



**SALEM**  
**CITY SCHOOLS**

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**Salem City Schools  
Plan for Safe Return to In-Person  
Instruction and Continuity of Services**

**March 8, 2022**

## **Section 1: Introduction**

This plan describes how Salem City Public Schools will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and division staff during and following the return to full in-person instruction.

We believe that most students learn best under the direction of a caring and committed educator. We are also committed to providing a healthy and safe environment in accordance with state and federal guidelines for in-person instruction, but we understand that it is not possible to provide a “no risk” environment. Salem City Schools plans to open at full capacity five days a week on our normal bell schedule. Online options are available for students who have been approved to participate in online instruction.

## **Section 2: Maintaining Health and Safety**

Salem City Public Schools has taken and will continue to take actions to ensure the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and division staff during and following the return to full in-person instruction.

Salem City Public Schools has adopted policies on each of the following safety recommendations established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- Salem City Public Schools has developed a [scalable mitigation implementation plan](#) based on recommendations from the VDH, the CDC, and the AAP. COVID-19 prevention and mitigation strategies will be implemented in accordance with this plan.
- If required by local, state, or federal guidelines SCS will modify facilities to allow for physical distancing of students and staff. At this time, Salem City Public Schools has no plans to require physical distancing of staff or students. Physical distancing will be encouraged when reasonable and practical but will not be mandatory.
- Salem City Public Schools will continue to communicate and encourage proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette.
- Salem City Schools will continue cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation, such as replacing air filters with rated filters.
- Salem City Schools will implement contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, as recommended by the VDH in collaboration with the local health department.

- Salem City Schools provided vaccination clinics to the school community during the spring and fall of 2021 and will continue to support vaccination in collaboration with the Roanoke Alleghany Health District and the local health department.
- Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies will continue to be provided.
- Salem City Schools will continue to coordinate with state and local health officials.

### **Section 3: Continuity of Services**

Salem City Public Schools has taken and will continue to take actions to ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs.

Salem City Public Schools used ESSER Grant funds to hire additional instructional staff to provide personalized on-time instructional support to address unfinished learning.

Additional funds were budgeted for school counseling services and a social worker to address social emotional and mental health needs for students and staff.

For the provision of mental health services:

- School counselors will be available in each building.
- Salem City Schools has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Intercept for the provision of services for Beyond Anger Management (BAM) and Substance Abuse Counseling.
- Salem City Schools has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Mainstream Inc. for Clinical Impressions and At-Risk Assessments, and Individual Psychotherapy, and Group Therapy.
- Salem City Schools has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with RippleFx for brief counseling

### **Section 4: Opportunity for Public Comment**

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, Salem City Public Schools sought public input and took such input into account as described below.

Stakeholder committees were solicited for feedback on the plan. Including the CTE Advisory Committee, Health and Wellness Committee, the Comprehensive Planning Committee, and the Local Special Education Advisory Committee. The opportunity for general public comment was advertised and offered at the January 11, 2022 School Board meeting. No input was received at that time, however if input is provided it will be taken into consideration during future updates to the plan.

### **Section 5: Periodic Review and Revision of Plan**

During the period of the ARP ESSER award (until September 2024), Salem City Public Schools will periodically review and, as needed, revise its plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services. The plan will be reviewed at least every six months, and Salem City Public Schools will seek and take into account public input during the review process. Plan revisions will address updated CDC guidance on safely reopening schools, if any are issued.

