

OTHS Return to Learn Framework

2023-2024

Reviewed 7/20/23

The Return to Learn Framework is a requirement for school districts to receive Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. The Return to Learn Framework is subject to change based guidance received from governing bodies.

The goal of the OTHS Return to Learn Framework is to provide the highest quality of academic instruction and extracurricular opportunities, while prioritizing the safety, mental health, and physical health of our students and employees.

Per the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Joint Summary of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Operational Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Schools:

“Schools and local health departments should exercise their longstanding authority, including as described in the Communicable Disease Code¹ and according to schools’ infectious disease policies, to address all infectious disease cases among students and staff.”

The OTHS Return to Learn Framework for 2023-2024 is based on the most current guidance from the CDC, IDPH, and ISBE in conjunction with legal opinions from school attorneys in Illinois.

The CDC guidance² recommends “strategies for everyday operations” or actions schools can take every day to prevent the spread of infectious disease. Those actions include:

1. Stay up to date on vaccinations.
2. Stay home when sick.
3. Optimize ventilation.
4. Maintain hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
5. Clean surfaces

This Framework has been divided into the following three sections:

Instruction and Learning

Safety and Wellness

Operations

¹ <https://www.ilga.gov/commission/icar/admincode/077/07700690sections.html>

² https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fschoo%2Fschools-childcare%2Fk-12-guidance.html

Instruction and Learning

OTHS will continue its mission of providing high quality instruction during a pandemic or any other emergency disaster declaration.

1. **Class Period Schedule:** OTHS will provide instruction in-person under the traditional education model. The full-day class schedule for in-person and/or virtual instruction is as follows:

	SMILEY CAMPUS	MILBURN CAMPUS
Early Bird	7:00 - 7:55	
1 st Period	8:00 - 8:55	7:30 - 8:25
2 nd Period	9:00 - 9:55	8:30 - 9:25
3 rd Period		9:30 - 10:25
3 rd Period/Advisory/Lunch	10:00 - 10:55	
4 th Period/Advisory/Lunch	11:00 - 11:55	10:30 - 11:25
5 th Period/Advisory/Lunch	12:00 - 12:55	11:30 - 12:25
6 th Period	1:00 - 1:55	12:30 - 1:25
7 th Period	2:00 - 2:55	1:30 - 2:25

2. **Learning When Students are Unable to Attend School In-Person**

Learning during Student Illness or Exclusion

- a. Students who are unable to attend in-person classes due to illness and/or exclusion will receive direction from their teachers for the completion of assignments in alignment with supports received for other types of absences.
 - i. The student and/or family should contact the grade-level assistant principal if the student/family has any questions or concerns.
 - ii. The student/family should email the student's teachers to establish email communication to which the teachers will be able to respond. Contact information for teachers can be found at: [Faculty & Staff Directory](#)
 - iii. The student's teachers will respond to the student/family email communication within one school day with a plan forward for the student in their respective classes, and mutual communication will follow as appropriate throughout any absences from in-person instruction.
 - iv. Due to the uniqueness of each class, teachers may use a variety of methodologies to facilitate the student's learning experience during the time the student is unable to attend classes in-person. Methodologies may include Blackboard Collaborate when they deem it appropriate to the individual lesson.

- b. Absences for missed days of school will be accounted for per the [Student Handbook](#).

Homebound Instruction – Medically Fragile Students

Homebound instruction will be available for those students with medical conditions that prevent them from attending in-person instruction. Medical documentation is required. Please contact Ms. Megan McNicols at 618-622-9647 ext. 5222 to make arrangements if it is believed this situation applies to your student.

Remote Learning

Students are expected to attend school in-person. In general, ISBE does not allow for a Remote Learning option except under specific circumstances. Therefore, OTHS does not provide a remote learning option in lieu of in-person instruction.

3. **Technology:** Students should bring their technology devices to class each day. Technology devices will be distributed to students if they do not have a personal technology device. Cell phones are not considered a technology device for classroom work. Technology can be checked out by students during walk-through days or before/after school beginning August 15th. Please refer to the technology use policies and guidance in the [Student Handbook](#).
 - a. Chromebooks, laptops, and hotspots can be checked out in room 501 (Tech Office) at the Smiley Campus and room 1050 (Tech Office) at the Milburn Campus. A Device Authorization Form will need to be completed and signed by a parent before anything will be checked out. For additional information, please contact the Computer Department at ComputerDepartment@oths.us.
 - b. Calculators and books may be checked out through the IMC.
4. **Extracurricular Travel and Participation:** Extracurricular travel and participation will occur per Illinois High School Association (IHSA) guidelines.

Safety and Wellness

Keeping students and faculty safe is a top priority for OTHS. Safety protocols and mitigations are subject to change should conditions warrant.

