

Message from Dr. Kristen Rickey, Superintendent

July, 2021

Revised August 18, 2021

Revised January 10, 2022

Revised March 15, 2022

To our Families, Employees, and Community Members:

We are very proud of the successful 2020-21 school year we had despite the pandemic, and we are looking forward to another successful year in 2021-22! Thank you for all the support and flexibility as we addressed the changing state of knowledge of the virus and the safety protocols needed to provide the safest learning environment for our students and staff.

Please carefully read our revised plan for the 2021-22 school year, as we have made revisions based on new knowledge and/or new guidance. Throughout all of our planning, the health and safety of our students, our staff, and the larger community has been our primary concern and at the center of our decision making. As has been the case throughout the pandemic, we will continue to update our procedures as we learn more and receive guidance from the Department of Public Health and the Iowa Department of Education.

Thank you for your patience, support, and encouragement as we work through this challenging time together. We feel confident that together, we will have a successful 2021-22 school year, and we are excited to welcome students and families back to school!

Sincerely,
Dr. Kristen Rickey, Superintendent

Instructional Delivery

Our primary consideration in selecting our mode of instruction is the health and safety of our students, staff, and community. We have also given strong consideration to other student and family needs, including academic achievement, equity, social-emotional health, and family capacity for remote instruction.

The guidelines and decisions referenced in this plan are based on guidance from the Iowa Department of Education, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Iowa Department of Public Health. This plan is developed based on current recommendations and is subject to change based on additional information from these organizations and/or any proclamations from the State of Iowa. Changes will be communicated to our families as soon as possible, but due to the nature of the pandemic they may occur with little advance notice.

Below is a table that defines the different learning options that we may use this year. These may change based on changing circumstances in our community.

Delivery Method	Description
Daily On-Site **This is the option West Delaware will use unless local circumstances change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Schools will be on site for all students Monday through Friday according to our normal calendar.● Enhanced, detailed cleaning protocols and other health and safety measures will be implemented as described in this document.
Hybrid **West Delaware will <u>NOT</u> use this option unless local circumstances require a change and the hybrid option is approved by the Department of Education. This will be announced to families if it is necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Students will be split into two groups based on last name. Groups will alternate location of instruction, with each attending on site approximately 50% of the week and through remote instruction approximately 50% of the week.● Exact schedules will be announced at the time this method of instruction is announced.● All students will participate in required remote instruction when not on site.
All students remote **This option will only be used if necessary due to local health conditions and must be approved by the Department of Education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● School operations are limited to virtual learning only for all students. West Delaware teachers will provide this and parents will be informed of specific timelines and schedules for remote learning. **This may apply to only a classroom or other group of students based on quarantine directives from the Iowa Department of Public Health.● The Learning Management System will be SeeSaw for students/teachers in grade PK-2, and Google Classroom for students/teachers in grades 3-12.● Students will continue to have access to high quality instruction and will be required to participate, attendance will be taken, work will be graded, and credit will be issued.

EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT HEALTH

Parents are asked to complete a brief health screening process at home before sending the student to school. The student should stay home if he/she is symptomatic or sick. It is requested and strongly recommended, but not required, that students stay home if they have been in direct contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

COVID-19 positive persons can return to normal activities after:

- 10 days since symptoms first appeared
 - Under new CDC guidance, this can be shortened to 5 days if the person testing positive wears a mask consistently and correctly for 5 additional days. If the person who tested positive cannot or chooses not to wear a mask, he/she must remain out of school for the full 10 days.
- 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving*

*Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation

All other sick students, teachers, or other staff members should stay home in accordance with existing school procedures, generally until 24 hours after their symptoms resolve.

Our district nurse will work closely with the Delaware County Department of Public Health to determine the next steps. Parents are strongly encouraged to notify the school principal if a student or someone they have been in direct contact with tests positive for COVID-19.

Employees will follow the same self-administered pre-screening described above for students and MUST stay home if showing any symptoms of illness until they are 24 hours symptom free. Employees may be required to take temperatures on site before reporting to work location.

Employees must notify their supervisor if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, test positive for COVID-19 or are directly exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID-19.

EMPLOYEE OR STUDENT EXPOSURE West Delaware will work closely with the Iowa Department of Health and the Delaware County Department of Health and will follow any required quarantine orders issued by the Department of Public Health. Current guidance released by the Iowa Department of Public Health in May and in August, 2021, directed that exposed individuals who are not showing symptoms will no longer be required to quarantine and contact tracing will not be conducted. This guidance is subject to change.

ENHANCED SAFETY MEASURES

Our goal is to protect the health and safety of our staff and students. We know that at this time children under the age of 12 are not eligible for vaccination, and some other students and staff have not or cannot receive the vaccine. To protect everyone, we will continue to implement layered prevention strategies recommended by the CDC. Please note that while we will take many measures to protect health and safety, we cannot meet all CDC recommendations in all situations and cannot guarantee that all COVID exposure will be eliminated.

Revised March 15, 2022

With the current trends improving in our Community Covid Transmission rates, as well as the changes to vaccines that make them available for anyone five years of age or older, the physical distancing requirements detailed below will be adjusted accordingly. At this time teachers and staff will be allowed to arrange desks and furniture in groups and students will be allowed to be in closer proximity. This also includes common student and staff seating areas like the commons/lunchroom, school buses, and other spaces.

