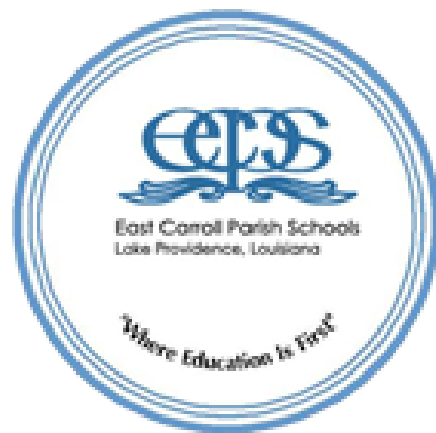


**READY-TO-ACHIEVE  
SAFE RETURN-TO-SCHOOL PLAN  
IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19**



**East Carroll Parish Schools**

## **INTRODUCTION**

We have created this plan to aid in navigating the reopening of our schools where employees, students, and families feel safe and to reduce the impact of COVID-19 conditions upon returning to the district. The guidelines referenced in this plan are based on guidance from the recommendations of the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This plan is a “Living Document” and regular updates will be made based on information provided by the LDOE, LDH, CDC, and applicable federal, state, and local agencies..

## **IN-PERSON LEARNING**

As more people are able to get COVID-19 vaccines, there's hope that everyday life, including school, may soon get back to normal. The East Carroll Parish School District is committed to returning our students to a safe learning environment for the start of the 2022-2023 School Year. Our goal is to have all students attend school in person, which is how they learn best. This means working with public health officials to keep the community spread of the virus under control. As well as, ensuring layers of safety measures that will help keep students, teachers, and staff safe.

We understand that our schools provide more than just academics to children and adolescents. In addition to, providing core academics and nutritious meals, our students learn invaluable social and emotional skills, get physical exercise, and have access to mental health and other support services.

This Safe-Return- to-School Plan will detail the layers of safety procedures and the approach that our district will take to ensure a safe return to in-person learning for students and staff.

The district hired two additional school nurses to help ensure the health and safety of students and staff. Each school nurse will provide educational training to each student, and members of faculty and staff on how to properly wear masks and what masks to select for the best protection. As well they provided training and demonstrations on mask selection and how to wear them. Additionally, each nurse will provide training and demonstrations on the correct respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette and how to help prevent the spread of germs.

Please Note:

Provisions for students with disabilities-

Through the collaboration of school nurses, Special Education Director and LDH, adequate accommodations were made for students with disabilities. Consultations were done as needed to ensure that necessary adjustments were made and that the district was compliant.

#### **K-12 SCHOOLS AND EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION (ECE) PROGRAM OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE**

This guidance can help K-12 school and ECE program administrators support safe, in-person learning for K-12 schools, and keep ECE programs open; while managing the spread of COVID-19. Based on COVID-19 Community Levels, this guidance provides flexibility so schools and ECE programs can adapt to changing local situations, including periods of increased community health impacts from COVID-19. The district has hired two additional school nurses to help ensure the health and safety of students and staff. The nurses will provide training on COVID-Care. Each school nurse will provide educational training to students, faculty and staff on vaccinations, quarantining, respiratory illness and how to properly wear masks and what masks to select for the best protection.

#### **LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL COVID-19 COMMUNITY LEVELS**

- Immunization planning resources can be found on the Louisiana Department of Health website.
- Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms, regardless of vaccination status, should be tested for COVID-19.
- If a rapid antigen test is negative, a symptomatic person should seek confirmatory PCR testing.
- › If confirmatory testing is negative, they can return to school as long as they meet return-to-school requirements (e.g., 24 hours fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication).

› If confirmatory testing is positive, the symptomatic person has COVID-19 and should complete at-home isolation.

- Anyone who tests positive by viral test (antigen or PCR) for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, should complete at-home isolation.
- Anyone who is identified as close contact with a COVID-19 case should follow the appropriate masking and quarantine guidance.
- Schools and ECE programs should teach and reinforce proper handwashing to lower the risk of spreading viruses. Hand hygiene should be monitored and reinforced during key times in the day (e.g., before and after eating and after recess).
- Schools and ECE programs should teach and reinforce covering coughs and sneezes to help keep individuals from getting and spreading infectious diseases.
- Schools and ECE programs should clean surfaces at least once daily to reduce the risk of spreading germs by touching surfaces. The space should be cleaned and disinfected if a facility has had a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours. Additionally, ECE programs should follow recommended procedures for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection in their setting such as after diapering, feeding, and exposure to bodily fluids.
- Schools can consider screening testing for high-risk activities such as indoor sports and extracurricular activities.

