

Freeman Public Schools
Safe Return Plan
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Freeman Public Schools
415 8th Street
Adams, NE 68301
Phone: 402-988-2525
Fax: 402-988-3475

<http://www.freemanpublicschools.org>

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Section I: Safe Return Plan

General Information (Pursuant to the Federal American Rescue Plan)

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, into Public Law. The ARP Act includes nearly \$122 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) Fund that allows state and local education agencies (LEAs) to take additional steps for continued safe in-person instruction and to address unfinished teaching and learning to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic. The ARP Act requires each school district that receives ARP ESSER funds to develop and make publicly available on the school district's website, no later than 30 days after receiving ARP ESSER funds, a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction, and continuity of services for all schools (Safe Return Plan). The ARP Act further requires that the district seek public comment on the Safe Return Plan and take those comments into account in finalization of the Safe Return Plan. A school district must periodically, but no less frequently than every six months through September 30, 2023, review and, as appropriate, revise its Safe Return Plan.

Please Note: Freeman Public Schools plans to operate in a traditional learning environment during the 2021-2022 school year unless there is a state or federal mandate that requires school districts to implement the protocols listed below or if there is a COVID-19 outbreak (10% or more of the student/staff population testing positive for COVID-19 or 50 individuals total). If a COVID-19 outbreak were to occur, the district would look to implement some or all of the safety protocols listed below for a short timeframe.

Illness Protocol Plan

Airborne/Contagious Illnesses

- There are approximately 500 students and staff at Freeman Public Schools daily. This number will be used to determine percentages of student/staff illness.
- **Illness:** out of school with airborne/contagious illness symptoms (Ex. COVID-19, influenza, strep throat, cold, etc.)

5% or 25 Students/Staff: Notice of illness increase

- Notice of 5% illness level is sent to Freeman students, staff, and families.
- Increased cleaning, hand washing, and social distancing when possible

10% or 50 Students/Staff: Implementation of safety protocols

- **If 50 students/staff are out of school with airborne/contagious illness symptoms, the school district will seek guidance from Public Health Solutions and may implement any or all of the following protocols depending on the nature of the illnesses:**
 - Hand washing (3x per day)
 - Social distancing when possible
 - Limited visitors in the building
 - Limited fan attendance at athletic events and activities

Protocols will remain in effect until the 8-school day rolling average for student/staff illness falls below 10%.

20% or 100 Students/Staff: Short-term closure

- **If 100 students/staff are ill with contagious/airborne illnesses, the school district will seek guidance from Public Health Solutions and may implement a short-term closure**
 - Short-term closure based on guidance from Public Health Solutions (length depends on severity and risk of spread)
 - Deep-cleaning of facilities
 - Remote learning will be utilized during closures

Disclosures:

- Freeman Public Schools personnel will make decisions based on the safety of staff, students, and the Freeman community. While these guidelines are set to monitor the spread of illness, decisions may be made quickly and with little notice.
- The ability to find substitutes for Freeman teachers and support staff may warrant a change to the implementation of safety protocols.

COVID-19 Illness

- There are approximately 500 students and staff at Freeman Public Schools daily. This number will be used to determine percentages of student/staff illness.
- Percentages will be determined in the following ways:
 - Student/staff active positive COVID-19 cases
 - COVID symptomatic but not tested students/staff that are home due to a positive COVID-19 test of an immediate household contact
- Student/staff active cases are currently tracked on Freeman's COVID Dashboard and updated daily. Active cases are the current number of confirmed positive cases of students and staff within the building. Students and staff that return to school are no longer considered active.
<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1FYevWDD6nZZkIBFgMgPrrJswuer4fFKLPURTIV5szZQ/edit?usp=sharing>
- We ask that families continue to work with the school regarding student illness. If students and staff develop one or more COVID symptoms, especially in combination, please begin isolation precautions, contact your healthcare provider, and notify the school.

5% or 25 Students/Staff: Notice of illness increase

- Notice of 5% level is sent to Freeman students, staff, and families.
- Increased cleaning, hand washing, and social distancing when possible

10% or 50 Students/Staff: Implementation of safety protocols (Board Action)

- **If there are 50 students/staff active COVID-19 cases and evidence of transmission, the Freeman School Board will meet to determine implementation of specific safety protocols. Depending on the nature of the cases, this may include, but is not limited to, interventions such as:**
 - Hand washing (3x per day)
 - Social distancing when possible

- Face coverings while INDOORS regardless of vaccination status
- Limited visitors in the building
- Limited fan attendance at athletic events and activities
- Short-term closure of a specific classroom, grade, school, and/or district based on need and increased percentage
- Remote learning during a closure
- **At that time, it will also be determined how long any or all protocols will remain in effect.**

Disclosures:

- COVID-19 cases will be tracked at the individual classroom, grade, school (elementary and secondary), and district levels. Potential protocols or closures may be implemented at any or all levels. For example, if an outbreak of COVID-19 impacts an individual classroom, grade, or an extra-curricular group, specific protocols may be put in place. These will be assessed on a situation-by-situation basis.
- Freeman Public Schools will continue to work with Public Health Solutions with the ultimate goal of keeping our kids in school and involved in activities. Decisions may need to be made quickly and with little notice.
- The ability to find substitutes for Freeman teachers and support staff may warrant a change to the implementation of safety protocols.

