

Matteson School District #162

Back to In-Person Learning

Parents' Guide and F.A.Q.

Updated

As of January 12, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We appreciate your patience as we work through the details of this important reopening of school to in-person instruction. We continue to receive new guidance almost daily from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). As new guidance is released we are constantly reviewing the District's plan to be sure we are doing everything possible to keep all students and staff safe and to provide an effective and meaningful learning experience for your child. The district has a robust plan in place to provide in-person instruction for you as soon as possible. However, it is important to understand that the situation is very fluid and circumstances may require that a classroom, a school building, or the district may need to return to full remote learning for a specific period of time. The procedure for responding to an outbreak of COVID-19 is addressed in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section of this guide.

The district will be utilizing a hybrid in-person learning plan. The hybrid plan calls for approximately one-half of the students to be in the building at any given time in order to allow for proper social distancing whenever possible. To make this plan work the District is assigning students to one of two groups, Group A (generally students whose last names begin with letters A-K) and Group B (generally students whose last names begin with letters L-Z). Group A students will attend school in-person for normal hours on Mondays and Wednesdays while receiving live virtual instruction on a district issued laptop or Chromebook at home on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Group B students will attend school in-person on Tuesdays and Thursdays while receiving live virtual instruction on a district issued laptop or Chromebook at home on Mondays and Wednesdays. All students will participate in learning remotely from home on Fridays to allow custodians to deep clean and sanitize the buildings. Instruction on Fridays will end at 1:25 p.m. Note that whenever there are students from the same household with different last names, the district will assign them to the same group so that students from the same household attend school in-person on the same days. Richton Square School students will attend school five days a week and be assigned to either a AM or PM time schedule each day.

In addition, parents have the option to keep their child home to participate in remote learning five days per week. This election can be made at the beginning of each the quarter.

GROUP	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
A (A-K)	In-Person	Remote	In-Person	Remote	Remote
B (L-Z)	Remote	In-Person	Remote	In-Person	Remote

Parents made an election of remote vs. hybrid in-person learning at the end of September for the 2nd Quarter assuming the option of in-person instruction was going to be available at that time. Those choices have been kept in place for the 3rd quarter unless parents notified the district of a change prior to December 22, 2020. Parents can opt for remote instruction at any time.

For those students attending school in-person the following procedures will apply:

- The use of face masks will be required at all times on buses or inside school buildings except while students are eating during breakfast and lunch periods. Face masks can be removed when outdoors if socially distanced by six feet or more.
- Social distancing must be maintained to the extent possible.
- No more than 50 people may be gathered in one location.
- District buses will be routed to allow one student per seat (two students in the same seat are allowed if from the same household).
- Students will have their temperatures taken by staff prior to entering the school building each day.
- Parents will be required to self-certify daily that their child is free of COVID-19 symptoms, is not suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 and has not been exposed to someone who is confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
- Any child who is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19 must stay home. Symptoms include: a fever of 100.4 or greater, chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headaches, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, congestion or runny nose, nausea, or vomiting.
- Additional custodial staff will be on-duty in all buildings to provide increased cleaning and sanitization throughout the day and after school.
- Students will eat breakfast and lunch in their classroom or in another designated area while maintaining proper social distancing.
- Food deliveries at school will not be allowed.
- Visitors and volunteers will not be allowed in school buildings.
- Frequent hand-washing breaks will take place throughout the day.
- All students will receive at least 5 clock hours of instruction regardless of the location where learning takes place. Instruction can be via classroom broadcast, video lessons, or remote work.
- All students in grades K – 8 will receive a district-issued Chromebook or laptop for remote learning. PreK students have received iPads. Wireless “hot spot” connection devices will be available for those without internet access at home.

Below is a list of Frequently Asked Questions from parents. This document will be updated as more questions arise and new information is available.

LOGISTICAL QUESTIONS

1. Will the district provide facemasks for students? What if my child forgets to bring a facemask to school? On the first day of in-person learning for each student group, all students will be issued a washable and reusable facemask to wear. Students are not required to wear these particular masks but must come to school with an appropriate fitting mask each day. If any child forgets to bring a facemask to school the district will provide a disposable mask for the child to wear that day.
2. Will students need to wear facemasks for Physical Education class? Per ISBE guidelines all students must wear a facemask inside the school building except when consuming breakfast or lunch. School personnel will make every effort to provide outside activities when possible (and weather permitting) in order to allow for facemask breaks as long as students are socially distanced.
3. Will BASE have before and after-care services in the buildings? Yes. BASE is available for before and after school care as in past years. There will be no BASE on Fridays as the buildings will be closed in the afternoon for sanitization.
4. How many students are assigned to each classroom? The ISBE guidelines have not set the number of students assigned to a classroom; however, District 162 will limit the number of students in each classroom to allow for social distancing, generally not more than twelve (12) students depending on the size of the physical space.
5. Will breakfast and lunch be provided for my child if I do not elect in-person learning? The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has extended its Seamless Summer Food Program until June 2021. This program allows the school district to provide free meals to ALL children in the community whether they are in school or learning remotely from home. The district will make breakfasts and lunches available at all buildings for parents to pick-up.
6. Will there be any after-school activities or sports? As of now after-school activities and sports will not be held.
7. Will school hours be the same as in the regular school year? The school hours Monday through Thursday will be the same as the regular school year (7:45 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.). The school hours for the remote Friday's will be 7:45 a.m. – 1:25 p.m.
8. When is the first day of school and will the calendar be changing? The first day of in-person learning is scheduled for Monday, January 25, 2021. The District will continue to monitor information provided by the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Governors' Office to determine when it is safe to begin or return to the hybrid in-person model. Regardless of health metrics, the district made the decision to hold remote instruction only for all students from Tuesday, January 5, 2021 through at least Friday, January 22, 2021.

