

# **South Ripley Community School Corporation**



**2020-2021 Re-entry Plan**

## **Overview**

It is the intention of the South Ripley Community School Corporation to provide face-to-face instruction to begin the 2020 - 2021 school year according to our adopted school calendar. We believe that our best teaching and learning take place when our students and staff are physically present together in the school environment. The school calendar lists Wednesday, August 5, 2020 as the first student day of the school year and we plan on following that calendar.

The Indiana's Considerations for Learning and Safe Schools ([IN-CLASS](#)) document provides all Indiana districts and schools with guidance for preparing school operations under the current pandemic environment. Per this document, not all districts and schools will be able to address or implement all of the considerations listed.

Governor Holcomb has empowered each school district to consider and evaluate all aspects of returning to school and to develop a re-entry plan that considers the recommendations and addresses local district capabilities while still delivering a quality education.

As addressed in the IDOE document, South Ripley will be constantly evaluating two key factors:

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

We will be working closely with Ripley County Health Officer, Dr. David Welsh, who will guide us if any adjustments need to be made during the school year.

Looking at local Ripley County data, the spread of COVID-19 has been very well controlled since early June. Additionally, persons age 0-19 represent approximately only 2% of all COVID-19 cases in the county. This data suggests that our students are at very little risk of contracting the virus.

However, we know that we can also help to protect the students and adults in the school environment by taking a series of reasonable steps in various aspects of our school operations. This document will provide guidance to students, parents, and other community stakeholders regarding the specific re-entry plans of the South Ripley Community School Corporation.

***Revisions to this document are expected as dictated by circumstances surrounding COVID-19.***

## **General Guidelines for South Ripley Schools**

The following general guidelines will be used to provide for a safe re-entry to school:

- We plan for the school year to begin, as scheduled, with in-person classroom instruction on the first day of school, August 5, 2020.

- We anticipate providing the standard 180 days of instruction during the 2020-2021 school year. If necessary, we will review and adjust the calendar. Such adjustments may consist of virtual and/or hybrid instruction and longer or shorter breaks. These decisions will be made based on the current community health status.
- A full time online learning option will be provided to students whose parents wish to limit their children's contact with others due to COVID-19. Parents wanting more details on this option should contact their child's building principal as soon as possible. **Additional information on this option is provided at the end of this document.**
- We will review all policies and procedures to provide more flexibility and remove punitive measures for absences when there is determined illness, a localized outbreak, or exposure of a contagious disease.
- All buildings will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to the start of school and on a frequent basis throughout the year.
- We will work with the Ripley County Health Officer to establish predetermined thresholds for mitigation strategies if there are cases in our schools and/or community spread.
- The superintendent will be provided with health reports as necessary to review with the Ripley County Health Officer 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.
- If school is closed by the superintendent or the Ripley County Health Officer, South Ripley will transition to eLearning during the period of the closure.
- Staff will be trained on non-interventive screening procedures to help identify symptoms which may need to be addressed.
- Student and staff daily schedules will be adjusted to provide adequate time for handwashing, sanitizing desks, and other good hygiene practices.
- The school clinic 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 to certified staff, non-certified staff, and substitute teachers to address a variety of COVID-19 related issues, such as identifying symptoms, remote learning methods, remediation, and addressing academic losses from the spring.
- Mental health training will be provided to assess student and staff needs stemming from dealing with the pandemic.
- Custodial staff will be trained on effective methods of cleaning and disinfecting work and play areas and the time schedules for cleaning.
- Our visitor policy will be adjusted to reduce the number of additional individuals in the school buildings, which reduces the number of people students and staff are exposed to.
- The COVID-19 section of the South Ripley website will regularly provide updates for students, parents, and stakeholders. In addition, other methods of communication may be employed to ensure that stakeholders are aware of any noteworthy developments.

## **Health Protocol for South Ripley Schools**

It is essential for the school and 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. South Ripley Schools will work in partnership with the Ripley County Health Department to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the school environment.

Students and employees should not enter the school buildings if they test positive for COVID-19, have a fever of 100.4 or greater, or exhibit three or more of the symptoms of COVID-19 that are not otherwise explained. 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.