Universal & Correct Wearing of Masks

Face coverings, like other Non-pharmaceutical interventions, can serve as an extra layer of protection against the spread of the virus. Freeman Public Schools recommends students and staff that are not vaccinated to wear a mask if/when they are indoors and unable to socially distance. In addition, we strongly recommend students and staff that have a known exposure to wear a mask at school. Masks are available in the elementary and secondary offices if students are unable to provide one.

Actions occurring during a COVID-19 outbreak: The district may implement universal wearing of masks for all students in grades K-12 for a short timeframe including in school vehicles, during class, during passing periods, in lunch lines, and during any other times that social distancing is not possible. Exceptions may be made only as required by law, such as based upon the decisions of a student’s IEP or 504 teams, or as otherwise necessary such as while eating or drinking.

Staff may also be required to wear approved masks when not teaching, and to the extent possible when teaching. Special circumstances may constitute not wearing a mask during the school day. Parents may provide an approved face covering for their children, but the district will have them available at no cost to the student.

Modifying Facilities to Allow for Physical Distancing (e.g., Cohorts or Podding)

Actions occurring during a COVID-19 outbreak: Physical distancing will be maximized to the greatest extent possible and with a goal of achieving 3 feet of distance between students while seated in classrooms. If 3 feet of physical distancing is not possible, in some circumstances, students may be assigned to cohort groups to minimize interaction with students in other groups (e.g., Students may be assigned seats during lunch or assigned to play groups during recess). In

large classroom environments, students may be required to maintain 6 feet of distance from one another if possible. Large group assemblies and unnecessary trips will be eliminated in the event of an outbreak. Students will be spaced as far apart as possible in school vehicles or buses with ideally one student assigned per row. Windows may be opened, if safe and weather permitting, to improve circulation of fresh air. Students may be required to enter their school buildings through an assigned door and stay in an assigned area after school to reduce interaction and possible transmission.

Handwashing & Respiratory Etiquette

Actions occurring during a COVID-19 outbreak:

Elementary School (PK-6):

Students will be required to wash their hands 3-4 times a day. Each self-contained classroom teacher will set up a time in the morning and a time in the afternoon for their class to wash their hands. Students will also wash their hands before lunch every day.

Jr./Sr. High School (7-12):

Students will be required to wash their hands 3-4 times a day. Each class will take five minutes during second period to wash hands and a schedule will be set up by each second period teacher. Students will wash their hands on their way to get their lunches. Each class will take five minutes to wash hands during seventh period and a schedule will be set up by each seventh period teacher.

In addition, the district will post signage about frequent hand washing, cough etiquette, and nose blowing. Signage will be widely posted, disseminated, and encouraged through various methods of communication.

Cleaning & Maintaining Healthy Facilities (Including Improving Ventilation)

Actions occurring during a COVID-19 outbreak: The following essential actions will be taken to ensure that the facilities are safe for students and staff to inhabit. The district will:

- Change air filters regularly.
- Distribute wastebaskets, tissues, and CDC approved soap to every office and classroom so that these materials can be used upon entry and exit into any discrete location and during transition between classrooms (Pending availability).
- Post signage about frequent hand washing, cough etiquette, and nose blowing. Signage will be widely posted, disseminated, and encouraged through various methods of communication.
- Follow guidance from the CDC when performing all cleaning related duties.

Contact Tracing (Isolation & Quarantine)

The district will follow the contact tracing (Isolation & Quarantine) guidelines from both the CDC and Public Health Solutions during the 2021-2022 school year and the district will comply with all privacy laws. An internal tracking document has been created to record the dates, medical orders, and isolation or quarantine requirements for students and staff across the district. This document is accessible only to authorized district personnel and our local public health department. Our local public health department will be contacted when the district becomes aware of a potential exposure requiring their assistance in contact tracing, and the district will

assist the department in contacting close contacts. The district will use its website to publish the most current health department recommendations concerning quarantine and isolation.

Students and staff who show symptoms of COVID will be encouraged to stay home. Those symptoms will be communicated to students, their families, and staff using the district's website, social media platforms, and communications system. Sick leave policies and practices may need to be modified during an outbreak to accommodate this expectation. Available substitute teachers will be identified and principals will assist in developing staffing plans to cover the classrooms of quarantined or isolated staff members.

COVID-19 and School

COVID exposures (Self-Monitoring): At this time, the guidelines for COVID-19 exposure do not recommend quarantining those students and staff that are exposed. They do require closely self-monitoring for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days. Symptoms include:

One or more of the following:

- Sudden onset of cough
- Sudden onset of shortness of breath
- Sudden loss of taste or smell

Two or more of the following:

- Fever or 100.4 or above
- Chills
- Extreme fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

These symptoms, individually, can also be signs of other illnesses or conditions. If you develop one or more of these symptoms, especially in combination, please begin isolation precautions, contact your healthcare provider, and notify the school.

