

Willow Springs R-IV School District



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

**BOE Approved
01/10/22**

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Introduction

The global Coronavirus pandemic has introduced a new level of risk for in-person instruction and in-person gatherings. Willow Springs R-IV will make reasonable best efforts to minimize risk. However, attending our schools in-person will introduce a greater risk of exposure. Our schools are designed to educate students through social, face-to-face interactions, in relatively close spaces and in large groups. The benefits of this approach to education are well accepted. We know our community prioritizes student and staff safety and expects a thoughtful re-entry plan. As stated in RSMo170.011, "The school board of each school district in the state may make all needful rules and regulations for the organization, grading and government in the school district." The development and approval of this plan falls under the statutory authority extended to the Willow Springs school board.

As we plan for a school year likely to be continuously impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the priorities we hold are:

- Providing environments that are as safe as possible for students and staff;
- Providing equitable, guaranteed, and viable education
- Providing appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities as necessary as mandated by the individual student's IEP.

Knowledge and understanding of the contents of this plan is the responsibility of each staff member. The Safe Return to In Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan (SRCSP) will be reviewed regularly by the District Health and Wellness Committee consisting of school leaders, teachers, students and parents. The plan will also be reviewed by the Board of Education at each monthly meeting to ensure compliance and to approve any necessary revisions.

The Willow Springs School District takes very seriously the emotional and mental health needs of students and staff. To assist with these needs, the Willow Springs School District has hired a full-time social worker and contracts with Ozark Health Center to provide behavioral therapy to students as needed. Additionally, the school district will provide ongoing professional development for staff to better understand and respond to student's mental health issues.

Individuals should contact the Superintendent's Office if the information contained in the SRCSP is needed in a language other than English.

Safety and Well Being

Pandemic Period/Response Activities

In the event there is evidence of district-wide transmission of COVID-19, or if there is wide-spread human-to-human transmission in Howell County, the Willow Springs School District may enter the highest level of alert, which may include restrictions on access to buildings, if recommended by the Howell County Health authorities.

In order for Willow Springs R-IV School employees and the general public to best understand access rules, Willow Springs will use a Level Indicator.

Willow Springs Level Indicator Definitions

Level 1: Traditional School (Pre-Pandemic School):

All classes will take place in school buildings. There are no restrictions on visitors and volunteers in the building.

Level 2: Seated School with Health Precautions

All classes will take place in school buildings and social distancing, to the extent possible, will be followed. Extra cleaning and safety protocols for staff and students will be followed. There will be restrictions on parents, visitors, and volunteers in the building. The DESE approved AMI plan will be provided by the school district for those students unable to attend the seated school due to COVID-19 issues.

Level 3: Combination of AMI/Distance Learning and Seated School (Short Term School Closure)

Classes will take place for a majority of students by seated instruction or distance learning. Small groups of students who have no internet or Wi-Fi access may be transported to school for seated instruction.

Level 4: Online with AMI/Distance Learning (Extended School Closure)

All students will receive instruction online. Students in remote locations of the district will be provided access points in their geographical area. Students who still have no Wi-Fi connection will receive printed materials to be returned every other day with consistent communication and feedback from teachers. Teachers will use phone, text, email, Google Meets, Remind, and person- to-person meetings with protective barriers or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) utilized.

General Expectations – Parents

- Educate your child on viruses and the signs of illness.
- Screen your child for temperature each day before sending them to school and keep them home if they have an elevated temperature of 100.0 or higher. Families who are in need of a thermometer can contact the school nurses' office to be supplied with an inexpensive thermometer.
- It is also recommended to screen for additional symptoms including: shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, coughing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, or sore throat. Students exhibiting these symptoms that cannot otherwise be explained should be kept home from school.
- Teach appropriate hand washing, good hygiene and social distancing.
- Help explain to your child why “material sharing” will be limited right now.
- Teach your child how to wipe down surfaces at home, as they will also use disinfectants provided by the school district on their desk at school.
- Teach your child how to appropriately wear a mask and when to use them (if desired).
- Parents of students with healthy risk conditions to include but not limited to chronic kidney disease, weakened immune systems, obesity, serious heart conditions, diabetes, etc., should consult your family doctor for specific guidelines to be followed if your student attends school. Please communicate this information to the school nurses' office.

