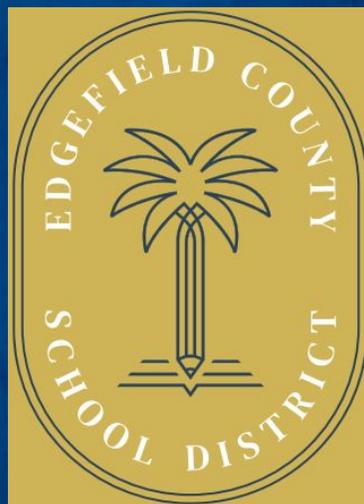


Edgefield County School District

2021-2022

Safe Return and Continuity of Service Plan



Maintaining Health and Safety

A district's plan must include how it will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and LEA staff, and the extent to which it has adopted policies or practices and a description of any such policies or practices, on each of the CDC's safety recommendations including: universal and correct wearing of masks; modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding); hand washing and respiratory etiquette; cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation; contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the state, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments; diagnostic and screening testing; efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible; appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies or practices; and coordination with state and local health officials.

Description of maintaining health and safety:

Edgefield County School District continues to have two goals:

- to maximize instruction; and
- to keep our students and staff as safe as possible.

To accomplish this, we plan to leverage a number of mitigation and support strategies to support and prioritize children and adults' physical, social, and emotional health.

In order to maintain the health and safety of our students, staff, and school communities, the district put the following strategies in place.

The district will:

- maintain a nurse at each school.
- maintain PPE supply stocks and hand-sanitizing stations.
- support additional pay for summer and winter break contact tracing **as needed.**
- continue our ongoing collaboration with the Midlands Epidemiology Team, local emergency management team, and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control.
- continue to monitor the spread of viruses or other contagious diseases, such as, but not limited to, influenza and COVID-19.
- continue to use the Edgefield County School District COVID-19 Data tracking form and post the results on the ECSD website.

The district will use our own data to carefully monitor COVID-19 cases and exclusions daily, and will consider the information provided to us by public health officials and medical experts when making decisions around instructional model shifts.

Hybrid and/or Remote Learning will not be offered, unless there is a statewide mandate. If we have to pivot to, or from remote, hybrid, or face-to-face instruction, we will always consider what impacts the fewest possible number of students, families and staff members.

It is our intent to avoid large-scale instructional shifts.

If a change is necessary, we will communicate the shift to families and the community through a variety of means, including letters to parents/legal guardians, email, phone messenger, and our website.

Universal and correct wearing of masks:

Students

At this time and throughout next year, the 2021–2022 school year, masks will be optional for our students, with the following exceptions:

- Masks will be optional on any school bus (updated 2/25/22).
- The Department of Health and Environmental Control continues to require students to wear masks in health rooms and in isolation rooms.
- The district will also require masks in other spaces if directed by the South Carolina Department of Education.
- If required by DHEC or the SCDE, the district will ask parents/legal guardians to fill out and submit a “Consent Form to Opt Out of Face Mask Requirement.”

Staff

At this time and throughout next year, the 2021–2022 school year, masks will be optional for our staff, with the following exceptions:

- Masks will be optional on any school bus (updated 2/25/22).
- The Department of Health and Environmental Control continues to require staff to wear masks in health rooms and in isolation rooms.
- The district will also require masks in other spaces if directed by the South Carolina Department of Education.

Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding):

Elementary Schools

Hybrid and/or Remote Learning will not be offered, unless there is a statewide mandate. If we have to pivot to, or from remote, hybrid, or face-to-face instruction, we will always consider what impacts the fewest possible number of students, families and staff members.

The district will use the Department of Health and Environmental Control indicators and thresholds defining community transmission of COVID-19 to guide any decision to modify facilities and structures to allow for physical distancing. The DHEC indicators and thresholds can be found [here](#).

When DHEC indicators and thresholds indicate that community spread is substantial, schools and district administrators will collaborate as they make decisions about adjusting instructional models or the processes needed to ensure safety and consistency throughout the district.

This could include using cohorts or modifying transitions to support physical distancing to the greatest extent possible, to ease contact tracing, and to minimize in-school transmission.

