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**Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)
COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan**

**Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education-Roosevelt (ICRE-R)
Illinois School for the Deaf (ISD)
Illinois School for the Visually Impaired (ISVI)**

March 8, 2021

OVERVIEW

ICRE-R, ISD and ISVI will reopen campus for *optional* in-person learning starting on April 5 or 6, 2021. We look forward to welcoming students back to campus!

Following please find an overview of our plan to protect the health and safety of students, employees, families, and the larger community. To guide our planning, we are working with school nurses, physicians, and teachers, as well as infection control specialists, parents, and our state and local health departments. We are also following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and our sister schools who have already brought students back into the classroom.

This plan supports the five strategies that CDC has identified as essential for safe in-person learning and helping to reduce COVID-19 transmission in schools. Please click on links below for more information about each strategy:

- 1) Universal and correct use of [masks](#)
- 2) [Physical distancing](#)
- 3) [Handwashing and respiratory etiquette](#)
- 4) [Cleaning](#) and maintaining healthy facilities
- 5) [Contact tracing](#) in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the health department

Please note that this plan will continue to change. The planning committee will make ongoing updates along with changing circumstances or new scientific research.

Options for School Participation

While we are taking all recommended safety precautions, we cannot fully guarantee a COVID-free campus. Recognizing that each student and family is different, as of April 5th or 6th, we will offer three choices for participating in school:

- 1) **Fully remote learning:** Students can choose to continue to learn from home.
- 2) **Day school only:** Students will travel to school each day and return home each evening.
- 3) **Residential:** Students will stay in school residential facilities. Frequencies of travel home will be different for each school, but families should expect restrictions.

All parents/guardians who would like their student to return for day or residential in-person learning need to notify their superintendent by March 17. We recognize that there may be circumstances in which a change from remote learning to in-person is necessary and will make exceptions to this deadline on a case-by-case basis. In addition, all guardians and students returning to school will be required to sign an agreement, saying that key safety guidelines will be followed while on campus. Those students living in a residential facility must agree to sign a second document. This second document governs conduct that is dorm-specific.

Preparing for a Safe Return to Campus

The planning team has taken several steps to prepare the staff and campus for an April 5th or 6th return, including:

- Getting the necessary cleaning products and PPE for staff and students for the remainder of the school year.
- Securing additional housekeeping and nursing staff.
- Partnering closely with local and state-level departments of health to review plans, assist with community contact tracing and provide ongoing support.
- Offering vaccinations to all school staff.
- Upgrading IT systems and networks to improve hybrid learning.
- Installing plexiglass barriers and securing HEPA filters for selected locations.
- Re-configuring school facilities (i.e., classrooms, etc.) as needed to allow for social distancing.
- Developing training and educational materials for students and staff.

COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

- Schools will provide ongoing education and training to staff and students on COVID-19 policies and procedures and infection control.
- Schools will continue to keep families informed about COVID-19 infection rates on campus and/or major changes to policies and procedures.
- All school staff will be required to complete training on COVID-19 practices before students come back to campus.
- All classrooms, dorms, common areas, offices, and buses will have a list of COVID-19 symptoms. These lists will be updated and regularly reviewed.

ENVIRONMENT AND SANITATION

Classrooms and Hallways

- Students will be put into smaller classroom groups or “cohorts” of 6-8 and stay with those groups throughout the day.
- All students will have assigned seats and assigned computers, iPads etc.
- There will be one-way pathways in hallways with signs and tactile reminders about distancing as needed.
- Desks will be at least six feet apart when possible and all facing in the same direction.
- Plexiglass barriers will be placed in key reception, testing and other locations.
- Student lockers will be spaced apart.
- When possible, multiple windows will be opened in classrooms to increase ventilation.
- All water fountains will be turned off. Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles.

Dining

- If the dining hall must be used for meals, times will be staggered by smaller groups of students when possible and areas will be disinfected in between groups.
- Students will wash or sanitize their hands when entering and exiting the dining hall.
- Direction markers will be visible throughout dining facilities. Tactile markers on the floor may also be used to help with distancing and clear instruction will be provided to students and staff.
- Cafeteria staff will wash hands, wear gloves, and wear masks during food preparation and service.
- Meals will be pre-plated using plastic and disposable silverware.