#### **LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEDIUM AND HIGH COVID-19 COMMUNITY LEVELS OR DURING OUTBREAKS**

In an effort to limit the spread of Covid and other respiratory illnesses ECPS has partnered with LDH and Safer Smarter Schools to offer COVID-19 diagnostic screening and testing for students, teachers and staff weekly, bi-weekly, and on an as needed basis. Additionally, the ECPSD has partnered with LDH and the East Carroll Sheriff's Department to provide vaccinations to the school district and community. The district also has an assigned liaison to do weekly scheduled meetings and daily check-ins as needed to ensure all needs and concerns are properly vetted and addressed. District leaders and school nurses participate in regularly scheduled Region 8 Zoom meetings to stay abreast of best practices, CDC updates and statistics.

#### **LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH MASKING RECOMMENDATIONS**

Wearing a well-fitted mask consistently and correctly reduces the risk of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Universal indoor mask use is recommended at a high COVID-19 Community Level and when experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak. People at risk of getting very sick with COVID-19 should also wear masks or respirators that provide greater protection, such as N95s or KN95s.

At a medium COVID-19 Community Level, people who are immunocompromised or at risk of getting very sick with COVID-19 should talk to their healthcare provider about the need to wear a mask. School systems should consult with their regional LDH for appropriate masking levels. Anyone who chooses to wear a mask should be supported in their decision to do so at any COVID-19 Community Level, including low.

### **SCREENING TESTING**

Screening testing identifies people with COVID-19 who do not have symptoms or known or suspected exposures; so that steps can be taken to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. Schools can implement screening testing at any COVID-19 Community Level but should be especially considered at medium and high COVID-19 Community Levels. Schools may maintain a screening testing infrastructure at low COVID-19 Community Levels that may be scaled up during higher levels.

### **COHORTING**

Cohorting is the practice of keeping people together in a small group and having each group stay together throughout the day; while minimizing contact between cohorts. In areas with a high COVID-19 Community Level, this can be used to limit the number of people who come in contact with each other. In areas with high COVID-19 Community Levels, schools and ECE programs can also discourage crowding indoors to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

### **HIGH-RISK ACTIVITIES**

Due to increased and forceful exhalation that occurs during physical activity, some sports can put players, coaches, trainers, and others at increased risk of getting and spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Close contact sports and indoor sports are particularly risky. Similar risks may exist for other extracurricular activities, such as band, choir, theater, and other school clubs that meet indoors and entail increased exhalation. Schools and ECE programs may consider temporarily stopping these activities to control a school or program-associated outbreak or during periods of high COVID-19 Community Levels.

## **K-12 SCHOOLS AND EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION (ECE) COVID-19 OUTBREAK GUIDELINES AND REPORTING**

K-12 schools should report weekly aggregate case counts and core group outbreaks to the LDH COVID-19 Reporting Portal. If school systems need to be enrolled in the LDH COVID-19 Reporting Portal, information on how to do so can be found in the LDH School Reporting Guidelines. Early Care and Education (ECE) programs should report outbreaks to their regional epidemiologist.

## LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH DEFINITIONS

Core Group Outbreak: at least three (3) student, teacher, or staff cases within a specified core group with symptom onset or positive test results within 14 days of each other, and no likely known exposure to a case outside of the school setting (e.g., household)

Core group: includes but is not limited to an extracurricular activity, classroom, cohort group, before/after school care, etc.

School-wide outbreak: 5% or more students, teachers, and staff with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 over a

14-day period

Outbreak Conclusion: outbreak is considered over when there have been 14 days without any new cases

Use the below tool for each core group where multiple cases have been identified to determine if you have an outbreak(s).

### DETERMINING IF YOU HAVE AN OUTBREAK IN A CORE GROUP

#### Question Response Interpretation

1. How many cases have been identified in the core group?

- If 3 or more cases, continue to question 2.
- If less than 3 cases, this is not an outbreak.

2. Do cases have a symptom onset or positive test result within 14 days of each other?

Yes

No

- If no, remove the cases that don't meet this criterion from your case count.

3. Do any of the cases have known exposure to a case outside of the school setting?

(Note: if exposure to another case outside of the school setting is unknown, the case should be counted toward the school-associated outbreak.)

Yes

No

- If yes, remove from your case count the cases with exposure outside of the school setting.

4. After removing cases that don't meet the criteria in questions 2 and 3, are there still at least 3 cases in the core group?

Yes

No

- If yes, this is a Core group outbreak.
- If no, this is not considered a Core group outbreak.