State statute gives public school districts the authority to exclude students who have a contagious disease such as COVID-19 or are liable to transmit it after exposure (IC 20-34-3-9). In addition, the local health department has the authority to exclude students from school and may order students and others to isolate or quarantine (IC 16-41-9-1.6). As such, we will work closely with our local health department.

If a parent tells the district/school that a student is ill, the district/school may legally ask the parent whether the student is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19. It is the personal responsibility of every school family to comply with this policy and to report any symptoms to the school so any illness trends in the school populations can be appropriately addressed.

## **Symptoms Impacting Consideration for Exclusion from School**

Students and employees will be excluded from school if they test positive for COVID-19, have a fever of 100.4 or greater, or exhibit three or more of the symptoms of COVID-19 that are not otherwise explained. ***Excluded students are expected to keep up with school work via eLearning as their health allows.***

Students and employees will be trained to recognize the following symptoms:

- **A fever of 100.4° F or greater**
- **Cough**
- **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing**
- **Chills**
- **Repeated shaking with chills**
- **Muscle pain**
- **Headache**
- **Sore throat**
- **New loss of taste or smell**

If an employee or student is sent home with suspected COVID-19, educational literature including the following information will be sent home with them.

[Parent Letter if student is sent home with possible COVID](#)  
[CDC Edu. for COVID-19](#)

[CDC Parent Checklist](#)  
[COVID Testing information](#)

**Temporary Suspension of Attendance Reward Programs**

Because it is so imperative to stop the spread of COVID-19 in our schools, attendance incentive and award programs will be temporarily discontinued. In no way do we want to encourage students who are ill to attend school.

**Parent pick-up of a sick student**

If a student is being sent home sick, a parent or guardian is to enter the front office first to sign their child out per our usual protocol. The office staff will then contact the nurse's clinic and a staff member will meet the parent or guardian at the designated door for pick-up of ill students. Door 11 will be used for all elementary students and the front junior high gym entrance will be used for all junior high and high school students.

**Return to School After Exclusion**

Once a student or employee is excluded from the school, they may return if they have remained symptom free and fever free for 72 hours, or if they have a doctor's document stating approval for the return to school with the date of return.

If an employee or student is suspected of having COVID-19, the following guidelines will be expected to be followed before a re-entry:

***Untested***

Persons who have not received a test proving or disproving the presence of COVID-19 but experience symptoms may return if the following three conditions are met:

- At least 10 calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- They have not had a fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers); and
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved);

***Tested Positive - Symptomatic***

Persons who experienced symptoms and have been tested for COVID-19 may return to school if the following conditions are met:

- At least 10 calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared; or
- The individual has received two negative tests at least 24 hours apart.
- The individual no longer has a fever (without the use of medicine that reduces fevers); and
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved)

### ***Tested Positive- Asymptomatic***

Persons who have not had symptoms but test positive for COVID-19 may return when they have gone ten calendar days without symptoms and have been released by a healthcare provider. Persons may also return if they are approved to do so in writing by their health care provider.

### ***Tested Negative***

Persons who have had symptoms of COVID-19 and received a negative test result may return to school when they have not had a fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers), along with a doctor's note that it is safe to return to school.

### ***Someone in the Household Tests Positive***

Students and employees should remain home if someone in the household has COVID-19 symptoms or is being tested for COVID-19. Even without symptoms, if a student or employee has recently had contact with a person with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, has someone in their home being tested for COVID-19, or has recently traveled from somewhere considered to be a "hot spot" by the CDC, South Ripley may choose to exclude the student or employee from the school building and recommend that they self-quarantine for 14 calendar days. The amount of time out of school could be longer if the person then becomes symptomatic.

### **Screening**

The current CDC guidelines recommend screening all students and employees for COVID-19 symptoms and history of exposure. South Ripley schools will operate using the CDC option of self-screening. All students and employees are expected to self check their temperatures before arrival. If staff or students have a temperature of 100.4 or greater, or if they feel sick with symptoms of COVID-19, they are to stay home for 72 hours. All staff, students and parents will be provided information regarding the recognition of COVID-19 symptoms and screening.

At any time the district/school may take the temperature of students, employees and visitors on school property on a random basis or in situations where there is reason to believe that the person may be ill.

