

La Harpe Community School District #347

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LaHarpe CSD #347 Parents/Guardians, Students and Staff,

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued updated guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Kindergarten K-12 Schools on July 9, 2021. The State of Illinois has adopted the CDC guidance. We will work with the Hancock County Health Department to determine the prevention strategies needed in our district, based on local metrics. The Illinois Department of Public Health has put forth the following key points, as provided by the updated CDC guidance.

Key Takeaways from the Illinois Department of Public Health:

- Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in the fall 2021 is a priority.
- Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports.
- Masks should be worn indoors by all individuals (age 2 and older) who are not fully vaccinated. Consistent and correct mask use by people who are not fully vaccinated is especially important indoors and in crowded settings, when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms combined with indoor mask wearing by people who are not fully vaccinated, to reduce transmission risk. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, such as when schools cannot fully re-open while maintaining these distances, it is especially important to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as indoor masking.
- Screening, testing, ventilation, handwashing, respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick, getting tested, and contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, along with cleaning and disinfection are also important layers of prevention to keep schools safe.
- Students, teachers, and staff should stay home when they have signs of any infectious illness and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.
- Many schools serve children under the age of 12 who are not eligible for vaccination at this time. Therefore, this guidance emphasizes implementing layered prevention strategies (e.g., using multiple prevention strategies together consistently) to protect people who are not fully vaccinated, including students, teachers, staff, and other members of their households.
- COVID-19 prevention strategies remain critical to protect people, including students, teachers, and staff, who are not fully vaccinated, especially in areas of moderate-to-high community transmission levels.
- Localities should monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies (e.g., physical distancing, screening testing). Vaccination data by county can be found here <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccinedata>.

Based on these key points, LaHarpe CSD #347 will recommend the following layered-prevention strategies for the start of the 2021-2022 school year. Please bear in mind that layers of prevention may be increased or reduced as IDPH guidance changes.

1. Masks are highly recommended for all individuals age 2 and older, who are not fully vaccinated, when indoors.
2. Masks are required on school buses per Federal regulations.
3. When possible, physical distancing of at least 3 feet is recommended within classrooms.
4. Students, teachers and staff should stay home when they have signs of infectious illness.
5. Students, teachers and staff should practice respiratory etiquette (i.e. cover a cough or sneeze)
6. Students, teachers and staff should practice regular handwashing.
7. Contact tracing will be conducted at the direction of the Hancock County Health Department
8. The district will continue increased cleaning and disinfection at its facilities.