



# **Valley R-VI School District**

## **Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan for Fall 2021**

# A Letter from the Superintendent

Greetings,

Throughout our years of educating students, one of our top priorities at Valley R-VI School District has always been the safety of our students, staff and community. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Valley R-VI has been monitoring the situation and taking all possible precautions to keep our students and employees as safe as possible. We have been continuously working with the Washington County Health Department and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) while making decisions throughout this time. We have also continued to monitor information and press releases from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS).

Through many hours of researching, collaborating, and gaining input from multiple stakeholders, we reopened school on the 2020-2021 scheduled start date of Wednesday, August 26, 2020. During that entire school year, we watched the fluidity of the situation, day after day, and made decisions in light of what we thought was best for our students at the time. Now, almost a year and a half after that initial decision in March of 2020 to close school for the remainder of the year, and almost a year after reopening in August of 2020, we are updating our plan again and releasing it for the start of the 2021-2022 school year.

This plan is called the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan (SRCSP). It is so named because this is the plan that we have been told we must have in place to start the 2021-2022 school year. We realize we have already returned safely to in-person instruction, and have been operating in that capacity for an entire school year. Just know that the plan before you is an updated version of our Return to School Plan issued before the 2020-2021 school year.

The details in the following plan could change at any time, even between now and the start of school, based on things such as community spread and recommendations by state and local health officials. Student and staff safety is of the utmost importance to us, and I hope this plan reflects that. We will continue to coordinate with federal, state, and local officials as we make critical decisions regarding student, staff, and community safety, while also providing quality instruction to all students.

Through this entire time, I want to say again that we appreciate your support, understanding, and patience as we have attempted to make the best decisions possible for our students.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Michael Silvy*

Michael Silvy, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

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## **A Return to 100% In-Person Instruction for the 2021-22 School Year**

In 2020-2021, the Valley R-VI School District's plan consisted of two options of education. These choices included a Traditional Option with students on campus or a Distance Learning Option.

We feel that situations have changed since we made those decisions for the 2020-2021 school year. One thing that has changed is DESE has removed the option for schools to operate under the AMI-X Plan during the 2021-2022 school year. This was a plan that allowed schools to shut down in-person learning and go strictly virtual for a period of time. At this time, we believe students have stronger educational experiences when they are able to attend school in-person with instructors and other students. Therefore, we have removed our virtual option of education we provided for all students.

If you had a virtual student last year, let us know if we can help you with this transition in any way. And as always, feel free to contact the school to speak to an administrator with any concerns you might have in regards to this change for the 2021-2022 school year.

### **Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan**

The following Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan for the 2021-2022 school year is an updated version of our Return to School Plan we issued for the 2020-2021 school year. Both the original plan and the updates to this plan were created by Valley staff, and includes much input from stakeholders of many different roles, our local health department, the Washington County Health Department, and was presented to the public in a public Board meeting both originally, during every time we issued changes to protocols during the 2020-2021 school year, and before issuing this Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan in its current state for the 2021-2022 school year.

### **GENERAL HEALTH GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS**

**Healthy Behaviors to Mitigate Health Risks:** To help mitigate health risks, Valley R-VI wants to emphasize the following behaviors for our students while they are at school, and for our families at home:

1. **WASH YOUR HANDS-** Regularly and vigorously wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Between hand washing, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
2. **COVER YOUR MOUTH & NOSE-** This can be done by wearing a face covering or mask to prevent the spread of germs, especially when you must be within six feet of other people. This also includes covering your cough or sneeze when you are without a face covering.
3. **DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE-** Life causes us to touch many surfaces that others have touched before. Try not to touch your eyes, nose, mouth and face throughout the day to cut down on the spread of germs.

4. **SOCIAL DISTANCING-** Keep six feet of distance between you and others whenever possible. The COVID-19 virus is generally spread through droplets caused when people sneeze, cough, or even when they talk. Remaining six feet apart helps prevent the spread of those germs. If you are unable to keep six feet apart, space as much as possible. Also, wearing a face covering can help.
5. **STAY HOME IF YOU ARE ILL-** If you are sick, showing symptoms listed on the following page of this document, or have had known close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have Covid-19, we are asking that you stay home.

**Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette at School:** The school will work to stay consistent with CDC guidelines and recommendations on handwashing and respiratory etiquette. Teachers will give students chances to wash their hands at appropriate times.

**Face Masks Allowed to be Worn on Campus:** The school is not mandating the wearing of face coverings at this time; however, we are allowing both staff and students to wear face masks to help prevent the spread of the virus. Staff may use face shields or masks during some instructional delivery situations. Also note that we will continue to monitor guidance concerning face coverings based on city, county, state, and national guidelines, and changes could occur.

