



# **2020-2021 Lesterville R-IV School District Return to School Plan**

This plan was developed based upon available information as of July 27, 2020. This plan may be modified as needed to comply with new guidelines or in response to updated information regarding COVID-19.

# Introduction

As Lesterville School transitions into the 2020-2021 school year, there are many unknowns in the educational world. However, in the midst of uncertainty, the district knows that families and communities need schools to reopen as soon and as safely as possible with guidance from local health officials. This is a moment when all of us—educators, families, and communities—must unite to ensure that children reenter schools with safety as a top priority so that learning can continue and students can develop the social and emotional connections necessary for their growth. These past several months have served as a great reminder of the role that public schools play in ensuring an equitable education for all students. Schools create conditions that support students with their social/emotional needs, develop lifelong friendships, explore their passions, and channel their energy into productive pursuits and activities. Reopening schools in a manner that is responsive to the needs of families and communities will involve challenges with many undetermined factors. Lesterville School will work to prepare for any scenario that may arise.

As the world around us changes and evolves, it is imperative for the school district to learn and grow, preparing students to be successful and resilient regardless of the opportunities and challenges that lie before them. We have examined all aspects of the organization and created this guide to organize a set of directions and protocols aligned to the guidance of medical experts to lead us as we strive to provide a quality education for all students.

The mission of the Lesterville R-IV Schools is to help all students realize their worth and potential as individuals and to guide them toward becoming productive members of society. Our commitment toward providing for the health and well-being of students is of utmost importance in achieving our mission. The district is wholly committed to living our mission in preparation for the fall of 2020 – no matter the circumstances put before us. We look forward to partnering with our parents and community as the 2020-2021 school year begins.

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# According to the Center for Disease Control

COVID-19 is mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. It is thought that the virus may spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose or mouth, causing infection. Therefore, personal prevention practices such as handwashing, staying home when sick and environmental cleaning and disinfection are important principles that are covered in this document. Fortunately, there are a number of actions school staff can take to help lower the risk of exposure to and spread of COVID-19 during school sessions and activities (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2020).

One of the actions that can be taken to help lower the risk of exposure is the use of face coverings. Face coverings may be challenging for students (especially younger students) to wear in all-day settings such as school. Face coverings should be worn by staff and students (particularly older students) as feasible, and are most essential in times when physical distancing is difficult. Individuals should be repeatedly reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently. Information should be provided to staff, students, and students' families on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings (CDC, 2020).

## **Symptoms of COVID-19**

People with COVID-19 have reported having a wide range of symptoms – from mild symptoms to severe illness. Children have similar symptoms to adults and generally have mild illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

This list is not all inclusive. Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea (CDC, 2020).

# Universal Precautions Recommended by the Centers for Disease Control

## **Hand Washing**

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

## **Physical Distancing**

Avoid close contact by putting an appropriate distance between yourself and others. Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus. Keeping an appropriate distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

## **Masks**

Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they have to go out in public, for example to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected. Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker.

## **Cover Coughs and Sneezes**

If you are in a private setting and do not have your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

## **Clean and Disinfect**

Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces throughout the day. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets and sinks. If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. Then, use a household disinfectant. Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants work well.

# Minimizing Risk

## **What can we do to minimize the risk at school?**

Based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and the Reynolds County Health Department, the district has developed a proactive reopening plan that places student and employee safety at the forefront of returning to school. Parents, classroom teachers, and support staff will play an increasingly important role in the health and wellness of students. Please review the following checklist that will assist in preventing the spread of sickness.

## **Classroom Health & Safety Norms**

- Use hand sanitizer / wash your hands for 20 seconds each time you enter and exit the school building
- Use hand sanitizer /wash your hands for 20 seconds each time you enter and exit each classroom
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds after using the restroom
- Cough and sneeze in your sleeve
- Keep your hands out of your mouth and away from your eyes
- Have a place to keep items that have been mouthed or soiled until they can be cleaned
- Remove items that cannot be easily cleaned
- Do your best to use your own supplies. Limit use of community supplies
- Utilize virtual manipulatives as much as possible
- Limit multiple students touching/interacting with the same materials
- Ensure students are facing the same direction as much as possible
- Water fountains will be shut off. Personal water bottles can be filled at the water filling stations
- At this time, Lesterville School is not making masks mandatory. This could change at any time. If we mandate mask usage at a later date, the school will work to provide masks for each staff and student. Students and staff may wear their own mask at any time if they choose.

On the first day of school and throughout the first week, these safety procedures will be taught and practiced in all of our classrooms. Parental support and reinforcement of these measures will be critical in providing the safest possible environment for students.

