



ELLENDALE PUBLIC SCHOOL HEALTH & SAFETY PLAN 2020-2021

Ellendale Public School
Board Approved: August 10, 2020
Updated: October 8, 2020 & December 14, 2020 & April 12, 2021

EPS Families,

It has been a challenge for our entire community since March, but we hope you have found ways to cope and embrace this new normal. Thank you to the students, staff, parents, and community members who have helped us succeed in these difficult times. The 2019-2020 school year was challenging but we are proud of students and thankful the district was able to celebrate our seniors' accomplishments with a graduation exercise.

The challenge now is planning for what school will look like during the 2020-2021 school year. This is a daunting task as we all realize how the impact and response to COVID-19 has changed rapidly over the past four months. This plan will try to address these challenges, while providing a flexible framework to guide our response over the next school year.

For academic, social-emotional, and economic reasons, we are compelled to strive to return to an in-person model. Yet, we cannot disregard that the health and safety concerns associated with the virus remain. The district must consider all practical steps to keep our schools from contributing to virus spread in our community.

This plan presents hundreds of hours of critical thinking, research, modeling, and work by our educators, staff, and school board. This group reviewed input gathered from our employees and parents.

We realize that reviewing this plan may not address every question you have. We recognize some concepts and actions may be polarizing, and there are strong opinions about what the school should do or should not. But we must remain open to what is possible and consider all options so we can move forward.

Thank you for your time reviewing this plan. We encourage everyone to ask questions and communicate their concerns as we move forward. Together, our school can provide quality education to our children in a safe manner, if we work together to solve problems.

Respectfully,

Michael J. Kaiser
Superintendent

Scott Wertz
School Board President

Assumptions & Assurances

Ellendale Public School Believes

- Every student should have the opportunity to engage in learning, regardless of the spread of COVID-19 in our community.
- Schools have a vital role in providing safe environments for students, focusing on both social-emotional and physical health.
- By working together with educators, staff, health care professionals, parents, students, and community members we can solve most challenges.
- Our district will make decisions based on the most current guidance from local, state, and national health care officials.
- Our School Board will ensure our plan meets the needs of our students, educators, staff and community.

Our Planning Team

The EPS Health and Safety Planning Team consisting of the following members:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| ● Michele Thorpe | ● Norma Trautmann |
| ● Michael Kaiser | ● Lorraine Betting |
| ● Matt Herman | ● Deanne Olson |
| ● Dan Girard | ● Ashli Rall |
| ● Cindy Rall | ● Randall Brockman |
| ● Lana Norton | ● Amber Miller |
| ● Allison Radermacher | ● Angela Goehring |
| ● Dennis Ketterling | ● Abby Peterson |

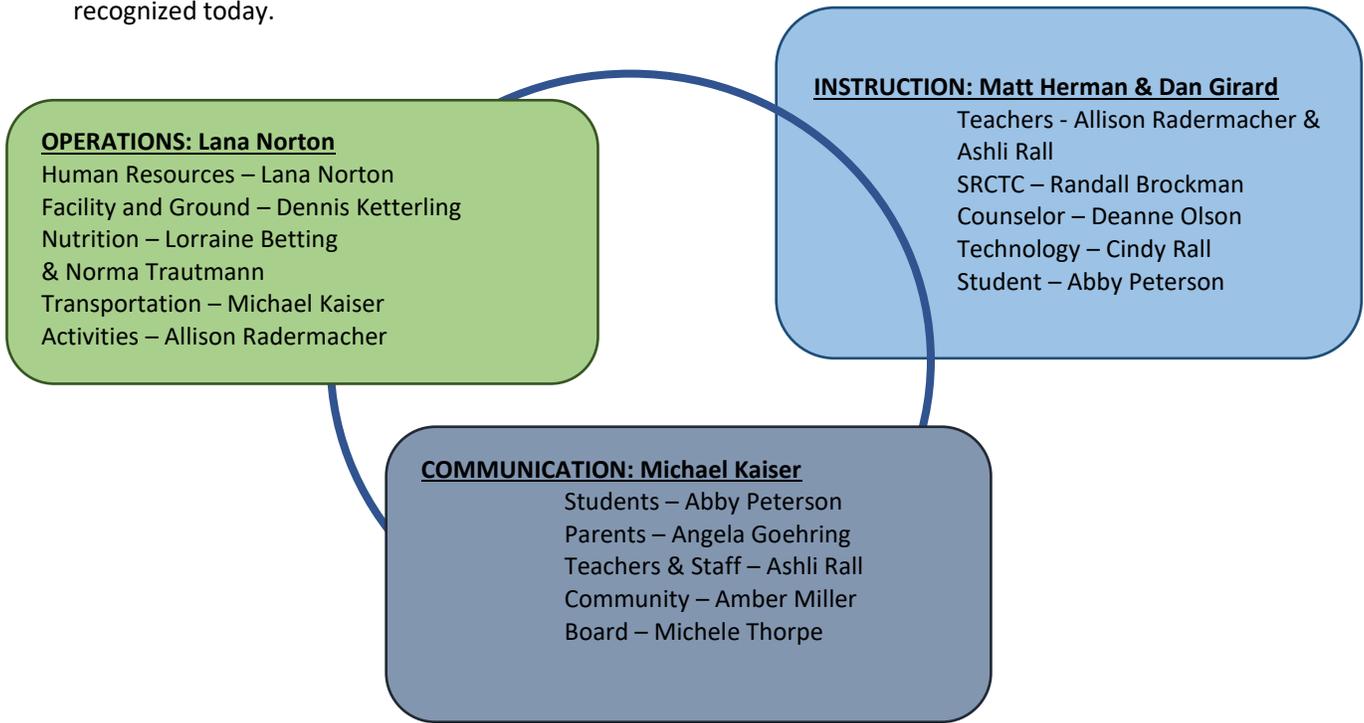
In consultation with the Dickey County Health District, the Ellendale Public School Board Approved the EPS Health and Safety Plan on August 10, 2020.