Schools may also adjust recess, entry/dismissal and breakfast/lunch processes to maximize physical distancing between students, if necessary.

Schools and district administrators will collaborate as they make decisions about adjusting instructional models or the processes needed to ensure safety and consistency throughout the district.

Secondary Schools

Hybrid and/or Remote Learning will not be offered, unless there is a statewide mandate. A normal instructional model in a secondary school can include, but is not limited to, normal movement around the building and normal entry, dismissal, breakfast, and lunch procedures.

We will use our own data to carefully monitor COVID-19 positive cases and exclusions daily in secondary schools. If an instructional shift is required, we will always consider what impacts the fewest possible students, families and staff members in an attempt to avoid large-scale instructional shifts. If a change is necessary, we will communicate shifts to families and the community.

Transportation

Transportation will comply with the South Carolina Department of Education's guidelines regarding capacity in effect during the 2021-2022 school year.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:

One of our most successful mitigation strategies continues to be our emphasis on handwashing and respiratory etiquette. At the beginning of the year, we will provide a mini-lesson to all students regarding proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette.

Respiratory etiquette includes coughing into your elbow, properly using tissue and throwing them away after use, covering sneezes and coughs, washing hands and using hand sanitizer often, etc.

To support our emphasis on handwashing and respiratory etiquette, we plan to maintain and refurbish our handwashing and hand-sanitizing stations and equipment as needed, including the stations in the cafeteria.

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation:

Keeping our physical environment safe and clean remains a priority for the 2021–2022 year.

We will continue to use electrostatic foggers at each school to support needed cleaning and our established COVID-19 cleaning protocols.

We will continue to implement additional ventilation projects identified in our facilities study, as well as to investigate other ventilation strategies.

Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine:

We will continue to follow DHEC guidelines related to quarantine and isolation, including the outlined quarantine periods for students and staff members who are considered close contacts (possible exposures) to a person diagnosed with COVID-19.

As of 2/22/22 DHEC released guidance similar to, but not identical, to our pre-COVID-19 guidance for influenza. The guidance applies to individual schools, not entire school districts and childcare centers.

The guidance allows individual schools to suspend Test to Stay or quarantine once they have had two consecutive weeks with less than 10 percent of all students and staff having COVID-19. When Test to Stay or quarantine has stopped, contact tracing and testing and masking of close contacts without symptoms is no longer required

If a school suspends Test to Stay or quarantine and has two consecutive weeks with 10 percent or more of all students and staff having COVID-19, either Test to Stay or Quarantine will need to be reinstated.

Isolation requirements for those who have COVID-19 will remain unchanged. Students who present COVID-19 symptoms will immediately be isolated in the designated space and will wear a mask while waiting to leave the facility.

To facilitate contact tracing if needed, we will continue to maintain seating charts on all buses and in classrooms when appropriate, unless individuals can sit three feet apart.

We will continue to communicate with families and community members about our contact tracing and quarantine procedures using communications through a variety of means, including letters to parents/legal guardians, email, phone messenger, and our website.

Diagnostic and screening testing:

At this time, we are not currently engaged in diagnostic or screening testing.

Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible:

We will continue to work with and provide guidance for employees, families, and eligible students to seek vaccination opportunities where available. When possible, nurses will work with employees to facilitate vaccination appointments as quickly and easily as possible.

The district will also work with community health partners to distribute pertinent vaccination information.

Lastly, we will follow guidance from DHEC related to quarantine, including recommendations that fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine as a result of a close contact exposure.

Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies and practices:

As we have done during the 2020–2021 school year, we will continue to follow all accommodations specified in students’ individual education plans (IEP), 504 plans, or individual health plans, and communicate updates such as this example to families, as needed.

We will also continue to provide homebound/home based services where needed to support student academic, social, and emotional growth. The district has the ability to connect with students in all grade levels remotely, if they are placed on homebound/home based services and not physically present in the classroom.

Staff will still conduct in-person evaluations with all safety precautions and mitigation strategies necessary.

We will continue to schedule online meetings, when possible, to support the development and implementation of students’ education or health plans.

