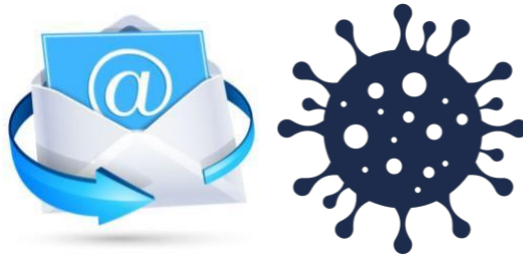




This return-to-learn in-person plan was approved on August 9, 2021, December 14, 2021, June 20, 2022, and December 12, 2022, by our School Board of Trustees and reviewed in June 2023 with no changes.



Questions: Email at covidinfo@unorth.k12.in.us

SUMMARY

The Indiana's Considerations for Learning and Safe Schools (IN-CLASS) document([link:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1T1nQj3BrQRtT5QXVcVLGe114bOd5dSCIWRggPuPE5dg/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1T1nQj3BrQRtT5QXVcVLGe114bOd5dSCIWRggPuPE5dg/edit)) was published on June 5, 2020 giving guidance to all Indiana districts and schools for preparing school operations under a pandemic environment. This guidance, along with our Health Department guidance, helped us to provide school for the subsequent school years 2020-2023.

There were several takeaways from the past two years. First, it is hard to hit a moving target. The rules guiding our decisions in the fall of 2020 were very different than the spring of 2021 and 2022. Second, it has never been more apparent that we have a great staff, and they continue to rise to each challenge. Most important, we found that the benefits of in-person learning for our students far out weigh the risk of potentially

contracting the virus. Simply put, our students need to physically be present in order to have their social, emotional, and educational needs met. This is why we have decided to offer an in-person option only moving forward.

We will still be working closely with the Marshall and St. Joseph County Health Departments, who will guide us if any adjustments need to be made during the school year. Also, Union North United will be constantly evaluating two key factors as we have this past year:

- 1) the school's ability to maintain a safe and healthy school environment, and
- 2) the prevalence of COVID-19 in our community.

This document will provide guidance to students, parents, and other community stakeholders regarding the specific in-person plan of the Union North United School Corporation.

Also, it is important that students, parents, and staff understand that during the public health emergency related to the Covid-19 virus, while Union North United has undertaken measures to minimize risk, there still remains the general risk of contracting the virus while participating in in-person school.

Considerations for Union-North United School Corporation

- ✓ We plan for the school year to begin, as scheduled, with In-person classroom instruction on the first day of school, August 9, 2022.
- ✓ We anticipate providing the standard 180 days of in-person instruction during the 2022-2023 school year.
- ✓ All buildings will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to the first day of school. Custodial staff will be trained on effective methods of cleaning and disinfecting work and play areas along with the time schedules for cleaning. Custodians will continue a consistent cleaning protocol each day thereafter.
- ✓ The superintendent will communicate as necessary with the Marshall and or St. Joseph County Health Officers to review and make determinations if further mitigation is warranted. Data tracked may include, but is not limited to:
 - Reasons for student and staff absences.

- Positive cases of COVID-19 in the schools.
- Data regarding COVID-19 spread in the community.
- ✓ Staff will be trained on non-invasive screening procedures to help identify symptoms needing to be addressed.
- ✓ Student and staff daily schedules may be adjusted to provide adequate time for hand washing, sanitizing desks, and other good hygiene practices.
- ✓ The school nurses will develop procedures to minimize infection.
- ✓ Extra-curricular and co-curricular re-entry guidelines will be developed so that sports and other extra-curricular programs may continue to take place while reducing risk of disease spread.
- ✓ Relevant training will be provided as needed to certified staff, non-certified staff, and substitute teachers to address a variety of COVID-19 related issues, such as identifying symptoms.
- ✓ Mental health training will be provided as needed to assess student and staff needs stemming from dealing with the pandemic.
- ✓ Our visitor policy will be adjusted if necessary to reduce the number of additional individuals in the school buildings thereby reducing the number of people to which staff and students are exposed.