### **Section 6: Making the Plan Available to the Public**

Salem City Public Schools has taken the following steps to make this plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at <https://www.salem.k12.va.us/covid19>
- The plan is available in multiple languages [English and Spanish];
- The plan may be orally translated for parents. Contact Ruth Moran at 540-389-0130 to request translation; and
- Upon request, a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA may be provided with the plan in an alternative format accessible by contacting Randy Jennings at 540-398-0130 or email at [rjennings@salem.k12.va.us](mailto:rjennings@salem.k12.va.us)



## CITY OF SALEM SCHOOL DIVISION

### Return to Learn COVID-19 Mitigation Plan

#### Goals

1. **Maximize in-person instruction.** We believe students learn best in a safe and disciplined environment provided by caring and respectful adults. Therefore, our primary goals are to minimize exposures to keep students in school and keep schools operating at full capacity.
2. **Continue to be a community health partner.** As one of the largest employers and the largest childcare provider in our community, we are committed to working with community healthcare agencies to ensure the health and safety of our staff, students, and the community.
3. **A scalable plan.** We desire to create a scalable plan that allows us to meet the health and safety needs of our staff, students, and community as local conditions and guidance change.

#### Guiding Principles

- **Students benefit from in-person learning.** Safely returning to and maintaining in-person instruction during the 2021-22 school year is a priority.
- **Focus on prevention.** Promote vaccination, as it is the leading prevention strategy to end the COVID19- pandemic and keep schools open for in-person instruction. Establish a school culture of adherence to prevention strategies both in and out of school. Establish environments in which vaccination is promoted, and people physically distance, wear masks correctly and consistently, practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, and clean frequently. Coordinate closely with local health departments. Educate students/staff to monitor health daily and stay at home if they have symptoms, and follow public health recommendations. Consider screening testing programs to identify cases early.
- **Consider community needs.** Consider disease and vaccination trends and understand the socioeconomic factors, literacy barriers, and other educational needs in your community when developing plans.
- **Be flexible and innovative.** Scientific knowledge evolves rapidly, and local context is incredibly important. Community transmission and the level of impact to a given school can change and the combination of prevention strategies may evolve with time.

#### Legal Requirement

**SB 739** – Requires each school board to offer in-person instruction and allows the parent of any child enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school, or in any school-based early childhood care and education program, to elect for such child to not wear a mask while on school property. The bill requires each local school division to comply with the foregoing provisions relating to masks no later than March 1, 2022.

#### Current Recommendations

##### Centers for Disease Control

On Friday, February 25, 2022, the CDC unveiled a new [tool](#) to help communities determine appropriate COVID mitigation strategies. Using a variety of metrics, the tool assigns a level for every county and major city in the country (low, medium, high). Citizens can determine the level for their community by using the interactive map on the [website](#). Please visit the [CDC COVID-19 Community Levels](#) page if you would like more information about why the CDC is transitioning to this method, how they determine each locality's designation, and the mitigation recommendations for each level

## VDH

There is presently a lack of consensus among health experts regarding the costs and benefits of mask-wearing for children in school. Parents should consult with their medical providers if they have questions about whether or not their child should mask and for how long; this is especially true if a child is at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, or lives with individuals at higher risk for severe illness.

In situations where a child is returning from isolation due to COVID or was subject to a close contact exposure, the benefit of temporary masking is likely to outweigh the risks.

## Isolation and Quarantine Requirements

**Schools are no longer expected to conduct contact tracing for individual cases of COVID-19 and are no longer required to report every known case to the VDH. Instead, schools will focus on contact tracing and quarantine when they experience an outbreak (10% of a population) or at least three cases in a typical classroom setting.**

**When contact tracing outbreaks:** A close contact is anyone within six feet of someone who has tested positive COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes in 24 hours while they were considered to be contagious.

**If a student tests positive or has symptoms consistent with COVID-19,** they can return to school after quarantining at home for 5 days after the onset of symptoms as long as:

- they currently have no symptoms and have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours without medication, **and**
- they wear a well-fitting mask and avoid close contact for an additional 5 days after their isolation period ends.

**If a student has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 outside the home:**

- If they are unvaccinated they should:
  - Quarantine for 5 days as long as they do not develop symptoms within that time, wear a well-fitting mask, and avoid close contact for an additional 5 days when they are around others.
- If students are fully vaccinated:
  - they do *not* need to quarantine following an exposure.
- If a student has previously tested positive for COVID-19 within 90 days of the current exposure:
  - they do *not* need to quarantine following an exposure.