Health and Safety Plan Evaluation

Please note that this plan is subject to change due to a variety of factors. The Ellendale Public School District COVID-19 Coordinator and Response Team will evaluate the content of this plan and make updates and changes to reflect current guidelines from the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and the North Dakota Department of Health. Any change to the Health and Safety Plan will be communicated to the Ellendale Public School Board.

COVID-19 Response Team & Coordinators

This organizational structure was crafted to assist in the development and monitoring of the EPS Smart Restart Health and Safety Plan. This structure identifies leaders and guiding team members that will serve as a voice in how the district responds to COVID-19 during the school year. This plan is designed to address the issues of reopening as well as provide a nimble and responsive process to address issues that may not be recognized today.



The three components have been identified as key operational teams that consist of multiple departments. Each operational team will work implement the EPS Smart Restart Health and Safety Plan and address challenges as they arise.

COVID-19 Building Level Coordinators

The school district and each school building will have an identified COVID-19 Coordinator who will be responsible for the health and safety preparedness and response planning. Coordinators will make themselves available to the North Dakota Department of Health 24 hours a day / 7 days a week to respond to phone calls from public health. This position will assist public health in identifying and notifying close contacts in the school setting. The coordinator will report cases of COVID-19, found in the school setting, to health officials and the State Superintendent’s office.



Michael Kaiser will assume the role of District COVID-19 Coordinator. If the coordinator is unable to be reached the secondary contact will be Lana Norton. Dan Girard will assume the role of Ellendale Elementary and Maple River Colony COVID-19 coordinator. Matt Herman will assume the role of Ellendale High School COVID-19 coordinator.

Health Guidance System

K-12 Smart Restart Fall 2020

The North Dakota K12 Smart Restart Fall 2020 plan provides guidance and direction in preparing a re-opening plan. We anticipate changes to the current COVID-19 situation as it evolves and we will continue to communicate these changes promptly.

The K12 Smart Restart categories re-opening into five phases:

Blue / New Normal	Most normal activities can resume with standard precautions and awareness guidelines.
Green / Low Risk	Low case counts are reported. Public health and private healthcare are able to diagnose, treat safely, and isolate cases and their contacts.
Yellow / Moderate Risk	Heightened exposure risk; transmission is controlled. The reported cases are contained by rapid testing and robust contact tracing.
Orange / High Risk	Significant transmission; high risk for exposure due to widespread community spread of infections.
Red / Critical Risk	Highest disease burden; significant and uncontrolled community transmission, multiple outbreaks.

Some locations may not experience a straight path from a blue to a red designation. Cycling back and forth between designations may occur as reported by local public health districts.