# School Reopening Plan Levels

The district's plan is to open schools on August 24 utilizing precautions and guidelines as described in this reopening plan. Our hope is that we will begin the year with all of the students in attendance. In the event the district is required to reduce capacity, an alternative schedule will be implemented as detailed on the next page. There are a variety of models that have been discussed and shared throughout the educational community in recent months and in countries in which schools reopened in the spring. Lesterville School has developed three different options with our calendar that would address a requirement to reduce capacity or close the school. In level two, students would be attending school for face-to-face learning on specific days. We would attempt to ensure that students in a family would attend school on the same schedule, however, this may not always be possible. Students not attending in-person would engage in E-Learning from home. If possible, additional considerations will be given to provide more face-to-face instruction with our students with disabilities. Level three would be in case of a future school closure. At level three, all students would be engaging in E-Learning from home.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	<b>Level 1: Regular week, with five days of in-person learning.</b>				
<b>1</b>	In-person learning for all students	In-person learning for all students	In-person learning for all students	In-person learning for all students	In-person learning for all students
	<b>Level 2: Modified week, with two groups (A and B). Students will split time between In-person learning and E-learning.</b>				
<b>2</b>	A: In-person B: E-learning	A: In-person B: E-learning	E-learning for all students.	A: E-learning B: In-person	A: E-learning B: In-person
	<b>Level 3: E-learning only, no in-person learning.</b>				
<b>3</b>	E-learning for all students	E-learning for all students	E-learning for all students	E-learning for all students	E-learning for all students

At this time, we are planning to begin school using level 1. If a decision is made to transition to level 2 or 3, Lesterville School will enact our Alternative Methods of Instruction plan. Details of this plan will be communicated with families by the Building

Principals. We also understand that if E-Learning is needed, not all students have access to technology at home. Students will be provided a tablet or Chromebook as needed (based on grade level) to ensure that they can complete work and communicate with their teachers. We are installing high power hotspots on the exterior of each building to provide internet access to those that do not have it in the home. This will enable students to work from the safety of vehicles without having to access the building. We will also have flash drives available that can be loaded with student assignments for those students that cannot access the internet.

Families with a high-risk medical issue needing an alternative learning environment must contact their child's school beginning August 4, 2020. Procedures are in place to partner with families to determine what is in the "best educational interest" of individual students. The administrator will schedule a time to discuss options including Virtual and Homebound instruction. Alternative methods of instruction will be made available to individual students when in-person instruction is not possible.

### **Factors affecting school schedule level changes**

1. Student absenteeism - When it is not economically prudent to keep the school open and a period of days closed would allow for deep cleaning and for families to recover and get well.
2. Faculty & Staff absenteeism - When the number of staff available to properly educate and supervise students drops below what is necessary to maintain a safe learning environment.
3. Confirmed case(s) of COVID-19 that warrant a change in response.
4. To protect public health as advised by government or health authorities.

### **Field Trips**

We will likely not go on field trips this year. However, teachers will work to provide rich experiences through virtual trips and/or online guest speakers. If guidelines and recommendations change and we are able to schedule field trips, additional communication will be sent home at that time.

# Parent responsibilities / Symptomatic Students

It is more important than ever for parents to conduct a wellness screening on your child before sending them to school. Please check their temperature and assess their overall wellness. **DO NOT** send your child to school if they have been experiencing any symptoms of sickness.

You **MUST** contact the school district for any of the following reasons:

- Suspicion of a COVID-19 case in your household.
- A member of your family has come into contact with a known positive case.
- A member of your family is being tested or has tested positive for COVID-19.
- If you have been contacted by the Reynolds County Health Department

## **Symptomatic Student / Staff Scenario:**

- A student or employee doesn't feel well and visits the school nurse.
- The nurse determines symptoms may be COVID related.

## **Protocol:**

- The student or employee will be masked, temporarily separated from others, and will wait to be picked up or leave the school. Students will not be left alone while they are waiting.
- The school nurse will contact the parent to pick up their child and encourage them to have their student tested and offer assistance in securing testing.
- The school nurse and school counselor will be available to talk to the student for reassurance and to assist the student with their fears or concerns while they wait for their parent.
- The school nurse will reach out to the parent with questions to ensure contact tracing information is gathered.
- The school nurse may notify the Reynolds County Health Department.
- Siblings or other students in the same household will undergo a screening by the school nurse. Even if they are not exhibiting symptoms, they may be sent home and asked to self-quarantine at the district's discretion.

## **Positive COVID-19 Test Result**

- If there is a positive test result, the Reynolds County Health Department will contact the parent and conduct a risk assessment (contact tracing).
- The school nurse will contact the Reynolds County Health Department for coordination and direction of next steps for the school.

## **District Office Response:**

- Based on the direction from the Reynolds County Health Department, the school nurse will notify the Superintendent of Schools for consideration of next steps.

**Symptomatic Students Return to School Protocols (No Positive Test Result):**

Students with symptoms can return to school when they have met the following conditions:

- Fever and symptom free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- Upon returning to school they will be evaluated by the school nurse.

Please call your child's school when they are absent. If it is due to illness, you will be transferred to talk to the school nurse after reporting the absence to the school office. Your student will undergo a health screening by a district nurse when he or she returns to school.

