

Smithton School Return to School Plan 2021

The Smithton School District Reopening Plan approved on February 1, 2021, remains in effect except as modified below by this supplement to the Reopening Plan.

The new in person schedule is as follows:

Monday - Thursday 8:00 - 3:00

Friday - 8:00 - 11:30 Sack lunches will be available for students to grab and go. If you are interested in your child receiving a grab and go lunch on Friday, please notify the office by Wed. each week.

There will be no Cougar Care on Fridays since students will be leaving at 11:30.

This new schedule will begin on Monday, Feb. 8.

Smithton School has used the guidelines set by the state and local health departments since the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. The school year started in fully remote learning following guidance from the St. Clair County Health Department. We successfully moved to a hybrid learning model in September after forming a metric for guidance. This model was successful through mid-November when we returned to fully remote learning. We have now returned to hybrid learning. At this point in time we are moving forward to full in person instruction unless otherwise prohibited by the state, the local health department, or increased exposures and/or symptoms or illness due to COVID-19 that would hinder starting in a timely manner.

The goal of this document is to provide adequate communication and transparency to the community while also working together to do what is best for the students and staff.

Smithton School will continue to act under the guidance of the Illinois Department of Public Health and the St. Clair County Health Department. We have been using a metric designed at the beginning of the school year to determine our mode of instruction. At this time we will continue to monitor these data but keep the focus on the health of the students and staff in the school. The number of currently positive or quarantined staff and the number of currently positive or quarantined students will be the most useful in determining which mode of instruction will be used.

Per our Mitigation Metrics : **As of 2/1/2021**

1. Positivity rate over 8%

Region 4 is at 6.5%, St Clair County is at 5.1%

2. New cases per 100,000 – target is less than 50 per 100,000

359

3. ICU bed availability – at least 20% available

Region 4 has 22.9% availability

4. Number of CLI Admissions. Target – Decreasing or Stable

Decreasing

5. Currently positive -
3 students

6. Currently quarantined -
1 staff, 13 students

CDC Mitigation Measures

1. Consistent and correct use of face coverings (masks)
2. Social distancing as much as possible
3. Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
4. Cleaning and disinfection
5. Contact tracing in collaboration with local health department

We have utilized these measures to the best of our ability and will continue to do so.

According to the original metric the thought was that we could move forward to full in person learning once all 4 data points were achieved. Using the new data metric above, we can see a more accurate picture of how the school is affected rather than just state, regional, or even local numbers. This should give us a true representation of how to proceed. The mitigation measures will remain the same. Using the data above, we believe that we should begin the process of determining how we can return to full in person instruction safely.

A committee including the administration, the nurse, a group of teachers, and 2 board members was formed to create this plan. Together we have formulated a plan we believe will be safe for everyone involved, both students and staff.

The teachers in each grade level put together a plan for a typical day if all the students were to return to full in person learning. They also have a full remote plan in place for their grade level including daily live instruction with new lessons each day. These plans are located on the school website.

A survey was sent to all the families in the district on Monday, January 25, asking to choose the option they feel would be best for their students. The only options were Full Remote Instruction or Full In-Person Instruction. Full In-Person instruction included a range of options for discussion. Every family had the opportunity to view the full remote and the full in-person options for their students on the school website. Every family was asked to respond by Wednesday, January 27. Those without responses were called and asked the survey questions by Wednesday, February 3, 2021. The choice made on this survey will be for the remainder of the school year in order to provide the maximum amount of space for each student in the classroom.

Families may elect to enroll your child(ren) in remote learning if you want to limit your child's exposure and contact with other individuals during the current pandemic or you do not want your child to comply with the in-person safety rules. By enrolling your child for remote learning, you are making an irrevocable commitment to remote learning for the remainder of the school year. Students enrolled in the remote learning option will participate remotely 5 days per week with five (5) clock hours of instruction/learning activities scheduled/assigned per day. Your child will still be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities during any period of time he/she is enrolled in the remote learning program.

You may elect remote learning if your child has an underlying medical condition that exposes him/her to a higher risk of complications if he/she contracts COVID-19. You will need to contact your child's school to discuss your child's specific issues and the school will address your child's needs and reasonable accommodations through a 504 Plan. Your child's eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities will be determined through the 504 Plan process.

By enrolling your child for in person learning, you are agreeing that you and your child will comply with the criteria for in-person instruction, including performing a daily self-certification health check of your child prior to sending your child to school, and your child's compliance with school safety procedures, such as wearing a face covering while on a school bus and while present in a school building, unless your child meets the criteria for an exemption from wearing a face covering.

