



**FORRESTVILLE
VALLEY
SCHOOL
DISTRICT #221**

**COVID-19
PROCEDURES &
MITIGATION
STRATEGIES**

**2021-
2022
School
Year**

Forrestville Valley School District #221
Return to School Plan
COVID-19 Procedures & Mitigation Strategies
2021-2022 School Year

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FORRESTVILLE VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT #221

SUPERINTENDENT
Mrs. Sheri Smith

August 2021

Dear Forrestville Valley Community,

We are entering year two of starting our Back-to-School season with ongoing changes, various protocols, and COVID-19 continuing to be part of our daily conversations. Thank you for your patience as we navigate information from CDC, IDPH, ISBE and our local health departments. The District remains committed to in-person instruction for all students and we remain confident we are able to provide high quality instruction during pandemic conditions.

With your support, Forrestville Valley was one of the few districts to provide in-person instruction every day of the school year last year. My hope is we will be able to implement mitigations based on local data in the near future. However, until we are granted the authority to do so, we will comply with all mandates to ensure our doors remain open. The 2021-2022 Return to School Plan includes many of the layered mitigation strategies as well as areas of flexibility from last year. Please review all information carefully.

Navigating education during a global pandemic has been a confusing and emotional process for all. No one person has been left without questions or concerns. As a public system, there are certain mandates and requirements that we must follow to ensure we receive funding, have adequate insurance coverage, and ultimately protect all students and staff. Our students and staff did an excellent job following all protocols last school year and I expect the same this upcoming school year.

If you have questions about any one strategy, you are encouraged to contact your school office or the district office. However, I respectfully request if your concern is one of following the mandates in place, please direct these concerns to Springfield. The teachers, administrators, support staff, and Board of Education are dedicated to providing a high-quality education for your son or daughter within the mandates given. I would ask that their time be appropriately spent on educating your son or daughter, not defending a mandate they have no choice but to follow.

I look forward to a great school year and thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Smith

EXECUTIVE ORDER COVID-19 No. 85
August 4, 2021

On August 4, 2021, Governor Pritzker signed COVID-19 Executive Order No. 85 that has direct impact to Forrestville Valley School District. This order mandated all public and nonpublic schools in Illinois serving pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students, follow the joint guidance issued by ISBE and IDPH and take proactive measures to ensure the safety of students, staff, and visitors, including, but not limited to:

- a. Requiring the indoor use of face coverings by students, staff, and visitors who are over age two and able to medically tolerate a face covering, regardless of vaccination status, consistent with CDC guidance; and,
- b. Implementing other layered prevention strategies (such as physical distancing, screening testing, ventilation, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, advising individuals to stay home when sick and get tested, contact tracing in combination with appropriate quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection) to the greatest extent possible and taking into consideration factors such as community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks, consistent with CDC guidance.

Under this executive order, Forrestville Valley will require the following layered mitigation strategies beginning August 16, 2021:

Layered Mitigation Strategies

- Face Coverings Required by ALL Students & Staff
- Social Distance = 3 feet*
- Daily Cleaning Protocols
- COVID-19 Testing*
- Vaccine*

LAYERED MITIGATION STRATEGIES 2021-2022 School Year

COVID-19 Vaccine: Under the current executive order, the vaccine is encouraged as the most effective mitigation strategy for eligible students and staff. The District will continue to work with Ogle County Health Department to offer on-site clinics. Parents are encouraged to call any school office with information regarding locations offering the covid vaccine in our area. Please note, students and staff who are fully vaccinated are not required to practice social distancing or participate in covid testing.

Face Coverings: All students and staff must comply with the requirement to wear a face covering as mandated by Governor's Executive Order, IDPH, and ISBE while indoors, regardless of vaccination status. Face coverings must cover both nose and mouth.

Students who are not able to tolerate a face covering due to a medical contraindication must provide a physician's statement of such contraindication to building principal.

As was done last school year, natural breaks will be built into the school day to provide opportunities to remove face coverings safely. In addition, as weather permits, breaks will be encouraged to be taken outdoors.

Social Distancing: While the mask mandate is in effect, social distancing will be a minimum of 3 feet within classroom environments and approximately 6 feet during lunch/cafeteria settings.

Students will resume use of lockers, hallway passing time, and rotation of classrooms during the 2021-2022 school year. In addition, secondary students will return to a traditional eight period day.

Daily Cleaning and disinfection: Forrestville Valley will continue daily cleaning protocols within the building as well as on school buses.

Daily wellness screenings through the skyward system, or self-certifications, will NOT be required this school year. Temperature checks will not be completed at school unless a student exhibits symptoms. However, the firm expectation is that parents keep their student home and immediately notify the school district if their student is exhibiting any signs of the COVID virus.

IN-PERSON LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

On February 12, 2021, CDC released updated guidance for K-12 Schools which prioritized in-person instruction for all students. On July 9, 2021, Illinois State Superintendent Dr. Carmen Ayala declared all Illinois schools must resume full in-person learning for all student attendance days during the 2021-2022 school year.

