

# LAFOURCHE PARISH SCHOOL DISTRICT

## 2021-2022 RETURN-TO-SCHOOL PLAN *IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19*



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## MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT MARTIN

TINA NAQUIN BABIN, President

JAROD W. MARTIN, Superintendent

### Lafourche Parish School Board

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July 20, 2021

Lafourche Parish Community Members,

The Lafourche Parish School District remains committed to providing a high quality education to all children of Lafourche Parish. We are confident that our operational plans will balance the requirement to ensure the safety of the entire community with the need to offer a complete and comprehensive school experience for all of our students.

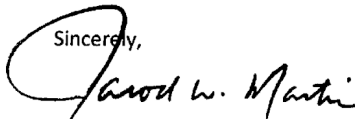
Last school year we faced many challenges that included multiple school and grade level closures. We were able to successfully navigate virtual, hybrid, and in-person learning. In the upcoming school year, we anticipate more COVID related challenges. However, the Louisiana Department of Education and the Louisiana Department of Health have reported reduced levels of COVID transmission. As a result, we will be able to modify many of our COVID-19 protocols and requirements for the 2021-2022 school year. This will allow us to begin to approach school level operations in a way that will more closely resemble schools prior to the response to the pandemic.

However, we must remain prepared to respond and adjust to any threat to student and community safety. Therefore, we will be prepared to deliver high quality instruction to all of our students during potential interruptions to normal school operations due to instances of COVID -19. We will also follow quarantining protocols as defined by the CDC and the Louisiana Department of Health.

In closing, please be assured that our goal is to provide the most complete educational experience possible for the children of Lafourche Parish. We hope that the 2021-2022 school year more closely resembles student experiences prior to the pandemic. However, our commitment to student and community safety remain our first and most critical priority. As a result, we will continue to make decisions that are in keeping with the guidelines and requirements of our local health experts and authorities.

I look forward to working through these challenges together as a community, and I am confident in the ability of our schools to meet these challenges with your continued support.

Sincerely,



Jarod W. Martin  
Superintendent of Schools

## **INTRODUCTION**

During the 2021-2022 school year, Lafourche Parish School District will update its operational plan to reflect the current Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) guidance for K - 12 schools. As our district transitions to make schools more accessible to all students and staff, we will continue to implement measures to ensure the safety of all employees, students, and families and to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Based on information provided to us by the LDOE, CDC, LDH, and applicable federal, state, and local agencies, these plans may be revised and amended as needed.

## **Lafourche Parish School District Operations**

Beginning in August, LPSD will provide all students the opportunity to be in school every day. With guidance from the LDOE and LDH, our schools will resume traditional operational practices with modifications to ensure the safety of students and staff, including maintaining social distancing to the extent possible, amended cafeteria operations, mandatory masks on buses, and enhanced cleaning measures.

In addition, Lafourche Parish School District will offer a virtual instruction program by application process only for the 2021-22 school year. Applications for virtual learning were required to be submitted at the end of the 2020-2021 school year for enrolled students, and students not previously enrolled in the district may apply at the time of registration if they meet eligibility requirements. In order to be considered for virtual learning, students must submit medical documentation authorized by a physician.

The continuation of the LPSD Virtual Learning Program is contingent upon the needs of the community, and as a result, LPSD reserves the right to discontinue offering the program at any time. If this occurs, virtual students will be required to return to in-person learning.

## **Masks**

In accordance with current guidance from the CDC and LDH, masks will be optional for fully vaccinated staff and students (fully vaccinated =  $\geq 2$  weeks following the receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or  $\geq 2$  weeks following the receipt of one dose in a single dose vaccine), except while on school buses (see below for transportation and bus protocols). However, Lafourche Parish School District highly recommends all unvaccinated persons, students and staff, wear facial coverings / masks while on school campuses to protect against the spread of COVID-19. We will continue to monitor all

federal and state mandates regarding facial coverings and may make adjustments as required.

## Transportation and Bus Protocols

To comply with federal mandates for public transportation, Lafourche Parish School District will require bus drivers and students in grades 3 through 12 to wear facial coverings while riding school buses. Students in PK through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade are also strongly encouraged to wear facial coverings, to the extent possible, while on the school bus. In addition, school buses will be required to travel with the windows open to facilitate air flow as permitted by weather. Upon entering the school bus, hand sanitizer (not exceeding 80 percent alcohol) will be available for students, and each school bus operator will be required to sanitize their school bus after routes are completed.

## EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT SAFETY

- Parents are encouraged to complete a student health screening at home before sending students to school (see below for symptoms).
- Students with two or more symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will be required to return home.
- To practice social distancing, we will, to the extent possible, maintain appropriate physical distance between students and teachers as recommended by the CDC and Louisiana Department of Health.
- Unvaccinated students and staff are encouraged to wear facial coverings throughout the school day as recommended by the CDC and LDH.
- Students will be required to wear masks on all school buses as required by a federal mandate.
- Buses will be required to have the windows open while students are on board, weather permitting.

## Student Screening and Protocols

**When conducting a student self-screening, parents should look for the following symptoms. If students present with any of these symptoms, the student should remain at home. If the student presents one or more of the following symptoms at school, school personnel will follow established protocols and contact parents.**

1. Symptoms that may require a student to stay home and/or leave school:
  - a. Any **one** of the symptoms below:
    - i. Coughing (dry, persistent cough that does not produce phlegm; often leaves person short of breath)

- ii. Shortness of breath
  - iii. Difficulty breathing
  - iv. New loss of taste or smell
- b. Emergency warning signs get medical attention immediately
  - i. Trouble breathing
  - ii. Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
  - iii. New confusion or inability to arouse
  - iv. Bluish lips or face
- c. And / or have **two or more** of the following symptoms:
  - i. Fever of 100.4 or higher (99.4 forehead or temporal)
  - ii. Active vomiting (nausea) or diarrhea
  - iii. Chills or Rigors
  - iv. Muscle pain or body aches
  - v. Headache
  - vi. Sore throat
  - vii. Congestion or runny nose
  - viii. Fatigue
- 2. All students with the above symptoms will be isolated and provided with the proper adult supervision until the student is able to return home.
- 3. It will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to promptly pick up the student from school.
- 4. In the case of a student who tests positive for COVID-19, parents are strongly encouraged to notify the school principal of the student's health status.

## Employee Screening and Protocols

The following guidelines are **mandatory** for LPSD employees.

All employees must follow established return-to-work guidelines. Symptoms that require an absence, or exclusion, from work include: **(If any of the following symptoms exists you should remain home using a sick day.)**

- a. Any **one** of the symptoms below:
  - i. Coughing (dry, persistent cough that does not produce phlegm; often leaves person short of breath)
  - ii. Shortness of breath
  - iii. Difficulty breathing
  - iv. New loss of taste or smell
- b. Emergency warning signs get medical attention immediately
  - v. Trouble breathing

- vi. Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- vii. New confusion or inability to arouse
- viii. Bluish lips or face
- c. And / or have **two or more** of the following symptoms:
  - i. Fever of 100.4 or higher (99.4 forehead or temporal)
  - ii. Active vomiting (nausea) or diarrhea
  - iii. Chills or Rigors
  - iv. Muscle pain or body aches
  - v. Headache
  - vi. Sore throat
  - vii. Congestion or runny nose
  - viii. Fatigue

## Employee Health Protocol

- If an employee becomes ill at work, or if another person is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 at work, he or she may be asked to go home or to the nearest health center.
- Before returning to work, employees may be asked to submit a healthcare provider's note.
- If an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19, he or she may return to work when **all** 3 criteria have been met
  - 1. A minimum of 10 days has passed since first presenting symptoms AND
  - 2. At least 24 hours without symptoms (no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications) AND
  - 3. Improved respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, etc.)
- If an employee has symptoms that could be related to COVID-19 and is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the employee should assume that he or she has COVID-19 and should not return to work until the three criteria listed above have been met

## Employee or Student Exposure

LPSD will be in communication with the Louisiana Department of Health to report incidents related to employee and student exposure to COVID-19 and/or COVID-19 related symptoms. While we all hope to avoid exposure to COVID-19, we need to be prepared for that possibility. If an LPSD employee or student, or someone he or she has been in contact with, has been directly exposed to the virus, our first concern is for the health and safety of those who may be at risk for additional exposure.

