

# Sisters School District

## Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan 2021-2022



**SISTERS**

School District

A great place to live and learn.

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# Sisters School District

## Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan 2021-2022 School Year

In order to best support students and families with the safest possible return to school for the 2021 school year, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) has created an operational plan template to align guidance from the federal and state level in support of local decision-making and transparency of health and safety measures in the communities that school districts serve. The Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan serves the following purposes:

1. Replaces the Ready Schools, Safe Learners Operational Blueprint required under Executive Order 21-06; and
2. Meets the requirements for:
  - a. An operational plan required under OAR 581-022-0106(4), while aligning the CDC Guidance on School Reopening with the Ready Schools, Safe Learners Resiliency Framework for the 2021-22 School Year (RSSL Resiliency Framework);
  - b. Section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP ESSER and the US Department of Education’s Interim Final Requirements for Safe Return/Continuity of Services Plan; and
  - c. Communicable Disease Plan and Isolation Plan under OAR 581-022-2220 (Division 22 requirements).

The Sisters School District’s plan is to implement the recommendations in ODE’s RSSL Resiliency Framework. With that being said, we will need to adjust based on current needs and risk levels, especially when all recommendations cannot be fully implemented. For example, universal correct wearing of face coverings by all between people is one of the most effective preventive measures. However, there will be times when this is not possible based on a specific interaction or a physical space limitation, such as during meal times. It will be necessary to consider and balance the mitigation strategies described to best protect health and safety while ensuring full time in person learning. ODE remains committed to the guiding principles introduced in spring of 2020 to generate collective action and leadership for efforts to respond to COVID-19 across Oregon. These principles are updated to reflect the current context:

### **Overview & Authority**

Sisters School District will continue to work with the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority as we continue to monitor the severity of illness associated with new variants of the SARS-CoV-2 that causes COVID-19 and the guidance updates from the CDC, ODE, OHA, and DCPH to align this recommendation framework as needed.

Decisions about when and how Sister School District will respond to an outbreak of COVID-19 involve collaboration across multiple partners. If part of or an entire school needs to close for in-person instruction as a matter of public health, it is important that educators, students, families and the general public have a clear understanding of how decisions are made and who makes those decisions.

When determining how to best support in-person learning during the 2021-2022 school year, Sisters School District will work in a collaborative manner with the Deschutes County Health Services as the Local Public Health Authority.

Considerations in the decision of returning to an In-Person school year

- Returning all students to full-time, in-person instruction is a priority.

- We understand our communities will be living with the virus until there is widespread immunity.
- COVID-19 continues to change with new variants, our knowledge of mitigation efforts grows over time. For these reasons the guidance for responding to COVID-19 also changes.
- Currently, the best practices recommended by CDC and required by OHA and ODE for protecting individuals from COVID-19 are face coverings along with strong recommendations for physical distancing, ventilation and airflow, hand hygiene, vaccination for those eligible, and staying home if ill or exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- **Innovate:** Returning to school is an opportunity to improve teaching and learning by iterating on new instructional strategies, rethinking learning environments and investing in creative approaches to address unfished learning and new learning

### **Equity: Our individual uniqueness makes us stronger**

Sisters School District is committed to promoting educational systems that support every child’s identity, health and well-being, strengths, traditions and needs. Sisters School District makes every effort to apply an equity informed, anti-racist and anti-oppressive lens across all sections of this operational plan.

- **WE BELIEVE** The next generation of Outlaws face an increasingly changing world where the work they do and the problems they solve will require the ability to see the big picture, relate well to others and think creatively. We are committed to educating students to have the confidence and capacity to change the world for the better. We know our students and help them find their strengths and passions. Individual relationships are foundational to everything we do, as is our belief in each student’s ability to become a caring, contributing adult. This requires a focus on the whole individual, including their mental and emotional well-being, beginning with self-awareness and compassion. We believe diversity will make us stronger and honor each student’s background, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and religious affiliation. We believe every student has a unique future and can be successful. We believe kids learn best when education is hands-on, real and relevant to their lives or interests. We are fortunate to live in a unique and special community that makes us stronger and vice versa. We believe TOGETHER we can do anything. After all, WE ARE THE OUTLAWS
- **Ensure safety and wellness:** Ensuring basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, emotional and physical wellness is our number one concern. The counseling department and the Family Access Network work collaboratively in prioritizing that basic needs are met for all students and their families.
- **Prioritize equity:** Recognizing the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on our black, indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) communities; students experiencing disabilities; students living in rural communities, and students and families navigating poverty and houselessness, the district will apply an equity informed, anti-racist, and ant-oppressive lens to promote culturally sustaining and revitalizing educational systems that support every child.