Dormitories

- Each student will have his or her own bedroom.
- Masks will be required throughout the dorm in all locations except student bedrooms.
- Bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms, common areas, and high touch areas will be cleaned regularly, following CDC and ISBE recommendations.
- Refillable alcohol-based containers of hand sanitizer, spray disinfectant, and sanitizing wipes will be available throughout each dorm.
- Students in residence must report any COVID-19 symptoms to school health personnel for evaluation.
- Students in residence should maintain at least six feet of social distance from other residents in shared residential spaces and may not gather in common spaces.
- Dorm move-in will be pre-scheduled and staggered to ensure social distancing.
- Guardians and students choosing to live in the dormitories must review and sign an agreement saying that they will follow these and any additional dorm-related guidelines.

Events, Activities and Visitors

- Meetings will be held virtually as much as possible.
- If a face-to-face meeting is needed, it should be as short as possible and in a large meeting room. Team members should wear masks, keep social distance and follow all other safety guidelines.
- Visitors will be limited and must be approved by Administration. All visitors will be screened, wear masks, practice social distancing, and sign-in to allow for contact tracing as needed.
- There will be no school sports for the rest of the school year.

Transportation and Travel

- Bus service will be available to travel to and home on weekends as well as for day students.
- Any other off-campus travel will follow Illinois guidelines and safety standards.
- All students will have assigned seats on the bus and available seats will be spread out to ensure as much distance as possible.
- Windows on the bus will be opened whenever possible.
- Students, staff, and drivers will engage in symptom self-screenings before boarding busses.
 - Anyone with a temperature higher than 100.4 will not be permitted to board the bus.
- Bus seating areas will be disinfected after each bus route, especially high-touch surfaces such as bus seats, steering wheels, knobs, and stairway handrail.
- Hand sanitizer will be available for use by students and staff before boarding the bus.
- All passengers must wear face coverings while on the bus.

Cleaning and Ventilation

- High touch surfaces such as desktops, doorknobs, railings, and restrooms will be cleaned throughout the day.
- Extra housekeeping staff will regularly clean high traffic areas including residence halls, cafeterias, classrooms, and offices.
- All cleaning and disinfectant supplies or chemicals will meet government requirements for effectiveness in destroying COVID-19 and other viruses and be kept out of reach of students.
- All schools have electrostatic sprayers and HEPA filtration systems in their COVID-19 isolation areas.

Masks and Face Coverings

- Students, staff, and visitors will wear mask/face coverings except when students are alone in their dorm rooms with the door closed and for short periods while eating and distanced six feet apart.
- Students and staff should bring their own face coverings but if they do not, the school will make them available.
- Masks may include non-medical grade disposable face masks also known as surgical masks, cloth face covering, window masks, full face shields, N95, and KN95. Masks must cover both the nose and the mouth. Masks with exhalation valves or vents, those that use loosely woven fabrics, and ones that do not fit properly are not recommended.
- Individual needs regarding mask/face coverings will be addressed on a case-by-case basis recognizing that some students will need exceptions based on instructional, physical, or medical needs.
- Staff will have personal protective equipment (PPE) to deal with everyday activities as well as to manage students in isolation, including N95 respirators, KN95 respirators, face shields, gowns, and gloves.

Hygiene Practices

- Soap, water, paper towels, or hand sanitizer will be available in buses, classrooms, dorms, bathrooms, offices for staff and student use.
- Staff will regularly educate and remind students about thorough handwashing and hand hygiene throughout the day.

VACCINATION, SCREENING AND TESTING

Vaccination

- While COVID vaccines are not mandatory, schools are encouraging all eligible staff and students to get vaccinated.
- All school staff have been offered the vaccine and eligible students should ask their healthcare providers about getting the vaccine.

Self-Screening

- Students and staff should not attend school if they feel sick. Please stay at home, monitor symptoms, and get tested or talk to your doctor as needed.
- Students should tell staff immediately if they notice symptoms developing throughout the day.
- Students and staff will conduct daily symptom self-assessment, including:
 - **Residential students:** Residential care workers will perform temperature and symptom screening on students before leaving the dormitories each morning.
 - **Day students:** Students will pass through the temperature and symptom screening station daily before the start of the school day.
 - **Staff:** Staff will participate in temperature and symptom screening through the Health Center or security guard/main building before starting their work shift. Special circumstances requiring supervisor approval will allow staff to complete the self-certification form.

