

FRANCIS HOWELL SCHOOL DISTRICT

# Return to School Plan



2021-2022 School Year

**CONTINUITY OF SERVICES:  
IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL LEARNING**

## FHSD OFFERS IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL OPTIONS

- In-person and virtual learning options are available to students for the 2021-22 school year. Due to limited enrollment, virtual students will be placed with a third-party virtual course vendor, such as LAUNCH. Participation in the virtual program must be determined to be in the best educational interest of the student. This determination is made through consultation between educators, parents/guardians, and students.
- If in-person instruction is interrupted by a COVID-19 shutdown, students enrolled in virtual programming will continue with their platform. In-person students will shift to online instruction provided by FHSD teachers.
- Technology resources such as the Canvas learning management system and Google Classroom will be utilized to provide continuity of learning during quarantines. Students may be able to participate in classroom instruction via Zoom at the teacher's discretion. Chromebooks and hot spots are provided to students with demonstrated financial need.
- FHSD provides a number of resources for students who are served through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies in this document will be made as necessary or as mandated by the IEP. If in-person instruction is interrupted by a COVID-19 shutdown, students' individualized plans will be implemented.
- FHSD will continue to offer weekly meal pick-up for virtual students and students on quarantine.

## **FHSD OFFERS SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS**

- FHSD will continue to tend to students' social, emotional and mental health needs during the 2021-22 school year by teaching positive coping skills and referring students to the counseling or care teams as necessary.
- FHSD staff are eligible to take advantage of free services provided by the District's employee assistance program, PAS. Resources include health and wellness resources, financial support, and crisis tools. The District also offers the wayForward app to support the social, mental and behavioral health of staff. The app helps staff build resilience, improve communication, learn keys to good mental health, and practice mindfulness and breathing exercises.

**COVID-19 MITIGATION AND  
PREVENTION MEASURES**

## **MASKS REQUIRED FOR PRE-K THROUGH 6TH GRADE**

- Since our youngest learners are not yet eligible for vaccination, masks will be required for students in Pre-K through 6th grade while indoors, except while eating.
- Masks will be required for staff working with students in Pre-K through 6th grade when social distancing of 6 feet is not possible.
- Masks will be required for all students on school buses, regardless of age or vaccination status. (This is the result of a federal order that mandates face coverings on public transit, which includes school buses. The order cannot be waived by state or local authorities.)
- Masks are strongly encouraged for staff and students in 7th-12th grades when indoors.
- Masks are optional for all students and staff while outdoors.
- The District will re-evaluate this guidance on a regular basis, examining rates of positivity, quarantines and any potential school spread. This information will be used to determine if the mask mandate for grades 6 and below should be extended or lifted. Likewise, if cases are high or there is evidence of school spread in 7th-12th grades, the District is prepared to institute a mask mandate for those ages at any time.

## **CONTACT TRACING IDENTIFIES CLOSE CONTACTS**

- FHSD will continue to work with the St. Charles County Department of Public Health (SCCDPH) to provide contact-tracing information for school-connected cases and exposures.
- Students will be provided assigned seats in all situations where close contact (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) may occur, including on the bus and all instructional areas.
- Parents will be notified by FHSD when their child has been in close contact with a positive case.
- FHSD will maintain a weekly dashboard showing positive cases and quarantines across the District.

## MASKS AND VACCINES HELP PREVENT QUARANTINES

- FHSD will follow quarantine protocols established by SCCDPH:
  - A close contact who remains symptom free will be released from quarantine on Day 8 after exposure (completing a 7-day quarantine) with a negative COVID test from a medical provider on Day 5 or later.
  - A close contact who remains symptom free will be released from quarantine on Day 11 after exposure (completing a 10-day quarantine) without a COVID test.
- Modified Quarantine will apply for masked exposures that happen in the school setting at a distance of 0-3 feet. Modified Quarantine allows a close contact to continue attending school as long as both parties were correctly wearing masks at the time of exposure. The close contact must continue to wear a mask during the quarantine period and cannot participate in extracurricular activities until released.
- Consistent with the CDC Exception, students in close contact with a positive case do not have to quarantine if both parties were at least 3 feet apart and masked at the time of exposure. SCCDPH expanded the CDC Exception to include staff as well as students.
- Fully vaccinated individuals do not have to quarantine if exposed to a positive case as long as the individual does not develop symptoms associated with COVID-19. The same is true for individuals previously diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last 90 days, as long as they remain symptom-free.

