



## **ROE#33/RAES RETURN TO LEARN PLAN 2021-2022**

This plan will be living document that is intended to be updated continually through the grant period depending on routine evaluations

### **RETURNING TO SCHOOL SAFELY SUMMARY:**

Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 2020-40 was filed on June 4, 2020. The order permitted schools to reopen for in-person instruction beginning in Phase 4. On June 26, the state of Illinois moved into Phase 4. The Illinois State Board of Education vastly recommended schools open for in-person instruction in Phase 4. In order to be in compliance, implementation of the following safety measures per Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) must be in place.

- August 4, 2021, Governor Pritzker issued a statewide mask mandate, Executive Order #18, requiring a mask for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to PK-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Per the IDPH, students should still return for full in-person learning this fall with layered Covid-19 prevention strategies in place
- Prohibit more than 50 individuals from gathering in one space
- Require social distancing be observed, as much as possible
- Require that schools conduct symptom screenings and temperature checks or require that individuals self-certify that they are free of symptoms before entering school buildings
- Require an increase in school-wide cleaning and disinfection

In accordance with the Illinois State Superintendent of Schools July 9, 2021 declaration, RAES will be open fully for in-person learning for all student attendance days for the 2021-22 school year. Remote instruction will only be made available for non-vaccinated or vaccine ineligible students who are under quarantine as directed by the local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health. Absent an order from the Illinois State Board of Education and/or the Illinois Governor's Office, RAES will be in operation in accordance with the CDC's updated (July 9, 2021) *Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Kindergarten (K)-12 Schools*, also adopted by the IDPH on July 9, 2021. These guidelines include the following:

The ROE 33 Return to Learn Plan is aligned with guidance provided by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). School strategies in this plan may be removed or replaced based on local conditions, levels of community transmission (low, moderate, substantial, and high), local vaccine coverage, and direct consultation with local public health officials to determine the best prevention strategies needed. School officials will

communicate all changes in procedures to staff matters, students, and parents through various district communication platforms.

ROE #33 will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff by following all advised CDC and IDPH recommendations and strategies for prevention and mitigation. These strategies will be implemented for the safety of all staff and students.

- Universal and correct wearing of masks for all persons.
- Modified facilities to allow for physical distancing
- Increased handwashing and respiratory etiquette will be requested and encouraged
- Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities will be done on a daily routine basis and throughout the day
- ROE 33 will work with the local and state health departments for contact tracing
- Diagnostic and screening testing will be encouraged in all facilities.
- Information on vaccinations will be provided to school communities up on request
- ROE 33 will make appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to all health and safety policies

ROE 33 will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address the areas listed below:

- students' academic needs
- students' and staff social, emotional, mental health needs ● student health and food services
- other students' needs.

### **RAES SCHEDULE**

All students will be provided a full 6 hour day of in-person instruction five days per week. Monday through Friday 8:30am - 2:00 pm.

### **MASKS**

The CDC, IDPH and ISBE recommend masks for all unvaccinated individuals. As long as supported by local health data:

- Mask use required for all school students and staff
- Mask use is required outdoors during activities (e.g., participating in outdoor play, recess, physical education, sports, extra-curricular activities) that involve sustained close contact with all personnel, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission.
- All passengers and drivers are required to wear a mask on school buses.
- A supply of disposable face coverings will be available.

## **CLEANING**

School and Custodial staff will conduct deep cleaning daily using approved sanitation equipment. Daily and evening cleaning procedures will be updated to reflect an increase in frequency. The District will follow recommendations per the CDC, IDPH, and local health departments

## **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

The CDC, IDPH and ISBE recommend social distancing in schools of at least 3 feet where possible. While these agencies make the wearing of masks a recommendation and not a mandate, RAES will do the same.

- To the extent possible within school and classroom structures so that it does not exclude students from full day in-person learning, school staff are to help students commit to physical distancing as much as possible by:
  - arranging furniture, desks and tables to model and reinforce physical distancing of at least 3 feet and movement;
  - providing assigned seating for students and encourage students to remain in these seats to the greatest extent possible; and
  - developing marked paths of travel in classrooms and corridors.
- School staff will maximize physical distance as much as possible when moving through food service lines and while eating indoors. Aside from the cafeteria, additional spaces for mealtime seating will be utilized when available and feasible (e.g., weather permitting).
- Physical distancing measures are to be done in an equitable manner that does not perpetuate academic, racial, cultural or other tracking (e.g., separating people into fully vaccinated and non-fully vaccinated cohorts).
- Dismissals and release of students to and from busses or parent pickup/drop off will be controlled.

## **CLASSROOMS**

- Arrange seating three to six feet apart, if possible and face the same direction if feasible
- Teachers will assign seating
- Encourage hand washing and sanitizing
- Do not share school supplies

## **HALLWAYS**

- Maintain three to six feet distance to the extent possible
- Mark common gathering areas to show three feet spacing
- Provide visuals to indicate spacing and directional flow

## **CAFETERIA**

- The cafeteria will be utilized as allowed for 3 feet of spacing between students to the extent possible. Students may also be eating in alternate locations as necessary to maintain social distancing. Staff will be assigned to provide supervision by building administration as needed

## **HEALTH SCREENINGS**

Families should monitor student health daily to determine that students are symptoms free before sending students to school. Only healthy students and staff should report to school. Students are encouraged to stay home when not feeling well.