Dickey County Health District Notification and Contact Tracing

- Dickey County Health District (DCHD) will be the Case Investigator and Contact Tracer for all Dickey County cases. DCHD works closely with the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH), following guidelines set forth by the NDDoH and the CDC.
- Upon notification of a positive case, DCHD will work with the COVID-19 Coordinator to determine close contacts of the positive case. The coordinator will also provide contact information to DCHD. *It is very important to have updated contact information on file with the school.*
- Positive case: When a positive case is identified, DCHD will be in contact with the positive case to determine isolation time and release from quarantine.
- Close contacts: A close contact is defined as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes during the infectious period (2 days before illness onset or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

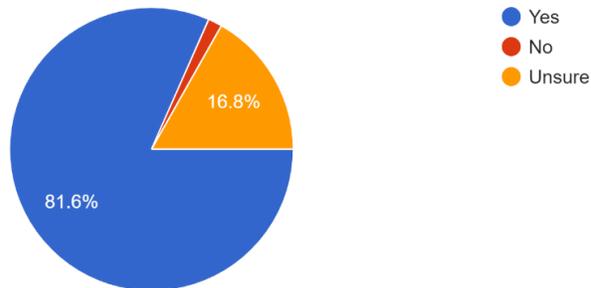
NOTE: Individuals with positive screening responses are NOT automatically placed in a 14-day quarantine period. However, if individuals with positive responses refuse to be evaluated by medical personnel and provide that notification to the school, they must sit out and monitor for further symptoms for 14 days from the onset of symptoms to ensure recovery.

Return to School Survey Data

PARENT SURVEY – July, 2020 (Results based off of 125 responses)

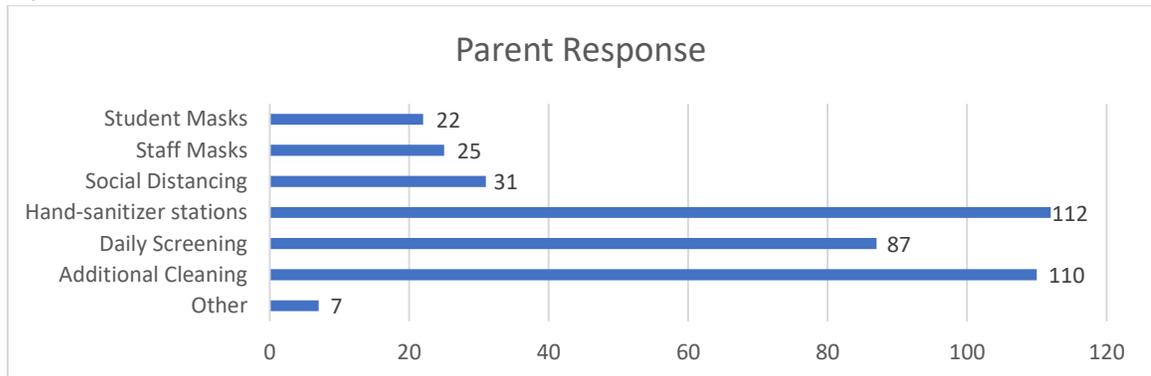
With safety precautions in place, would you feel comfortable sending your child(ren) back to school in the fall meeting face-to-face?

125 responses



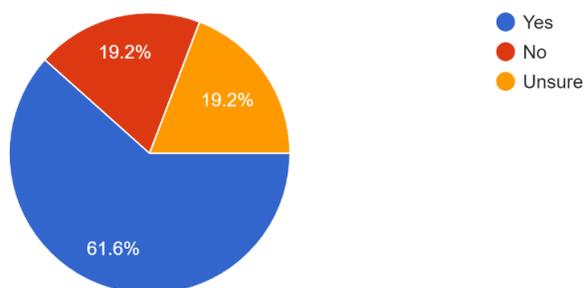
What safety precautions are you expecting the school to have in place? (Check all boxes that apply)

122 responses



Are you in favor of reducing student instructional days to allow staff COVID-19 training in preparation for the re-opening of school?