General Expectations—Teachers:

- Take temperature at home before arrival to assigned building. Temperatures at 100.0 or higher are considered significant. If you are experiencing an elevated temperature and other symptoms such as shortness of breath, chills, a consistent cough, or a sore throat, please do not report to work.
- Educate your students on viruses and the signs of illness.
- Take the temperature of students in your class if appropriate with the provided infrared thermometer.
- Make time in the day for good hand-washing.
- Train each student to use the hand sanitizer each time that they enter or leave the classroom.
- Have students maintain personal supplies vs. communal supplies.
- Have students wipe down desks daily and before and after meals if served in the classroom.
- Teach students how to maintain social distancing.
- Teach your students how and when to appropriately wear a mask (if desired).
- Do not allow students to congregate outside of the classroom before or after school is dismissed.
- Develop and communicate clear expectations that all student personal items will be taken from the room each day so that proper sanitizing can be done.
- Develop seating charts that are accurate and submit to the building office. These charts are not to be changed without approval of building administrator.

Health and Safety Guidelines

- The district will require “wash-in/wash-out” with both students and staff. All persons are strongly requested to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer when they come to school, during the day as they enter and exit classrooms and school busses, and again at the conclusion of the day. In addition to wash-in/wash out, breaks will be provided during the day to both wash and sanitize hands.
- Proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette will be taught and reinforced.
- Health Service staff will continue to keep a record of all persons seen in the nurses’ office. Due to student privacy, these records are not public; however, information may be shared with the Howell County Health Department, as appropriate.
- The Howell County Health Department will notify the school district of any student or staff member who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- We will strive to follow social distancing practices by class.
- Temperatures may be checked if feasible. Each teacher will have access to infrared thermometer for such purpose.
- For health and safety concerns, outside visitors, volunteers and parents will have restricted access to the school grounds. This includes visits during breakfast and lunch.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own clear water bottle/containers.
- Masks are allowed and students may choose to wear masks or PPE while at school. The CDC and United States Department of Transportation have mandated the wearing of masks on all public conveyances including school buses. Regardless of the mask policy at school, passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses. As such, the Willow Springs School District will require the wearing of masks by passengers and drivers, to include regular routes and activity buses.
- Masks are allowed and staff members may choose to wear masks or PPE while at school and may do so at their own discretion.

As stated in RSMo 167.191, “It is unlawful for any child to attend any of the public schools of this state while afflicted with any contagious or infectious disease, or while liable to transmit such disease after having been exposed to it. For the purpose of determining the diseased condition, or the liability of transmitting the disease, the teacher or board of directors may require any child to be examined by a physician, and exclude the child from school so long as there is any liability of such

disease being transmitted by the pupil.”

Students and employees will be excluded from school if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit one or more of the symptoms of COVID-19 based upon CDC guidance that is not otherwise explained.

- A fever of 100.0 degrees or higher
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Students should be screened at home before coming to school. Those exhibiting symptoms as noted above are prohibited from coming to school.

COVID Testing

COVID testing will be available through the school nurses' office. These will be available to staff upon request and if showing symptoms consistent with COVID-19. The tests administered by the school nurse are rapid tests that will reveal a positive or negative result within 15 minutes.

Return to School After Exclusion:

Those who have tested positive for COVID-19 and those experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, but have not been tested, may return to school when all of the following are met:

- a. They have not had a fever for at least 24 hours (one full day) without the use of medicine that reduces fevers, and
- b. Other symptoms have improved (for example—when your cough or shortness of breath have improved), and
- c. At least five (5) calendar days have passed since the symptoms first appeared, OR the individual provides a doctor's note stating the date a student or staff member may return to school. If asymptomatic, the five (5) days of exclusion will begin on the test date.
- d. Upon returning to school from exclusion, students and staff who tested positive for COVID-19 should wear a mask for five (5) days to minimize the risk of infecting people they encounter.

Contract Tracing

Upon being informed of a positive COVID case of a student or staff member, every effort will be made by the school nurses' office to contact the parents of any close contacts to the positive case to inform them of possible exposure to allow the parent to monitor their child for symptoms.