TECHNOLOGY QUESTIONS

1. Will students leave their Chromebooks/laptops at school? Students will bring their fully charged Chromebooks and laptops to and from school to allow them to be used both in the classroom and for remote instruction
2. What if we do not have adequate internet access at home? The district is partnering with T-Mobile to provide “hot spot” internet connectivity for those families that do not already have reliable internet connection in their homes for remote learning. Requests for hotspots can be made by sending an email to hotspot@sd162.org.
3. Are the Chromebooks/laptops monitored and filtered for inappropriate content? Yes, all devices are compliant with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA). All devices have software installed that monitor usage and do not allow inappropriate content whether being used on the district’s network or remotely at home.
4. What happens if my child’s device is damaged? The District has purchased accidental damage protection that covers the repair or replacement of one device per person. Any additional repairs or replacements will need to be paid by the parent or guardian.

HEALTH QUESTIONS

1. How will parents “self-certify” their child’s health each day? It is required by IDPH that parents complete a Self-Certification form for each child every morning before putting the child on the bus or bringing them to school. Parents will receive one form in the packet e-mailed to them prior to returning to in-person instruction. On the first day of in-person school, students will receive a pad of 25 Self-Certification Checklist forms. Parents must sign, date and return the form with their child each day.
2. What if my child arrives to school without a completed, signed Self-Certification form? Students who arrive without this form will not be allowed to go to class until the form is completed.
3. What if my child has a medical reason for not being able to wear a mask at school? The ISBE and IDPH have made clear that masks must be worn at all times in the school building except during breakfast and lunch unless there is a documented medical reason for the child not to wear one. If a child has a medical condition that makes it not feasible for him or her to wear a face mask at school and that can be documented by a physician, parents should contact their child’s Principal for further guidance and options.
4. Does the district have nurses on staff in its buildings? All District #162 buildings have nurses on-staff during the school day.
5. My child has a severe food allergy that will prohibit him or her from eating in a classroom with other students who may bring to school food with allergens. What are my options? Students with severe food allergies should bring this to the attention of the building Principal. Each building will make a limited number of seats and tables available

in lunchrooms for students with severe allergies to eat in an allergy free environment while socially distanced.

6. What happens if a child develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while at school? Consistent with ISBE and IDPH guidance, the district will have a separate room available to isolate any student who develops or exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 until a parent or guardian arrives to take the child home.
7. What happens if a child or staff member is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19? Who will be notified? Within the school environment, any individual who shows symptoms of COVID-19 will be immediately separated from the rest of the school population. A room has been identified in each building.

Individuals who are sick will be sent home. If emergency services are necessary, staff will call 911. When interacting with students or staff who may be sick, school nurses and personnel will follow IDPH guidance on standard and transmission-based precautions such as wearing face masks, gloves and protective eyewear or face shields.

If a student or staff member is confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19, any identified close contacts of that person will be notified and given further instructions.

The district will follow the detailed Student and Staff protocols for handling COVID-19 exposure and illnesses. These can be found in Appendix 2 and 3 the district's 2020-2021 reopening plan.

8. Once started, will the hybrid in-person model continue for the full school year? The District will monitor regional and local COVID-19 infection rates weekly in coordination with the IDPH. The decision to move to all Remote Learning will be based upon the infection rate of our local community and other factors as recommended by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

ACADEMIC QUESTIONS

1. How will students in the hybrid learning program or the remote program learn on remote days? All students who are at home and learning remotely will either view a live stream of their child's class or receive live remote instruction from a teacher assigned to provide remote only instruction utilizing the program Google Meet. Google Meet allows students to provide feedback and ask questions to teachers in real-time.
2. Can my child still participate in band or choir? Students will have the option to participate in band or choir as always. However, special guidelines exist for both options. Students who elect to join band or choir will receive additional information regarding special guidelines and safety procedures for those classes.
 - a. Directors will:

- viii. Where possible students are to provide their own equipment for class; sharing of equipment between students is prohibited. This includes, reeds, mouthpieces, and percussion mallets and sticks.
 - ix. Students should disinfect musical instruments between classes. Information on to how to disinfect a musical instrument will be given by the Director.
3. Will attendance be taken during remote days? Yes, the Illinois State Board of Education requires that attendance is taken for each day of school regardless if that school day is held remotely or in-person. Each teacher will take attendance via the Google Meet program each day. Attendance and participation in class each day, whether remote or in-person, is expected. For students in hybrid mode, remote participation and attendance can occur even if they are scheduled for in-person attendance.
 4. Will students continue to receive grades as in the past? The rules developed by ISBE in the spring of 2020 which required that student grades should not go down during remote learning no longer apply for the 2020-2021 school year. Students will receive grades as they have during the normal school year.
 5. My child has special needs, how will his or her I.E.P. services be delivered? The district will comply with all I.E.P. services. The special education department will be contacting parents to discuss any suggested adjustments to I.E.P.s.
 6. Will Illinois School still hold the extended day program for 7th and 8th graders who elect that option? Yes, the extended day program at Illinois School for 7th and 8th graders will still be held on the same A/B schedule as the regular day. The Illinois School Principal will be contacting parents about signing up for the extended day program. There will be no extended day program on Fridays.