

2020-2021 RE-ENTRY PLAN SUMMARY

PARENT/GUARDIAN OPTIONS

Based on parent/guardian and staff survey results, Elkhart Community Schools will offer two plans for students.

PLAN 1: HALF OF STUDENTS, ALTERNATING DAYS

PLAN 2: FULL-TIME ONLINE VIRTUAL LEARNING

Parents/guardians will be asked to select **one plan** for the semester (until Winter Break). The district will reevaluate conditions in late November to plan for the second semester. Parents who opt for Plan 2 will be responsible for transportation to extra-curricular programs (athletics, music, art, clubs) if they choose to participate.

SUMMARY OF SAFETY MEASURES

Please see the full [Re-Entry Plan](#) for additional details on all of the items below.

For many years, Elkhart Community Schools has consistently gone above and beyond when it comes to the safety of our schools, including cleaning procedures. To reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19, we will:

- **Screening.** Parents/guardians must take their child's temperature before school. If a child has a temperature of 100.4 or higher, or any COVID-19 symptom identified by the CDC or ISDH, he or she must be kept home. A child may return to school after 24 hours without a fever (without fever-reducing medicine).
- **Masks.** Each ECS student will be provided with two washable, reusable cloth masks. Students will be able to remove masks when seated at their desks, when told it is safe to do so by their teacher. Masks will be worn by students and staff when within 6' of other students or staff, on buses, in hallways, and common areas.
- **Handwashing.** Students will be provided extra opportunities for handwashing. Hand sanitizer will be available.
- **Cleaning.** ECS will remain diligent with current cleaning processes, clean high-touch points throughout the day, communicate best practices with students, and ask students to play their part in keeping areas clean and sanitary.
- **Gatherings.** Lunch, recess, specials, arrival and dismissal times will be staggered as much as possible to minimize large groups of multiple grades.
- **Transportation.** Bus seating charts will be created. Students will be required to wear a mask on the bus. Siblings will be seated together. Students first on the bus will be seated in the furthest back available seat to not pass other students, and this order will continue until all students are on the bus. Students last on the bus will be the first to unload.
- **Water Bottles.** Parents/guardians should plan to send personal, labeled water bottles that can be refilled during the day.
- **Symptomatic Individuals.** ECS will provide a separate isolation area for students/staff who display COVID-19 symptoms, including fever. Students in this area will wear masks and maintain a minimum of 6' distance between each other. Parents/guardians will be expected to pick up sick children within an hour.
- **Communication.** Parents/guardians will be contacted directly by the district if their child is identified as a close contact. The district will maintain a dashboard that shows cases by building for all schools and buildings in the district. Parents/guardians are encouraged to visit the dashboard regularly to monitor cases at the district.
- **Guests.** Guests will be limited to those who are deemed necessary, including partnering agencies for mental health and educational support. For the time being, ECS will not allow lunch visits, outside food delivery, special guests/assemblies, volunteers during school. Parents/guardians will be limited to the office area and required to wear a mask.
- **Field Trips/Assemblies.** Field trips and assemblies are discontinued until further notice.
- **Perfect Attendance.** Perfect attendance incentives/awards for students and staff are discontinued for 2020-2021.

PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS

1

HOME SCREENING

Watch for symptoms
Temperature checks every day before school (<100.4)
Stay home if there are symptoms or fever (24 hours)

2

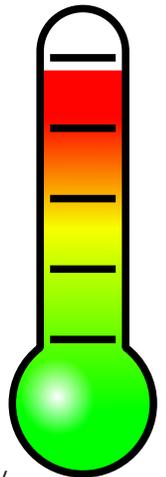
SOCIAL DISTANCING

Classrooms spaced for distance
Masks when needed (groups, community areas)
Lunch, recess, gym, hallways zoned for safety

3

EXTRA SANITATION/SAFETY

Separate isolation areas for students with symptoms
Additional handwashing/sanitizer stations
Minimize item sharing, additional item labeling



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POSITIVE CASE PROTOCOL

Parents/guardians and staff are asked to contact the district as soon as possible if they, or someone in their household, test positive for COVID-19. Please email covid@elkhart.k12.in.us or call 574-262-5999 to inform the district.

Elkhart Community Schools will notify parents/guardians of students who are considered "close contacts" of an individual (student/staff) who has a positive test results. Only families of those identified as close contacts will receive direct communication from the school district. Families should monitor the COVID dashboard on the ECS website to see cases within their child's school. The COVID dashboard is updated in real time with the "current week" spanning from Sunday to Saturday.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS / SUSPECTED COVID-19

All school buildings will have an isolation area for individuals (students, staff, visitors) who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19.

