

Carthage Elementary School District # 317

RETURN TO LEARN PLAN 2021-2022

In accordance with the Illinois State Superintendent of Schools July 9, 2021 declaration, Carthage CESD 317 will be open fully for in-person learning for all student attendance days for the 2021-22 school year. Remote instruction will only be made available for non-vaccinated or vaccine ineligible students who are under quarantine as directed by the local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health. Absent an order from the Illinois State Board of Education and/or the Illinois Governor's Office, Carthage CESD 317 will be in operation in accordance with the CDC's updated (July 9, 2021) *Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Kindergarten (K)-12 Schools*, also adopted by the IDPH on July 9, 2021. These guidelines include the following:

Schedule

All students will be provided a full day of in-person instruction five days per week.

Masks

The CDC, IDPH and ISBE recommend masks for all unvaccinated individuals. As long as supported by local health data:

- Mask use is recommended, but not required, indoors for everyone who is not fully vaccinated. Mask use is recommended, but not required, outdoors during activities (e.g., participating in outdoor play, recess, physical education, sports, extra-curricular activities) that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission.
- School staff are to model support for and encourage students to be supportive of people who choose to continue to wear a mask as a personal choice or because of a personal medical reason.
- School staff will not discriminate against anyone including, but not limited to: a staff member, employee, or a student for their decision to wear or not wear a mask.
- Unless exempt by CDC order, all passengers and drivers are required to wear a mask on school buses.

Social Distancing

The CDC, IDPH and ISBE recommend social distancing in schools of at least 3 feet where possible. While these agencies make the wearing of masks a recommendation and not a mandate, Carthage Schools will do the same.

- To the extent possible within school and classroom structures so that it does not exclude students from full day in-person learning, school staff are to help students commit to physical distancing as much as possible by:
 - arranging furniture, play spaces and naptime materials to model and reinforce physical distancing of at least 3 feet and movement;
 - providing assigned seating for students and encourage students to remain in these seats to the greatest extent possible; and
 - developing marked paths of travel in classrooms and corridors.

- School staff will maximize physical distance as much as possible when moving through food service lines and while eating indoors. Aside from the cafeteria, additional spaces for mealtime seating will be utilized when available and feasible (e.g., weather permitting).
- Physical distancing measures are to be done in an equitable manner that does not perpetuate academic, racial, or other tracking (e.g., separating people into fully vaccinated and non-fully vaccinated cohorts).

Screening

Parents and employees are responsible to self-screen and not come to school when displaying COVID symptoms.

Vaccinations

- Vaccinations will not be required. Respectful of peoples' varying levels of vaccine confidence, those who want to get vaccinated against COVID-19 can visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find out where they can get vaccinated in our community.
- Individuals will not be required to disclose their vaccination status. Parents, students and staff may wish to voluntarily disclose their vaccination status to avoid a mandatory quarantine for close contact with a COVID positive person.

Hand Washing/Hygiene

Frequent handwashing and attention to good personal hygiene is a simple and effective way to combat the spread of all viruses. Frequent handwashing opportunities will be a point of emphasis for Carthage E.S.D. #317 students and staff. Hand sanitizing stations will be placed for easy access throughout the building and entryways.

School staff will monitor and reinforce frequent handwashing and respiratory etiquette by

- continuing to teach handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- assisting young children with handwashing;
- reminding everyone in the facility to wash hands frequently;
- using hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol (for teachers, staff, and older students who can safely use hand sanitizer) when handwashing is not possible;
- continuing to teach respiratory etiquette (e.g., covering coughs and sneezes); and
- providing adequate handwashing and hand sanitizer supplies that are safely stored (up, away, and out of sight of young children and used only with adult supervision for children under 6 years of age).

Facilities

Frequent and thorough cleaning and sanitization of classrooms and facilities, with special attention paid to frequently touched surfaces will be a focus of the Carthage custodial staff. Hand sanitizing stations will be kept stocked and sanitizing fog machines will be used at least daily to kill viruses and help prevent any potential spread of COVID. Custodians and maintenance staff will also look for opportunities and suggestions to improve ventilation in the building as this is another layer of protection against the virus.

Contact Tracing and Quarantine

- Students and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as influenza (flu) or COVID-19, should stay home and contact their healthcare provider for testing and care.
- COVID positive students and staff will have mandatory quarantines in accordance with local health department guidelines.
- Students and staff who have had close contact with a COVID positive individual will have mandatory quarantines in accordance with local health department guidelines.