Teachers will be utilizing a COVID planning day on Friday, February 5, 2021 to prepare for all students in person.

On Monday, February 8, all students, K-8 will go to full in person learning. The students (K-5) will remain in their classrooms throughout the day and move only to specials. The addition of plastic desk or table dividers will be added to each desk in these classrooms. Junior High students will be following their schedule and moving throughout the day.

Students with IEP/504 health or learning plans will continue with their plans as previously designed. Seating charts and social distancing will be used as much as possible in order to decrease any increased risk for transmission or need for quarantine.

Lunch will take place in the classrooms while under the supervision of staff and/or current lunch supervisors. This could require rearrangement of available staff in order to compensate for six classrooms eating at the same time. Sixth and eighth grade will eat lunch in the classroom they report to right after lunch period supervised by the supervisors. Seventh grade class will utilize the cafeteria for lunch due to the size and location of the seventh grade classrooms. A sack lunch will be provided to every student requesting a lunch on Fridays at 11:30 dismissal time. Students with food allergies will be accommodated with a separate seating arrangement as necessary. **Second and third grades will have NUT FREE classrooms for the remainder of the year.**

Face coverings (masks) must be worn at all times in school buildings unless eating (only during lunch period) or drinking. All individuals in a school building must wear a face covering unless they have a medical contraindication, are under 2 years of age, have trouble breathing, or are unconscious, incapacitated, or unable to remove the face covering without assistance. If a student is medically unable to wear a face covering, a physician's note must be provided, otherwise the child will be required to wear a face covering. Face coverings must be worn properly covering the nose and mouth. Face coverings may be removed when outside only if social distancing is maintained.

Each student will be required to provide their own face covering. The District will have a limited supply of face coverings.

Students arriving at school without wearing a face covering will be provided with a face covering if available. If no face coverings are available, the student will be placed in a designated location until a parent or guardian can pick them up or bring them a face covering. If a student refuses to wear a face covering or repeatedly takes off the face covering in violation of this safety rule, the District will place the student in remote learning.

It is the responsibility of each Smithton family to complete the self-certification of health with their student(s) before sending them to school or sending them on the bus. This was the agreement set up in the Smithton Student Handbook at the beginning of the current school year. We are sending a self certification form home with our in person students on Wednesday, Feb.3, Group A students and Thursday, Feb. 4 with our Group B students. A self certification form will also be attached to this email.. This form must be signed and returned to the school by Monday, Feb. 8. By signing this agreement, each family agrees that their student would only be sent to school if the student meets the criteria to report to school and has no COVID-19 symptoms. Only students and staff who have completed the self-certification and meet the criteria to report to school will be permitted to do so. **Parents, by sending your child to school, you are certifying you have conducted the daily health screening and meet the criteria for your child to attend school.**

Students who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms or who otherwise do not meet the screening criteria should not report to school and will not be allowed in school buildings. Parents should notify the school of the child's absence and contact your child's physician to report the information.

The District will designate a supervised space for students who are experiencing COVID-19-like symptoms and may be awaiting evaluation and/or pickup. Any student that exhibits COVID-19 symptoms or does not meet the screening criteria while at school will be separated from other students under supervision of a staff member until a parent/guardian can be contacted to pick them up from school. Students will be permitted to return to school once they meet the Illinois Department of Public Health guidelines.

Attendance personnel will request specific symptom reporting when absences are reported along with COVID-19 diagnoses and COVID-19 exposure. Information will be documented and shared with the health staff or other appropriate personnel and the local health department. In such a circumstance, the District will maintain confidentiality of the student or staff member as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Illinois School Student Records Act, and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

Positivity numbers among students and staff will weigh heavily upon the decision to move to temporary remote or quarantine a classroom or wing of the school. If we are no longer able to staff all the necessary classrooms, we will be forced to move the grade level or wing of the building to a temporary remote status. This will be determined on a case by case basis. Our hope is to keep as many students in the building as possible and avoid a return to full remote learning for large numbers of students or the entire student body.

