



South Adams Schools

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Michelle Clouser-Penrod, Superintendent

South Adams Schools **Return to School Guidance**



Inspiring students to reach for the stars!

Board Approved July 22, 2020*

***This document was approved with the understanding that it will need to be adjusted as circumstances and state/county directives change.**

Introduction

South Adams Schools is excited to welcome students and staff back to school in August of 2020. The first student day is set for **Wednesday, August 12th**. SAS has also resumed summer athletic activities in accordance with the IHSAA and the Indiana Department of Education IN-C.L.A.S.S. guidance documents. South Adams teachers are scheduled to return in full capacity beginning on Monday, August 10, 2020.

SA understands that the needs of families, especially during this time, are unique. SA will work with each Starfire family to make sure we meet those needs and continue to educate our students in a way that is best. If a family has health concerns or does not feel comfortable with their child/children attending in person, we will work with each family on an individual basis to ensure they are fully supported as they learn at home. **All families need to register online by August 5**. If you would like your child to learn at home, there will be an opportunity to indicate your wishes for your child to learn at home at the end of the form.

Additional cleaning protocols, to mitigate/prevent the spread of COVID-19 have been developed. In addition SA has developed plans for social distancing during lunch periods, passing periods, student arrival/dismissal, and other times of student congregation.

In keeping with guidance from the DOE, school drinking fountains will not be used. However, the touch-free water bottle filling stations are being installed and will be accessible to students and staff. Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles (clear plastic or reusable bottles) to school.

School bus seating charts are also required to minimize exposure and to assist with contact tracing, if needed. Bus drivers and other transportation staff will be responsible for sanitizing buses between and after each route as recommended by official guidance. Masks or face shields will be required on the bus.

South Adams' students will be expected to adhere to all student handbook rules and expectations. Students will be expected to follow all social distancing requirements and face covering guidelines while in school attendance. In the event of a quarantine period or school closure, students are expected to continue the educational process through our SA Learn at Home with the support of our SA staff.

South Adams Schools will make every effort to implement safety protocols that are sensible and realistic to our school setting, while also ensuring that all official directives are followed. It is always the objective of the South Adams Schools Board of Trustees and SAS School Administration to put the needs of our students, staff, families and community first.

South Adams Schools Return to School Guidance

South Adams has worked in partnership with the Indiana Department of Education, and the Adams County Department of Public Health, to develop guidance to support our school district in determining plans and strategies for the reopening of school this August. *South Adams Schools Return to School Guidance* provides a sensible approach with clear, actionable steps designed to prioritize the health and safety of students, staff and community as we return to school for the 2020-2021 school year. It is important to keep in mind that this guidance is subject to change based on guidance from the above entities.

Instructional Delivery Options:

SA believes that in person instruction is the best way to educate our students. However, we understand that during these uncertain times, families may feel that in person instruction is not the best option for health or other personal reasons. If a family has health concerns or does not feel comfortable with their child/children attending in person, we will work with each family to ensure they are fully supported as they learn at home.

Our learn at home option is very different from the eLearning that we experienced in the spring. SA teachers will be working in the coming weeks to establish clear expectations and guidelines for those students who will be learning at home. Students who will be learning from home will still be assigned to a teacher (Elem) or be given a schedule (MS/HS). Students will be a part of each class and participate virtually during regular school hours, via canvas or another tool being used by the teacher. This will allow for teaching to be live and learning to take place in real time “alongside” their peers throughout the regular school day.

South Adams teachers will be working to refine plans related to this and detailed information will be communicated in the near future. **Students will not have to commit to a specified timeframe in order to participate in this option (i.e. 9 weeks or a semester).** If you choose the at home option, we understand that this entire situation is fluid and circumstances for our families could change. It is our goal that our learn at home plan will also be able to serve students who may need to quarantine or isolate at home for a period of time.

Health Protocols

The following protocols are based on the recommendation front the ISDH and the CDC. It is our goal to continue to work in conjunction with all appropriate stakeholders and health care professionals to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the school environment and in the community of South Adams, while at the same time providing a high-quality education to our students.