South Ripley staff will use the sheet below to assist in tracking reported signs and symptoms of students, reported by guardians. [Sick Student Call-In Monitoring Sheet](#)

### **Clinical Space COVID -19 Symptomatic**

South Ripley school clinics will be located in low traffic areas and will have separate space for ill students within the nurse's clinic. Students or employees who are feeling ill will be evaluated and wait to be picked up in designated areas. Anyone waiting in this location will be required to wear a mask provided by South Ripley schools. Only essential staff will be assigned to the

room. Strict social distancing is required and staff must wear appropriate PPE. Students who are ill will be walked out of the building to their family. A record will be kept of all persons who received care per the nursing staff. The equipment will be disinfected between use and the room will be disinfected several times throughout the day.

### **Clinic Space Non-COVID-19 Related**

Students who do not display symptoms of COVID-19 will be seen and treated in a separate area of 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.

### **Confirmed Case of COVID-19 on School Property**

When there is confirmation that a person infected with COVID-19 was on school property, South Ripley will contact the local health department and work with them to assess factors such as the likelihood of exposure to employees and students in the building, the number of cases in the community, and other factors that will determine building closure.

It is the responsibility of the Ripley County Health Department to contact the person confirmed with COVID-19, inform direct contacts of their possible exposure, and give instructions to those involved with the confirmed case, including siblings and other household members regarding self-quarantine and exclusions. The individual who tested positive will not be identified in communications to the school community at large, but may need to be selectively identified for contact tracing by the local health department.

If a closure is determined necessary, we will consult with the Ripley County Health Department to determine the status of school activities including extracurricular activities, co-curricular activities, and before and after-school programs. South Ripley will transition to eLearning during the time period of the closing.

As soon as South Ripley becomes aware of a student or employee who has been exposed to or has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the custodial staff will be informed, so that impacted building or bus areas, furnishings, and equipment are thoroughly disinfected. If possible, based upon student and staff presence, the custodial staff will wait 24 hours prior to disinfecting. However, if that is not possible or school is in session, the cleaning will occur immediately.

### **Immunizations**

Indiana State Immunization requirements still remain in effect. A fall immunization will still be offered. Flu clinics and "catch-up" immunization clinics have been scheduled for fall.

## **Social Distancing**

Social Distancing will not be possible at all times within the school environment, however, we are taking steps to provide greater distance between students wherever possible. The following adjustments include measures that South Ripley Community School Corporation will take to increase distance between students while still maintaining face to face instruction.

- Rearranging of classroom set-up to allow for greater space between students.
- Utilizing assigned seating in classrooms. Staff will be encouraged to utilize the seating charts available in Skyward gradebooks to track locations of students within the classroom.
- 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 on buses.
- Placing social distancing reminders on the floor to remind students of appropriate space.
- Reducing the amount of shared materials, supplies, and personal belongings going to and from school.
- Reducing student exposure to high-touch, shared resources at school, and frequent sanitizing of shared spaces.
- Providing plexiglass barriers in appropriate locations.

## **Masks and PPE**

According to Governor Holcomb's Back on Track Indiana Plan, upon the entrance to Stage 4, facial coverings are optional. It is not the intention of South Ripley Community School Corporation to require all students and staff to wear masks and personal protective equipment at all times during the school day. However, we are prepared to make these available and to encourage any students or staff who wish to wear masks and PPE to do so.

Face coverings may be challenging for students (especially younger students) to wear in all-day settings such as school. Face coverings are recommended, and are most essential in times when physical distancing is difficult to maintain for a period of time greater than 15 minutes. Masks or face shields will be encouraged for all students when social distancing is not possible, but they are not required at this time.

Certain employees, such as food service personnel, will be required to wear masks or face shields when carrying out their assigned duties. Additional accommodations may need to be made for staff and students based on their individual health plans. Individuals who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 while at school will be required to wear a mask, and will be isolated from others until they are safely able to leave the building.

## **Hygiene at School**

South Ripley 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. Key times for handwashing include but are not limited to:

- Start of the school day
- Before and after breakfast and lunch
- Before and after recess
- After using the restroom, blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After using shared equipment

## **Water Fountains**

Water fountains will not be utilized in the schools until further notice. Water will be accessible. Students are encouraged to bring in their own water bottles. Students may use the water bottle refill stations, which will be disinfected on a frequent basis. Water will be available with our lunches.