**Student and Staff Asked to Conduct Self-Screening:** To help prevent the spread of Covid-19 and reduce potential risk of exposure to other people, staff are asked to conduct a self-screening before attending work. Also, parents are asked to have students do a self-screening before attending school each day. Answering “yes” to questions about the following symptoms and/or running a temperature should cause a person to stay home for the day:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Feeling feverish or measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- Known close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have Covid-19.

**Health Protocol:**

If a staff member or student becomes ill, or if someone is exhibiting symptoms of Covid-19, they will be asked to leave school or be picked up by a parent. They should go to their medical provider or the nearest health center upon leaving school. Upon returning to school, a student or staff member may be asked to submit a healthcare provider’s note or a note from the health department before returning.

**Diagnosed with COVID-19:**

If a student or staff member is diagnosed with Covid-19, they may return to school when all four criteria are met:

1. At least 24 hours have passed since a recovery with no fever without the use of fever reducing medications; and
2. You have improved symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, etc); and
3. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first occurred (with the possible exception of the loss of smell and taste); and
4. **A release from the Health Department of the county they reside in to return to school.** (You can contact the health department to receive a letter of release to return to school.)

**Social Distancing:** Social distancing is an effective way to prevent potential infection. School employees, students, parents, and visitors should practice staying six feet or more away from others *when possible*. There will be times during our school day where six feet separation is just not possible. If the situation allows, we will work to create three to six feet spacing, or as much as we can. However, we will move to minimum distancing in situations that make it difficult to implement social distancing.

**Visitors allowed on campus:** At this time, visitors *will* be allowed on campus with administrative approval. However, changes in conditions and situations could cause us to go back to a “No Visitor” procedure.

**Travel Restrictions:** No travel restrictions are in place at this time. However, changes in conditions and situations could cause a change to our travel restrictions procedure.

**Facilities / Custodial / Maintenance Protocols:**

- Staff will be asked to disinfect all frequently touched surfaces often, creating an increased cleaning for high-touch surfaces, both from teachers as well as support staff. These high-touch surfaces may include door handles, light switches, and any equipment that may be used by multiple students.
- Like last year, water bottle fillers will be available for staff and student use in all buildings. Students are encouraged to bring bottles for water to school. Please discuss the importance of not sharing water at school with your child(ren).
- Restrooms will be disinfected frequently. We have installed touchless faucets and hand dryers in all restrooms and locker rooms.
- Custodians will work to ensure there is adequate soap and paper products in restrooms.
- The school plans to have hand sanitizer available in classrooms and high traffic areas.

**Personal Workspace/Classroom:** The district plans to supply sanitizer wipes for employees to disinfect their own personal workspace throughout the day, giving special attention to commonly touched surfaces. Custodial staff have gone through training on proper cleaning techniques, will establish cleaning routines, and use proper cleaning supplies for the current situation.

**Accommodations for Children with Disabilities:** Appropriate accommodations will be made for children with disabilities when necessary or as mandated by a student’s Individual Education Plan.

**Cafeteria and Meal Periods:** Social distancing of six feet between all people will not be guaranteed for all students during meals. Social distancing will be practiced when necessary. Seating charts and video may be used in case of the need for contact tracing.

**Restroom & Locker Room Usage:** Restrooms and locker rooms may not provide six feet of separation between people at all times; students and staff should stay three to six feet from each other as a normal practice. Please practice thorough hand washing after use of facilities.

**Recess and Outdoor Activities:** Recess, outdoor activities and outdoor play are recommended for our students, and social distancing will be encouraged when possible during these recreational activities.

**Bus Drivers/Bus Protocols:** Parents who can bring their child(ren) to school and pick them up from school are encouraged to do so. This will help us with social distancing on our buses for families that need students to ride the bus. Here is a list of things to know about our bus transportation:

- Buses will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- We are installing video security systems on all our buses, so seating charts and video may be used for contact tracing purposes.
- Students can space out as much as they can on our buses, but as stated before in other situations, we will not be able to guarantee six feet between all people at all times.

**Classroom Protocols:** Valley R-VI will be implementing the following procedures to maximize the safety of all students. Please keep in mind that our intent for all students is to keep them in a stable group as much as possible while at school.

- We are going one-to-one, providing each student K-12 with a device. This should cut down on sharing of devices, mouse and keyboard, etc.
- Students will switch classes throughout the day. During passing times, students are asked to social distance as much as possible.
- Classrooms can be set up to encourage social distancing as best we can within our limited spaces; however, we cannot guarantee six feet between all people at all times.
- Assigned seating may take place in classrooms. This can reduce the number of students sharing a space and help with contact tracing if needed.
- Classroom teachers will help educate and remind students of practicing healthy behaviors such as hand washing to mitigate health risks.
- We plan to have sanitizer in classrooms and areas for students and staff to use.
- Every effort will be made to eliminate the sharing of school supplies, unless the supplies have been disinfected after each use.

