

# Safe Return to In-Person Instruction & Continuity of Services Plan

**Mission Statement: “Cooperatively preparing all students to succeed as life-long learners in an ever-changing world”**



Chester Area School  
Home of the Flyers

\*Date of Plan Review/Approval by the BOE: Monday, December 11, 2023

\*Recent Review Dates as Required: December 12, 2022, May 8, 2023, Sept 11, 2023

\*Changes to this plan are possible and will be reviewed a minimum of every six months:  
December 2021, June 2022, December 2022, June 2023

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## Executive Summary

The Chester Area School District was open for in-person learning during the entirety of the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years with multiple mitigation strategies in place. We will continue coordinating with state and local health officials pertaining to Covid-19.

The 2023-24 school year will continue to have several mitigation efforts and strategies in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and ensure students have access to needed services for academic success. This plan is easily accessible on the school district web page

<https://chester.k12.sd.us/> for public viewing. The plan is available to be viewed in multiple languages by clicking on the icon "Select Language" located near the top of the page.

Any questions regarding this plan can be directed to Superintendent Heath Larson via email at [heath.larson@k12.sd.us](mailto:heath.larson@k12.sd.us) or phone (605) 489-2411.

## Assumption of Risk

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, was declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is very contagious and is believed to be spread primarily from person-to-person contact.

The Chester Area School District has put in place preventative measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19. However, the district cannot guarantee that individuals will not become infected with the disease. In addition, school attendance could increase the risk of contracting COVID-19.

## Student Learning: Instructional Plans

Students will be expected to attend school in-person during the 2023-24 school year. If other options are needed due to circumstances, please contact Heath Larson, Superintendent. Our district will continue to address academic needs including learning loss through the hiring of an additional counselor for 2022-23, an additional special education teacher which was hired in 2021-22, academic interventions, before and after school teacher assistance, and 9<sup>th</sup> period help time at the middle and high school levels. All students, including students with disabilities, have equal access to all educational programs.

Students' social, emotional, and mental health needs are addressed and improved with in-person learning and fully operational educational programs. The school counselors, staff, and other outside resources assist in these areas. School staff received several professional development opportunities to assist with multiple aspects of the pandemic.

# **Student Learning: Athletics and Extra-Curricular Activities**

Athletics & Extra-Curriculars: The district intent for athletics and extra-curriculars is to have a fully operational schedule with open attendance. We will follow the SDHSAA requirements and consider the guidance provided.

## **Student/Staff Health & Safety**

The plan information for health and safety is thorough and fluid. The guidance received from national, state, and local agencies will provide for the most updated requirements and considerations for schools. Over the course of the summer and in preparation for the 2022-23 school year, we have numerous upgrades which are in process or have been planned to occur. These upgrades will all be benefits for student and staff health in our school district response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure**

- Cloth face masks or coverings are voluntary for staff and students. Most essential to consider is when physical distancing is difficult.
- Signage for social distancing will be displayed.

### **Cleaning and Hygiene**

- Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol will be at the building main entrances, cafeteria, and available in classrooms for safe use by staff and students.
- Soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, and tissues will be available to support healthy hygiene habits.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers will be frequently checked and refilled.
- Handwashing during key times such as before, during, and after food preparation; before and after eating food; toilet use; after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, and after touching objects that have been handled by others will be encouraged by staff.
- Students and staff will be encouraged to cough and sneeze into their elbows or cover with a tissue. After using and discarding a tissue, wash hands immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Frequent handwashing will be integrated into daily schedules.
- Cleaning and disinfection will continue.
- Sharing of personal items and supplies such as writing utensils etc. will strive to be minimized.

### **Elementary and Main Office Services Procedures**

- May utilize PPE for symptomatic students and staff.
- Symptomatic students may wear masks while in the waiting area. If they do not have a mask, a disposable mask may be provided to the student.
- ICE= Isolate and mask, Contact parent, Exit building ASAP

### **Monitoring for Symptoms**

Conducting regular screenings for symptoms can help reduce exposure. Staff and students are encouraged to self-certify prior to attending school and self-monitor for symptoms such as fever, chills, shortness of breath, new cough, loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. If a student or staff member develops symptoms while at school, he/she should notify a school administrator immediately.

- Staff and students stay home if:
  - They have tested positive and should not return until they meet the criteria per guidance from SD DOH or their medical provider.
- Students out of school will be given make-up work and assignments provided by the teacher.

### **Communicating Individual Positive Infection Cases**

The SD DOH will work with school districts to provide data to assist with decision making in line with appropriate privacy protections. The school will not be notifying parents or students if there is a positive Covid-19 case.

If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19:

- Please follow SD DOH or your medical provider guidance.

### **Close Contacts & Quarantine**

- As a school, we will not be providing the resources to make determinations of close contacts and quarantine.
- South Dakota Department of Health has the statutory authority to isolate sick individuals.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Guidance**

- All Staff = Voluntary wearing of face coverings or face shield.
- PPE Guidelines are attached in the CDC web link as a resource in this plan.

## **Operations: Classroom Safety**

- Seating/desks may be arranged to allow for maximum physical distancing as possible. Mixing of groups is allowed.
- Individual student desk shields and plexiglass barriers may be used at certain times but will not be required.
- Desks/tables may be turned to face the same direction rather than facing one another or have students sit on only one side of tables while spaced apart.
- Visual guides such as wall signs may be added to assist with distancing and flow of movement.
- Each child's belongings may be kept separated from others and in individual desks, cubbies, containers, or floor areas.
- Use of bottle fillers at water fountains allowed and encouraged.
- Staff and students encouraged to bring water bottles from home.
- Adjustments to the schedule may be created to assist with distancing efforts.
- Frequent handwashing and good hygiene will be built into daily schedules.
- Open windows and doors when feasible.

## **Operations: Signage**

- Signs may be posted around the school as reminders for good hygiene habits, social distancing, and face coverings including the appropriate way to wear a mask.

## **Operations: Cleaning, Disinfecting, Sanitizing**

- Perform ongoing and routine cleaning and disinfection of high touch areas with approved disinfectant.
- HVAC filter replacement will increase.
- Open windows and doors to increase air flow when feasible.

## **Operations: Use of School Buildings or Facilities**

- The use of indoor facilities for non-education related activities will be allowed with prior approval from school administration. The use of virtual tools and platforms may be utilized when feasible to conduct essential business.

## **Food Service**

Our food service program provides nutritious meals at school and are critical safety nets to support the overall well-being for students. Meals will be provided to meet the nutritional needs of students in an environment that promotes social distancing and good hygiene practices to support optimal academic success. Families will be paying for meals in 2022-23. Free/Reduced Meal forms are available and need to be completed and submitted to determine eligibility.



- Safety Precautions and Information
  - Social distancing as feasible.
  - Time provided to wash hands before and after meals.
  - Individual packets may be used for condiments.
  - Disposable trays, plates, and utensils may be used.
  - Share table will be prohibited.
  - Check out point of contact entered by one staff member.
  - Meals may be determined to be eaten in the classroom/gym.
  - Meal service options will continually be monitored to determine any modifications that are needed along with ideas to promote meal participation.
  - Alternative seating arrangements/locations/schedules may be utilized to decrease number of students in the lunchroom.

## **School Transportation**

- Cloth masks or face coverings are voluntary for all drivers and passengers throughout the duration of all trips.
- Parent/guardian may determine to provide transportation for drop off and pick up at school to reduce the number of passengers and allow for maximum social distancing.

## **Prevention & Mitigation of Covid-19: CDC Resources**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>