***If an employee or student has been in close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19, the following guidelines will be implemented to determine if quarantine is needed.***

1. Close contact is defined as an individual who was within six feet of a COVID positive person for a cumulative time of 15 minutes over a 24-hour period.
2. Close contacts will be asked to quarantine at home for a specified period of time. Options to shorten the number of quarantine days if contacts remain asymptomatic include:
  - a. If no symptoms develop during quarantine and the individual has a negative COVID test collected after the fifth day of quarantine, the individual may return to school after the 7<sup>th</sup> day of quarantine, which begins after the last contact with the COVID-19 case.
  - b. If no symptoms develop during quarantine and no testing is completed, the individual may return after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the last contact with COVID-19.
3. Fully vaccinated persons (fully vaccinated =  $\geq 2$  weeks following the receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or  $\geq 2$  weeks following the receipt of one dose in a single dose vaccine), who have had contact with a COVID positive person, are not required to quarantine if they remain asymptomatic. If symptoms develop, the vaccinated person will be expected to follow quarantine guidelines.
4. Individuals who have been previously diagnosed with COVID within the past 90 days and who have had recent contact with a COVID positive person do not need to quarantine if they remain asymptomatic. If symptoms develop, the individual will be required to follow quarantine guidelines.
5. Parents of students who have been quarantined because of close contact with a positive case should monitor students for symptoms and may consider contacting a healthcare provider.
6. In the case of a student who tests positive for COVID-19, parents are encouraged to notify the school principal.
7. Employees who test positive for COVID should contact their personal healthcare provider and their supervisor.

## **CAFETERIA PROTOCOLS**

***Important Information pertaining to all meal phases:***

- All regulations and guidelines (from the CDC, USDA, LDOE, CNP, and LDHH) will continue to be followed in all processes of meal service, including delivery, storage, preparation, serving, and cleaning.
- Students are encouraged to wash their hands upon entering school, before meals, and at appropriate times throughout the day.



- All meals will be packed and served by the cafeteria staff.
- Students and faculty members will not be allowed to share food or beverages.

## COMMUNICATION

Parents and employees are strongly encouraged to access the most up-to-date information about school operations through:

1. Teacher, student, or parent email
2. Our district website
3. Our social media platforms – Facebook and Twitter

However, administrators will inform parents and employees of any issues related to COVID as the need arises.

## VISITORS ON CAMPUS

Although all visitors are welcome on school campuses, the safety of our staff and students remains the district's primary concern. Visitors are asked to refrain from visiting campuses if they are ill or exhibiting any symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What COVID preventative measures will be in place for in-person learning?**

- To comply with federal mandates, bus drivers and students in grades 3 to 12 are required to wear masks while on the school bus. Although not required, students in PK – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade are encouraged to wear facial coverings while on school buses to the extent possible.
- Lafourche Parish Schools strongly encourage all unvaccinated students and staff to wear facial coverings while on campus.
- Students who present with COVID-like symptoms will be isolated, and parents will be asked to follow district protocols for student illnesses.
- Students will be encouraged to wash their hands periodically, including upon arrival, during lunch, and throughout the day.
- Enhanced cleaning procedures will be in place. High traffic areas will be cleaned multiple times throughout the day.
- Social distancing practices will be implemented to the greatest possible extent.
- Middle and high school students will be assigned classroom seating to limit classroom contacts.

**Will student attendance be mandatory?**

Attendance at school will be mandatory, and students with excessive absences will be referred to Child Welfare and Attendance.

**Will water fountains remain closed this school year?**

In adherence with CDC and LDH guidelines, water fountains will remain closed. Students are encouraged to bring water from home in a refillable water container. Schools will have these available for students as needed.

**How will student breaks be handled (for example recess in elementary grades)?**

Elementary schools will resume traditional operations in August, which may include scheduled recess times. During recess, students will be allowed to utilize playground equipment, if available. Middle and high schools will also resume traditional operations; students will be allowed to access communal areas in the morning and during lunch as appropriate. As our first priority is to maintain the safety of students and staff, modifications may be needed to accommodate social distancing.

**How will student participation in athletics change this year?**

Lafourche Parish Schools will continue to follow LHSAA guidelines in regards to athletic participation.

**Will extracurricular activities be allowed to resume?**

The majority of extracurricular activities may resume this year, which include club meetings, non-athletic competitive events, and dances.

**Will band and choir be allowed to resume?**

Band and choir activities will resume this year. Students will be encouraged to maintain social distancing, and precautionary measures will be implemented (for example, brass covers).

**Are students allowed to use the locker rooms this year? Will students be able to dress out in physical education class?**

Student participation in physical education classes will include dressing out, and locker rooms will be open to PE students and athletes.

**Will parents be able to attend traditional school events, like Open House?**

Although some modifications may be needed, schools will offer parents the opportunity to attend Open House this fall. Special events and award programs will, likewise, be open to families although some modifications may be required. Some events that invite

visitor participation (like Grandparents' Day), however, may not be offered to maintain the safety of all students attending schools.