Symptoms and Screening. *Students and staff will complete training to recognize the following COVID-19 related symptoms:

- Cough;
- A fever of 100 degrees or greater;
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
- Chills;
- Repeated shaking with chills;
- Muscle pain;
- Headache;
- Sore throat; and
- New loss of taste or smell

Self-Monitoring: Students and employees will be expected to self-monitor and screen (or a parent must screen when age-appropriate) before arriving at school, for any of the signs and symptoms of Covid-19, listed above. Should the student present any of the following symptoms, without being otherwise explained, CDC guidance requires that students or employees may not come to school. **Parents/employees will need to call the school and report the absence and the COVID19 symptoms related to the absences.**

Medical Inquiries

Federal law typically limits the type of medical inquiries that can be made, but given the nature of the pandemic, more leeway has been given to districts in this circumstance to make additional medical inquiries of staff and students that otherwise would not be allowed. The following are examples of inquiries:

- If a parent reports that a student is ill, school personnel will ask the parent whether the student is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19.
- If an employee calls in sick or appears ill, school personnel will inquire as to whether the employee is experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.
- If a person is obviously ill, school personnel will make additional inquiries and may exclude the person from school property.

Even without symptoms, if a student or employee has recently had contact with a person with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, has someone in their home being tested for COVID-19, or has recently traveled from somewhere considered to be a “hot spot” by the CDC, SAS may exclude the student or employee from the school building and recommend that the student or employee self-quarantine for 10 calendar days.

Cleaning and Disinfection

South Adams Schools will begin implementing several strategies to maintain healthy environments. ADDITIONAL CUSTODIAL SUPPORT WILL BE ADDED TO ENSURE PROPER EXECUTION OF OUR CLEANING AND DISINFECTION PROTOCOL

- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces (playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains) within the school and on school buses at least daily or between use as much as possible.
- Use of shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art supplies, toys, games) should be limited when possible, or cleaned between use.
- If transport vehicles (e.g., buses) are used by the school, drivers should practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff (e.g., hand hygiene, cloth face coverings).
- Develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
- Ensure [safe and correct use](#) of all disinfectants.
- Cleaning products of concern will not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.

Shared Objects

- Discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect.
- Keep each child's belongings separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student their own art supplies, equipment) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
- Avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids.

Ventilation

- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors. Doors will not be open if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.

Water Systems

- Drinking fountains will be off limits; however, we will encourage staff and students to bring their own water to minimize use and touching of water fountains. The touchless bottle refill stations will be open for student and staff use.

Adjusted Classroom Settings

- Space seating/desks at least 3-6 feet apart.

- Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.
- Create additional distance between children on school buses when possible (ECA trips).

Physical Barriers and Guides

- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g., reception desks).
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times.

SOCIAL DISTANCING AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Student & Employee Face Masks/Covering Protocols

While South Adams students and staff will not be required to wear a mask/face shield at all times, there will be times when masks will be required to decrease the chance of a transmission of COVID-19. Students and staff will be provided with both face masks and face shields.

Face masks/coverings will be **required** in the following situations where social distancing may not be possible*:

- while riding on a school bus,
- during classroom situations where instruction requires close contact
- while at the school nurse's office, during times of transition
- during free time that is not active play and students are staying in place with limited movement while socializing with other students

Face masks/coverings will be ***allowed, but not required*** in the following situations:

- during free time when students are supervised and actively engaged in play in large areas ie outside or in the gym
- during classroom situations when seated in a socially distanced manner (seating is separated, facing forward, teacher is speaking more than six feet away)
- during times of food and drink consumption (lunch & snack times)
- during times of transition where an individual is not in close contact with another individual or group of individuals
- while an individual is alone and/or in need of private/personal time.

*As recommended by the Adams County Health Official, Dr. Michael Ainsworth.

Additional Situational Specific Guidance:

Bus Routes

- All students will be required to wear a mask/face shield during our regular school day bus routes. Bus drivers will be required to wear a mask/face shield while loading and unloading student bus riders. While buses are in transit, drivers will be encouraged to wear a mask/face shield if they do not pose a safety concern by either reducing the drivers view and/or creating an unnecessary distraction for the driver.