Siblings or Other Students in the Household

- Vaccinated household members of a positive case who remain asymptomatic or household members of a positive case who have had a positive COVID test within the last three months will not be excluded from school.
- Unvaccinated household members of a positive case, or those not up to date on vaccination, regardless of whether the positive case is a student or not, will be excluded from school.
- It is highly recommended that household members who are positive but are not students or staff members, contact the school nurses' office if they have students in their home who are close contacts.
- The duration of the exclusion from school for household contacts will be determined by the school nurse on a case by case basis. Upon returning to school, household contacts should wear a mask for five (5) days to minimize the risk of exposing other students/staff.
- If a household member of a positive case, regardless of vaccination status, develops symptoms of COVID-19, they will be excluded from school for five (5) days from the onset of symptoms OR until they provide a doctor's note to the school stating the date they may return. They are also required to contact the school nurses' office to let the school nurse know when they become symptomatic.
- If a student/staff member or household member of a student/staff member is tested for COVID-19, the student/staff member and unvaccinated household members will need to stay home from school until test results are received.

District Response to Exclusion from School

As soon as the district becomes aware of a student or employee that may have COVID-19 or that has been excluded from school, the custodial staff will be informed so that all desks, lockers, and workspaces of the person are thoroughly disinfected. If the school is not open when the notification occurs, the custodial staff will wait 24 hours or as long as possible prior to disinfecting and instead will block off the area so that others do not have contact. However, if that is not possible or school is in session, the cleaning will occur immediately.

Separation While in School

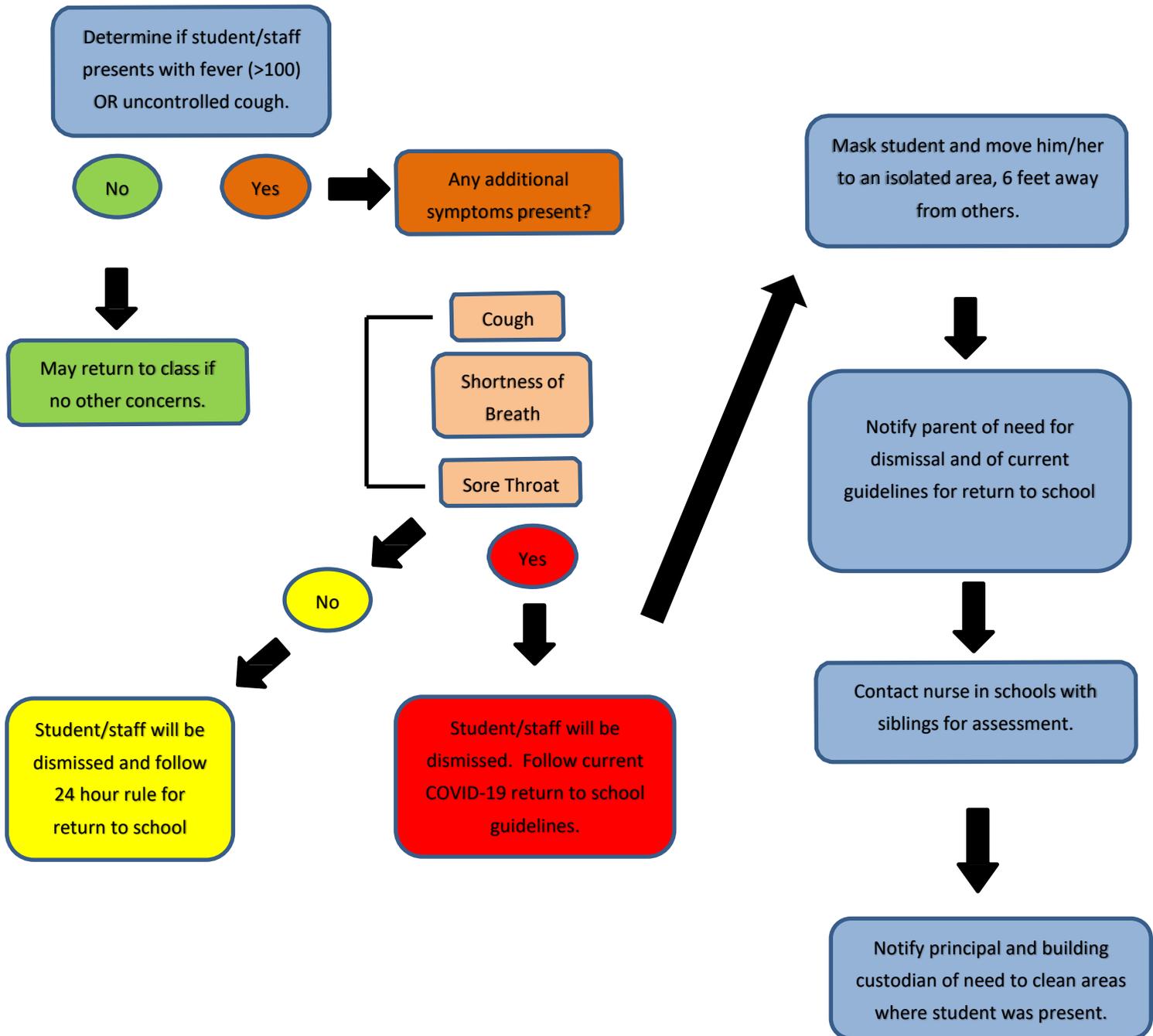
A separate room or space will be available where students who are symptomatic or have an elevated temperature will wait for pickup. Students will be given a mask to wear. Only essential staff and students assigned to the room may enter. The room will be disinfected several times throughout the day. Strict social distancing is required and staff must wear appropriate PPE. Students will be walked out of the building to their parents.