## **Cafeteria and Food Service Considerations**

South Ripley food service personnel will review food service guidelines and make adjustments to keep our students safe during meals provided in our buildings. Adjustments will include:

- Prior to any meal service, all students and staff will utilize hand washing or sanitizing to ensure safe eating practices.
- Cafeteria staff will wear PPE as appropriate.
- The self-touch keypad at the high school/junior high points of sale will be removed.
- Grab and go style breakfast may be used to allow more flexibility.
- Seating adjustments will be made to accommodate greater distance between students.
- Markers may be used on the floor to promote social distancing.

## **Groupings, Gatherings and Field Trips**

Efforts will be made to reduce the number and frequency of large group gatherings. Use of technology will be encouraged to deliver messages that typically are delivered in large gatherings such as staff meetings and convocations. Consideration will be given to reducing or temporarily eliminating off-site field trips depending on location and duration of the trip and the COVID-19 status of the trip location.

## **Passing Periods**

In the high school and junior high school, staggered passing periods will be utilized to alleviate the number of students in hallways and locker bays. Students will be unable to socially distance at all times during passing periods. We will recommend students and staff wear a mask or face shield when social distancing is not possible.

## **Recess**

South Ripley Elementary School recognizes the importance of breaks in instructional time for elementary students. We will continue to have recess, but adjustments to normal procedures will be made including the following:

- Students will sanitize hands when going to and coming back from recess.
- Only one grade level will be on the playground at a time (50% reduction).
- Playground equipment will be sanitized frequently throughout the day.

## **Mental Health Considerations**

South Ripley 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.

## **Facility and Cleaning Considerations**

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. Custodial staff will adhere to [CDC Cleaning Guidelines](#)

## **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. South Ripley 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 prior to the start of school, and on a regular basis throughout the year. Masks or face shields will be recommended on buses at times when social distancing cannot be maintained for a time period greater than 15 minutes.

Additional modifications to transportation protocols include:

- All buses will have cleaning supplies available and drivers will be trained regarding appropriate daily cleaning methods to help prevent the spread of illness.
- A new dropoff procedure has been established that will stagger students being dismissed from buses to limit the amount of time that students are in close contact with each other.
- Assigned seating will be used on buses to limit the amount of time that students are in close contact with each other. Family members may be required to sit together.
- Students will be loaded every other seat while boarding and then reverse during unloading. This will create the greatest distance for the most time possible during the route.
- Bus drivers may be required to wear masks or face shields.

- All buses and transportation vehicles will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before and after routes.

### **Athletics and Extracurricular Activities**

Athletics and extracurricular activities will be conducted following recommendations and guidance provided by state agencies such as the Indiana Department of Education and the Indiana High School Athletic Association, and local guidance from the Ripley County Health Department and Ohio River Valley Conference.

All participants and coaches MUST be symptom-free. Participation is strictly prohibited by anyone exhibiting a fever, or a combination of any three or more of the COVID-19 symptoms found earlier in this document that are not otherwise explained.

Additional guidance for a specific activity/club/sport will be provided by the coach or sponsor. Please contact the sponsor, coach, or athletic director if you have questions.

### **Full Time Online Option**

A full time online learning option will be provided to students whose parents wish to limit their children's contact with others due to COVID-19. Parents wanting more details on this option should contact their child's building principal as soon as possible.

**It is important to understand that full time online learning will look much different than the eLearning that took place last school year. This will be full time, robust coursework that will require the same expectation of time as a full day of school.**

During registration, or in a meeting with the principal, families will have the option to select the full time online program. Parents and the students will be asked to sign an Online Learning Agreement Form which identifies the requirements for successful online learning. If choosing this option, students must commit to staying in the full time online program for at least one semester. Students will not be permitted to move back and forth between the face to face and full time online program.

Since this option is being selected to limit a student's contact with others, students choosing to enroll in the full time online program will not be eligible to participate in sports or extracurricular activities. For the same reason, high school students choosing the full time online program will not be eligible to attend Ivy Tech or the Southeastern Career Center.

***Revisions to this document are expected as dictated by circumstances surrounding COVID-19.***