not quarantined.***

²***Fever is defined as $\geq 100.0^{\circ}\text{F}$. If fever was never present, the other guidelines must still be followed.***

This statement is valid based on relevant information on the date above, but may change based on new symptoms, exposures, or results. The patient's family has been instructed to notify the office for any changes.

Updated 8/2021