**Hallway Protocols:**

- Elementary students will move from place to place within their cohort.
- Junior/senior high, students are asked to social distance as much as is allowed during the changing of classes.
- Movement through the hallways should be one-way when possible. Appropriate social distancing when lining up or walking down the halls will be encouraged to the greatest degree possible.

**Athletic / Extracurricular Event Protocols:**

- Because complete social distancing is not possible during athletic practices and extracurricular events, parents need to realize that participation in these activities are voluntary. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable, you should not allow your child to participate.
- Spectator capacity MAY be reduced or eliminated, depending on current area situations and recommendations from health officials.
- Concession stands will need to follow current health officials' recommendations.
- At this time, social events and assemblies are allowed but may be temporarily modified or eliminated depending on current circumstances.

**Protocol for Students or Staff Sick at School:** If an employee or student becomes ill on campus/district, he/she will immediately report to the district's isolation room (there is one located in each building) and a case form will be completed.

Once the employee or student arrives at the isolation room, they will be provided with a mask and gloves to wear to help protect other employees and students and prevent the spread of the potential virus.

- The nurse must complete the Suspected COVID-19 Case Form and call the local health authorities, seeking advice regarding transportation and location.
- The nurse and others attending to the suspected infected person should wear a protective mask and gloves while working with the suspected infected person.
- The nurse will direct an ill employee to leave work or call the parent of an ill student to be picked up from school immediately.
- Parents or emergency contacts that may come to pick up a sick student will not be allowed admittance into the building. They may wait outside the door of the building and the student will be allowed out.
- A district supervisor will identify persons who may have come in contact with the suspected infected person.
- Employees may be advised that they may have been in contact with a suspected employee and to carry out self-screening every morning. Based on the results, employees may need to contact their supervisor.
- The isolation area and suspected employee's or student's work area/classroom must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, in addition to all other common surfaces recently touched by the employee or student.

**Procedures for a Positive Case of COVID-19:** In the event of a positive case of COVID-19 at school, the following procedure will be followed:

- 1. Someone on Campus Tests Positive-** The Washington County Health Department (WCHD) receives information that an individual who has been on campus at school has tested positive for COVID-19.
- 2. Individual Notified-** The Washington County Health Department, best practice, will notify the individual who tested positive within 24 hours of positive test and has him/her quarantine. WCHD then initiates a risk assessment through contact tracing.
- 3. Health Department Notifies School-** The school gathers any information it has (i.e. seating charts, class rosters, etc.) and gives to the WCHD to aide them in contact tracing and risk assessment. Contact tracing will be conducted by the local health department in conjunction with the information provided by the school.
- 4. Close Contacts Notified-** The Washington County Health Department, best practice, will notify all close contacts within 48 hours, informing them to quarantine.
- 5. Individuals Released-** The Washington County Health Department, or their residing county, will provide a release for the individual diagnosed with a positive case of COVID-19, to return to campus. The individual will not be allowed back on campus without the release from the County Health Department.
- 6. Community Notification-** Valley R-VI School District will stay in communication with parents as best as possible with regard to individuals that test positive for COVID-19, and those in potential contact with such individuals. The school will *not* communicate with the community as a whole each time this happens.

**Diagnostic and Screening Testing:** At this time, the Valley R-VI School District will not provide testing or diagnosis of COVID-19 on campus. Those needing these services have testing available to them by an LPHA or a local clinic.

**Vaccination Events for Staff on Campus:** Valley R-VI School District sponsored an onsite vaccination clinic for all certified and non-certified staff to be able to receive both doses of vaccination for those that desired to do so. Staff that did not participate and students that are wishing to receive the vaccination are now able to receive these by an LPHA or at a local clinic.

**School Closures:** Just like during the 2020-2021 school year, the Valley R-VI School District will work closely with the Washington County Health Department in making decisions for the entire school district or school building closures. These decisions will be based on current data and situations, as well as the recommendations from the Washington County Health Department, and state and federal authorities. In the event that this would occur, the school district may communicate with parents through our Blackboard Communication System, on our website and/or Facebook page, and letter to parents given to the child and to be delivered home.

**Review and Revision of SRCSP:** The Valley R-VI School District plans to review and revise the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan at least every six months. The revision process will include consultation with students, families, school and district administrators, special education director, teachers, and school leaders and staff.

**Language of the SRCSP:** If families require a copy of the SRCSP in a different language other than English, please contact the Valley R-VI School District's administration.