

ROCHESTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
SAFE SCHOOL REOPENING POLICY
2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

Based on the guidance provided by Governor Holcomb's Executive Order 20-28 and the Indiana School Board Association's Coronavirus and Re-Entry Resource Guide updated June 10, 2020, together with input from the CDC Guidelines and in conversation with Dr. Kevin Reyburn, Chair of the Fulton County Health Department, the Rochester Schools have created the following plan for the operation of the Rochester School System's plan in re-opening the education of Rochester students for the Fall semester 2020. This policy is subject to change or amendment upon the recommendation of the Fulton County Health Department, the Rochester School Board, or by Order of the Governor.

I. *Educational Operations.*

- A. Calendar. Rochester Schools will open for the fall semester on August 4, 2020 for students, with organizational day for teachers on August 3, 2020, pursuant to the 2020-2021 school calendar approved October 21, 2019. All classes will be in session on August 4, 2020 pursuant to student schedules.
- B. Passing periods. Rochester Middle and Rochester High School days will be modified to permit staggered passing periods between classes in order to allow for physical distancing. The superintendent will establish the passing period plan by August 1, 2020.
- C. Rochester Schools will provide E-learning opportunities for high risk students based on IEPs or a doctor's diagnosis of high risk provided to the school, using school provided one-to-one electronic devices. School will record E-learning sessions to accommodate home bound students and their parents' access to the student's education, for 72 hours after live classroom time.
- D. Rochester Schools will provide E-learning opportunities for students whose parents have elected to distance learn, upon enrollment, using school provided one-to-one electronic devices. School will record E-learning sessions to accommodate home bound students and their parents' access to the student's education, for 72 hours after live classroom time.

II. *Student and staff illnesses.*

- A. Students who are ill with Coronavirus or have Covid-19 diagnosis, or who are ordered into quarantine by a physician or the County Health Department shall have excused absences and during the quarantine shall be enrolled in E-learning opportunities.
- B. High risk students are authorized to participate in their education at the school building, or by E-learning. The director of educational services will coordinate with each family to determine the appropriate manner and method of education.
- C. Medically fragile students who are unable to attend school due to Covid risks shall be provided remote educational services through E-learning. The Case Conference Committee for each student shall meet virtually at least every 60 instructional days to review the IEP for each student unable to attend school in person.
- D. Teachers and Staff – See Addendum A.

III. *Physical distancing.*

It shall be the policy to provide as much physical distancing as is possible in classrooms, hallways, cafeterias and at other school facilities. The recommended six feet is not possible in most instances. At the request of the Health Department, all classrooms shall be set up so that students are facing one direction, and cluster teaching is prohibited without building administrator approval.

IV. *Bus Transportation.*

- A. Bus transportation shall be available to students who shall wear masks at all times on the bus. Students/parents shall use hand sanitizers before students get on the bus for school, students shall use hand sanitizer at school before they get on the bus for returning home. Students without masks shall not be permitted on the bus. Colored masks will be provided by the corporation and rotated by a schedule provided by the bus driver. Each colored mask will be worn no more than 1 time per week, and students are responsible to use the proper mask each week during each 9 week period. Bus staff and drivers shall wear masks and use hand sanitizer when boarding the bus.
- B. Athletic transportation to and from athletic events shall require all athletes and coaches to properly wear masks, provided by the athletic department. Failure or refusal to properly wear a mask

may result in suspension from athletic activities by the athletic director.

C. Buses shall be sanitized daily after use.

V. *Screening.*

A. Each student/parent or staff member shall be personally responsible to daily screen their own physical condition, by taking their temperature before school starts. Those with a temperature that equals or exceeds 100.4 degrees shall be kept at home, and their absence properly reported to the school building.

B. If a student or staff member attends school and thereafter appears to be showing signs of illness, by elevated temperature, coughing, sneezing, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell they should report to the school nurse who shall quarantine the student and contact a parent or guardian to pick up the student, or send the staff person home, responsibly. Once a student or employee is removed from the school environment, they will be permitted to return if they satisfy the following guidelines.

