



Ankeny Community Schools

UPDATED: September 21, 2021

The Ankeny Community School District (“ACSD”) is committed to fulfilling its mission of preparing every learner for a lifetime of personal success. As we engage students in learning during the pandemic, the district will remain united in our commitment, passion, and vision in order to support students, families, and our staff in pursuit of the mission.

Summary of and Rationale for Proposed Amendments

Introduction: The following adjustment to ACSD’s *2021-2022 Return-to-Learn Plan* (the “Return to Learn Plan (9.21.21)”) is recommended in response to the September 13, 2021 federal court ruling in *The ARC of Iowa et al vs. Governor Kim Reynolds et al*. On that date, the United States District Court for the Southern District of Iowa issued a Temporary Restraining Order, which has the effect of law, prohibiting the State of Iowa from enforcing Iowa Code section 280.31, the law barring Iowa school districts from requiring masks. While the Order does not tell local districts how they must respond to the decision, it does state that, in the court’s opinion, “[I]t is essential that to reduce the transmission of the virus causing COVID-19 in schools, all adults and children, whether vaccinated or not, wear masks when indoors.”

Administrative Recommendation: The ACSD superintendent requests that the Board approve the changes to ACSD’s *2021-2022 Return-to-Learn Plan* outlined below. If approved, these changes shall take effect September 23, 2021, and remain in effect through December 21, 2021, unless, prior to December 21, 2021, the superintendent brings and the Board adopts an updated recommendation and/or the board takes further action on this matter to remain compliant with applicable law. The superintendent will present a plan for the beginning of the 2022 calendar year to the Board prior to December 21, 2021, based on applicable law.

Proposed Changes

Use of Masks

- **Indoors:** Consistent and correct masking for all individuals age 2 years and older, including students, teachers, staff, visitors, and volunteers, regardless of vaccination status, is required indoors on ACSD property during the compulsory school day. Masking is strongly encouraged, but is not required, during indoor events happening on ACSD property outside of the compulsory school day (e.g. during the Before and After School Program, at meetings, athletics, and activities).
- **Outdoors:** Masking is not required when outdoors on ACSD property, including during the compulsory school day (e.g. at recess). Individuals who are not fully vaccinated, individuals who are immunocompromised, and individuals who have someone in their household who is immunocompromised are strongly encouraged to mask in crowded outdoor settings and/or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people on ACSD property.

- **Buses:** School bus drivers, monitors, and passengers are required to wear masks on school buses as defined by an Order issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *This is not a change in practice.*
- **Exceptions:** Exceptions to the requirements above may be made for the following categories of people upon completion and approval of designated documentation:
 - A person who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).
 - A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the relevant workplace safety guidelines or federal regulations.
 - A person for whom, in the opinion of an Iowa licensed physician (MD or DO), nurse practitioner, or physician assistant, such requirements are medically contraindicated as facial coverings would be injurious to the health and well-being of the person.
 - A person for whom the requirements outlined above conflict with a genuine and sincere religious belief, which is in fact religious and not based merely on philosophical, scientific, moral, personal, or medical opposition to facial coverings.

Tracking and Notification of Potential COVID-19 Exposure

- **Contact Tracing:** With consistent and correct mask usage, ACSD will be able to more precisely identify potential close contacts and clearly communicate with families about their children's potential exposure to COVID-19. Close contacts include someone who was within 6 feet for fifteen minutes of an infected person if masks were not worn correctly. In the PK-12 classroom setting, "the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time." ACSD will follow the [guidance](#) of the Iowa Department of Public Health and Iowa Department of Education to respond to positive cases of COVID-19 for students and staff.
- **Lunch (PK-5):** Because masks are not feasible while students are eating lunch, to support more targeted notification regarding potential exposure, PK-5th grade students will continue to sit with their classes during lunch, physically distanced to the extent possible. Elementary school classes will be distanced from each other during lunch to the extent possible. *This is not a change in practice.*
- **Lunch (6-12):** Because masks are not feasible while students are eating lunch, to support more targeted notification regarding potential exposure, by Wednesday, September 29, 2021, secondary buildings will develop processes so communication related to potential exposure can be more precise.

Visitors, Volunteers, and Assemblies

- **Visitors and Volunteers:** During such time as masking is required indoors on district property during the compulsory school day, visitors and volunteers will be allowed in district facilities provided they wear masks and otherwise comply with district policy related to visitors and volunteers.
- **School-wide Assemblies:** During such time as masking is required indoors on district property during the compulsory school day, school-wide assemblies may be held regardless of community transmission rate.

Continuation of Other 2021-2022 Return-to-Learn Plan Mitigation Measures

The information below was included in the *2021-2022 Return-to-Learn Plan* approved by the ACSD Board of Education in August 2021 and is aligned with the CDC's guidance for K-12 Schools. ACSD will continue to support the health and safety of students, staff, and visitors by continuing these mitigation practices until further notice.

Physical Distancing

- Physical distancing will continue to be used as a mitigation measure to the extent possible within the school structures. *This is not a change in practice.*

Testing & Vaccination

- ACSD will work with the Polk County Health Department and the Iowa Department of Public Health to have testing kits available in nurses' offices, subject to availability. Additionally, ACSD will partner with health care providers and/or pharmacies to support the vaccination of staff, students, and families in the community. *This is not a change in practice.*

Ventilation

- ACSD systems will allow for increased circulation of outdoor air through the HVAC systems in order to maximize fresh air. MERV-13 filters will be used in ACSD HVAC systems. *This is not a change in practice.*

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Custodial cleaning practices will focus on cleaning for health, which includes an emphasis on disinfecting surfaces where bacteria or viruses are most likely to be transmitted. *This is not a change in practice.*

Hygiene Practices

- ACSD will encourage students and staff to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently and will increase the availability of hand sanitizer in common areas and classrooms. *This is not a change in practice.*

Stay Home When Sick

- ACSD will follow public health directives related to individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 and/or who are exhibiting symptoms staying home from school. Additionally, ACSD will urge staff and students to stay home if they are sick. *This is not a change in practice.*

Coordination with Public Health Authorities

- ACSD will work with local public health authorities to determine what additional measures may be warranted. *This is not a change in practice.*

The Ankeny Community School District will also ensure continuity of services for academics, social emotional health, mental health, and other needs, including through:

- A remote learning option for all students in grades K-5 and for students in grades 6-12 who have a documented underlying health condition or a household member who does
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports for learning
- School Counselors and Social Workers
- School Nurses
- An expanded partnership with Employee and Family Resources