

Firelands Local Schools

Reopening Plan: July 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for your patience as we create a reopening plan for our district. This has been a challenging time for all of us and we appreciate your continued support. As **student and staff safety is our top priority**, we are taking guidance from the following sources to reopen our buildings:

- Lorain County Public Health (LCPH)
- The Governor of Ohio
- The Center for Disease Control (CDC)
- The Ohio Department of Education (ODE)
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

Our plan is a community effort that represents countless hours and much care. With that being said, **please understand that we are 7 weeks away from the start of the school year, and the reopening documents shared with you today are subject to change in order to meet the best interest of everyone's safety**. If this occurs, we will communicate on all of our normal platforms.

The following is our plan for reopening schools. We are appreciative of the input from parents and staff that was shared via our online surveys. Your input helped to shape the reopening of Firelands Local Schools.

Education:

Looking ahead to the 2020-2021 school year, families have the option to keep K-12 grade students home to engage in online learning exclusively or return to school with safety measures in place.

OPTION 1	100% ONLINE LEARNING
	

OPTION 2

100% IN PERSON LEARNING

Firelands will be offering two different educational options. Parents/guardians must choose either Option 1 or Option 2 for their student. Choices will be recorded in the Parent/Guardian Commitment Form: 2020-2021 School Year, with a link that follows in this document.

1) Online Option Only

Each Firelands family (including open-enrolled students) has the ability to keep their child at home and participate in 100% online learning (5 days a week). Classes will be taught by Firelands teachers although not all electives will be offered. This is a full semester commitment (September - January 22, 2021) and selections may be limited. **You can find more information about [online learning here](#).**

2) In Person Option Only

Students will learn in a traditional classroom setting with the safety measures listed below in place. Physical distancing and preventative measures will be employed to minimize risk to students and staff.

Families can have children participate in online learning while other siblings participate in person. The majority of this document will address in person learning.

Safety Measures for In Person Learning:

School districts in the State of Ohio have been given general guidelines for reopening which include:

- **Assessing Symptoms**
- **Washing/Sanitizing Hands**
- **Cleaning/Sanitizing Surfaces**
- **Social Distancing**
- **Masks/Face Coverings**

Firelands will follow these guidelines by implementing the following:

Health Check/Assessing Symptoms

Families must check children's temperatures prior to boarding the bus or arriving at school. Staff are also required to self check. **Students and staff members should stay home when they register a fever of 100°F or higher or have any of the symptoms related to COVID-19.** The LCPH Department has posted information that must be followed:

Any student that has the following symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home from school and should see their primary care provider to be assessed for COVID-19:

Any one of the following symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, and known exposure.

People with COVID-19 report a wide range of symptoms, which can also include: fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.

Washing/Sanitizing Hands

We have ensured that all classrooms and building entrances are stocked with sanitizers.

Hand washing or sanitizing breaks will be taken frequently so that we can do our part in prevention of transmission.

Cleaning/Sanitizing Surfaces and the Buildings

Additional measures will be taken to sanitize our facilities both during the school day and after with high traffic areas being a focus for cleaning staff. Classroom surfaces, such as desks and chairs, will be **cleaned by staff** prior to the next student use. In addition, community supplies that have been shared in the past will no longer be used. Children need to have their own designated materials. An emphasis will be placed on limited touching of any physical items.

Social Distancing

While we cannot guarantee 6 feet of social distancing at all times, we will social distance to the fullest extent possible. The AAP states that 3 feet is acceptable if face coverings are worn. The number of students in a classroom will be decreased in order to provide an average of 4-foot physical distancing from one another.

We will be reducing the number of students on buses. This is a very difficult area to distance students and we are continuing to finalize this plan. **All students (K-12) will be required to wear a face covering prior to boarding the bus.** If parents are uncomfortable with children on buses they are reminded that driving students to and from school is an option that is always welcome.

In grades K-8 students will remain in classrooms and teachers will rotate (with limited exceptions). In grades 9-12, students will be following a block class schedule. The number of students in hallways will be decreased as movement will be limited.

Restroom breaks and recess at FES while obviously occurring, will look different with safety in mind.

Face Coverings

Staff:

- All staff members **are required** to wear a face covering at all times.

Students:

- **Students in grades K-12 will be required to wear face coverings.** Exceptions to this rule will be lifted for students with documented medical conditions and/or disabilities that prevent the wearing of face coverings. The special education department will be reaching out to families that may need exemptions.
- **Students in grades K-12 are required to wear face coverings on all bus routes.**
- Face covering breaks will be built into the day with safety in mind.
- Students are required to provide their own face coverings. On a limited basis, face coverings will be provided for students who arrive without proper coverings.
- Face covering should securely fit around the mouth, nose and side of the face. Examples of face coverings include reusable or single-use face coverings or neck gaiters. Face coverings must not cover ears or the top of heads. Face shields can also be utilized. Face shields must cover the nose, mouth and extend below the chin.