- Screening questions include:
 - 1) Have you been in close contact (less than 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) to persons who are suspected of having or have tested positive for COVID-19 (Coronavirus) during the past 14-days - including family members or others?
 - 2) Do you have new onset of cough OR shortness of breath OR difficulty breathing symptoms caused from something other than a pre-existing condition?
 - 3) Have you had a fever (100.4° or greater) within the past 3-days?
 - 4) Do you have at least one of the following: chills; muscle pain; headache, sore throat; recent loss of taste or smell; new skin rash; nausea/vomiting; and/or diarrhea?
- **Staff** who answer yes to any of the screening questions or identify symptoms during the school day will be offered rapid antigen testing and required to return home immediately to monitor symptoms.
- **Students** who answer yes to any of the screening questions or identify symptoms during the school day will be isolated and provided with rapid antigen testing. Pending test confirmation, student families will be notified to pick up their student and bring them home to follow CDC quarantine guidelines.

COVID Testing

- All schools will offer both rapid antigen and PCR testing (click [here](#) to learn more about each)
- While testing is optional, it is highly recommended by the CDC as a way to identify people who may have COVID-19 without feeling sick.
- Schools will perform weekly rapid antigen testing among staff and students to identify infected people who may have COVID-19 without symptoms or know that they have been around someone else with COVID.
- We will use BinaxNOW, the preferred rapid antigen test with a 78.6 -92.6% sensitivity rate.
- Students/staff that have a known positive COVID result within the past 90 days should not take this test.

Symptomatic Staff and Students

- Symptomatic staff and students may ask for a rapid antigen test.
- Staff that request this test, regardless of test result, will be asked to follow DHS protocol including not working on site, telling their supervisor, and contacting Human Resources.
- Students with COVID-like symptoms without an alternative diagnosis will be asked to be immediately isolate and follow guidance from local public health department, including:
 - Housing in the COVID isolation area until parents arrive to take them home. Parents/guardians are expected to pick up their students as soon as possible.
 - Possible additional PCR testing if recommended by local health department agencies.
- COVID-like symptoms may include a new onset cough or shortness of breath OR any of the following: fever of 100.4 or higher, chills, shivering, muscle pain, sore throat, headache, loss of sense of taste or smell, and gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting or diarrhea).

Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

- If a potential or a confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified, internal contact tracing will be conducted to investigate possible exposure to other staff, students, and the areas of the campus that may have been exposed. All contact tracing will follow the guidance of IDPH and the local health department.
- Exposed area(s) (e.g., classrooms) will be closed off for up to 24 hours, cleaned, and disinfected.
- Others in close contact will self-isolate according to CDC guidelines.
- Positive staff will be asked to follow DHS protocol including not working on site, informing their supervisor, and contacting Human Resources.
- Positive students will be asked to be immediately isolate and follow guidance from the local public health department, including but not limited to:
 - 1) Housing in the COVID isolation unit until parent or guardian arrives to take them home.
 - 2) Possible additional PCR testing if recommended by the local health department.
- Staff and students must have a letter from a public health official releasing them to return to work/school following a confirmed laboratory test. Acceptable public health entities include IDPH or the local/county public health department.

Managing Linked Infection

- The definition of an outbreak for a residential school facility like ours is two “epidemiologically linked cases” of COVID.
 - An “epidemiologically-linked” case is one where someone with COVID at the school has had contact with one or more people at the school who also has or has had COVID and was probably infected by one of those people.
- When schools experience COVID infections that seem to be connected in this way, they will contact the local health department to investigate. The health department will provide direction on how to manage cleaning and isolation on campus or potential return to remote learning.

CONCLUSION

We are excited to get to work and welcome your students! Working together, we are very optimistic we will have a successful school year. Please talk to your student about the school expectations for students. Cooperation and teamwork are so important as we embark on the start of a new school year in these very challenging times. We are here for you if you have questions.