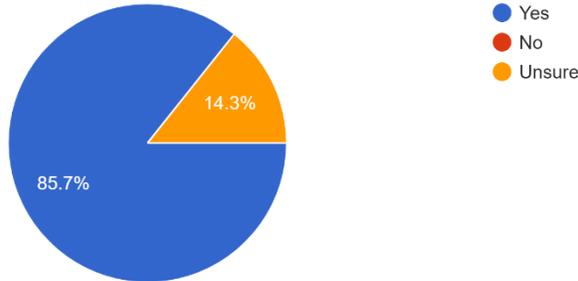
125 responses



STAFF SURVEY – July, 2020 (Results based off of 35 responses)

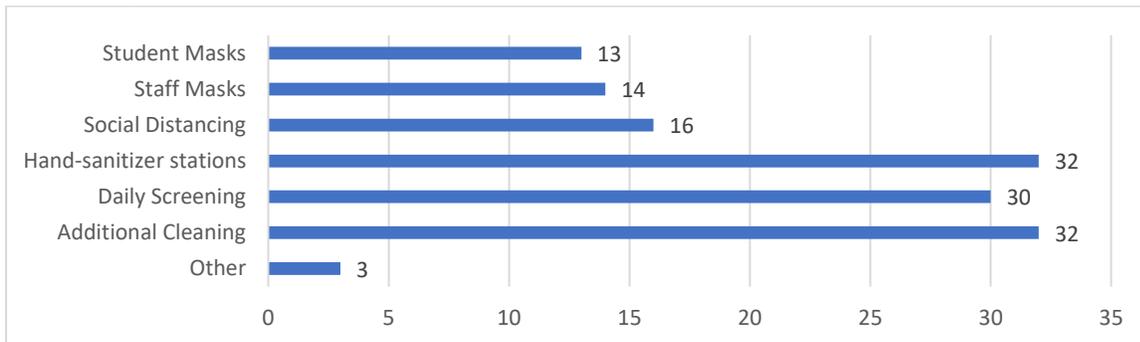
With safety precautions in place, would you feel comfortable returning back to school in the fall meeting face-to-face?

35 responses



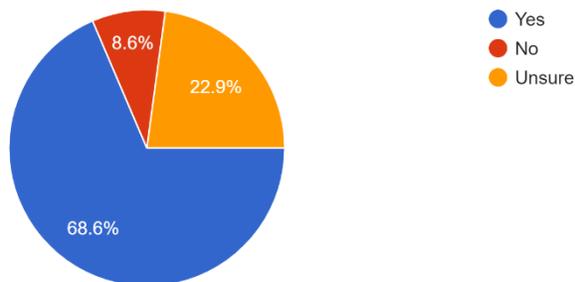
What safety precautions are you expecting the school to have in place? (Check all boxes that apply)

35 responses



Are you open to the consideration of reducing student instructional days and adding Professional Development to prepare for the re-opening of school?

35 responses



Academic Instruction

Educating Students in Any and All Environments

Ellendale Public School has planned and prepared for a continuum of learning plans for the 2020-2021 school year. In alignment with the North Dakota K-12 Smart Restart Fall 2020, the school district will provide students with appropriate learning plans. Throughout the school year, students at any time may be required to quickly transition from one learning plan to another. Any student that will not be attending in-person to begin the school year will be placed on the virtual learning plan.

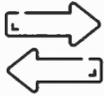
There are two primary instructional models from which families can choose:

1. **Blended Learning:** The goal of the blended learning model is to be in school as often as possible with in-person instruction. Students may experience movement to and from the following modes of instruction depending on specific COVID-19 situations in classrooms, buildings, and the district in blended learning:



In-Person (Traditional Learning)

All instruction is delivered in-person with some building and group modifications. Teachers and students maintain a normal daily schedule. Safety precautions are implemented to enhance staff and student safety. Staff and students should prepare for distance learning.



Modified On-Campus (Hybrid Learning)

Modifications to the daily schedule may be implemented. Student schedules may be varied to meet the learning needs of each child. Multiple hybrid models of instructional delivery may be appropriate. Instruction could be conducted both in-person and / or online. Staff and students should be ready to implement distance learning.



Distance (Schoology and SeeSaw)

All instruction is provided off-campus through the use of distance learning resources or suited to the unique needs of the student.

2. **Virtual Learning:** This model will be fully online for students and families that decide to remain at home.



Virtual Learning

A virtual educational opportunity for K-12 students will be provided as an option for students/families that have concerns about returning to school this year. The courses / curriculum will be provided in partnership with online providers (such as the Center for Distance Education). Students who enroll in this option must do so for a full semester.