**Students with a Positive Test Result:**

Students with a positive test result will be excluded from school until cleared by the Reynolds County Health Department or a medical provider. The student may return to school once the following conditions have been met:

- Fever free without the use of fever reducing medications for 72 hours.
- Symptom free or improving symptoms.
- Negative COVID test.
- Medical clearance from health care provider (documentation must be provided).

We are in constant communication with the Reynolds County Health Department, other area school districts, government officials, as well as the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. We will continue to monitor COVID-19 cases in our area. Nurse Melanie Swaringim will be the point of contact between the school district and families when there is a positive test result or a presumptive positive in the household. She will maintain a log of information to aid the Reynolds County Health Department with contact tracing.

# Building Visitors

- At this time, we ask that you limit visits to the school to only those absolutely necessary.
- All outside vendors will be required to wear a mask when visiting the school.
- If you are not feeling well, please do not visit the school.
- Visitors may be subject to temperature checks and a wellness screening.

## Drop-off and Pickup Procedures

In the interest of limiting visitors to the school building as much as possible to comply with safety recommendations regarding COVID-19, we ask that parents/guardians don't accompany their child in the building in the mornings if at all possible. Students can be dropped off at the elementary doors where a staff member will greet them.

Parents/guardians who will be picking up their student after school will not be able to enter the building until 3:00pm through the main entrance doors. Once in the building, parents/guardians will need to stay in the cafeteria. Please don't be in the offices, hallways, or other areas unnecessarily.

## School Parties / Recognition Days

School parties and school day events will look different for 2020-2021. The administrative team will be working on plans for parties and events, and we hope to be able to continue some of these school traditions at some point this year. We enjoy hosting our Grandparent's Day, Muffins with Mom, and Donuts with Dad day events, however, we must keep the safety of our families as the priority. If we feel we can safely host these events, we will send out information in the future.

## Athletics

Lesterville School will follow guidance from MSHSAA and the Reynolds County Health Department concerning extra-curricular activities. This includes guidance concerning participants and fans. Currently, we plan on playing ballgames with fans in attendance. Please do not attend an extra-curricular event if you are not feeling well. Fans exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms may be asked to leave. Fans will be restricted to the gymnasium, cafeteria, and restrooms. All hallways will be blocked off. All student athletes and their parents will be required to sign a participation waiver. All coaches and students will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms and must report any possible exposure prior to entering any district site or competitor's site. Additional disinfecting measures will be implemented during the event. We will work on utilizing social media to stream ballgames for those fans that do not wish to attend in person.

# Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols

## **What protocols will be in place in each building to properly disinfect classrooms and commonly touched surfaces?**

- Desks, chairs and commonly touched surfaces will be disinfected throughout the day.
- Procedures to disinfect frequent touch points will be implemented.
- The evening custodial staff will ensure the cleanliness of the school for the start of the next day.
- Teachers and students must be involved in cleaning their instructional space.
- Classrooms will be provided with disinfecting wipes to use throughout the day.
- Playground equipment will be disinfected.

## **Student Hand Washing and Sanitizing**

- Elementary school teachers will build in time to have students periodically wash hands throughout the day, including, but not limited to, when entering the building, the start of the day, before and after lunch, and following recess.
- Everyone entering a school must use hand sanitizer or wash hands upon entry.
- Custodial staff will be responsible for refilling sanitizer.

## **What additional measures will staff be expected to perform to limit potential exposure to other students/staff (in individual classrooms during the day)?**

- All employees should work to keep their office and workspace as clean as possible by cleaning and disinfecting their workstations, surfaces they commonly use and other touchpoints. Employees should also avoid using others' workstations, supplies, tools and equipment.
- Use virtual manipulatives/tools as much as possible.
- Limit multiple students touching/interacting with the same materials.
- Keep students physically distant within the classroom as much as possible.
- Ensure students are facing the same direction as much as possible.
- Student temperatures may be taken at random times during the day to avoid bottlenecks at the exterior doors and to help with maintaining physical distance during arrival.
- Restrooms schedules will be created to avoid intermingling, but students will always be able to use the restroom as needed. Restrooms will be frequently disinfected by the custodial staff.

# Breakfast and Lunch Procedures

## **Breakfast**

Lesterville School will serve a Grab-and-Go breakfast. Elementary students will be able to pick up breakfast and take it to their classroom to eat. This will minimize the blending of different grade levels in the cafeteria in the mornings. Junior High and High School students will pick up their breakfast and eat in the cafeteria and gymnasium.

## **Lunch**

Lunch schedules will be staggered to avoid multiple grade levels waiting in line to be served. Students will be seated by grade to reduce the blending of different grade levels. As much as possible, social distancing will be practiced. Some grades will have the option of eating outside or in their classroom.

# Transportation

Bus routes will run as scheduled. Family groups will sit together on the bus. Hand sanitizer dispensers will be added to each bus and will be available for use upon entering. Each bus will be disinfected twice daily, at the end of each route. If possible, parents are encouraged to transport their children to and from school. This will help with distancing on the buses.