At this time, face coverings are not required to be worn during this self-monitoring period. However, we do strongly recommend students and staff that have been exposed to wear face coverings to limit transmission.

Immediate Household Members/Siblings: Freeman Public Schools recommends that students who are exposed to immediate family members that test positive for COVID-19 follow these additional precautions:

- Please consider keeping school-age children/siblings home through the family member's infectious period
- If families are unable to keep siblings at home, we strongly recommend masks are worn while at school to limit further transmission

Symptomatic but not tested: Students and staff who develop one or more of the symptoms listed above, especially in combination, should immediately begin isolation precautions, contact your healthcare provider, and notify the school. Isolation shall continue until:

- At least ten (10) days have passed since onset of symptoms AND
- Symptoms have improved AND
- The isolated individual has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication

Positive Cases: For individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 and do NOT have symptoms may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:

- At least ten (10) days have passed since the date of their 1st positive test AND
- Have had no symptom development AND
- For 3 days following discontinuation of isolation, these people must continue to limit contact and when possible wear a face covering.

Please note: The day of symptom onset or a positive test will count as Day 0 of isolation.

Diagnostic & Screening Testing

Actions occurring during a COVID-19 outbreak: The district shall refer students and staff having COVID symptoms to local diagnostic testing locations. If diagnostic or screening testing is recommended and becomes available in schools, the district will make its facilities available to students and staff who provide informed consent. Rate of community transmission will be monitored to determine whether asymptomatic screening is warranted through temperature checks or other means as directed from the local health officials.

Efforts to Provide Vaccinations to School Communities

The district will continue to work collaboratively with our local public health department, local medical providers, and community leaders to promote and disseminate information on vaccinations to students, staff, and the community at large. The district will allow Public Health Solutions to use our facilities to provide free vaccinations to all eligible students and patrons in our community.

Accommodations for Children with Disabilities

Students qualifying for extra support through an IEP or through a 504 plan will continue to receive services and support according to their plans throughout the 2021-2022 school year. Accommodations, modifications, and related services will be provided as outlined in a student's plan during in-person learning.

Coordination with State & Local Health Officials

District personnel will continue to participate in weekly information-sharing sessions with local health care providers, public health department personnel, and other ESU 5 school district leaders. In addition, District administrators will continue to participate in regular Nebraska Department of Education and governor briefings.

Continuity of Services

The district has invested in iPads/Chromebooks for all PK-12 students and provided our teachers with remote learning trainings to ensure continuity of instruction will still occur should in-person learning not be possible due to a COVID-19 outbreak. In addition, students will continue to be provided accommodations as stated in their IEP or 504 plans during remote learning. Parent input will be sought to develop a plan for the provision of remote IEP services and student progress will be reviewed by the student's team when in-person learning resumes.

Closures

The district would like to personally thank all Freeman staff members, students, and parents for your dedication and efforts during the 2020-2021 school year. Everyone worked tirelessly to ensure that students were being educated in-person again during a global pandemic. The district has appreciated everyone's flexibility and patience. We all know that there will be some uncertainty of what lies ahead this school year regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, but the district's plan is to operate in a traditional learning environment during the 2021-2022 school year.

Please Note: The district's Safe Return Plan may change as new guidance becomes available from the Nebraska Department of Education, the CDC, and other state or local public health agencies.

COVID-19 Isolation Guidelines (DHHS)

For school-aged individuals who have had close contact with a person(s) whom has developed or during the 48 hours prior to the person developing one or more of the following symptoms:

Sudden onset of cough

Sudden loss of taste or smell

Sudden onset of shortness of breath

or whom has developed or during the 48 hours prior to the person developing two or more of the following symptoms:

Fever of 100.4 or above

Muscle aches

Sore throat

Diarrhea

Chills

Headache

Nausea or vomiting

Fatigue

or with a person whom has tested positive for COVID-19, whichever event occurs earlier, may meet the following conditions in lieu of quarantine:

- Self-monitor daily for fever or other symptom (listed above) development for 14 days and have NO symptom development.

If symptom development occurs within the 14-day self-monitoring period, please follow isolation guidance.

Isolation shall continue until:

- At least ten (10) days have passed since onset of symptoms AND
- Symptoms have improved AND
- The isolated individual has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication

For individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 and do NOT have symptoms may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:

- At least ten (10) days have passed since the date of their 1st positive test AND
- Have had no symptom development AND
- For 3 days following discontinuation of isolation, these people must continue to limit contact and when possible wear a face covering.

Instructions to Self-Monitor (Public Health Solutions)

An individual that you have been in contact with has been confirmed to have COVID-19. Because your exposure was determined to be low-risk, you are not being asked to quarantine but should self-monitor for signs and symptoms of the virus.

For fourteen (14) days, you are asked to:

- Monitor yourself closely for sign/symptoms of COVID-19. Symptoms include:
 - Fever of 100.4 or above
 - Chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - Extreme fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - New loss of taste or smell

These symptoms, individually, can also be signs of other illnesses or conditions. If you develop one or more of these symptoms, especially in combination, please contact your healthcare provider or Public Health Solutions for further guidance.