Blended Learning

The blended learning model used by the district will be guided, in part, by the risk level of COVID-19 in the school and community. This is a guide, as instructional models could be altered based on factors including but not limited to occupancy levels, age of children, and abilities to establish high quality instruction. Student in the blended model may experience movement to and from the following modes of instruction based on specific COVID-19 situation in classrooms, buildings, and the district.

In-Person (Traditional Learning)

All instruction is delivered in-person. Teachers and students maintain a normal daily schedule. Safety precautions are implemented to enhance staff and student safety.

Modified On-Campus (Hybrid Learning)

Due to the environment, modified on-campus instruction may be any combination of the following forms:

- Shortened day, in-person with enhanced precautions. The daily schedule may be reduced by 1 to 2 hours to allow for additional cleaning and reduce contact.
- Hybrid Instruction may be as follows:
 - Class sizes may be reduced by splitting the student body into the following two sections:
 - Group A - Students with last names A-L
 - Group B - Students with last names M-Z
 - The following plan for delivery of instruction may be in effect:
 - Monday / Tuesday – Group A in-person; Group B distance
 - Wednesday – Group A and Group B distance
 - Thursday / Friday – Group B in-person; Group A distance
 - Ellendale Public School Teachers will provide instruction for all students, whether at school or at a distance.
 - Delivery of instruction may vary depending on the child's grade level. The primary mode of delivery will take place via Schoology or SeeSaw.
 - All students are required to complete their assignments and participate in instruction through means determined by each class.
 - Class split by last name can change when looking at class splits and number of students allowed in the building
 - Families residing in the same household will be in the same group.

Distance (Schoology and SeeSaw)

In the event of a school closure, all instruction will be delivered through distance learning by Ellendale Public School Staff. This does not apply to students enrolled in Virtual Learning.

- Some students might be allowed on campus in a case-by-case basis.

Instructional Model Evaluation

A team consisting of school and local health officials will meet on an as needed bases to assess the current instructional plan (In-Person, Modified-On Campus, or Distance). Any change to the instructional plan will be communicated to stakeholders so that staff and families can transition to the new instructional plan.

Virtual Learning

This model will be fully online for students and families that decide to remain at home.

Ellendale Elementary School Virtual Learning

Students will be enrolled in the SE Dakota Virtual Learning Academy. Instructors will not be Ellendale Public School Staff. It will be responsibility of the family / student to communicate with academy instructors and monitor progress / grades in each course. Each student will be required to take and pass six courses. In the event a student does not finish or fails a course, the family may be responsible for reimbursement of the cost of the course, and the child may not be promoted to the next grade level at Ellendale Elementary School.

Ellendale High School Virtual Learning

Students will be enrolled in North Dakota Center for Distance Education (NDCDE) classes each semester. Instructors will not be Ellendale Public School Staff. Ellendale Public School will cover the costs of these courses. In the event a student fails a course, the family may be responsible for the cost of that course. Academic support will be provided solely by NDCDE, and it will be the responsibility of the family / student to monitor progress and grades in each course, as well as communicate with their instructor. Each student will take a minimum of 6 classes per semester, which include a combination of core classes required for graduation and electives.

Virtual Learning and Special Education

Ellendale Public School District will work in conjunction and collaboration with James River Special Education Unit to ensure that educational decisions for students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) will be made on an individual basis and in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and the North Dakota Department of Instruction Office of Special Education guidelines. The learning environment, services, and accommodations for students with disabilities will be determined through the student's IEP team, including student's parents or guardians, school administration, and staff. The team will work together to develop plans that will ensure equitable and effective access to provide Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with special needs in all learning environments.

Special education case managers will be the contact person for communication between each student's parents/guardians and required team members, and will monitor the continuation of services and accommodations, whether they are provided in-person, virtually, or a combination model. The school district's Smart Restart Plan will focus on procedures for delivering education within the district, which will also apply to holding IEP team meetings and completing required special education procedures, while maintaining student and staff health and safety, according to the North Dakota K-12 Smart Restart guidelines.

Health and Safety Guidance

The district strives to provide a healthy and safe environment for all who occupy our schools. The following guidelines are intended to provide a framework for the district's response to COVID-19.

Resources

- [ND Department of Public Instruction](#)
- [ND Department of Health](#)
- [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

Best Intentions

Despite taking every reasonable precaution, there is no guarantee that our schools will be without risk as it relates to COVID-19. The virus will be present on our buses, in our classrooms, and at our activities. In certain situations, social distancing is not possible in a school setting. Our actions, as outlined in this plan, cannot prevent any student or staff member from being in contact with the virus.