**If someone in the home tests positive for COVID-19:**

- If students are unvaccinated they should:
  - Quarantine for 15 days as long as they do not develop symptoms within that time, wear a well-fitting mask for an additional 5 days when they are around others.
- If students are fully vaccinated:
  - they do *not* need to quarantine unless they develop symptoms.
- If a student has previously tested positive for COVID-19 within 90 days of the current exposure:
  - they do *not* need to quarantine unless they develop symptoms.

**Salem City School Participates in Test to Stay-**Test to Stay (TTS) is a practice of allowing close contacts/exposures who are not fully vaccinated to continue in-person learning during their quarantine period. Students take a COVID-19 rapid antigen test, provided by the school, every day for 5 days following the exposure and if the test is negative, they are allowed to stay in school for in-person instruction. Contact your school nurse for more information on the test to stay program if your student is required to quarantine.

# Scalable Mitigation Plan

The Salem City School Division will utilize the following guidance to make decisions regarding the implementation of COVID mitigation strategies at school and on the bus.

## School Impact Considerations

Criteria to Consider	Level of Impact to a School*		
	Low	Medium	High
Transmission within school	Zero or sporadic cases with no evidence of transmission in school	Single outbreak or sporadic outbreaks in school. Sizes of outbreaks remain small.	Several outbreaks in school within a short time period; sizes of outbreaks are large or scope of outbreak is significant (e.g., multiple classrooms or grade levels are impacted).
Student absenteeism	At baseline/Low	Slightly above baseline	High
Staff Capacity**	Normal	Strained	Critical

## COVID-19 Community Levels

### What Prevention Steps Should You Take Based on Your COVID-19 Community Level?

Low	Medium	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay <a href="#">up to date</a> with COVID-19 vaccines</li> <li><a href="#">Get tested</a> if you have symptoms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you are <a href="#">at high risk for severe illness</a>, talk to your healthcare provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions</li> <li>Stay <a href="#">up to date</a> with COVID-19 vaccines</li> <li><a href="#">Get tested</a> if you have symptoms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wear a <a href="#">mask</a> indoors in public</li> <li>Stay <a href="#">up to date</a> with COVID-19 vaccines</li> <li><a href="#">Get tested</a> if you have symptoms</li> <li>Additional precautions may be needed for people <a href="#">at high risk for severe illness</a></li> </ul>
<p>People may choose to mask at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask.</p>		

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

**Overview:** Schools will operate using normal procedures and implement the following mitigation strategies as needed based on ongoing CDC and VDH guidance.

Area	Mitigation Strategies
<b>Transportation</b>	Masks as recommended based on scalable mitigation Promote physical distancing to the maximum extent possible
<b>Arrival</b>	Masks as recommended based on scalable mitigation Promote physical distancing to the maximum extent possible
<b>Breakfast</b>	Breakfast in class and cafeteria to promote physical distancing Seating charts Cohort students to the extent possible Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as recommended based on scalable mitigation
<b>Classrooms (General)</b>	1st-period health screening Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as recommended based on scalable mitigation Seating charts to support contact tracing
<b>Health &amp; PE</b>	Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks, as recommended based on scalable mitigation
<b>Music (Singing &amp; Band)</b>	Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as recommended based on scalable mitigation Masks can be removed to play instruments as necessary
<b>Transitions</b>	Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as recommended based on scalable mitigation
<b>Lunch</b>	Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as recommended based on scalable mitigation Lunch in the class and cafeteria to provide for physical distancing
<b>Dismissal</b>	Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as recommended based on scalable mitigation
<b>Playgrounds</b>	
<b>Cleaning/Hygiene</b>	Normal cleaning procedures
<b>Health Services</b>	Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as recommended based on scalable mitigation
<b>Visitors/Volunteers</b>	Visitors and volunteers allowed Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as recommended based on scalable mitigation Limit visitors as recommended
<b>Action Plan if Confirmed Case</b>	Contact tracing per VDH/CDC guidelines Communication as appropriate and required
<b>Extra-Curricular Activities</b>	Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as recommended based on scalable mitigation