Remote learning instruction is only available for students while they are under quarantine consistent with guidance or requirements from Ogle & Stephenson County Health Departments. Should a student be placed on quarantine due to exposure or presumed/positive COVID-19 case, he/she will be able to participate in class instruction via remote means.

The district remote platform is synchronous participation via the Zoom platform. This system is the same as last school year and students should obtain log-in access from class teacher(s). Students are responsible for all work completion, including quizzes, tests, and exams during any quarantine period.

Any student who is not able to attend school due to a medical condition may be eligible for homebound services. The process to review eligibility for homebound services starts with a physician completing medical certification under Illinois School Code Section 14-13.01. Parents of students with such medical conditions should contact their school office for more information regarding homebound services and instruction.

QUARANTINE REQUIREMENTS & COVID TESTING

Individuals Not Yet Vaccinated:

Quarantine Periods: In the event a student or staff member shows covid symptoms, or has tested positive for COVID, a specific period of quarantine will apply. In addition, quarantine periods will apply for any student or staff member who is not vaccinated but identified as a close contact.

Close Contacts: The close contact definition has changed for students in the school setting. Due to the universal masking mandate, students in the classroom setting within 3 to 6 feet of an infected person are NOT required to quarantine*. In the event both the infected person and close contact are not masked, students within six feet of the infected student for 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period will be considered a close contact and subject to quarantine.

Nurse Nelson will take care of all contact tracing and will work collaboratively with local health departments to determine length of quarantine periods. Please note, the length of quarantine may change due to local transmission levels, testing options, and exhibited symptoms. This information will be provided to parents once all information has been obtained.

*applies to students only, not staff.

COVID Testing: BinaxNOW covid testing is available for all students/staff on site for no charge. This test can be administered by Nurse Nelson after parental consent is received, at specific times throughout the day. BinaxNOW testing schedules can be obtained by calling any school office. Parents are encouraged to sign consent at the beginning of the school year for BinaxNOW testing, allowing this test to be administered at any time throughout the 2021-2022 school year. Consents will be sent to parents via Skyward email and will also be located on the district website.

All students participating in extracurricular activities may be required to participate in covid testing due to nature of close contacts within such activities. Failure to participate in any testing will result in a 10-day quarantine from the current extracurricular activity.

TEST to STAY: As universal masking has now been mandated, students and student-athletes exposed to a positive covid individual outside the home have the option to TEST AND STAY. Upon strict BinaxNOW testing protocol, students identified as close contacts may remain in school and may continue to participate in extracurricular activities, provided universal masking is in place, no symptoms are exhibited, and all testing remains negative. More specific information will be shared by Nurse Nelson when these specific situations arise.

Individuals Fully Vaccinated:

Students and staff who are fully vaccinated are not considered close contacts if exposed to covid, provided they remain symptom free. In addition, individuals who are fully vaccinated do not need to practice social distancing throughout the school day. However, vaccination status must be verified in one of two ways:

- a) Parents may provide a copy of vaccination card to any school office to be shared with appropriate school personnel.
- b) Parents may complete an authorization for Nurse Nelson to share vaccination status from the state database system with appropriate school personnel. This release will be sent to all parents via Skyward email and will also be located on the district website.

There is no requirement for a student or staff member to provide verification of vaccination status. If an individual who is fully vaccinated does not provide evidence of vaccination, nor provide release for Nurse Nelson to share vaccination status with appropriate school personnel, student or staff member will be treated as an individual not yet vaccinated.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

During the 2021-2022 School Year there is no covid capacity on school buses. However, all drivers and students are required to mask while riding a school bus.

Seating charts will be in place again this school year to assist with contact tracing in the event close contacts are identified while riding the bus. Close contacts on school buses are individuals within 3 feet of a positive case, for more than fifteen minutes. This is a decrease from 6 feet last year and should assist with the number of students in quarantine based on bus transportation.

To the greatest extent possible, parents are still encouraged to provide transportation to and from school to avoid close contacts scenarios.

CONTACT INFORMATION

As we all know, information surrounding the coronavirus continues to evolve, and guidance will be based on new information received. Forrestville Valley will communicate any changes through the Skyward email and Skylert phone messaging systems. Parents are encouraged to visit the district website for the most up-to-date information www.fvdistrict221.org.

In the event Illinois School Districts may alter mitigation strategies to align with local data, the District will implement the recommendation previously sent to parents in July 2021. If allowable, this plan follows a low, moderate, and high transmission status to determine mitigation layers, specifically when masking is required. This plan cannot be implemented until approved by CDC, IDPH, and ISBE or the executive order is no longer in effect. Any policy or procedure that violates state mandates will jeopardize district funding, insurance coverage, and overall liability.

Our goal continues to emphasize in person instruction, and we will do our best to remain open for all students during the 2021-2022 school year. Thank you in advance for your support to keep our doors open.

School offices have resumed regular office hours from 7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Monday-Friday and can be reached as follows:

German Valley Grade School	(815) 362-2279
Forreston Grade School	(815) 938-2301
Forreston Jr/Sr High School	(815) 938-2175
Forrestville Valley District Office	(815) 938-2036