Wessington Springs School District

Safe Return Plan

Updated April 2024

Introduction

From the South Dakota Department of Education "Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan Required Elements" guidance document released on May 17, 2021:

> "To achieve continued success with a return to in-person instruction, school districts must continue practices of transparency with stakeholders around: (1) mitigation efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and (2) strategies to ensure students have access to needed services for academic success. As outlined in the American Rescue Plan Act Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER) and accompanying interim final rules, these strategies must be publicly re-evaluated at a minimum of every six months through September 2023." (p. 1)

The purpose of the Safe Return Plan is to provide school district personnel, students, and community members with a structured outline of specific procedures and responsibilities when responding to spread of a disease. Resources informing this plan have been from the South Dakota Department of Education (SD DOE) and the South Dakota Department of Health (SD DOH), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The overall effectiveness of the plan requires the administration to provide in-service activities and staff meetings on a regular basis to ensure that teachers, support staff, students, and community members know the plan contents and the actions that will follow during a flex learning situation.

To provide continued community awareness and input, the Safe Return plan will be evaluated, at a minimum, every six months and updated accordingly. The plan will reside on the school district website for community input, and the plan will be reviewed by a committee that may include staff, administrators, board members, and parents.

Safe Return Plan Information:
Date of last School Board Approval: April 8, 2024
Last review of plan: March 2024
Plan contact: Dr. Michael Ormsmith, Superintendent

Health Screening

Wellness Check

- *Student Wellness Check at Home*
  - A checklist to help parents screen for illness is located at the back of this guide
  - Parents should use the checklist daily to determine if their child should stay home due to illness
  - The Wessington Springs School District highly recommends that students stay home if they are sick

- *Students Sick During the School Day*
  - Temperatures will be taken at the office
  - Parents will be contacted to pick their child up from school
  - Students may return to school when they have a normal temperature and symptom free for 24 hours without medication
  - Teachers will observe students for signs of illness throughout the day and immediately notify the Administrator if students display symptoms

- *Positive Test Results & Notifications*
  - The Wessington Springs School District highly recommends:
    - Students and staff stay home if they receive a physician confirmed positive test result for: influenza, strep throat, chicken pox, measles, mumps, tuberculosis, covid-19, or other contagious respiratory infections
    - Staff and parents consult with their physicians to determine the appropriate treatments
    - Staff and students return to school based on the guidance received from their medical provider
  - The Wessington Springs School District will notify parents in the affected grade levels and staff if a positive test result is reported by the SD Department of Health or a physician regarding a confirmed positive test result for: influenza, strep throat, chicken pox, measles, mumps, tuberculosis, covid-19, or other contagious respiratory infections

Promoting Healthy Hygiene Practices

- The district will encourage washing hands and hand sanitizer use
- Students will be encouraged to wash their hands:
  - Upon arrival at school
  - During bathroom breaks
  - After recess
  - Before and after eating

- o Prior to leaving school
- Tissues and hand sanitizer (with at least 60 percent alcohol) available for staff and students
- Younger students will be supervised when using hand sanitizer

Cleaning, Disinfection, and Ventilation

- Frequently touched surfaces within the school (e.g., door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains) will be cleaned often
- Students will be encouraged to use alcohol wipes to clean keyboards and electronics after use
- Staff will be provided with disinfectants to use in their assigned areas as needed along with training on how to use those products
- The district will ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air (e.g., opening windows and doors)
- Doors or windows will not be opened if doing so would pose a safety or health risk (e.g., during times with poor air quality indicators) to children using the facility

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Recommendations

- The Wessington Springs School District will promote practices to reduce the spread of viruses consistent with long standing CDC recommendations for Influenza
  - o Recommendations provided by the CDC document "Guidance for School Administrators to Help Reduce the Spread of Seasonal Influenza in K-12 Schools"
  - o Mitigation practices the district has adopted from the CDC:
    - Avoid close contact with people who are sick (i.e., stay home if you have symptoms)
    - Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
    - Wash hands often with soap and water, or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
    - Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth
    - Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with viruses that cause flu
    - For flu, CDC recommends that people stay home for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone except to get medical care or other necessities
    - Fever should be normal without the need to use a fever-reducing medicine (a fever is a temperature over 100.4° F)
- The Wessington Springs School District has not adopted the following COVID-19 strategies:
  - o Universal wearing of masks
  - o Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (may include cohorting)

- o Contact tracing in collaboration with state, local, and (as applicable) tribal health officials
- o Quarantine policy for close contacts, whether identified in the school setting or outside of the school setting, in collaboration with state, local, and (as applicable) tribal health officials
- o Isolation policy for positive COVID-19 cases, in collaboration with state, local, and (as applicable) tribal health officials
  - ▪ Clarification:
    - – Students and staff should isolate at home and may return when symptom free for 24 hours without medication
    - – A negative test result is not required to return
- o Diagnostic and screening testing for COVID-19
- o Efforts to provide vaccinations for eligible members of the school community

Transportation Services
- Student transportation will operate under normal conditions
- Parents and guardians uncomfortable with bus transportation may transport children to and from school at their expense
- If schools are closed by government mandate, bus drivers will provide meal delivery services and transportation to essential students