1. **Ongoing Management of COVID cases**³:

- a. OTHS will not exclude asymptomatic individuals unless they have tested positive for COVID-19 or other communicable disease.
- b. Students and employees can be sent home from school if exhibiting symptoms of illness, including COVID-19 like symptoms.
- c. Students or staff who come to school with symptoms or develop symptoms while at school will be asked to wear a well-fitting mask or respirator while in the building and be sent home and encouraged to get tested if testing is unavailable at school. Symptomatic people who cannot wear a mask should be separated from others as much as possible; students should be supervised by a designated caregiver who is wearing a well-fitting mask or respirator until they leave school grounds.
- d. People with COVID-19 should isolate away from others and should not attend school until they have completed isolation. Once isolation has ended, people should wear a well-fitting mask or respirator around others through day 10. Testing is not required to determine the end of isolation or mask use after having COVID-19; however people can use the test-based strategy outlined in the [isolation guidance](#) to potentially shorten the duration of post-isolation mask use. If using the test-based strategy, people should continue to wear a well-fitting mask or respirator in the school or ECE setting until testing criteria have been met. People who are not able to wear a well-fitting mask or respirator should either isolate for 10 full days or follow the test-based strategy to determine when they can safely return to the school or ECE setting without a mask, while continuing to isolate until testing criteria have been met. If a person with COVID-19 has been inside a school or ECE facility within the last 24 hours, the space should be cleaned and disinfected.

2. **Vaccinations**⁴: Per CDC, staying up to date on routine vaccinations is essential to prevent illness from many different infections. COVID-19 vaccination helps protect eligible people from getting severely ill with COVID-19.

More information on vaccinations can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html> .

³ https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fschoo-ldcare%2Fk-12-guidance.html

⁴ https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fschoo-ldcare%2Fk-12-guidance.html

3. **Masking**: Masking is a safety mitigation to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and is encouraged for those wishing to have that level of protection. Masking is optional at OTHS. Universal masking will not be required unless specific action is taken by the Board of Education to require the implementation of such a safety mitigation.
4. **Social Distancing**: Social distancing is a safety mitigation to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other airborne viruses. OTHS is a school community having a large and diverse population. Not all OTHS inhabitants are up-to-date on their vaccinations. Some members of our school community are immunocompromised. Because of the importance of in-person learning and the care of all those in our schools, OTHS students and employees should use social distancing to the extent practical while inside buildings.
5. **Locker Use**: Students will have access to their lockers, but are expected to access them in an expedited manner with no lingering in the hallway and while maintaining social distancing to the extent possible.
6. **Personal Hygiene**: Frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing is a key safety mitigation to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, influenza, and other communicable diseases. Employees and students should wash hands as often as possible with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitizers will be available in every classroom and in multiple locations throughout the building.
7. **COVID-19 Testing**: Voluntary COVID-19 testing may be available at OTHS as an additional safety mitigation strategy.
8. **COVID-19 Metric Monitoring**: OTHS will continue to monitor metrics and other indicators of community COVID-19 spread and will continue to partner with St. Clair Health Department on local conditions and necessary safety mitigations.
9. **Self-Certification**: By the action of entering OTHS, students, staff, and visitors are self-certifying that they are free from symptoms of illness, including COVID-19 symptoms that are not able to be explained by other medical condition(s). Those entering an OTHS school building or attending an OTHS event are responsible for doing so under the following conditions:
 - They do not have a temperature over 100.4F.
 - They are not taking fever-reducing medicines, such as those that contain aspirin, ibuprofen or acetaminophen, in order to reduce fever.
 - They have not been directed to quarantine or isolate by a health care provider or the County or State Department of Public Health.
 - They do NOT have any of the following symptoms that are new or otherwise unexplained by a known, pre-existing condition:

Chills	Headache
Cough	Loss of Taste or Smell
Shortness of Breath	Sore Throat
Fatigue	Nausea or Vomiting
Muscle or Body Aches	Diarrhea

For the safety of the entire OTHS campus community, students and employees should remain home when not feeling well.

10. **Safety and Wellness Resources:**

- IDPH & ISBE Joint Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Schools <https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/school-guidance.html>
- ISBE Coronavirus Updates and Resources <https://www.isbe.net/coronavirus>
- CDC Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Education Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fschools-childcare%2Fk-12-guidance.html
- St. Clair County Health Department Covid-19 Information: <https://www.co.st-clair.il.us/departments/health-department/covid-19-information>

Operations

1. **Food service:** Breakfast and lunch will be available to students. Parents/Guardians must complete the free/reduced application for their student(s) who qualify for free/reduced lunch.
2. **Transportation:** Illinois Central has developed several safety protocols to keep our staff and students safe.
 - a. By their action of boarding a school bus or entering a school vehicle, students are self-certifying that they are free from symptoms of illness including COVID-19 symptoms that are new or otherwise unexplained by a known, pre-existing condition (See #6 under the Safety and Wellness section on Page 4).
 - b. Drivers are subject to illness procedures, including those for COVID-19, as directed by Illinois Central Bus Company.
3. **Sanitization/Cleaning:** Building custodians and cleaning personnel will conduct daily cleaning and disinfection.
 - a. School buildings will be cleaned and disinfected daily. Emphasis will be placed on high touch surfaces and common areas.
 - b. Restrooms, cafeterias, and other common areas will be cleaned multiple times throughout the day.
 - c. Soft surfaces such as carpets and rugs will be disinfected weekly.
 - d. All custodial/maintenance staff will follow the established cleaning procedures for building cleaning and disinfection as recommended and will be trained on the return to school guidelines, where applicable. These procedures will include extra sanitation efforts using certified or registered EPA products.
 - e. As needed, a detailed sanitation will occur throughout the facility with extensive deep cleaning of restrooms and other common areas will occur.
4. **Ventilation:** All OTHS ventilation systems have been adjusted to allow a minimum of 10% fresh air exchange. Smiley classroom thermostats have the options for faculty to activate fans in the HVAC system to increase the percentage of fresh air exchange in individual classrooms.