

# Hope Elementary School 2023-2024 COVID-19 Procedures

Draft 8/11/23

*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 August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023 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. **We will continuously be monitoring the transmission rates in our area and will be adjusting accordingly.** We look forward to strengthening these partnerships as we ride out this pandemic together.

## SAFETY MEASURES THAT WILL BE IN PLACE AT SCHOOL

Since the onset of this pandemic the importance of implementing critical health and safety practices to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, have been stressed by the CDC. These practices include rigorous hygiene and hand washing, staying home when sick, protecting those most vulnerable to the disease, and expanding testing and tracing capabilities, among others.

As educators we strive to provide a safe learning environment for our students which is why we will be implementing the following safety protocols school-wide for grades PK-8, as recommended by the CDC and DOE regardless of their vaccination status.

## **Daily Health Screening**

- a. All students, under the supervision of a parent or guardian, as well as school staff will complete the daily health-screening checklist by 7:30 AM each morning before arriving at school/boarding the bus. Answers to these questions will determine whether students/staff can safely attend school/work that day (**See Appendix A**).
- b. Students and staff who answer, “Yes,” to any question on the screening must stay home.

## **Masks**

Masks will be optional indoors for all staff and students, regardless of vaccination status.

- a. Face masks are required through day 10 after a person tested positive for COVID-19.
- b. . Face masks are required if there is a confirmed COVID exposure in the household.

## **Ventilation and Outdoor Spaces**

- a. 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.
- b. HES will encourage the use of outdoor play and outdoor spaces.
- c. Windows on buses will be down as much as possible.

## **ADDITIONAL DETAILS**

### **Cold/Flu Season**

Flu season is another critical factor that could pose significant challenges for schools and students. Not only do flu symptoms closely mirror COVID-19 symptoms, but also managing both a bad flu season and an ongoing presence of COVID-19 could be highly disruptive for our educational institution and healthcare system.

Health providers strongly recommend as many children and adults as possible receive the flu vaccine.

## **APPENDIX A: DAILY HEALTH SELF-CHECK**

This is one of the main safety features of our return to in-person learning in our school, the daily health self-check. 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 COVID-19.

1. Within the past 24 hours have you had a fever (100.4 and above) or used any fever reducing medicine?
2. Do you feel sick with any common symptoms of Covid, had vomiting/diarrhea, or felt unwell?

**If the answer is YES to any of these, stay home and consult with your family physician.**