- Individuals in our school environments who show symptoms of COVID-19 are to immediately report to or be escorted to the school's office to be either sent home or be quarantined in the school's supervised safe area while awaiting pickup/evaluation. Students and staff are required to wear masks while in the safe area. Parents should ensure that ill students are picked up from school within 30 minutes of being notified. Ill students will not be allowed to utilize the school bus to return home.
- Student absences related to a COVID-19 isolation or quarantine will be recorded as excused. To ensure continuity of services, school work missed during such an absence can be requested and made up in accordance with the school's policy (refer to student handbook); social, emotional, mental health, or other needs will be provided in accordance with a student's IEP or 504 Plan. Parents of students who have social, emotional, mental health, or other needs outside of an IEP or 504 Plan should contact their child's principal to discuss needs. Remote instruction will only be made available for non-vaccinated or vaccine ineligible students who are under quarantine as directed by the local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health as per guidelines of the CDC, IDPH, and ISBE.
- Absent COVID-related leave days previously provided by Federal law, staff absences related to a COVID-19 isolation or quarantine will be recorded in accordance with the district's sick leave policy and related professional negotiations agreements. To ensure continuity of services, staff members should contact their principals to discuss support for social, emotional, mental health, or other needs.
- To the extent allowable by privacy laws and other applicable laws, school health care professionals will continue to collaborate with Hancock County Health Department officials to confidentially provide information about people diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19, including making notifications to staff and parents as soon as possible regarding those who were in close contact of someone in the school who tested positive for COVID-19.
- Following quarantine, students and staff returning from illness related to COVID-19 are to call to check in with the school's health care professional.

Visitors

- Nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations with people who are not fully vaccinated are discouraged from visiting schools.

Collaboration with Public Health Officials

- District officials will continue to collaborate and consult with Hancock County Health Department officials throughout a pandemic on various logistics and decision-making including, but not limited to, quarantines, school health and safety protocols, screening testing, contact tracing, vaccine clinics, and emergency school closings.

Remote Learning

ISBE has mandated in-person instruction for all schools.

Plan Review

This plan will be reviewed by the Carthage Board of Education whenever changes in guidelines are published by the CDC, IDPH, or ISBE that substantially change public health guidelines, or whenever local circumstances – especially those related to an outbreak may warrant. School district administration will continuously monitor local health data and consult with local public health officials to determine if policies/practices need revision.

Disabilities/Other Health Care Needs

- Parents of students who need accommodations, modifications, or assistance related to COVID-19 safety protocols, disabilities, underlying medical conditions, or weakened immune systems should contact the principal. Medical documentation may be required.
- Staff members who need accommodations, modifications, or assistance related to COVID-19 safety protocols, disabilities, underlying medical conditions, weakened immune systems, or a sincerely held religious belief or practice (covered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) should contact the principal to discuss the issue. Medical documentation may be required.

Tier-Based COVID Mitigation Measures

	Low Transmission: Positivity rate increasing by >10% for two consecutive weeks in community	Moderate Transmission: Positivity rate increasing for 2 consecutive weeks by more than 10%, but less than 20% each week in community	Substantial or High Transmission: Positivity rate increasing for 2 weeks, by > 20% each week in community
Screening	No health screening	Self health screening required for all students and staff prior to attending school or work.	Self health screening required for all students and staff prior to attending school or work
Face Coverings	<p>Transportation: Required during student transportation for all students and staff</p> <p>Instruction and Activities: Not required for vaccinated individuals.</p> <p>Face coverings strongly recommended but not required for unvaccinated individuals.</p>	<p>Transportation: Required during student transportation for all students and staff</p> <p>Instruction and Activities: Not required for vaccinated individuals.</p> <p>Face coverings strongly recommended but not required for unvaccinated individuals.</p>	<p>Transportation: Required during student transportation for all students and staff</p> <p>Instruction and Activities: Not required for vaccinated individuals.</p> <p>Face coverings strongly recommended but not required for unvaccinated individuals.</p>
Social Distancing	3 feet between students when practical	3 feet between students when practical	6 feet between students when practical
Quarantine	Per Hancock Public Health Guidelines	Per Hancock Public Health Guidelines	Per Hancock Public Health Guidelines
Hand Washing Protocols	Cleaning hands at key times with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water is not readily available	Cleaning hands at key times with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water is not readily available	Cleaning hands at key times with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water is not readily available
Cleaning Protocols	Standard cleaning protocols..	Standard cleaning protocols.	Enhanced cleaning protocols.
Low and Intermediate Risk Sports/Activities	No screening	Self health screening required for all students and staff prior to participation	Self health screening required for all students and staff prior to participation
High Risk Sports/Activities	No screening	Self health screening required for all students and staff prior to participation	Staff administered health screening required for all students and staff prior to participation