Vaccinations

The Willow Springs School District encourages staff and students, if eligible, to receive a vaccination for additional protection from COVID-19 and will be supportive of local vaccination events.

Surveillance, Screening, and Triage

In the event that a student or staff member is feeling unwell, they will visit the nurse's office on campus and the following protocols will be followed:



Social Distancing and Operational Protocols

- Every precaution to the extent possible will be taken to follow social distancing protocols. Middle school and high school students will transition quickly from one class to the next without congregating for any length of time. Adult supervision will assist to ensure that social distancing and constant movement occurs between classes.
- Students will report straight to their classroom upon entering the building and staff will monitor to ensure that no congregating occurs.
- Backpacks may be brought to school but must go home at the end of each day so the buildings may be completely sanitized.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own clear water bottles to school to be used throughout the day.

Sanitation Protocols

- The Willow Springs R-IV School District will maintain adequate supplies of personal protective equipment, soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, and other cleaning materials throughout each school.
- The Willow Springs R-IV School District will clean frequently-touched surfaces and objects (e.g., tables, handrails, and doorknobs) with district-supplied cleaning and disinfectant products. Computer safe disinfectant methods will be used for computers and keyboards.
- An additional custodian will be on duty during the day to sanitize high traffic areas, including door knobs, handrails, etc. for increased cleaning to high touch surfaces.
- Classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized daily with cleaning materials used on desks, tables and materials throughout the day by teachers and by students.
- Playground equipment for elementary and middle school students may be used by students during the day, but all areas in which students may come into contact by touching will be sanitized daily.

Student Transportation

Due to COVID-19 social distancing recommendations, **it is highly recommended** parents provide students their own transportation. If parents decide to have students utilize school transportation, every effort will be made to provide a safe and clean environment on the bus.

- The CDC and United States Department of Transportation have mandated the wearing of masks on all public conveyances including school buses. Regardless of the mask policy at school, passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses. As such, the Willow Springs School District will require the wearing of masks by passengers and drivers, to include regular routes and activity buses.
- Parents are expected to screen their child for temperature each day before allowing them to board the school bus and keep them home if they have an elevated temperature of 100.0 or higher or other related symptoms that cannot otherwise be explained.
- Students are highly encouraged to practice physical distancing while waiting for the bus at their designated bus stop.
- Each bus will be equipped with hand sanitizer dispensers and students are strongly encouraged to use them upon entering the bus.
- Bus drivers will watch for continued coughing and may request a student sit in a designated area on the bus.
- Buses will be deep cleaned and sanitized daily.
- The seat directly behind the driver will remain empty if possible.
- Students will have assigned seats on the bus.
- Students from the same family are encouraged to sit together.