If an individual appears symptomatic, the school nurse will come to the individual in the classroom to evaluate. If the individual has symptoms of COVID-19, he or she will be moved to the isolation area until they are picked up. After the individual has left, the isolation room will be thoroughly disinfected. The school nurse will notify ECS Student Services and Chief of Staff, who will notify the Elkhart County Health Department and await further guidance. *If the symptomatic individual is a student, all same-household siblings and household occupants must be picked up immediately and quarantine for 14 days, per the Indiana State Department of Health.*

A symptomatic individual (student or staff) may return to school when the following conditions are met:

1. The individual has been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication **AND**
 2. Other symptoms have improved **AND**
 3. At least 10 calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared
- OR**
4. The individual (and siblings, if applicable) can return to school if tested negative **AND** with a note from the provider stating they believe the patient to have an alternate diagnosis and it is appropriate for the patient to return to school.

Any same-household siblings of a symptomatic student must quarantine for 14 days. If any school-aged same-household siblings develop symptoms during this time in quarantine, they should follow the guidance above to determine when to return. If the symptomatic child tests negative, all same-household siblings can return to school immediately, as long as they do not have symptoms.

CONFIRMED COVID-19 POSITIVE / SYMPTOMATIC

An individual (student or staff) who tested positive may return to school only if the following conditions are met:

1. It has been at least 14 days since the test was taken **AND**
2. At least 10 calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared **AND**
3. The individual has been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication **AND**
4. Other symptoms have improved.

CONFIRMED COVID-19 POSITIVE / ASYMPTOMATIC

An individual (student or staff) who tested positive may return to school only if the following condition is met:

1. At least 10 calendar days have passed (since the test was taken) with no symptoms

CONTACT TRACING

Close contact is described as "more than 15 minutes within 6 feet." Anyone with close contact to an individual who tests positive will be contacted by Elkhart Community Schools. CDC guidelines state that any person who comes into "close contact" with a known positive case of COVID-19 should isolate for 14 calendar days. ***CDC/ISDH guidelines also state that siblings (or other household contacts) of a symptomatic student or any positive case of COVID-19 need to quarantine for 14 days after the last day the positive case was infectious.*** This means the siblings will need to stay home when the positive case is in isolation plus 14 calendar days after the positive case is released.

2020-2021 RE-ENTRY PLAN FAQ

When will school start?

At this time, ECS plans to open schools on Monday, August 17, 2020.

Will students go to the school building or will they do eLearning?

Parents will have the option to choose from two plans - one that offers some face-to-face, in-school instruction for students who are able to return to school, and another offering virtual instruction only. In-school instruction will be two days per week: Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday. On the days when students are not physically attending school, they will be expected to complete eLearning activities. Fridays will be eLearning for all students in grades K-12. An online learning plan will be available for students with risk-factor health issues or those who have made the choice to learn virtually.

Will masks be required?

Masks will be required on buses, when entering and exiting the school building, when picking up food in the cafeteria line, and during passing periods. Masks could also be required for certain classroom and/or group activities. Students will be able to remove their masks while in their classrooms at their desks, once their teachers has instructed them it is safe to do so. Elkhart Community Schools will provide two free washable masks to every student.

What if I don't want my child wearing a mask?

In our parent/guardian survey, over 80% of parents indicated they are slightly, mostly, or very much in favor of ECS students wearing masks, with the largest percentage of parents (41%) responding that they are **very much in favor of masks**. We know there are strong opinions about the use of masks. Leading health agencies (CDC, Johns Hopkins Medicine, Mayo Clinic, and many others) indicate a reduction in COVID-19 transmission when masks are used by all, which is why we are requiring them for certain portions of the day. Additionally, Elkhart County is under a mask mandate until further notice [at time of publish].

Reducing the risk of transmission in schools is especially important since some carriers of COVID-19 may not have any symptoms. Children, despite being generally less affected by COVID-19, expose school staff and adults at home who may be more at risk. If your child is unable to wear a mask due to medical reasons, please contact ECS Student Services at 574-262-5540. *Parents who refuse to have their child wear a mask properly during the required times at school will need to utilize online learning at home.*

How will "Online Virtual Learning" differ from the Spring 2020 eLearning?

