



# 2022-23 School Opening Plan

August 16, 2022

## Introduction

District 28 school reopening plan aligns with updated Guidance for Schools as provided by the Centers for Disease Control and the Illinois Department of Public Health. High levels of vaccine and infection-induced immunity along with the availability of effective treatments and prevention have reduced the risk of severe COVID-19 illness. The district may update protocols and policies as warranted throughout the school year.

## Defining Transmission

The community-level transmission levels as [defined by the CDC](#) will be used to guide mitigation strategies. The CDC community-level transmission rate includes local cases, hospitalizations and hospital beds occupied by COVID-19 patients. If the community level changes to high, the district may change or enhance mitigation and safety practices.

## Prevention

The district will continue to follow prevention strategies that remain important in protecting students, staff and community members including:

- enhanced ventilation and filtration;
- handwashing and respiratory etiquette;
- cleaning and disinfecting;
- encouraging students and staff to stay up to date on vaccinations;
- having students and staff stay home when sick and get tested;
- isolation of a minimum of 5 days for positive cases;
- wearing a mask at school for 10 days if you are exposed to the virus. Individuals can stop wearing a mask if they test negative on day 6 and day 8.

## SHIELD At-Home Testing

District 28 will offer voluntary take-home SHIELD tests for students. Students will bring home the test kits for specimen collection and then drop off in collection boxes on the designated day. Lab results will be available in 24 to 48 hours. Specific instructions for opting in students and staff for the tests and on administering the test will be forthcoming.

## Social Distancing

Social distancing and cohort groups are no longer a recommended mitigation strategy by the CDC due to the disruption of the educational environment. The district is returning to normal classroom setup and the regular use of cafeterias and gyms.

## Face Masks

Face masks remain optional for anyone who wishes to wear them. Schools no longer require universal face masks while the community-level transmission is low or medium as [defined by the CDC](#). If the community level changes, the district may again require face masks. Masks are required, however, in health offices of schools. If you are exposed to the virus, wear a mask as soon as you find out, regardless of vaccination status, and **continue precautions for 10 days** as described in the Close Contact Section below.

## Isolation for COVID-19

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, should:

- Isolate for 5 days after onset of symptoms or from the specimen collection date if no symptoms are present. Day 0 is the first day of symptoms or specimen collection date if asymptomatic.
- Return to school after five days if symptoms have improved and fever-free without medication for 24 hours, diarrhea/vomiting have ceased for 24 hours, and other symptoms have improved.
- Anyone who continues to have a fever or whose other symptoms have not improved after 5 days of isolation should wait to the end isolation until they are fever-free without medication for 24 hours and their other symptoms have improved.



**All individuals returning after 5 days** of isolation must wear a well-fitting mask around others while indoors for 5 additional days, removing their masks only to eat. Individuals who test negative on Day 6 and Day 8 may stop wearing a mask.

After you have ended isolation, if COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen, restart isolation at day 0 and consult your physician.

## Close Contact Quarantine Is Not Required

Students and staff are no longer required to quarantine if they are exposed to COVID-19. Schools will no longer contact trace but will provide case notification and resources for testing. Individuals who are exposed to the virus are recommended to:

- get tested (using an at-home or PCR test) after 5 days from exposure unless symptoms develop; and
- wear a mask around others for 10 days while indoors, removing their mask only to eat. Individuals who test negative on Day 6 and Day 8 may stop wearing a mask.

Asymptomatic individuals who have tested positive in the last 90 days are not required to test. If symptoms recur, please contact your physician.

## Test-To-Stay for Outbreaks

Test-To-Stay protocols may be implemented in the event of an outbreak. To use TTS, close contacts should test at least two times between notification and day 7 after exposure, with the last test occurring 5-7 days after the last close contact. Rapid antigen, including home tests or SHIELD's home tests, may be used.

If the individual is part of a close contact group where Test-To-Stay is implemented and they elect not to participate in TTS, they must quarantine at least 5 days after exposure. They may return to school on day 6 under the following guidelines:

- remain asymptomatic;
- provide a negative home test or one negative PCR test within 24 hours of administration of the test on day 5 of exposure; and
- wear a mask while indoors around others for 5 additional days, removing their masks only to eat. Individuals who test negative on Day 6 and Day 8 may stop wearing a mask.

## Remote Learning During Isolation

Please review the [expectations for remote learning](#) when children are isolated.

## Monitoring

An ad hoc committee of staff, nurses and administrators will review the updated guidance and review the district's response to community-level transmission, making recommendations when warranted.

## COVID Dashboard

The District 28 COVID Dashboard is updated regularly when school is in session. Daily emails reporting case numbers to parents and staff are suspended. A link to the dashboard will be shared in the weekly school newsletters.

## Visitors

Northfield Township is part of a Cook County region designated by the CDC. As long as a low or medium transmission level is maintained, volunteers who are asymptomatic will be allowed in the schools.

## Community Testing Sites

The Cook County Department of Public Health provides an updated list of [community testing sites](#) that are open to all regardless of symptoms and do not require an appointment.