Breakfast and Lunch

Every effort will be made to ensure social distancing during breakfast and lunch. There will be no open salad bars or shared tables for students at any school for the indefinite future. Students who bring their own lunch will need to make sure that it is secure in a lunch bag and not handled by other students.

- High School – The high school will continue the “grab and go” breakfasts that they can take to their classrooms rather than a seated breakfast in the cafeteria. For lunch, meals will be served in the cafeteria (Bear’s Den).
- Middle School – With more room for chairs and tables in Grimes Auditorium, middle school students will continue with breakfast and lunch in that location. Social distancing guidelines will be followed.
- Elementary School – The elementary school will have breakfast in the cafeteria at the beginning of each day. Lunch periods will be staggered further to reduce the number of students in the cafeteria so as to follow social distancing guidelines.

Athletics and Activities

The Willow Springs School District understands the importance of extra-curricular and co-curricular athletics and activities for students. As such, as long as the Willow Springs School District offers seated school for students, athletics and activities for students will also be offered. In the event that the Willow Springs School District needs to close school for either a short-term or an extended term due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all athletics and activities will also be suspended while school is not in session. It may also be necessary to suspend a specific athletic program or activity in the event of multiple positive cases within the program.

Operational Procedures

The following general procedures will be followed for athletics or activities while on Level Two of the Levels Indicator Definitions:

- Student athletic groups and or activities may travel to out-of-town events but will not be allowed overnight trips. All groups must return to Willow Springs the same day of the event.
- Coaches and sponsors will be provided with infrared thermometers to screen student athletes for elevated temperature (100.0 or above) prior to each practice or rehearsal.
- Athletes will not drink from the same communal fountain but will be provided with individual water bottles for this purpose. Bottle filling machines or resources will be provided to athletes for this purpose.
- Following the school district protocol, coaches, sponsors, athletes or other student participants are not required to wear masks or other face coverings while at school district events or practices in the Willow Springs School District, but are not discouraged from doing so if they feel so inclined.
- Coaches, sponsors, athletes and student participants will follow the masking requirements and other health protocols of the school districts they visit for events or other activities.
- Weight equipment, other athletic equipment or musical equipment will be wiped down thoroughly before and after an individual's use of equipment.

Alternative Methods of Instruction – Education Delivery Options

The COVID-19 pandemic has required schools to re-invent how instruction can be provided to students. Although the Willow Springs School District believes that the preferred method of instructional delivery will always be one that allows for direct and in-person student-teacher interaction, the district is also prepared to offer an Alternative Method of Instruction (AMI) should students be excluded from attendance due to COVID-19 related reasons. The following options represent the instructional delivery options that will be offered by the Willow Springs School District for the 2020-2021 school year.

Option 1: (Traditional School Model)

Full Seated Instruction for All Students

This model will be used when no restrictions remain for schools and we are back to fully operational.

Option 2: (Traditional School Model Blended with Individual Student Needs)

Seated Instruction for a majority of students. The DESE approved AMI or distance learning plan will be followed for other students as necessary

This model is used when most students are able to attend school as planned, but other students, based upon individual circumstances related to COVID-19, may not be able to attend. This is not during a school closure.

Option 3: (Extended School Closure, Partial Access to School Buildings)

Seated Instruction for selected students as necessary. The DESE approved AMI or distance learning plan will be followed for other students as necessary

This option will be used when a partial or full school closure is in place due to COVID-19, for a short period of time. The importance of social distancing is emphasized, so the number of students in the building is minimized. Typically those in seated school would be those with limited or no Wi-Fi access.

Option 4: (Extended School Closure, No Access to School Buildings)

The DESE approved AMI or distance learning plan will be followed for all students. Full school closure. This may be done either virtually or with printed packets, but two-way communication between teacher and student is required.

Whatever Alternative Method of Instruction is preferred and utilized, a system of accountability will be in place for the school district, the school, the teacher and the student. Continuous interaction will occur between the teacher and the student to determine academic progress and may impact promotion of the student in subsequent school years if adequate progress is not demonstrated by the student.