School Day

Safety and flexibility is key. Instructional time will be shortened slightly in order to keep safety measures in place. We will spend more time washing hands/cleaning, etc. Students in K-8 will stay in the same classroom (for the majority of time). Students in grades 9-12 will

operate on a block schedule to minimize interactions with others. Seats will be assigned to protect students and minimize exposure.

Water fountains will be closed but the bottle feature will be available. Students are encouraged to bring water bottles (labeled with the child's name) as they will be able to refill them during the day.

Hallways will be one way where needed.

At this point we do not expect an extension of the school calendar to accommodate the increase in safety measures.

Transportation

Bus ridership will be limited to 48 students (2 per seat). Face coverings are required for all riders (K-12) due to the difficulty of proper social distancing on buses. High touch areas will be cleaned between routes and a more thorough cleaning will occur daily.

Parents/Guardians are reminded that students may arrive at school and be picked up through private transportation.

Firelands Local Schools recognizes that pick up and drop off at the child's home address is always best; however, we know that this is not always possible. A [variance form is available here](#). **Variance requests must be submitted for consideration by July 29, 2020.**

Food Service

Food service is offered to students who are learning online and in school. We are moving towards touchless pay systems for student and staff safety. It is encouraged, but not required, to use the online payment system. A small convenience fee is charged. For students attending school, breakfast will resemble a grab and go bag and will be eaten in the classroom. Lunches will be delivered to the classrooms at FES. At SAMS and FHS eating areas will be expanded beyond the cafeteria (gyms etc.) Students will maintain social distancing during breakfast and lunch.

Start Date for the 2020-2021 School Year

In order to provide the best possible environment for our students and staff, we have decided to push back the start date of school. Students in grades 1-12 **will begin the**

2020-2021 school year on September 8, 2020 pending BOE approval. The district will contact kindergarten parents regarding start dates for kindergarten.

Medical/Quarantining Protocol

Clinic Staffing

- The clinic staff for the 2020-2021 will include:
- 65 hours of LPN coverage
- 8 hours of RN coverage

This is an increase of hours from previous years.

Quarantine Protocol

Firelands will follow the recommendations of the Lorain County Public Health Department in regards to medical needs related to COVID-19. Each building will have a designated quarantine room that cannot be utilized for anything other than quarantine needs.

If we have a suspected case in school (symptoms or fever above 100° F) the student will be separated from the general public and will wait in the quarantine room for parent/guardian pick up. Staff members will immediately leave.

Firelands will follow the recommendations of the Lorain County Public Health Department in regards to an exposure or suspected exposure of a staff member, student, household member of a staff member or student. If someone tests positive for COVID-19, at the time of writing this document, the following will occur:

- Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 is isolated at home and receives a call from their county/city of residence's health department with instructions on how to keep themselves and their family safe.*
- During that call, the health department acquires a list of close personal contacts (persons who were within 6 feet of them for more than 10-15 minutes). The health department then reaches out to those case contacts with quarantine information (14 days at home, only going out when absolutely necessary, hand hygiene, face coverings, etc.).*
- They also seek patient permission to contact employers/schools, etc. to help determine close personal contacts as necessary on a case by case basis.*
- It is the job of the health department to contact cases and their contacts.*
- Anyone exhibiting symptoms should contact their primary care provider and depending on their access to care, they will be given testing instructions.*

There will be a minimum 14 day quarantine for any staff/student considered by LCPH to be a “close contact” to a positive case. Each case is determined on a case-by-case basis. **Please note that the LCPH orders the quarantine, not the school district.**

PARENTS & GUARDIANS -- YOU HAVE AN IMPORTANT CHOICE TO MAKE!

After you have read through this detailed information, we ask you to choose whether your child(ren) will attend school in person or enroll in exclusively online learning. **Please be advised that your selection is a commitment through January 22, 2021 (the first semester).** We also need accurate information from you regarding your child’s transportation to and from school. **THESE NUMBERS ARE CRITICAL TO IMPLEMENTING THIS PLAN.**

We acknowledge families will consider many factors when making this important decision. We request that you complete and submit a [PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMITMENT FORM: 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR](#) for each of your children by 9:00 am on Wednesday, July 29th. Your timely submissions will help us prepare to provide your child, our staff, and our community with a learning environment that prioritizes health and safety.

Frequently Asked Questions

We have put together many Frequently Asked Questions in order to be as transparent as possible. Please [visit this link](#) to read additional information regarding reopening our school.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that our reopening plan was created with the safety of our students and staff members in mind and with more than 50 days before the start of school, there is little doubt that some portions of this plan will need adjustment. As a parent of three children and Superintendent of this district, I appreciate the important decision in front of you and fully respect your choice for the coming year.

Thank You and Be Well,

Mike Von Gunten
Superintendent