Coordination with state and local health officials:

The district designates our nurses as the official contact with DHEC and other state and local health officials for Edgefield County School District.

In addition, the district coordinates procedures with the Department of Social Services, Guardians Ad Litem and other agencies. These groups include but are not limited to Edgefield County Mental Health, Edgefield County Sheriff’s Office, and Cornerstone.

Continuity of Services

We recognize that it is vital to ensure ongoing services for students, staff and the community without interruption. With that said, our district's focus and commitment continue to be providing safe, healthy, and supportive environments where children, staff, and communities can continue to thrive, learn, and grow.

District response on continuity of services:

Social and Emotional Support

Last year, the South Carolina State Department of Education directed school districts to implement social and emotional learning (SEL). In that directive, districts must develop short- and long-range SEL goals and plans that align with the district's vision, mission and strategic plan. In these plans, districts were asked to identify needs and resources to carry out SEL goals and plans.

Edgefield County Schools is committed to continuing the emphasis on supporting the social and emotional well-being of students and staff members, some of which is outlined in our plan.

Moving forward, we will do the following:

- The district will continue the use of wellness teams at each school.
- As required by SCDE, the district will implement a SEL screening tool for students and staff members.
- SEL check-ins for students and staff members will continue to be a part of our standard operating procedure as well as SEL instruction.
- The district will designate personnel to monitor SEL activities and coordinate support for students and staff where needed.
- The district will continue to share information about our social and emotional learning support with the community as we did on our [website](#).

District response on continuity of services continued:

Instruction

Hybrid and/or Remote Learning will not be offered, unless there is a statewide mandate. If we have to pivot to, or from remote, hybrid, or face-to-face instruction, we will always consider what impacts the fewest possible number of students, families and staff members.

The district will use the Department of Health and Environmental Control indicators and thresholds defining community transmission of COVID-19 to guide any decision to modify facilities and structures to allow for physical distancing. The DHEC indicators and thresholds can be found [here](#).

When DHEC indicators and thresholds indicate that community spread is substantial, schools and district administrators will collaborate as they make decisions about adjusting instructional models or the processes needed to ensure safety and consistency throughout the district.

This could include using cohorts or modifying transitions to support physical distancing to the greatest extent possible, to ease contact tracing, and to minimize in-school transmission.

Access to instruction for students in quarantine will continue to be a priority, including the enhanced use of online learning resources and platforms (Google Classroom).

A focus on continuity of service needs for students will continue, emphasizing students' access to internet hot spots, technological devices, and digital learning tools.

Educators will continue to use learning management systems and virtual meeting platforms to support students who are quarantined. We also continue to invest in infrastructure that supports teaching and learning. The district will also continue to prioritize systems and structures for the implementation of a Multi-tiered System of Supports for students when intervention is needed.

District response on continuity of services continued:

Other Services

Throughout summer 2021, Edgefield County Schools provided students no-cost breakfast and lunch meals. Families were able to obtain these from designated locations in the district.

During the 2021–2022 school year, the district will also commit to providing meal service options for children at no cost to families.

We will continue to communicate our plans for meal service to families.

Periodic Review

In order to ensure a continuity of services and support to our students, staff, and community, we recognize we must engage in periodic review of our plans to ensure the safety of our stakeholders.

District response on ensuring periodic updates to its plan:

We will continue to monitor and update the plan in accordance with updated public health guidance and input from the South Carolina Department of Education.

The district's Reentry Committee will review the plan periodically. Any changes made to the plan will be reported to the board of trustees.

Public Input

In order to create a thorough and thoughtful plan, we will engage in multiple rounds of input to garner helpful and specific feedback with multiple stakeholder groups. We believe that by engaging in multiple rounds of feedback we can ensure multiple voices and perspectives are part of the process.

District response on public input in development of its plan:

Edgefield County's Reentry Committee is engaging with a variety of stakeholders to seek input in the development of this plan, including school administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, students, district office personnel and the district's board of trustees.

In addition, the district created a link on our webpage that hosts the plan online. The district promoted that webpage using communications through a variety of means, including email, phone messenger, social media outlets, and our website. The plan included a link to a survey in order to gather public input.

Edgefield County School District

Engaging

Empowering

Enriching