If a positive case is found to be in the building, a contact tracing will be performed. Students and staff members in close contact with the positive case (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during the infectious period) will be required to quarantine in accordance with the IDPH guidelines, ISBE guidance, and the St. Clair County Public Health Department. Students and staff will be permitted to return to school once they meet the IDPH guidelines and in accordance with recommendations and guidance from the local health department. Student(s) or staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days and eventually those who receive all required doses of a COVID-19 vaccine may not be required to quarantine or isolate. The District will follow guidance from the St. Clair County Health Department for required quarantine and isolation. Each teacher will keep an up to date seating chart and list of small group members for their classrooms in order to assist in contact tracing.

We are committed to moving forward with in person learning. Our hope is to continue with full in person learning for the remainder of the year. Because we have a good, working second mode of education in

place, if a student is required to quarantine due to COVID-19 symptoms, a positive test result, or COVID-19 exposure, they will be required to use the remote option temporarily for the time they are in quarantine. All necessary items for classes can be obtained by contacting the office. It is the expectation that fully remote students and temporary remote students will be available throughout the day in order to participate in their live instruction. Students in fully remote and in temporary remote instruction will be marked absent if they do not show up to live meetings and instruction. If a student who tested positive for COVID-19 or is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms is not well enough to participate in remote learning, the student will be marked absent as sick and are required to follow building and teacher protocols for absences due to illness.

Kindergarten, first grade, second grade, and third grade students in fully remote options will be provided with a fully remote teacher to provide daily instruction. Fourth through eighth grade students will have live streaming instruction to log into daily. Temporary remote students in grades first through eighth will have live stream instruction for core classes during their time of remote learning.

If we begin having teachers testing positive or needing to quarantine, we will use any available substitute teachers from our pool. If no substitute teachers are available we will move some of our paraprofessionals to proctor classrooms that are receiving live instruction via the promethean board using their teacher from home or a teacher in the same grade level (k-5). Our next available teacher pool would include the use of RTI teachers followed by pulling our Specialty teachers to provide instruction in the classrooms. We will use whatever creative means available to keep all classes moving forward.

If 5 or more positive cases are determined to be connected throughout the school, the decision for how to proceed is determined by the St. Clair County Health Department. This could include a temporary closing of a classroom, a wing of the building, or the entire school as determined by the health department.

Cougar Care will continue to be provided for after school care. In order to have a more exact number of students needing after school care, the survey included this service as a question. A maximum of 50 people in one space is still recommended by the state at this time.

By sending your child on the bus you are certifying that you have completed the daily self-certification checklist and your child meets all criteria to report to school, including having no symptoms of COVID-19 and are fever free. Face coverings must be worn at all times on the bus, unless the student meets a face covering exception. Students arriving to the bus without wearing a face covering will be provided with a face covering if available. If no face coverings are available, the student will not be allowed to ride the bus and a parent or guardian will be notified to pick them up or bring them a face covering. If a student refuses to wear a face covering or repeatedly takes off the face covering in violation of this safety rule, the District will place the student in remote learning. No eating or drinking will be allowed on the bus. Assigned seating will be enforced on the bus for contact tracing and social distancing will be maintained as much as possible. All bus drivers will follow the procedures related to their own health concerns as enforced by the bus company.

Sometimes we do not know until the very last minute if a teacher will be out of school for symptoms, testing, or listed as a close contact and quarantined. For that reason, we are formulating a list of substitutes who can provide in person learning in the classroom while the teacher is out, proctor a class while the teacher works from home, or teachers/staff who are capable of filling in for the day or days the staff member will be out. This list includes other teachers or staff within the school and therefore could mean that students may not be able to receive certain classes or the additional services they usually receive.

Handwashing for 20 seconds with soap and water will be performed several times throughout the school day. Hand sanitizer is located throughout each classroom and will be used by everyone entering and exiting the classroom. All students All manipulatives will be sanitized immediately following the activity. Teachers will sanitize desks/tables throughout the day. Additional custodial staff have been employed to increase the level of sanitation procedures ongoing throughout the day.

The school building is cleaned daily. All classrooms are thoroughly cleaned by our custodial staff at the end of each day, while teachers will maintain cleaning procedures throughout the day. High touch areas throughout the building are cleaned multiple times a day.

A weekly health report will be included with Mrs. Norton's weekly email in order to keep the community up to date with the health status of the students and staff. The previously discussed committee will be contacted periodically to assess the effectiveness of this plan. Changes can still be made to this plan through the end of the school year as determined by the committee and the teachers. The St. Clair County Health Department will be able to make changes to the method of instruction should other health emergencies arise.

It is our hope that we are able to continue to provide the level of quality education that current Smithton families are accustomed to and future Smithton families will desire. We believe with this method we can accomplish this goal.