This closer physical proximity of students and staff will be allowed if community transmission rates remain at levels that are considered low or medium as determined by the CDC. The requirement to return to a more restrictive physical distancing detailed in the 2021-22 West Delaware Return to Learn plan will occur if either of the following is reached:

- 10% illness for any reason in one building
- CDC determines that our community transmission level is high, as reported at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/community-levels.html>

If either of these factors is reached, the stricter physical distancing requirements listed below will be put back into place by building for a period of two weeks, dated from the most recent date of that measure.

Physical Distancing (Social Distancing)

Physical distancing is one strategy to prevent potential infection. West Delaware will employ physical distancing strategies to increase space between individuals, adjusted seating arrangements for school buses, classrooms, and common areas and post signs to remind staff and students of 6-foot physical distancing to the maximum extent possible. Please note that six foot distancing is not possible in all situations, and students will likely be closer than six feet in most circumstances. Maximum distance possible in the space available will be utilized.

Face Coverings

Face coverings are allowed and recommended but not required for West Delaware employees, students, visitors, and volunteers, except as required by law.

Cafeteria Protocols

Nutritious, high quality, healthy breakfast and lunch will be served according to typical federal nutrition program guidelines. Principals will adjust lunch schedules and utilize additional space to create physical spacing between students during meal times and while in line to the extent

possible. Students will generally eat in the lunch room but may be required to eat in classrooms, in the lunchroom, or in other spaces created for this purpose if further spacing is required due to local circumstances.

Students will wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before meals and after meals. Serving staff and cashier will be separated from students by plexiglass barriers.

If hybrid or remote instruction is implemented, breakfast and lunch will be offered as “grab-n-go” meals, which are available for drive-by pick-up. Details on pick up times and locations will be shared at the time this determination is made.

Limiting group interaction

Students in grades PK-4 will participate in a practice called “cohorting”. This means that students will remain in the same group for the entire day with very few exceptions.

Special/exploratory teachers will either come to the students or the students will travel as a class to the specials/exploratory classroom. There may be exceptions for students receiving special services such as IEP services or Title I, as well as during music, intervention/enrichment, and PE, but these exceptions will be kept to a minimum. Cohort groups will eat lunch and have recess together.

Large group gathering restricted

Events during the school day that create large gatherings, such as pep rallies and assemblies, may be restricted or eliminated. Field trips will be evaluated to determine if they are essential to instruction and if they can be accomplished by alternate means. Non-essential field trips or those in which we cannot implement appropriate health and safety protocols may be restricted or eliminated.

Visitors and Volunteers

West Delaware values its volunteers, and we look forward to welcoming them back into our school. For the safety of our staff, students, and the volunteers themselves, volunteer activities may be limited or restricted. Visitors to our buildings may also be restricted. All visitors and volunteers will follow all safety procedures implemented by West Delaware, including screening, hand washing, and social distancing when interacting with students and staff.

Service providers

Outside service providers, including AEA staff and community providers will follow all safety procedures implemented by West Delaware, including hand washing, social distancing, and other required measures when interacting with students and staff.

Entrance and Exit Procedures

Building principals will adjust entry and exit procedures to comply with physical distancing, handwashing, and other mitigation strategies. Specific practices will be customized for each school and may include designating building entrances by grade level, mapping traffic patterns through the school, or other measures deemed appropriate and necessary.

Cleaning and disinfection of materials

Enhanced cleaning and disinfection measures will be implemented to ensure the physical spaces, equipment, and materials staff and students come into contact with remain as clean and safe as possible. High touch surfaces such as doorknobs, handles, fixtures, etc. will be cleaned multiple times throughout the day. Restrooms will be monitored and cleaned more frequently throughout the day. All classrooms will be equipped with cleaning solution for student desktops and hand sanitizer.

Regular water fountains will not be available. Water fill stations will be available and cleaned regularly throughout the day. Students are encouraged to bring a water bottle for personal use throughout the day.

Classroom materials

Classroom materials will not be shared unless sanitized between student uses. Library books will be rotated through classrooms and sanitized/quarantined between groups.

Handwashing

Handwashing or use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol will occur at arrival, before and after eating, before entering a classroom, and at regular intervals throughout the day. Good hygiene practices will be encouraged and discussed in the classroom.

TRANSPORTATION AND BUS PROTOCOLS

Due to the high usage of bus transportation and the shortage of additional drivers or vehicles, six foot of physical distancing will not be possible on district buses. The following procedures will be required to address the health and safety of our bus drivers and students.

- Students will be assigned seats on the bus. They will sit with other family members, and we will attempt to create distance by leaving empty seats between families when possible. This may not be possible on all buses depending on capacity limits and number of riders.
- Upon entering the school bus, every student will be required to sanitize their hands using hand sanitizer.
- School buses will be required to travel with the windows open if the weather permits to facilitate air flow.
- Face coverings are allowed and recommended but not required for West Delaware employees and students on the bus except/unless required by law. At this time we are not requiring masks on school buses, but we will implement this if we are legally required to do so.
- Students will NOT be allowed to ride a bus other than the assigned route. Guests will not be allowed on buses.
- Each school bus operator will be required to sanitize their school bus after each route.

West Delaware strongly encourages families to drop off their student(s) and pick them up from school if possible. This is voluntary and not required.