



## School District of Altoona Railroader Return-to-School Plan 2021-2022



### **From Safer-at-Home to Now**

On March 13, 2020 Wisconsin Schools were closed “indefinitely” due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Schools in Wisconsin remained ordered closed until June 30, 2020. In the fall of 2020, some schools reopened in the state while others kept a virtual learning environment. Schools in Eau Claire County opened with modified schedules to comply with the local public health order. Additionally, Wisconsin schools that were open complied with the State mask mandate. As the health of the community improved, the School District of Altoona removed prevention strategies one at a time in order to determine if the decreased prevention strategies would result in changes in illness presence in the schools. We increased student attendance on April 6, 2021, which removed social distancing as a standard practice in our schools. We moved to masks as parent-choice when summer school began in June of 2021.

### **Covid Prevention Outcomes in Summer School 2021**

Approximately 500 hundred K-8 students participated in summer school in the School District of Altoona. The full summer school session was 6 weeks long. Class sizes were typically 25 students.

Preventions strategies during summer school included:

- Requesting all staff and parents of students screen for symptoms prior to coming to school.
- Use of outdoor space for learning.
- Handwashing and hand sanitizing.

There were no known instances of Covid spread in summer school or as a result of participation in summer school.

To view local Covid statistics, including statistics about new cases and vaccination rates, please visit the [Eau Claire County Covid-19 Data and Metrics page](#).

### **Back-to-School Prevention Strategies**

The prevention strategies used in summer school will be used as the full student body returns to school in fall. We will review our student health and attendance records regularly to determine if they remain effective in preventing school-based spread.

### **Attendance Plan**

The School District of Altoona will be holding in-person learning for K-12 students five days per week and for 4K students 4 four days per week.

## 100% Virtual Option

The School District of Altoona will provide a 100% virtual option to students in grades 6 through 12. Families who would like this option but have not yet communicated this decision to the district should contact Terri Hanson at [thanson@altoona.k12.wi.us](mailto:thanson@altoona.k12.wi.us) ASAP. The deadline to enroll in the 100% virtual program was August 10th. Families who attempt to register after that date may experience a delay in the start date for the program. Students who start the school year in the 100% virtual option may move to the in-person model at the semester point (6th - 8th grade) or trimester point (9th - 12th grade). Students who start the school year in the in-person model may move to virtual at the semester point (6th - 8th grade) or trimester point (9th - 12th grade).

## Universal Health and Safety Measures

In order to reduce the opportunity for the spread of illness and germs, certain health and safety measures will be put in place across the district

- Access to hand-sanitizing and hand-washing
- Instruction for hand-washing, covering coughs and sneezes
- Instruction for at-home screening for symptoms

## Masks (or other Cloth Face Coverings)

The CDC and the Eau Claire County Health Department are currently recommending masks in indoor settings.

**Student and staff masks are parent choice in most school settings unless local orders change to require them.**

There might be some environments or activities where masks are expected due to the nature of the activities (eg vocal music classes). We ask that each family review all available information from health officials and / or their own physician and decide what is the best option for their child in mask-optional settings and communicate their choice to their son or daughter. Resources on how to appropriately wear and care for a mask are on the district website.

The [CDC is currently requiring masks on all forms of public transportation](#) regardless of vaccination status. **Students and staff will be required to wear masks while they are on a school bus, per the CDC Order.**

## At-Home Screening for Symptoms

Staff and students are required to screen for the below symptoms prior to coming to school.

- A temperature over 100.3 Fahrenheit within the last 48 hours
- Cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or sore throat within the last 48 hours
- A new loss of taste or smell
- Muscle pain or chills
- Illness symptoms including vomiting, diarrhea, continuous nasal drainage, or rash in the last 48 hours

Students and staff should stay home and consider being tested for Covid if they have respiratory symptoms, new loss of taste or smell, or two or more of the other symptoms that can't be explained by other reasons (such as seasonal allergies).