Our UNUSC COVID-19 website will provide updates as needed for students, parents, and stakeholders. In addition, other methods of communication may be employed to ensure that stakeholders are aware of any noteworthy developments.

IN-PERSON LEARNING

Union-North United School Corporation no longer offers the option of virtual learning. Students and staff members will still follow the mitigation strategies in our original plan. **Currently it is not required for students and staff to wear masks, following the recommendation of the local Health Department. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to make changes as the situation changes, following the recommendation of the Health Department.**



HEALTH AT SCHOOL: PROTECTING OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

It is essential for the school community to work together to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the school environment and in the community while still providing a quality education program.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

NUMBER ONE: STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK

The easiest and most effective way to stop the spread of the disease is to stay home if you are experiencing any of the symptoms listed below. Parents, students, and employees should self-screen for the following COVID-19-related symptoms:

- A fever of 100.4° F or greater
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Muscle or body aches
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or a runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Students and employees should not enter the school buildings if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit one or more of the symptoms of COVID-19 that is not otherwise explained by a doctor. Students and employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 without being otherwise explained are prohibited from coming to school, and if they do come to school, they will be sent home immediately.

NUMBER TWO: PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE

UNUSC will insist that employees and students wash their hands often and if soap and water are not readily available use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. Hand-sanitizing stations will be positioned throughout each building.

Reinforcing healthy habits regarding hand washing is expected and guidance can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>.

- Hand washing and avoiding touching your face, eyes, nose, or mouth are also important steps a person can take to avoid becoming sick or spreading germs to others. Families are encouraged to stress with their children thorough hand washing (for at least 20 seconds) and covering coughs or sneezes with the inside of the elbow if a facial tissue is not available.

Each school will incorporate key times into the school day when all persons should wash or properly sanitize their hands. If needed, these key times should be done in a staggered class pattern to maintain social distancing between students and include:

- Start of the school day
- Before eating
- After using the restroom
- After blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Before and after using the playground

NUMBER THREE: PRACTICE SAFETY AT SCHOOL

At UNUSC, we will employ flexible policies and procedures to keep the school environment safe. Our policies and procedures must allow for

adjustment because the situation surrounding COVID-19 in communities can rapidly change.

Adjustments may include (list is not exhaustive):

- Rearranging of classroom set-up to allow for greater space between students
- Changing the methods of instruction (eLearning)
- Changing out water fountains to water bottle filling stations.
- Reducing the number of people students interact with on a daily basis for overall risk reduction
- Implementing measures to decrease students congregating in one location
- Using assigned seating
- Placing social distancing reminders on the floor or wall to remind students of appropriate space
- Reducing the amount of materials, supplies, and personal belongings going to and from school
- Reducing student exposure to high-touch, shared resources at school.
- Adjusting lunch schedules
- Outside activities when possible

NUMBER FOUR: MASKS/FACE SHIELDS

At this time the wearing of face coverings is not required. The Corporation and Board of Trustees reserve the right to mandate masks if determined to be the best option by the Health Department in conjunction with the Board.

SCREENING BY THE NURSE

The nurse at each building will be guided by the information sent out by the Indiana State Department of Health when determining the healthcare needs of each person. This information may be found at:

<https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/2400.htm>

If it becomes necessary, we will be following the recommendations for contact tracing as guided by the Indiana State Department of Health.

RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER EXCLUSION

Once a student or employee is excluded from the school environment, they may return if they satisfy the recommendations provided by the Indiana State Department of Health. The guidelines from the Health Department can be found at the following website under Back to School Resources:

<https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/2400.htm>

FOOD SERVICES: NUTRITION SAFETY

At UNUSC, we will review our food service guidelines and adjust to keep our students as safe as we can during meals provided in our buildings.

Hand washing hygiene

Prior to any meal service, all students and staff will utilize hand washing or sanitizing to ensure safe eating practices.