Students and staff with the following symptoms must remain home:

- New cough
- Fatigue from unknown cause
- New onset of moderate to severe headache
- Known contact with a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19
- Measured temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater
- Vomiting
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Diarrhea
- New loss of sense of taste or smell
- Muscle or body ache from unknown cause

Any student or staff member who begins to exhibit any symptom associated with COVID-19 like symptoms must report to the RAES office. .

- Students will remain in a quarantine area until a parent or guardian picks up the students or an alternative transportation home is arranged.
- Students and staff who come in contact with someone who is positive for COVID-19 must follow the IDPH guidelines for self-monitoring and self-quarantine.

## **VISITORS**

- Visitors to any building are required to wear face coverings and are subject to health screenings.
- Nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations with people who are not fully vaccinated are discouraged from visiting schools.

## **VACCINATIONS**

- Vaccinations will not be required. Respectful of peoples' varying levels of vaccine confidence, those who want to get vaccinated against COVID-19 can visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find out where they can get vaccinated in our community.
- Individuals will not be required to disclose their vaccination status. Parents, students and staff may wish to voluntarily disclose their vaccination status to avoid a mandatory quarantine for close contact with a COVID positive person.

## **FULLY VACCINATED STUDENTS/ STAFF**

- Staff/students are considered fully vaccinated and protected two weeks following the final dose of vaccine.
- Fully vaccinated students/staff are exempt from quarantine as a close contact, provided they show no symptoms since exposure to positive cases.
- Symptomatic staff/students should stay home if they are ill, regardless of vaccine status.

- No COVID testing will be required for return to school following illness, unless recommended by a healthcare provider.

## **HAND WASHING/HYGIENE**

Frequent handwashing and attention to good personal hygiene is a simple and effective way to combat the spread of all viruses. Frequent handwashing opportunities will be a point of emphasis for RAES students and staff. Hand sanitizing stations will be placed for easy access.

School staff will monitor and reinforce frequent handwashing and respiratory etiquette by

- continuing to teach handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- assisting young children with handwashing;
- reminding everyone in the facility to wash hands frequently;
- using hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol (for teachers, staff, and older students who can safely use hand sanitizer) when hand washing is not possible;
- continuing to teach respiratory etiquette (e.g., covering coughs and sneezes); and
- providing adequate handwashing and hand sanitizer supplies that are safely stored (up, away, and out of sight of young children and used only with adult supervision for children under 6 years of age).

## **CONTACT TRACING AND QUARANTINE PROCEDURES**

- Students and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as influenza (flu) or COVID-19, should stay home and contact their healthcare provider for testing and care.
- COVID positive students and staff will have mandatory quarantines in accordance with local health department guidelines.
- Students and staff who have had close contact with a COVID positive individual will have mandatory quarantines in accordance with local health department guidelines.
- Individuals in our school environments who show symptoms of COVID-19 are to immediately report to or be escorted to isolation to be either sent home or be quarantined in the school's supervised safe area while awaiting pickup/evaluation. Students and staff are required to wear masks at all times. Parents should ensure that ill students are picked up from school immediately. Ill students will not be allowed to utilize the school bus to return home.
- To ensure continuity of services, coursework will be available to students while quarantining. Students will have access to social, emotional, mental health support. Parents of students who have social, emotional, mental health, or other needs outside of an IEP or 504 Plan should contact their child's principal or the lead teacher to discuss needs.
- Remote instruction will only be made available for non-vaccinated or vaccine ineligible students who are under quarantine as directed by the local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health as per guidelines of the CDC, IDPH, and ISBE.
- Absent COVID-related leave days previously provided by Federal law, staff absences related to a COVID-19 isolation or quarantine will be recorded in accordance with the ROE's sick leave policy. To ensure continuity of services, staff members should contact their principal to discuss support for social, emotional, mental health, or other needs.
- To the extent allowable by privacy laws and other applicable laws, school administrators will continue to collaborate with local health department officials to confidentially provide information about people diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19, including making notifications to staff and parents as soon as possible regarding those who were in close contact of someone in the school who tested positive for COVID-19.
- Following quarantine, students and staff returning from illness related to COVID-19 are to call to check in with the school's administrative staff.

## **COLLABORATION WITH PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS**

- District officials will continue to collaborate and consult with local health department officials throughout a pandemic on various logistics and decision-making including, but not limited to, quarantines, school health and safety protocols, screening testing, contact tracing, vaccine clinics, and emergency school closings.

### **Plan Review**

This plan will be reviewed by the Regional Office of Education #33 whenever changes in guidelines are published by the CDC, IDPH, or ISBE that substantially change public health guidelines, or whenever local circumstances – especially those related to an outbreak may warrant. School administration will continuously monitor local health data and consult with local public health officials to determine if policies/practices need revision.

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

Considerations will be given to the impact that COVID-19 has on the mental health of staff, students and their families. The mental and emotional well-being of students and staff members will be closely monitored.

- Training will be provided to staff to increase awareness of the impact of COVID-19
- Access to community resources and counselors will be communicated to the students and employees.

### **Disabilities/Other Health Care Needs**

- Parents of students who need accommodations, modifications, or assistance related to COVID-19 safety protocols, disabilities, underlying medical conditions, or weakened immune systems should contact the principal. Medical documentation may be required.
- Staff members who need accommodations, modifications, or assistance related to COVID-19 safety protocols, disabilities, underlying medical conditions, weakened immune systems, or a sincerely held religious belief or practice (covered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) should contact the principal to discuss the issue. Medical documentation may be required.