

Hope Elementary School 2023-2024 COVID-19 Procedures

Revised 04/08/2024

This is being provided as a resource for the school community outlining the plan for the 2023-24 school year in continued response to the pandemic caused by COVID-19. The plan was approved on 4/8/24 and is subject to change as conditions change.

We recognize the unprecedented times in which our schools operate and the fluidity of our public health situation. As a result, we authorize the Superintendent to make changes to this document without board approval based on emerging legal or health guidance.

INTRODUCTION

Hope Elementary School recognizes that we play a critical role in helping to ensure the health and safety of not only our staff and students but also our community. Because we take that role as seriously as we take our duty to educate and support our students, we know it is critical that we continue to follow a combination of safety measures during the 2023-2024 academic year. Although we remain hopeful that the increased prevalence of vaccinations in older students and adults will help us to experience fewer cases in our county and schools, we believe strongly that successful implementation of the measures outlined below will depend greatly upon our continued ability to partner with students, families, staff and community agencies.

This document reflects recent changes in the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Covid Guidelines. According to the CDC, as the 2023-2024 fall and winter virus season ends, it is clear that the situation surrounding COVID-19 has changed. It is still an important health threat, but it is no longer the emergency that it once was, and the health impacts increasingly resemble those of other respiratory viral illnesses, including flu and RSV.

SAFETY MEASURES IN PLACE AT SCHOOL

HES will continue to implement health and safety practices recommended by the CDC to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses such as flu and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). These practices include the following school-wide measures:

Daily Health Review

Performing a daily health check is an important consideration in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses. It is critical that all members of our school community conduct this health check every morning before entering the building.

Each student (or parent on behalf of student) and staff member should go through this daily checklist before coming to school/work to help prevent the spread of respiratory and other illnesses.

- Within the past 24 hours have you had a fever (100.4 and above) or used any fever reducing medicine?
- Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours?
- Do you feel sick with any common symptoms of COVID-19?

When people get sick with a respiratory virus, the updated CDC guidance recommends that they stay at home and away from others. For people with COVID-19 and influenza, treatment is available that can lessen symptoms and lower the risk of severe illness. The recommendations suggest returning to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, symptoms are improving overall, and if a fever was present, it has been gone without the use of a fever-reducing medication.

Hand Hygiene

Hand washing is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of disease. All students and staff members must wash hands or sanitize hands in the following situations.

- Upon entering the school
- Before and after eating
- Before and after putting on or removing a face mask/covering, if worn.
- After using the restroom
- Before and after use of playgrounds and shared equipment

Students and staff are trained in proper hand hygiene procedures, which are reinforced in each classroom. Sanitizing stations are available throughout the school.

Masks

Although proven to be effective at stopping the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory virus transmission, masks are now optional indoors for all staff and students, regardless of vaccination status.

Face masks are no longer required when returning to work after testing positive for COVID-19.

Ventilation and Outdoor Spaces

HES has ensured ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible and will keep windows and doors open, as long as this does not pose a safety or health risk to students or staff.

HES will encourage the use of outdoor play and outdoor spaces.

Windows on buses will be down as much as possible.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Cold/Flu Season

Cold and flu symptoms can closely mirror COVID-19 symptoms, and managing both a bad flu season and the ongoing presence of COVID-19 could be highly disruptive for our educational institution and healthcare system.

The CDC and health providers strongly recommend as many children and adults as possible receive vaccines to prevent outbreaks of flu, COVID, and RSV.