

Seneca Township High School Plan:

“Plan for Continued and Improved In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Educational Programming & Services”

Introduction:

Sweeping through the world in early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in major upheaval to all aspects of life, including unprecedented school closures in the spring and fall of 2020. To open schools for in-person instruction required strict health and safety protocols which created barriers and limitations to teaching and learning. Recognizing that students across remote and in-person settings faced significant academic, social, emotional, and mental health challenges as a result of the interrupted education and the trauma caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Congress made emergency funds available to local school districts to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. Most recently, funds available through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act require that school districts develop a *Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services*. As such, this plan has been developed in accordance with the ARP Act and the Illinois State Superintendent of Education declaration of July 9, 2021; is aligned with guidance provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and addresses adjustments needed in response to evolving COVID-19 pandemic circumstances. Taking the Seneca High School community’s input into account, this plan was also developed through meaningful consultation with a collaborative of students, parents, school and district administrators (including special education administrators), teachers, school staff, food service staff, transportation service staff, labor association leaders, and county health department officials. Opportunity for the public to provide input was provided from July 12-15 through a web-based comment platform. Upon request, this plan will be provided in an alternative format accessible to parents who are individuals with a disability as defined by the ADA. This plan will also be made publicly available on the district’s website. School strategies in this plan may be removed based upon local conditions, levels of community transmission (i.e., low, moderate, substantial, or high), local vaccine coverage, use of screening testing to detect cases in K-12 schools, and consultation with local public health officials to determine the prevention strategies needed.

Seneca High School has been able to demonstrate over the COVID-19 pandemic its ability to: (1) keep its door’s open for full in-person instruction, (2) run successful graduation ceremonies and other major events with appropriate mitigations, (3) monitor and inform its community of COVID related measures, and (4) continue to progress monitor the safety and success of the district for all stakeholders. School officials will communicate any changes in plans to staff members, students, and parents through the district’s regular communication platforms.

Maintaining the Health and Safety of Students, Educators, and Other Staff:

In accordance with the Illinois State Superintendent of Schools July 9, 2021 declaration, Seneca Township High School will be open fully for in-person learning for all student attendance days for the 2021-22 school year. Synchronous Remote learning will not be available. Students who miss days of school will be afforded the opportunity to make up for their missing work. Absent an order from the

Rev. 7.7,7.9, 7.12, 7.13, 7.14, 7.15, 7.16, 7.19, 7.20

Illinois State Board of Education and/or the Illinois Governor's Office, Seneca Township High School will be in operation in accordance with the CDC's updated (July 9, 2021) *Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Schools*, also adopted by the IDPH on July 9, 2021. These guidelines include the following:

1. Mask Recommended Use

- Mask use is recommended, but not mandated indoors for students, staff and visitors who are not fully vaccinated. Mask use is recommended outdoors during activities (e.g., participating in outdoor physical education, sports, and extra curriculars) that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission.
- School staff are to model support for and encourage students to be supportive of people who choose to continue to wear a mask as a personal choice or because of a personal medical reason.
- Unless exempt by CDC Order or subject to updated further guidance, passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses.

2. Physical Distancing

- To the extent possible within school and classroom structures so that it does not exclude students from full day in-person learning, school staff are to help students commit to physical distancing as much as possible by:
 - arranging furniture, desks, and lab tables to model and reinforce physical distancing of at least 3 feet and movement;
 - providing assigned seating for students and encourage students to remain in these seats to the greatest extent possible; and
- School staff will maximize physical distance as much as possible when moving through food service lines and while eating indoors. Aside from the cafeteria, additional spaces for mealtime seating will be utilized when available and feasible (e.g., weather permitting). Students and staff who are fully vaccinated do not need to distance while eating.
- Seneca Township High School will utilize the commons and the "New Commons" as multiple lunchroom sites to accommodate maximum social distancing while eating lunch. Additionally, before school begins in congregating settings, Seneca High School will utilize both commons locations to separate congregate groups of students into two areas.
- Physical distancing measures are to be done in an equitable manner that does not perpetuate academic, racial, or other tracking (e.g., separating people into fully vaccinated and non-fully vaccinated cohorts).

3. Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

- School staff will monitor and reinforce frequent handwashing and respiratory etiquette by
 - o reminding everyone in the facility to wash hands frequently;
 - o using hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol (for teachers, staff, and older students who can safely use hand sanitizer) when hand washing is not possible;
 - o providing adequate handwashing and hand sanitizer supplies that are safely stored.

4. Facility and Transportation Cleaning, Disinfection and Ventilation

- School custodial staff and transportation staff will continue to clean surfaces daily. To further reduce the risk of spreading infection, these staff will also use disinfectants on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency COVID-19 “List N” to disinfect spaces occupied by someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours.
- Maintenance staff will continue to regularly replace school ventilation system filters by using high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters. Seneca Township High School is working in coordination with its architect, HVAC vendors, and engineers to update its ventilation systems to increase clean air inside our building. Aged ventilation systems are being replaced by new systems to improve the control, increased outdoor return air circulation, and reliability of air circulation, per the CDC recommendations.
- When possible, staff will open doors and windows, and have activities, classes, or lunches outdoors when circumstances allow, with school safety a continued priority.