Protect Yourself and Others

Wash your hands often



- Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Students are encouraged to wash their hands often throughout the day.

Avoid close contact



- Practice social distancing. Protect yourself.
- Alternate or modified schedules, adjustments to use of common areas, use of outdoor spaces and other actions that increase physical separation may be considered.
- The sharing of instructional materials should be limited as much as possible.
- Social distancing and/or seating arrangements will be recommended on buses but cannot be guaranteed.

Avoid close contact - Visitors



- Parents are asked to not enter the building for pick up and drop off. Alternative pick up and drop off arrangements need to be pre-approved by building principals.
- Essential visitors must enter through door #1 and remain in the Central Office Area.
- Nonessential visitors will not be allowed into the building.

Cover coughs and sneezes



- Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- Throw tissues away and wash hands or use hand sanitizer to prevent spread.

Clean and Disinfect



- School staff should clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
- Shared materials should be cleaned (sharing is not recommended).
- Classrooms will be cleaned daily by custodial staff.

Facial Covering



- Masks are recommended when 6 foot social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Masks are recommended to be worn upon arrival, during transitions, and during dismissal when 6 foot social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Masks are recommended in the classroom when 6 foot social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Masks are recommended with all group projects and when congregating.
- Masks are recommended in the serving line for breakfast / lunch.
- Masks are recommended when on a school bus.
- Masks are permitted during PE, recess, and activity practices. However, masks are not recommended during strenuous activity.
- Staff / students are responsible for bringing their own mask to school each day.
- Staff / students are responsible to wash cloth masks after each use.
- Specific requirements may be modified based on Superintendent discretion, executive order, health officer order, and/or ND Smart Restart Guidelines.

Monitor your health daily



- Be alert for symptoms.
- Parents should screen their children each day before sending them to school. Use the screening guidance provided (see additional resources).
- Staff and students who are sick should stay home.
- Temperatures of symptomatic students or staff may be taken at the school.
 - Symptomatic students will be isolated, and their guardians contacted. Students should be picked up from school as soon as possible.
 - Please update emergency contact information as they will be called if guardians fail to arrive in a timely fashion or cannot be reached.

Health & Safety Protocols

Monitoring the health of students and staff will be an important component of a safe environment. Ellendale School will take the following measures to ensure all students and staff are healthy while they are at school.

Identifying Students at Higher Risk

- Parents should notify the school if their child is at-risk, based on a health professionals' diagnosis. Building principals will then contact families and discuss instructional models.
- Staff will be provided accommodations, based on a health professionals' diagnosis.
- When the NDDoH or Dickey County Health District inform the district of a student or staff member that is COVID-19 positive that information will be passed on to COVID-19 Coordinator as allowable within district policy and law.

Isolation and Quarantine Defined

- Definitions (see additional resources for more information).
 - Isolation – For people who are already sick from the virus. A prevention strategy used to separate people who are sick with the virus from healthy people.
 - Quarantine – For people who are not sick but have been exposed to the virus. A prevention strategy used to monitor people who were exposed for a period of time.
- Ellendale School will follow isolation and quarantine guidelines and directives as set by the CDC, NDDOH, and Dickey County Health.
- Families will assure isolation and quarantine procedures will be followed prior to student returning to school.
- Individuals who are deemed as close contacts, but both the parties were masked are required to wear a mask at school and should self-monitor symptoms while at home and in school in lieu of imposing quarantine for 14-days at home.

COVID-19 School Attendance Guidance

- Parents / caregivers should monitor their children for signs of infectious illness every day.
- Do not send your child to school if **ANY** of the following symptoms are present:
 - Fever of 100.4 F or higher/feeling feverish, sore throat, new/worsening uncontrolled cough, difficulty breathing, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, loss of taste/or smell **OR**
 - Two or more of the following symptoms with new or worsening onset: fatigue, severe headache, muscle/body aches, chills, congestion/runny nose.
 - People who are ill should contact their health care provider for additional guidance.
 - [Child Care and School Infection Disease Exclusion Guidance.](#)

If a student or staff members becomes sick at school (or school event)

- Student
 - Direct / escort the child to the designated area.
 - The child shall be provided a facial covering and isolated in the building sick room.
 - Parent / guardian will be contacted to pick up their child.
- Staff
 - Inform your supervisor immediately and wear a face mask / shield until they can be replaced if supervising students at that time.
 - Leave the school building/grounds and consult with a health care professional.