<b>Planning and Mental Health Support</b>	
Building relationships and using class time to process the experience	<b>Prioritize All Students Belong:</b> One of Sisters School District’s primary goals is to ensure every student is known and connected to adults, peers and resources to develop emotional self-regulation and a foundation of resilience. In order for the staff to develop strong relationships with our students the Sisters School District will target a student-to-teacher ratio at or under 25 to 1 at the high school, 23 to 1 at the middle school and 21 to 1 at the elementary school. A large portion of the staff are trained in Collaborative Proactive Solutions, Sources of Strength, Leader in Me, Growth Mindset and other trauma informed practices. We have hired an “Every Student Belongs” coordinator to assist every classroom teacher to ensure our classrooms are supporting every student to be the best version of themselves.
Health and Mental Health Services	<b>Ensure safety and wellness.</b> Prioritizing basic needs such as food, shelter, wellness, supportive relationships and support for mental, social, and emotional health of students and staff. The Sisters School District employs a counseling team at each building, a high school student success coordinator, student health and nursing services at each building, district wide student based health clinic, mental health workers who partner with Deschutes County Mental Health and High Desert Education Service District for emotional and academic needs of students.
Foster student led initiatives	The Sister’s School District strives to ensure all students are known, and taught, as individuals in order to become the best versions of themselves. This is accomplished by our instructional team focusing on those skills that build confidence in our students’ intellectual, social, and emotional competencies to work collaboratively, think critically, communicate effectively and pursue their individual passions in a placed-based and project-based learning environment.
<b>Communicable Disease Management Plan:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Sisters School District Pandemic Plan</u></a></li> </ul>	
Coordinate with Local Health Authorities	The Sisters School District works closely with Deschutes County and our Local Health Authorities when making decisions regarding health related issues. The District will continue this relationship.
Isolation Plan	The Sister’s School District nurses will continue to collaborate with county officials to provide updates for plan and isolation measures taken to that point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All students who become ill at school will remain at school supervised by staff until parents can pick them up in the designated isolation area (i.e., health room).</li> <li>• Student will be escorted to the office by the nurse and provided with a disposable medical grade facial covering.</li> <li>• Staff should wear a facial covering and maintain physical distancing, but never leave a child unattended.</li> <li>• Staff will maintain student confidentiality as appropriate.</li> <li>• Daily logs must be maintained</li> </ul>

