

## Spencer Community Schools Reopening Plan

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a major disruption for nearly every aspect of our lives. One of the most difficult areas has been our children and their education. Our students need to return to school. The children need to return to learning, but more importantly, they need the socialization that school provides.

Spencer Community Schools have gathered input from students, parents, and staff. We have studied the recommendations of the CDC and the American Association of Pediatrics. We have listened and heard how other schools in Iowa and other states are planning to safely bring students and staff back to school. We have also struggled to move forward with our planning and preparation with little guidance from the state and federal departments of education.

Recently, Governor Reynolds issued a proclamation that took the full-online option as a choice for school districts off the table. The proclamation stated that schools must provide face-to-face learning for at least 50% of a child's instruction. However, students and families may be provided the choice to select online learning.

We could not make the following recommendations without the local input from students, parents, and staff. We also have relied heavily on our local public health officials for insight and guidance. Thank you all for your input and support.

We understand that any decision that is made regarding the return to school will not meet the wants and expectations of some. This is a very difficult issue that as leaders, we must make a decision and move forward. But, we are at the point that a decision needs to be made.

### **At the July 28th School Board Meeting, the Board voted to Reopen schools for the 2020-21 school years as follows:**

- **Schools will open for full attendance at all school sites.**
  - Attendance and participation are required for all students of compulsory age.
  - Masks or face shields will be required for students who physically attend school.
  - Spencer School Staff will be required to wear masks or face shields when interacting with students or when they are not able to social distance.
- **Families/Students will have the option to attend school remotely/online.**
  - Students who have a diagnosed and medically-supported health condition **and/or** students/families who do not feel safe physically attending school will have the option to attend Spencer Schools and receive remote instruction from Spencer School staff.
  - Students/families who choose to attend remotely will be graded.
  - Participation and attendance are mandatory.

- If a student begins the school year in the remote format, they must remain in the remote option until the end of the first quarter or trimester, depending on which school they attend.
- A student may change from physically attending school to the remote format at any time.
- Families will be sent a survey that will allow them to select the remote/online option.
- Teaching staff will be assigned to teach and facilitate learning for students/families who select the remote/online option.
- When possible, teachers with documented health conditions will be assigned to teach and facilitate remote/online learning.
- **Transportation**
  - Busing will be available for those students who absolutely need it. We ask all families to use other transportation if and when possible.
  - For those students who need transportation, both out of town and in-town busing will be available.
  - Masks will be required on buses.
- **School Schedules**
  - School schedules will be formatted to limit the number of transitions that students have in a school day.
  - Student groupings will be limited to reduce exposure.
- **Cleaning/Disinfecting Plans**
  - Additional cleaning and disinfecting will happen at all schools.
  - When possible, classroom surfaces will be cleaned between class periods.
  - Restrooms and common areas will be disinfected additional times each day.
  - Classrooms and high traffic areas will be disinfected each evening with hydro-electric sprayers/foggers.
  - Playgrounds will receive additional cleaning.
- **Protocols for dealing with Covid related illnesses**
  - District nursing staff and public health officials have developed protocols based on current guidance from the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Additional guidance is expected to be released soon.
    - Each illness and the people who may be affected or exposed to Covid-19 will be addressed.
    - Protocols in place will help to isolate those who may test positive for Covid-19 and quarantine those who may have been exposed to someone with a positive diagnosis.
- **School Activities**
  - Decisions on school activities will be announced as guidelines become available.
- **School Trips/Field Trips**
  - There will be no student school trips or field trips for at least the first semester of the year.

**More specific information will be released from building principals in the following days.**

At this time, these are the school opening plans. Guidance and recommendations change often. These plans may change and it is important for everyone to remain flexible and ready to adjust.

Spencer Schools do not take these decisions lightly. Everyone would prefer to be operating under normal pre-Covid conditions and preparing for a regular start to a school year. But, as we know, these times and conditions are anything but normal.

We are hopeful that by following CDC guidelines, including the wearing of face coverings, we will be able to slow the spread of Covid-19. Following these guidelines will also provide us with a greater chance of keeping our students in schools for the 2020-21 school year. We only need to look back several months to see the opportunities and experiences that our children will not experience if we are in a situation where students cannot physically be at school. Our students missed out on Spring activities, field trips, prom, commencement, and the ability to be with their classmates and friends. The wearing of face coverings by students and staff is one thing that we can do that will help keep students and staff safe and to get us back to normal sooner.

Sincerely,

Terry Hemann  
Superintendent of Schools