5. Contact Tracing in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine

- Students and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as influenza (flu) or COVID-19, should stay home and contact their healthcare provider for testing and care.
- Individuals in our school environments who show symptoms of COVID-19 are to immediately report to or be escorted to the school’s nurse’s office to be either sent home or be quarantined in the school’s supervised nursing safe area while awaiting pickup/evaluation. Students and staff are required to wear masks while in the safe area. Parents should ensure that ill students are picked up from school within 30 minutes of being notified. Ill students will not be allowed to utilize the school bus to return home.
- Students and staff who are not fully vaccinated should quarantine after a recent exposure to someone with COVID-19. Fully vaccinated people who were in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but do NOT have COVID-19 symptoms do not need to quarantine or be tested. Quarantine decisions will be made and communicated by LaSalle and Grundy County Health Department officials.
- Student absences related to a COVID-19 isolation or quarantine will be recorded as excused. To ensure continuity of services, school work missed during such an absence can be requested and made up in accordance with the school’s policy (refer to student handbook); social, emotional, mental health,

or other needs will be provided in accordance with a student's IEP or 504 Plan. Parents of students who have social, emotional, mental health, or other needs outside of an IEP or 504 Plan should contact the Student Services Director to discuss needs. Synchronous Remote Learning opportunities will not exist, but student make up work will be made available to those quarantined, COVID positive, and will be done by teacher discretion.

- Absent COVID-related leave days previously provided by Federal law, staff absences related to a COVID-19 isolation or quarantine will be recorded in accordance with the district's sick leave policy and related professional negotiations agreements. To ensure continuity of services, staff members should contact the Principal to discuss support for social, emotional, mental health, or other needs.
- To the extent allowable by privacy laws and other applicable laws, the school nurse will continue to collaborate with LaSalle and Grundy County Health Departments officials to confidentially provide information about people diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19, including making notifications to staff and parents as soon as possible regarding those who were in close contact of someone in the school who tested positive for COVID-19.
- The school's nurse and the Superintendent will inform the school community of outbreaks while maintaining student and staff confidentiality rights.
- Students and staff suspected of having COVID-19, whether they were tested or not, are to follow the CDC guidelines to determine when they can return to school.
- Following quarantine, students and staff returning from illness related to COVID-19 are to call to check in with the school's nurse to return to regular attendance.

6. Screening & Testing

- Seneca Township High School will follow the local recommendations of the health departments regarding the necessity for students and staff to be screened and/or tested.

7. Promoting Vaccination

- Working with the LaSalle and Grundy County Health Departments and Jewel Osco Pharmacy, a COVID-19 vaccine clinic, available to anyone in our area 12 years of age and older, was scheduled in June to be held at Seneca High School. Due to low registrations (4) the clinic was moved off site and the registrants were advised to visit a Jewel Osco pharmacy to get vaccinated.
- Seneca High School will continue to provide additional information on vaccination locations in coordination with our feeder districts. Seneca High School is respectful of peoples' varying levels of vaccine confidence, those who want to get vaccinated against COVID-19 can visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find out where they can get vaccinated in our community.

8. Disabilities or Other Health Care Needs

- Parents of students who need accommodations, modifications, or assistance related to COVID-19 safety protocols, disabilities, underlying medical conditions, or weakened immune systems should contact the Student Services Director to discuss the need(s).
- Staff members who need accommodations, modifications, or assistance related to COVID-19 safety protocols, disabilities, underlying medical conditions, weakened immune systems, or a sincerely held religious belief or practice (covered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) should contact the Principal to discuss the need(s). Staff members with weakened immune systems are advised to contact their healthcare professional about the need for continued personal protective measures after vaccination.

9. Assessing Learning Loss

Seneca High School identifies those students struggling, who have had learning loss or struggling academic performance due to the impacts of COVID 19. The SAP team, along with the Student Supports Counselor will work to identify learning loss, tutoring opportunities, social emotional and mental health needs assessments, as well as assist with homebound services in coordination with the Student Services Director and other members of the SAP team.

10. Visitors

- Nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations with people who are not fully vaccinated are discouraged, when possible, from visiting schools.

11. Collaboration with Public Health Officials

- District officials will continue to collaborate and consult with LaSalle and Grundy County Health Department officials throughout a pandemic on various logistics and decision-making including, but not limited to, quarantines, school health and safety protocols, screening testing, contact tracing, vaccine clinics, and emergency school closings.

12. Additional Mitigation Strategies

- The Seneca Township High School Fall 2021-22 Plan is a flexible plan that will contain progress monitoring. In coordination with the county health departments, Seneca Township High School will have mitigation strategies ready to implement under the advisement of the county health departments. Recognizing the importance of in-person learning and the successful completion of the 2020-21 school year without school closure at Seneca Township High School, the administration and Board of Education may utilize necessary flexibility to accommodate rising health concerns. Additional mitigation strategies may result in:

- Masking mitigations: Non-vaccinated members, and/or school wide masking.
- Increased social distancing to 6'+
- One way hallway and staircases
- A shortened school day
- Grab and go lunch service

13. Transportation

· Similar to the 2020-21 school year Seneca Township High School recommends, where possible, for parents to transport their own children to school if there are concerns about masking on school buses. The CDC guidance states, "Regardless of mask policy at school, passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses, including on buses operated by public and private school systems." Additionally, IDPH has further required mandatory masking on buses. Seneca Township High School will offer bus service for those students who qualify, but masking will be required.

14. Plan Review

· Through September 30, 2023, this plan will be reviewed no less frequently than every six months and revised as appropriate after seeking and considering public input. Revisions will address the most recently updated safety recommendations by the CDC, provided in an alternative format accessible to parents who are individuals with a disability as defined by the ADA, and made publicly available on the district's website.