<b>Health and Safety Strategies</b>	
Vaccinations	The Sisters School District recognizes CDC states the best approach to preventing the spread of COVID-19 is a layered defense of protective measures, with the COVID-19 vaccination being their priority in protecting individuals from contracting COVID-19 and preventing the spread of the virus to others.
MASKS Indoors during Educational Hours	<p>Masks are required to be worn in all indoor shared school and work settings, during school hours, for all individuals two years and older including all students, staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors per the Oregon Health Authority’s statewide rule OAR 333-019-1015</p> <p>Group mask breaks, full classroom mask breaks, department staff mask breaks are best done outdoors where ventilation and physical distancing are maximized.</p> <p>Masks will be made available at schools and district buildings.</p> <p>Certain accommodations for medical needs or disabilities may be necessary</p>
MASKS Indoor School Programs	All are to wear a mask when indoors, on district property, or when engaged in a school program, after school hours
MASKS Outdoors During the School Day	<p>Masks are not required outdoors, during the school day.</p> <p>Per OHA rule and guidance, it is acceptable for both fully vaccinated and unvaccinated students, staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors to be outdoors without masks or any face covering.</p>
MASKS Athletics and Activities	<p>Masks are recommended but not required for athletics or activities taking place outside school hours.</p> <p>Sisters School indoor and outdoor athletics and activities will continue to follow all OSAA guidance. Schools and athletic programs will adhere to facility capacity requirements, per state and local fire marshal regulations.</p> <p>Per OHA guidance, face coverings are recommended but not required for indoor sports.</p>
MASKING Civil Penalty	<p>A school that violates the state masking rule is subject to a per day, per violation civil penalty.</p> <p>OHA has authority/responsibility under ORS 431A.010 for additional action.</p>
Physical Distancing	<p>Staff will promote physical distancing by doing the following when possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support physical distancing in all daily activities and instruction, maintaining at least 3 feet between individuals to the extent possible. Maintaining physical distancing should not preclude return to full-time, in-person instruction for all students.</li> <li>• Consider physical distancing requirements when setting up learning and other spaces, arranging spaces and groups to allow for and encourage at least three feet of physical distancing.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical distancing of desks, floor markers, and one-way traffic are no longer required, but personal distance preferences will continue to be respected.</li> </ul>
Cohorting	<p>Cohorting refers to establishing a consistent grouping of students that stays together for a significant portion of the school day.</p> <p>This mitigation strategy helps to minimize the number of close contacts in an exposure event between students and staff by intentionally limiting the possible number of interactions student may experience during the day. Our schools minimized the number of cohorts students will be in contact with in any given day. Decreasing the cohorts will be a strategy implemented when conditions warrant elevating the mitigation strategies due to increased prevalence of community and in-school transmission of COVID-19 cases.</p> <p>In the event that the Sisters School District would need to elevate our cohorting strategies, students would not be placed into full-time cohorts based on any demographic or disability criteria.</p>
Ventilation and Airflow	<p>Schools will operate ventilation systems properly and/or increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, and through other methods. Staff will not use fans if they pose a safety or health risk, such as increasing exposure to pollen/allergies or exacerbating asthma symptoms. Staff will consider the need for increased ventilation in areas where students with special healthcare needs receive medication or treatments. Ventilation systems will be checked regularly. • Where possible, staff will modify or enhance building ventilation (see CDC’s guidance on ventilation and filtration and American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers’ guidance), as we are aware that air circulation and filtration are helpful factors in reducing airborne viruses.</p>
Handwashing & Respiratory Etiquette	<p>Hand washing and respiratory etiquette: students will be reminded, through signage and regular reminders from staff, of the utmost importance of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Respiratory etiquette means covering coughs and sneezes with an elbow or a tissue. Tissues should be disposed of and hands washed or sanitized immediately. Handwashing is recommended over sanitizing by the CDC. Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with 60-95% alcohol.</p>
Covid Testing and Screening	<p>Sisters School District will offer COVID-19 testing opportunities for students and staff who develop symptoms through our Student Based Health Center.</p> <p>The district will continue to partner with local medical professional and the local health authority to share information with families and staff regarding testing site locations.</p>
Communication	<p>All communication will be disseminated in English and Spanish</p> <p>The School Nurse, LPHA, and District Administration will collaborate to determine appropriate measures and messaging in the event that cohorts need to be excluded and to inform staff or parents of students who have had an exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case. Letters produced to the families will be revised to reflect potential</p>

	exposure dates, associated risk, potential onset of illness windows and interventions advised by the LPHA.
Exclusion	Staff and students with known or suspected COVID-19, or displaying COVID-19 symptoms per current OHA guidance, CDC guidance, or LPHA guidance, cannot remain at school and should return only after their symptoms resolve and they are physically ready to return to school. The passage of 10 to 14 calendar days after exposure and symptoms are improving is the current recommendation.
<b>Accommodations for Students with Disabilities</b>	
<p>Administrators should consider adaptations and alternatives to prevention strategies when serving students with disabilities and/or students with academic, social, and emotional needs that require intervention and support while maintaining efforts to protect all children and staff from COVID-19.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For students receiving special education services, decisions are informed according to the individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)</li> <li>• Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis by the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan teams.</li> </ul> <p>Staff will ensure student accommodations create access to the same consistent learning opportunities all students have.</p> <p>Staff will consider allowing students with disabilities or accommodations to continue in-person instruction as daily routines and social interactions are key to meeting their individual learning needs.</p>	

To remain in compliance with ARP ESSER requirements, school districts must regularly, but no less frequently than every six months (taking into consideration the timing of significant changes to CDC guidance on reopening schools), review, and as appropriate, revise its Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan.

**Updates to this Plan: August 20, 2021**