Buildings and grounds
- Visitors are welcome at school facilities, including athletic events, under normal operations
- As with students, visitors to the school facilities should be free of illness
- If visitors display symptoms of illness upon arrival, they will be asked to leave the facility and not return until they are symptom free for at least 24 hours without medication

Food Services
- Food services will be provided to students under normal operations
- If schools are closed by government mandate:
  - o Food Service department will prepare for meal delivery services
  - o Delivery of meals will be available to students during a school shutdown

Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs
Student Supports
- *Access to District Resources*
  - o School Administrators and Counselor

- o Special Education teachers and Staff
- o Services available through the district's participation in the CORE Educational Cooperative
  - OT / PT evaluations and services
  - Speech therapy
  - Psychologists
- *Remote Resources*
  - o Remote students have access to district resources above in addition to the following:
    - Weekly check in with staff (virtual, phone, in-person)
    - Community connections through civic organizations
- *Learning Loss*
  - o Students will be evaluated by teachers regularly to determine student needs
  - o Teachers may recommend supports for students:
    - Additional small group, or individual, time with teacher
    - After school study programs
    - Summer school
  - o School Counselor and Administrators will work closely with parents and students to monitor progress

Staff Supports
- *Access to District Resources*
  - o Teachers and Staff have access to mental health programs available through the district healthcare plans:
    - OT / PT evaluations and services
    - Psychologists
    - Counselors and Psychiatrists
- *In-service and Training*
  - o Teachers and Staff provided with wellness information and programs
  - o Regular follow up with Administrators and supervisors

Access to Education Services
Definitions
- *In Person learning*:
  - o Students are at school in classrooms with teachers
- *Cyber School*:
  - o Students enroll into the Wessington Springs Cyber School
  - o Students must attend for at least a semester for high school, or a whole year for elementary and middle school
  - o Teachers are not from Wessington Springs

<u>Available Learning Options</u>

- Families are expected to send their children to attend Wessington Springs Schools classes in person as they have normally in the past
- Families may choose to have their children stay home and take classes through the Wessington Springs Cyber School
  - High school students must commit to a semester
  - Middle school and elementary students must commit to Cyber School for a whole school year
  - All courses in Cyber School are online and taught by teachers that are not in the Wessington Springs School district
  - Cyber School is available to all K-12 students
  - This option is like homeschooling your child, but the school provides the curriculum and teachers are available to answer questions

<u>Technology Based Learning Strategies</u>

- *Microsoft Teams and Google Classroom*
- *Student Privacy*
  - During remote learning, SPED, FERPA and COPPA laws will be followed
- *Student, Parent, and Staff Training*
  - Training on technology platforms for students, parents, and staff will be provided as needed
  - Paper manuals will be available for technologies and platforms:
    - Infinite Campus
    - Think Central
    - Google Classroom
    - Microsoft Teams
  - The district will develop schedules that:
    - Provide a routine for students
    - Establish expectations for student engagement
    - Determine how attendance is monitored
    - Identify how resources will be provided

<u>Students Learning at Home</u>

- The district will develop a schedule that uses all staff to connect with students while learning at home
  - Students receiving special education services through an IEP, 504 plan, or other special education service (i.e., ELL, Title I school, etc.) will be contacted by special education staff every 3 school days, at a minimum

<ins>Spring Valley Colony</ins>
- The Colony School will operate under normal conditions
- Remote services will be provided to the Colony School if necessary
- Colony students have access to all services available to the district

Access to Services for Individuals with Disabilities
- The Wessington Springs School District will:
  - Provide accommodations, modifications, and assistance for students, teachers, and staff with disabilities and other health care needs when implementing the Safe Return plan
  - Work with families to better understand the individual needs of students with disabilities is critical to providing adequate support
  - Remain accessible for students with disabilities
    - Provide access for direct service providers such as paraprofessionals, therapists, early intervention specialists, mental health and healthcare consultants, and others
    - Ensure access to services for individuals with disabilities when developing support plans

Daily Screening Checklist

Parents should complete the daily health check by answering the questions below **before** sending their child to school. This form is to help parents determine if their child should stay home from school.

If you answer YES to any of these questions, consult a medical professional about your child's symptoms before returning to school.

SCREENING QUESTIONS

1.	Does your child have a fever of 100.4 or greater?	YES	NO
2.	Does your child have new or worsening shortness of breath?	YES	NO
3.	Does your child have a new or worsening cough?	YES	NO
4.	Does your child have a new or worsening fatigue?	YES	NO
5.	Does your child have a headache?	YES	NO
6.	Does your child have runny nose or congestion?	YES	NO
7.	Does your child have the chills?	YES	NO
8.	Does your child have diarrhea?	YES	NO
9.	Does your child have unexplained muscle pain?	YES	NO
10.	Does your child have a sore throat?	YES	NO
11.	Does your child have a new loss of taste or smell?	YES	NO
12.	Does your child have a physician confirmed positive test result for: influenza, strep throat, chicken pox, measles, mumps, tuberculosis, covid-19, or other contagious respiratory infection?	YES	NO