## PHYSICAL DISTANCING HELPS PREVENT QUARANTINES

- Buildings will work to maintain physical distancing of at least 3 feet whenever possible. This distancing is especially important in the classroom and other areas where students will gather 15 minutes or more.
- Students will be provided assigned seats in all situations where close contact (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) may occur, including on the bus and all instructional areas.
- Breakfast will continue to be eaten in classrooms. Lunch will be eaten in the cafeteria with students in assigned seats with space between tables.
- Physical distancing measures are to be applied in an equitable manner that does not perpetuate academic, racial or other tracking (e.g. separating or grouping individuals according to mask usage or vaccination status).

## **CLEAN FACILITIES AND CLEAN HANDS KEEP US SAFE**

- FHSD's custodial staff will follow a daily cleaning protocol in all classrooms and school buildings.
  - This includes frequent disinfection of high-touch surfaces, including handrails, doorknobs, sinks and water fountains.
- Our heating and cooling units have filters to provide airflow to classrooms and common areas. The filters are capable of trapping and collecting large and small particles such as dust and micro-organisms. In addition, the outside airflow has been opened where possible to help circulate more fresh air through our school buildings.
- Good hand hygiene - consistent with CDC guidance - will be encouraged for all students and staff.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided in classrooms and common areas.
- Staff also practices and works to teach students respiratory etiquette, turning your face away from others and covering your nose and mouth with your elbow when you cough or sneeze.

## COVID TESTS AND VACCINES ARE READILY AVAILABLE

- FHSD offered free COVID-19 testing for students and staff from November 2020 to April 2021. At this time - due to the wide availability of testing resources in our community - students and staff are referred to the local health department or medical provider for testing.
- FHSD held a back-to-school COVID-19 vaccination clinic on August 4, 2021, with the second dose scheduled for August 28, 2021. There are currently no plans to offer additional in-house clinics, given the wide availability of vaccination appointments in our area.
- FHSD continues to encourage eligible staff and students to get vaccinated against COVID-19 since fully vaccinated individuals are not required to quarantine when exposed to a positive case (unless they develop symptoms).

## FHSD WILL REGULARLY REVIEW AND REVISE THIS PLAN

- FHSD will review and, if necessary, revise this Return to School plan no less than every six months. Revisions will be made in consideration of current pandemic conditions and in collaboration with the St. Charles County Department of Public Health.
- Task forces initially convened in 2020 to work on re-opening plans will reconvene as necessary to consider revisions in their respective areas. The task forces include representatives from many stakeholder groups, including teachers, support staff, principals and District leaders.
- FHSD continues to invite stakeholder feedback on the 2021-22 Return to School plan. The District welcomes patrons who wish to speak at board meetings and other forums regarding face masks and other COVID mitigation measures for the upcoming school year.
- Guidance provided by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) states that plans adopted as part of the public board meeting satisfy the American Rescue Plan's initial public input requirement. FHSD successfully offered both in-person and virtual learning for the 2020-21 school year. The District's 2020-21 Return to School plan can be found on the District website and was adopted by the FHSD Board of Education on July 19, 2020.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE

- [FHSD COVID-19 News and Updates](#)
- [FHSD COVID-19 Dashboard](#) *(updated weekly)*
- [FHSD COVID-19 Protocols](#)
- [FHSD COVID-19 FAQs](#)
- [Who Needs to Quarantine](#) [chart]
- [St. Charles County Department of Public Health Quarantine Information](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDC Exception for Masked Students](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Federal Order Requiring Masks on Buses](#)