VI. *Return after Exhibiting Symptoms.* Persons who have been self-quarantined, or removed or excluded from school may return after:

A. If not tested for Covid-19 they may return if:

1. They have not had a fever for at least 72 hours without the use of medication to reduce fever; and
2. Other symptoms such as coughing, or shortness of breath has improved; and
3. At least 10 calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

B. Persons who experience symptoms and have been tested for Covid-19 may return if, in addition to the above requirements, the individual has received two negative Covid-19 tests at least 24 hours apart.

C. If a person tests positive for Covid-19, but has exhibited no symptoms, they may return if:

1. They have not had symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath, after the test results; and
2. They have been released by a health care provider to return to school, in writing.

VII. Medical Inquiries. The school will take each opportunity to inquire concerning Covid-19 symptoms for employees and students, including:

- A. If a parent tells the school that a student is ill, the school will ask the parent whether the student is exhibiting symptoms of Covid-19.
- B. If an employee calls in sick or appears ill, the school will inquire whether the employee is experiencing Covid-19 symptoms.
- C. If a person is obviously ill, the school may make inquiries about the symptoms exhibited, and may exclude the person from school property, only to return in accordance with Section VI of this policy.
- D. If a student or employee has recently had contact with a person with a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19, has someone in their home being tested for Covid-19, or has recently traveled from somewhere considered to be a “hot spot” by the CDC, the school may exclude the person from the school building, and recommend that they self-quarantine for 14 calendar days.

VIII. Masks and PPE.

- A. Based upon CDC guidelines recommending that all students wear cloth face coverings, it is recommended that all students wear masks whenever the student is unable to maintain physical distancing, such as in the hallways and buses.
- B. Based upon CDC guidelines recommending that all employees wear cloth face coverings, it is recommended that all employees wear masks whenever the employee is unable to maintain physical distancing, such as in the hallways, and buses.
- C. Some students with educational plans concerning special medical needs may be required to wear masks by the Director of Special Services, as ratified by the next Case Conference Committee decision.
- D. Outdoor classes or recess periods shall be optional mask usage times.
- E. The school will have masks available at the nurses station.

IX. School Response to Confirmed Cases.

- A. After it is confirmed that a person infected with Covid-19 was on school property, the following steps shall be taken.
 - 1. Notification to the County Health Department.
 - 2. Notification to the Indiana Department of Education.
 - 3. Implementation of sanitization efforts in areas where the infected person was engaged in the educational program.
- B. The administration may shut down buildings, busses, or other facilities upon recommendation of County Health Board or the Indiana Department of Education, for such time as is appropriate for the protection of the community.

X. *Sanitation issues.*

- A. Water fountains. All water fountains shall be disabled at the drinking spigot. Touchless bottle filling water fountains have been installed in buildings, and more will be installed as available. Students needing hydration shall be responsible to provide their own water bottle, which shall not be shared with other persons. Restrictions on the presence of water bottles in classrooms are lifted.
- B. Restroom use. High school and middle school restrooms will be unavailable for use during passing periods. Students needing to use the restroom facilities may seek a pass during class, at such times as to not disrupt the educational plan of the teacher.

Riddle and Columbia schools shall handle restroom usage by classroom visits. No more than one class shall be released for restroom use at a time.

- C. Hand washing or sanitizing. Hand sanitizers shall be available at all entry doors, at the cafeteria, and throughout the building. All persons should use hand sanitizers at the following times:
 - 1. upon entering the building in the morning.
 - 2. before eating.
 - 3. after using a restroom.
 - 4. after blowing the nose, coughing or sneezing; and
 - 5. after using shared equipment.

The school will provide hand sanitizer for these purposes.

- XI. *High Risk Periods.* Several classes, due to the nature of instruction are considered high risk classes. If a student is enrolled in such a class, special protections and procedures will be required for participation, and parents or guardians will have to authorize participation during the pandemic period.
- A. Choir Class, due to the deep breaths and forceful exhalation used in singing, the class is considered high risk. Participation, depending on class numbers and room size may be sporadic, with less singing practice, and more music appreciation teaching for students. Concerts will only be scheduled if appropriate.
 - B. Band Class, due to the deep breaths and forceful exhalation used in playing musical instruments, especially marching band, the class is considered high risk. Participation, depending on class numbers and room size may be sporadic, with less practice on instruments, and more music appreciation teaching for students. Concerts will only be scheduled if appropriate.
 - C. Physical Education Class, due to the deep breaths and forceful exhalation used in physical exertion, the class is considered high risk. Participation, depending on class numbers and room size may be sporadic, with less physical activity and more education for students.
 - D. Weight Training, due to the deep breaths and forceful exhalation used in weight training, the class is considered high risk. Participation, depending on class numbers and room size may be sporadic, due to the half capacity requirement for the facility.
 - E. Cafeteria time for students of all classes except Kindergarten shall be in the cafeteria rooms, with physical distance achieved by seat assignments. Students are responsible to assure that physical distancing is maintained. Kindergarten students shall eat meals in their classrooms with physical distancing by seat assignments.