Special/Vulnerable Populations of People

- Staff and students who perform duties in close contact with special populations of people considered to be “vulnerable” to COVID-19 will be required to wear a mask/face shield throughout the duration of exposure/contact during high risk periods of time.

Food Service/Lunch Times

- Food service personnel will be required to wear a mask/face shield during times of providing direct food service to students and staff.

Instructional Time

- Masks/face shields may be required in situations where instruction would be delivered in close proximity. Examples of situations that fall into this category include all times when students are involved in small instructional groups that may take place in classrooms. Another example would be students sitting on the floor as a class or working collaborative groups.

School Clinic/Nurse

- School health professionals will be required to wear masks/face shields when providing health services and health evaluations to staff and students.

Maintenance/Custodial Personnel

- School maintenance and custodial staff will be required to wear masks/face shields when working in and around locations where staff and students are in proximities of six (6) feet or less.
- In situations involving contact with COVID-19 concerns for an individual person or persons, masks/face shields will be required at all times.

Special Face Covering Considerations:

While the requirement for students is to wear a face mask or shield during specific situations throughout the school day. We fully realize some students may not be able to comply with this requirement due to a health condition. The first option in these cases is for the student to wear a face shield instead of a mask.

If there is a medical condition that is negatively impacted by the wearing of a mask, the family will need to provide the school with a doctor’s note explaining the condition and the exact directions concerning a mask or shield.

SA will work with each family on an individual basis and consider each situation on a case by case basis. If the student is a special education student the case conference committee will meet to determine the most appropriate approach for each student.

School Bus/Transportation Safety Protocols

Due to the student need for school provided bus transportation, it is not realistic to apply social distancing protocols on the school bus (as recommended by the CDC). Therefore, South Adams will operate under the following guidelines/requirements:

- Assigned seating to maximize spacing will be applied to regular, daily bus routes
- Adding additional bus routes to minimize number of students on busses
- Allow hand sanitizer for students and drivers
- Siblings will be required to sit together
- Buses will be loaded from back to front when appropriate
- Buses will be “aired” out as much as possible
- Buses will be cleaned and disinfected after each trip.
- Masks/face shields will be required for students on all regular, day routes
- Students will ride their assigned buses only. Students will not be allowed to ride on other buses for birthday parties or special occasions, etc. (Emergencies will be addressed on a case by case basis)

Field Trips/ECA Trips

- Field trips will not be allowed during the Fall 2020 Semester
- ECA trips will apply social distancing for students and sponsors/coaches.
- Additional buses may be assigned to trips
- Assigning individual seating to each person
- Buses will be cleaned after each use
- Masks/face shields will be required

Precautions in The Classroom

The following, are measures that South Adams will take to increase social distancing while still maintaining a level of face-to-face instruction. Parents and community members should note these protocols may evolve as they are implemented, and more information is obtained about COVID-19.

- Eliminate non-essential student gatherings outside of the classrooms during the school day. (smaller grade level gatherings may be possible in the Gyms or Auditorium)
- Alternate recess times to minimize the number of students on the playground, encourage social distancing, and allow time to disinfect equipment between uses.

- Increase space between students during in-person instruction.
- Move classes outdoors whenever possible.
- Face desks in the same direction.
- Eliminate activities that combine classes or grade levels.
- Temporarily eliminate classroom and lunchtime visitors.
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (art supplies, equipment, etc. assigned to a single child) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between uses.
- Avoid or minimize the sharing of electronic devices, toys, books, art supplies, and other games or learning aids when possible. Increased disinfecting protocols on all shared items.

School Lunch Safety Protocols and Guidelines

Students will eat lunch primarily in the school cafeteria. Five (5) students will be seated at each twelve (12) foot table to support social distancing. In addition, prior to any meal service, all children should utilize hand washing or sanitizing to ensure safe eating practices.

- Eliminate self-serve food items. Snack bar not available
- Napkins and silverware are provided directly by staff, not for individuals to grab.
- Prohibit food-sharing.
- Provide hand sanitizer throughout the lunchroom.
- PPE provided and worn by all food service staff preparing and serving food.
- Work with local health department officials to comply with all requirements for your county.
- Students will be allowed to bring lunch from home

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