

Sisters School District

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



SISTERS

School District

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

2021-2022 School Year

In order to best support students and families to continue in-person instruction for the 2021-2022 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. This Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan serves the following purposes:

1. Replaces the January 3, 2022 Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Plan edition.
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. This plan is updated to reflect the current context:

Overview & Authority

Decisions about when and how Sister School District will respond to an outbreak of COVID-19 involve collaboration across multiple partners. 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.

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.

We understand the State Public Health Director at the Oregon Health Authority has broad authority to close a facility that presents a public health risk. To ensure we continue to maintain in-person instruction we follow our basic principles:

- In-person instruction is a priority.
- We understand our communities will be living with the virus for the indefinite future.
- COVID-19 continues to change with new variants, our knowledge of the virus and 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 recommended by OHA and ODE for protecting individuals from COVID-19 is taking a layered approach.

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.

Planning and Mental Health Support	
Building relationships and using class time to process the experience	Prioritize All Students Belong: 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	Ensure safety and wellness. 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.
Communicable Disease Management Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Sisters School District Pandemic Plan</u> 	
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 Protocols	<p>Isolation separates people who have a contagious disease from people who are not sick in the school environment. Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease and could become infectious themselves to limit further spread of the disease. Effective March 12, 2022, Oregon will pause contact tracing and quarantine for the general population, including K-12 setting.</p> <p>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. 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). Staff will maintain student confidentiality as appropriate.</p>
Health and Safety Strategies	
Vaccinations	<p>Effective October 18, 2021, teachers, school staff, volunteers or contracted workers may not teach, work, learn, study, assist, observe, or volunteer at a school unless they are fully vaccinated or have provided documentation of a medical or religious exception.</p> <p>This mandate does not include short-term visitors or individuals making deliveries. It also does not include district office, facility or ESD staff who never work at or volunteer in a school setting.</p>
Face Coverings	<p>On February 28, 2022, OHA announced that it would lift the statewide indoor face covering rule as well as the statewide K-12 indoor face covering rule on March 11, 2022 at 11:59 PM. The Sisters School District decided to make masks an individual choice for each employee, volunteer, student and visitor based on their own individual risk assessment.</p> <p>Sisters School District does not require wearing masks on buses or vans operated by schools. The requirement to mask on K-12 transport in Oregon will end when Oregon’s indoor masking mandate is lifted at 11:59 pm on March 11, 2022.</p>

Physical Distancing	OHA and ODE recommend schools promote physical distancing in daily activities, striving for at least 3 feet between students when possible.
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 through a pragmatic and realistic approach.</p>
Ventilation and Airflow	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.
Handwashing & Respiratory Etiquette	<p>Regular handwashing is one of the best ways to remove germs, avoid getting sick, and prevent the spread of germs to others. Washing hands can keep each health and prevent the sprpad of respiratory and diarrheal infections from one person to the next.</p> <p>All are advised and encouraged to frequently wash their hands or use hand sanitizer.</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> <p>Students and/or staff who develop symptoms at school have the option to be tested for COVID-19 at school. Students will be given an iHealth at home COVID-19 test kit to be used if they develop COVID-19-like symptoms or after an exposure to someone with COVID-19.</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</p>

	be revised to reflect potential exposure dates, associated risk, potential onset of illness windows and interventions advised by the LPHA.
Accommodations for Students with Disabilities	<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"> • For students receiving special education services, decisions are informed according to the individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) • Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan teams. <p>Staff will ensure student accommodations create access to the same consistent learning opportunities all students have.</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: March 7, 2022