Adopted by the Rochester School Board the 22nd day of June, 2020 by a vote of ____ aye,
____ nay.

Attest:

Board Secretary

ADDENDUM A.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act set the following standards into law:

FAQ 33. If I am an employer, may I require an employee to supplement or adjust the pay mandated under the FFCRA with paid leave that the employee may have under my paid leave policy?

No. Under the FFCRA, only the employee may decide whether to use existing paid vacation, personal, medical, or sick leave from your paid leave policy to supplement the amount your employee receives from paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave. The employee would have to agree to use existing paid leave under your paid leave policy to supplement or adjust the paid leave under the FFCRA.

The Act provides that employees of covered employers are eligible for:

Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at the employee's regular rate of pay where the employee is unable to work because the employee is quarantined (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a health care provider), and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis; or

Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay because the employee is unable to work because of a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a health care provider), or to care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19, and/or the employee is experiencing a substantially similar condition as specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Labor; and

Up to an additional 10 weeks of paid expanded family and medical leave at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay where an employee, who has been employed for at least 30 calendar days, is unable to work due to a bona fide need for leave to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.

Eligible Employees: All employees of covered employers are eligible for two weeks of paid sick time for specified reasons related to COVID-19. Employees employed for at least 30 days are eligible for up to an additional 10 weeks of paid family leave to care for a child under certain circumstances related to COVID-19.

Qualifying Reasons for Leave:

Under the FFCRA, an employee qualifies for paid sick time if the employee is unable to work (or unable to telework) due to a need for leave because the employee:

1. is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
2. has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;
3. is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis;
4. is caring for an individual subject to an order described in (1) or self-quarantine as described in (2);
5. is caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) for reasons related to COVID-19; or
6. is experiencing any other substantially-similar condition specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretaries of Labor and Treasury.

Under the FFCRA, an employee qualifies for expanded family leave if the employee is caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) for reasons related to COVID-19.

Duration of Leave:

For reasons (1)-(4) and (6): A full-time employee is eligible for 80 hours of leave, and a part-time employee is eligible for the number of hours of leave that the employee works on average over a two-week period.

For reason (5): A full-time employee is eligible for up to 12 weeks of leave (two weeks of paid sick leave followed by up to 10 weeks of paid expanded family & medical leave) at 40 hours a week, and a part-time employee is eligible for leave for the number of hours that the employee is normally scheduled to work over that period.

Calculation of Pay:

For leave reasons (1), (2), or (3): employees taking leave are entitled to pay at either their regular rate or the applicable minimum wage, whichever is higher, up to \$511 per day and \$5,110 in the aggregate (over a 2-week period).

For leave reasons (4) or (6): employees taking leave are entitled to pay at 2/3 their regular rate or 2/3 the applicable minimum wage, whichever is higher, up to \$200 per day and \$2,000 in the aggregate (over a 2-week period).

For leave reason (5): employees taking leave are entitled to pay at 2/3 their regular rate or 2/3 the applicable minimum wage, whichever is higher, up to \$200 per day and \$12,000 in the aggregate (over a 12-week period).

School Tax Consequences:

School districts are permitted under Section 7005(a) of the FFCRA to not to pay employer FICA taxes on FFCRA benefits. However, Section 7005(b) of the FFCRA provides that the tax credits available to private employers will be expanded to cover employer Medicare taxes on FFCRA benefits. Because school districts are not eligible for the tax credits, school districts must still pay employer Medicare taxes on FFCRA

benefits. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Department of Labor (DOL) have both said that they will put out guidance especially for public sector employers, but no such guidance is available yet. In the absence of such guidance, school districts should remit employer Medicare taxes on FFCRA benefits.