In March 2020, the lives of our students, families, and staff were unexpectedly turned upside down. Our teaching staff had to quickly migrate to an eLearning platform that was not fully tested or designed for long-term use. We are thankful for the countless hours, hard work, and commitment of our staff and families to work together to make the experience meaningful for students.

For the 2020-2021 school year, both the 3 days per week of eLearning for students in Plan 1 and the full-time online virtual learning (Plan 2) will look much different than March-May 2020. Students in Plan 1 will engage in eLearning that builds on and continues progress with their in-class curriculum. Students in Plan 2 will be taught virtually by a grade-level or subject-matter teacher. Their "classroom" will consist of students in their grade or subject-class from around the district. Participation in both will be critical.

How do I select Plan 1 or Plan 2?

Parents/guardians will be emailed a selection form to the parent email address on file on PowerSchool. Additionally, the link will be posted on social media. Parents/guardians who do not complete the selection form within the first week will receive a follow-up phone call. If parents were unable to be reached, students were enrolled in Plan 1.

Can I change which Plan my child has?

When considering which plan to choose, parents/guardians need to plan and commit for the first half of the school year (through Winter Break). To ensure appropriate social distancing in our buildings and adequate staffing for both plans, ECS cannot permit mid-semester changes after August 28. If ECS continues with Plan 1 and Plan 2 for the second semester, parents/guardians can change their selected plan between first and second semester.

2020-2021 RE-ENTRY PLAN FAQ

What will be different on school buses?

Students who ride the bus will be required to wear a mask. Students will have assigned seats, be seated two students per seat at most, and siblings will sit together. Students first on the bus will be seated in the furthest back available seat to not pass other students, and this order will continue until all students are on the bus. Students last on the bus will be the first to unload.

I drive my child to school / my child walks to school. Will anything change for car riders or walkers?

We anticipate an increase in parents dropping off students at school. Schools will assign specific arrival and departure times for car riders and walkers to reduce student/staff gatherings. Students should not arrive at the school earlier than their specific time.

What changes will students see in the cafeteria and at water fountains?

Students will be allowed to wash their hands before and after meal service. Additionally, hand sanitizer stations will be available to students and staff prior to entering the serving line and when exiting the serving line. Additional hand sanitizer will be available at tables throughout the cafeteria. Masks will be required while students are in line. Masks can be removed to eat.

Students will eat lunch in the cafeteria. Elementary students will have designated areas where they may eat with their class. Students will be distanced and allowed to remove their masks to eat. Middle/high school students will be expected to socially distance. Water fountains will be disabled. Students should plan to bring labeled refillable water bottles to school.

Will students be screened for COVID-19 symptoms?

Parents need to be attentive to the daily health of their children, including a temperature check before school. Students must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. Schools will be randomly taking student temperatures. School staff will also be receiving professional development on how to recognize potential COVID-19 symptoms. No one should be in our buildings if they are experiencing any symptoms of illness.

What will happen if someone at my child's school tests positive for COVID-19?

If we have a confirmed case of COVID-19, we will follow guidance from the Elkhart County Health Department and Indiana State Department of Health. Elkhart Community Schools will notify parents/guardians of students who are considered "close contacts" of an individual (student/staff) who has a positive test results. Only families of those identified as close contacts will receive direct communication from the school district. Families should monitor the COVID dashboard on the ECS website to see cases within their child's school. The COVID dashboard is updated in real time with the "current week" spanning from Sunday to Saturday.

How will schools, classrooms, and buses be cleaned and sanitized?

Elkhart Community Schools has a high standard for cleanliness and safety and is committed to upholding these standards with our intensive cleaning process. Enhanced cleaning protocols have been put in place as a result of COVID-19 and are based on current local health and government guidelines.

The custodial staff at ECS will use EPA-registered cleaning agents for disinfection, with an increased frequency of disinfecting high touch surfaces throughout the day: door knobs, handrails, light switches, restroom fixtures, and keyboards. Additionally, each building will have areas of enhanced focus: restrooms and locker rooms, cafeterias, classroom desks, media centers, kitchen and/or break areas, vending machines, copier/printers, front desk and lobby areas, and equipment.

The district owns multiple disinfecting machines that can disinfect an average-sized school building in an evening. These machines will be used as needed for intense after-hours cleaning.

Buses will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized between routes and at the end of the day.

Students will also play a part in keeping their areas clean. Students may be asked to put their items away and wipe down their desks or equipment at the end of the day.

July 15, 2020