**\*\* All students and staff are recommended to stay home from school when they have a fever.**

## Exclusion from School of Staff or Students with Symptoms

Staff and students who present Covid-like symptoms that can't be explained by another reason will be sent home from school. Staff and students are recommended to get tested if they have respiratory symptoms, new loss of taste or smell, or two or more of the other symptoms.

## Close Contacts

If an unvaccinated student or staff member is in close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes) of a person who is Covid-19 positive, the student or staff member will be sent home for quarantine and will be referred to the Eau Claire County Health Department. **A student or staff member who is a close contact is required to quarantine unless one of the following is true:**

- **The person has received all three vaccination shots and is not showing symptoms.**
- **The person has received two vaccine shots, with the second occurring within the past 60 days and is not showing symptoms.**
- **The person has a confirmed positive test result from within the past 90 days and is not showing symptoms. PCR tests or antigen tests are accepted, but home tests are not currently accepted.**

## Length of Quarantine

The length of the quarantine period in Eau Claire County is 5 days, provided the close contact is symptom free and agrees to wear a mask for 5 additional days. Details about quarantine can be found on the [Eau Claire County Health Department Information Page for People Who Tested Positive or are a Close Contact](#).

## Altoona Elementary School 4K Program

Our 4K students will have the same type of programming that they had in the past. **The only schedule change is that their day off will be on Fridays this year, not Wednesdays as it was last year.** 4K students will attend either mornings or afternoons Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

## Communication about Vaccination

The CDC and the Eau Claire County Health Department recommend eligible people get vaccinated. As a service to our families, the School District of Altoona will provide communication about vaccination as information becomes available. The communication is for information purposes and is not intended to promote or discourage vaccination or a specific healthcare provider. There is a high availability of vaccines in the Eau Claire area. To learn more about how to get a Covid-19 vaccine, please visit the [Eau Claire County Health Department information page](#).

## Continuous Instruction

The District will provide continuous home-based instruction for students who are home due to illness or quarantine. Instructional delivery will be in a mode that is developmentally-appropriate for the student (typically virtual for grades 4 through 12, paper for lower grades). The instruction or materials may be modified in format from the in-person learning, but the at-home learning will be aligned with the in-person learning standards.

## **Learning Loss**

The District will monitor for learning loss both by reviewing classroom-level assessment results and developing responsive plans in Professional Learning Teams. Additionally, the District will use a nationally-normed literacy and mathematics benchmarking tool. The benchmarking results will also be used in identifying additional responses and supports needed for students.

## **Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs**

The District will continue to provide School-Based Mental Health Services and will additionally provide school counselors for small group and individual supports. The District will monitor student well-being using a nationally-normed benchmarking tool and be responsive to the needs of students.

## **Nutrition Program**

All students will continue to receive free lunch for the duration of the 2021-2022 school year.

## **Ongoing Review**

This plan has been made based on what we understand about Covid-19, school health information, and the health of our community at this point in time. As the health of our community evolves, we will continue to review our plan on a frequent basis. As adjustments need to be made, we will communicate with our families as quickly as we are able.

## **Attendance Monitoring**

Overall school attendance will be monitored for trends and patterns.

## **Ongoing Communication**

Additional district and school-specific information will continue to be shared throughout the school year. The District will provide a weekly Covid Dashboard update that includes numbers of student and staff positive cases and numbers of students and staff who are in quarantine.

## **Our Covid-19 website will be kept up-to-date with current information:**

<https://www.altoona.k12.wi.us/district/covid-19>

## **Staff Provisions**

The District will continue to follow national, state, and local governing agencies' laws and directives concerning staff employment benefits. Staff will be provided social, emotional, and mental health supports through the Employee Assistance Program and District insurance benefits program.

## **Thank You!**

Our community is so much healthier than it was a year ago at this time. We appreciate the opportunity to work together to ensure that we keep our schools healthy and safe! Thank you for your partnership and support.