Food service changes

If any other changes are warranted, options may include:

Keeping lunch groups the same every day to minimize exposure

.Changing the ways meals are served

.Changing the way napkins and silverware are dispensed

.PPE to be worn by all food service staff

Environmental Risk Reduction

If it becomes necessary to reduce environmental risks,
Options may include:

- Employing social distancing methods to reduce transmission of germs
- Putting tape marks on the floor to encourage social distancing.
- Seating adjustments



**HEALTH AT SCHOOL: OTHER ITEMS YOU
NEED TO KNOW**

Besides home-based prevention techniques, UNUSC will be implementing protocols at school to protect our students and staff.

Tracking Community Spread

The superintendent along with the nurse in each building will communicate regularly with the Marshall and or St. Joseph County Health Departments to determine if adjustments in the school schedule or policies need to be made to protect our school families.

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/schools in this circumstance to make additional medical inquiries of staff and students than would otherwise be allowed.

- If a parent tells the district/school that a student is ill, the district/school may ask the parent whether the student is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19.
- If an employee calls in sick or appears ill, the district/school can inquire as to whether the employee is experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.

If a person is obviously ill, the district/school may make additional inquiries and may exclude the person from school property.

Mental Health Issues

UNUSC will provide support for students and staff who may develop mental health difficulties due to the stress and anxiety brought on by COVID-19. These resources may include access to school counselors, curriculum-related materials to provide students and families with suggestions for coping mechanisms, or other strategies to reduce the stress created by this situation.

Clinical Space for COVID-19 Symptomatic

Students or employees who are feeling ill will be evaluated in the nurse's clinic. The room will be disinfected throughout the day. Nurses will have PPE for this space.

Students who are ill will be walked out of the building to their parents. If a student or staff member has a fever, for any reason, it will be district/school policy to require staff and students to be fever-free, without the use of fever-reducing medications, for 24 hours before returning to school. Additionally, all staff and students with fevers or symptoms associated with COVID-19 should be encouraged to seek medical attention for further evaluation and instructions.

Clinic Space for Non-COVID-19 Related

Students who do not display symptoms of COVID-19 can be seen and treated in the nurse's clinic. These would include students who are injured during the school day or students with special health care needs such as those with chronic health conditions (i.e. - diabetes or seizures), those requiring medical treatments (i.e. - suctioning, tube feeding, or nebulizers), and those with individual health plans.

Cleaning at School

Custodial staff at all schools will receive training regarding how to clean and disinfect surfaces to prevent the spread of COVID-19. High-touch objects and surfaces will be cleaned more often and a more vigorous cleaning schedule will be adhered to.



TRANSPORTATION: STUDENT TRANSPORTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The school bus is often the student's first contact with the school in the morning and the last point of contact in the afternoon. UNUSC will pay particular attention to protocols used in student transportation to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and protect both students and employees.

All buses and transportation vehicles will have been thoroughly disinfected before the first day of school. In addition, we will be providing parents with the passenger expectations and the role students will play in minimizing infection prior to the start of the school year.

Preparation and Cleaning

All buses will have cleaning supplies available including hand sanitizer. All buses and transportation vehicles will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before routes.

Training

Drivers and maintenance/cleaning staff will be properly trained regarding:

- Correct information about COVID-19, how it spreads, symptoms, and risk of exposure will be provided.
- Whom to contact if a student or the driver exhibits symptoms of COVID-19.
- The appropriate methods, tools, and products for cleaning buses, including opening doors and windows for effective circulation and to avoid extensive exposure to cleaning fumes.
- The hygiene expectations of staff.
- Using gloves when handling and disposing of trash.
- Avoiding touching surfaces often touched by passengers.

Other Transportation Considerations

- Students may be restricted to only riding their assigned bus route.
- Seats will be assigned.
- Bus stops and routes may be adjusted.

Extra Curricular

Important points to remember:

- **All participants and coaches MUST be symptom-free.** Participation is strictly prohibited by anyone exhibiting any of the COVID-19 symptoms, which include:
 - A fever of 100.4° F or greater
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Fatigue
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Congestion or a runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea

In the event that conditions again arise, more information that is school specific will be provided. If you have questions or concerns regarding anything not covered in this document, please see the contact information provided below or address your question to any of our administrators.

Contact Information

Questions?

Email at covidinfo@unorth.k12.in.us

This plan was reviewed in June 2023