Return to School

- When a student or staff member has been isolated or quarantined as directed by NDDoH or Dickey County Health they will be allowed to return to school after being cleared by the NDDoH.

Facility Accommodations & Protocols

Modest accommodations, when partnered with other mitigation strategies, will allow Ellendale Public School to provide a safe and healthy environment for the students and staff of the district. The following procedures and protocols will be considered by school teams in making facility accommodations. See operational protocols in the in the additional resources section for more detailed information.

Modify Layouts

- Space desks / chairs as far apart as possible.
- Arrange desks and tables to face the same direction when feasible.

Physical Barriers

- Install physical barriers in certain areas where it is difficult to maintain social distancing.
- Consider placing floor markings to remind students to maintain social distance.
- When two entrances are available to a room, consider making one an entrance and one an exit.

Communal Spaces

- Consider how to limit occupancy of communal spaces, such as the lunchroom and gymnasium, with modified or staggered schedules.
- Increase time between groups or stagger groups to allow for surface cleaning.
- Encourage staff and students to bring their own water to minimize the use and touching of water fountains.

Food Service

The ability of the Ellendale Public School District to provide high-quality and nutritious meals is a crucial component of the educational environment. The district will take the following actions to ensure the students of Ellendale Public School receive meals safely. See operational protocols in the additional resources section for more detailed information.

Safety Measures

- Tables will be sanitized between each group.
- Physical barriers will be installed in the serving line.
- Food items commonly self-served, which require a shared utensil, will be individually served by food service staff. Food items, if individually served and not requiring a shared utensil, may be self-served.
- Food service staff will utilize facial covering throughout the preparation and serving of meals.
- Food service staff will enter all student lunch numbers to limit touching equipment.

Food During School Closures

- When school is closed, grab-and-go meals will be provided.

Transportation

Ellendale Public School District remains committed to providing a safe and reliable transportation for our students and their families. Families must be aware that the school district is unable to ensure social distancing is adhered to on all buses and at all times.

Ellendale Public School District will enhance procedures to support safe and healthy practices on district transportation to the best of our ability.

The transportation system is dependent upon drivers. COVID-19 may affect the total number of drivers available to the district. This will necessitate changes or reductions to district routes. These changes could happen on short notice. If that would become necessary, the district will prioritize routes as follows.

1. Rural Routes
2. City Routes
3. SE CTE Route

Bus Stops

- Students should maintain social distancing from other riders, particularly if not from the same family group.

On the Bus

- Facial coverings are required.
- Hand sanitizer will be available on the bus.
- Keep bus windows partially open when possible.
- Students may be assigned seats.
- Students will be asked to share seats with members of the same household.
- Buses will be sanitized after every route.
- When possible, buses will be loaded back to front and unloaded front to back.

Family Dropoff

- Since social distancing will be challenging, families may want to consider dropping-off and picking-up their children at school.

Activity Transportation

- Procedures will follow NDHSAA, school, and coop guidelines.

Additional Resources

Additional resources to assist schools, educators, students, parents / guardians.

Resources

- [Ellendale Public School Operational Protocols](#)
- [COVID-19 School Attendance Guidance – Decision Tree for Parents](#)
- [COVID-19 School Exclusion Guidance – Decision Tree for Schools](#)
- [COVID-19 What's the Difference Between Physical Distancing, Quarantine and Isolation?](#)



BEFORE SCHOOL!



Parents are asked to review this daily health checklist by answering these questions before sending their child to school.

(Parents **do not** need to send the questionnaire to school)

Has your child had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days?

Yes ___ No ___

Does your child have a new or worsening shortness of breath?

Yes ___ No ___

Does your child have new or worsening cough?

Yes ___ No ___

Does your child have a fever of 100.4 or greater?

Yes ___ No ___

Does your child have chills?

Yes ___ No ___

Does your child have a sore throat?

Yes ___ No ___

Does your child have a new loss of taste or smell?

Yes ___ No ___



If **YES** to any of the questions **STOP!**

Do not send your child to school. Contact your healthcare provider. Contact your child's school to inform them of your child's absence.



If you are able to answer **NO** to all questions, go to school.