



# **River Forest District 90**

Safe School Reopening Guide  
2021-22

## Abbreviated Summary: Pages 1-5

As all District 90 students and staff return to school in August 2021 for in-person instruction, it is important that the plans for reopening schools safely are communicated to the entire school community and implemented properly. The District ended the 2020-21 school year implementing multiple safety mitigation strategies, including social distancing, wearing of face masks, handwashing regimens, and disinfection procedures. With cases of COVID-19 and the Delta variant continuing to rise locally and nationally, many of those practices will continue to be implemented for the 2021-22 school year, albeit with some adjustments. All the District's COVID-19 mitigation strategies are recommended or mandated by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH), or they are suggested by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). **Please note that District 90 COVID-19 mitigation strategies are subject to change based upon evolving circumstances and/or updated directives from local, state, and national health agencies. As these agencies continue to refine and clarify directives, District 90 will endeavor to communicate changes in as timely a manner as possible.** For the 2021-22 school year, our primary objectives are 1.) to protect the health and safety of all students, staff, families, and the community to the greatest degree possible, and 2.) maintain a high-quality, equitable program of in-person instruction for all students.

The COVID-19 mitigation procedures can be divided into two categories: Adjusted Practices and Continued Practices. Here is a brief overview of the safety mitigation practices that will be implemented as the District reopens schools:

### Adjusted Practices

**Adjusted Mitigation Practices** – Due to updated evidence-based studies, several mitigation elements that were in force previously to protect individuals from COVID-19 have currently been modified. The modified or discontinued practices include:

- Daily online health certifications will no longer be required for students and staff before entering school. These should be conducted privately at home, however. Established symptoms of COVID-19 include *fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, muscle and body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, vomiting, or diarrhea.*
- Daily temperature checks upon arrival at school will be discontinued.
- Most extracurricular activities at Lincoln, Roosevelt, and Willard will be reinstated, contingent on levels of community COVID-19 transmission. These include FLIP, student-interest clubs, and athletics, though some will require heightened safety mitigation protocols for those individuals who elect to participate.

**New Screening Testing Protocols** – Screening testing will be required for students who elect to participate in high contact or “elevated risk” activities, such as basketball and volleyball, band, and extracurricular choral programs. Once established, optional screening testing will also be available to all unvaccinated middle school students and unvaccinated staff. District 90 is currently collaborating with the Rush Infection

Prevention Team to conduct a risk assessment regarding the possibility for optional screening testing at the elementary level. When required for participation in activities identified by IDPH as having elevated risk (see above), the frequency of screening testing will be dependent on the relative level of risk and rates of community COVID-19 transmission. More information will be provided for individuals participating in impacted activities as it becomes available.

**Quarantine Protocols** – Based on research about quarantine effectiveness, guidance from IDPH, CCDPH, and the CDC allow for shortened quarantine options for unvaccinated children who are non-symptomatic. Specific quarantine-related details for D90 include:

- Vaccinated individuals without COVID-19 symptoms will not be required to quarantine for close contact with individuals who are symptomatic or have been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Masked individuals without COVID-19 symptoms will not be required to quarantine for close contact unless social distancing is less than three feet for a cumulative 15 minutes or more during a 24-hour period.
- The District will implement modified 10-day quarantine protocols for non-vaccinated students and staff without COVID-19 symptoms, as permitted by CCDPH and when appropriate. Amended quarantine protocols reduce the number of days in quarantine from 14 days to 10 days but require ongoing monitoring for the development of symptoms.

**COVID-19 Vaccination** – As of this writing, individuals under the age of 12 are not eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccinations. District 90 strongly encourages all eligible unvaccinated individuals to obtain the vaccine. We will continue to promote local vaccination clinics and information about local sites providing the vaccine in communications to our families.

**Social Gatherings** – All three schools will refrain from holding any mass gatherings or large community events indoors **or** outdoors with children present until at least November 1, when the District will reassess conditions regarding COVID-19 community transmission. Unfortunately, this restriction will apply to familiar back-to-school events, including New Family Welcomes, Back to School Picnics, First Day of School Coffees, or Ice Cream Socials. Please know that we intend to reinstate these types of activities as soon as we can affirm that they will not have negative implications on our ability to maintain full-time in-person instruction. Also, other events, such as School Open Houses and PTO meetings, will occur virtually.

**Contact Tracing and COVID-19 Status Updates** – District 90 families are required to inform the District when their students have a contagious illness, including COVID-19. The District will continue to report probable or confirmed cases of COVID-19 to the CCDPH, as required. Information about individual incidence of COVID-19 in District schools will be updated on the D90 website daily, instead of sending individual email notifications. However, information about significant quarantines or potential outbreaks will continue to be provided via email, if those circumstances occur.

**Remote Instruction** – According to ISBE, remote instruction will only be available to students who meet specific criteria. To receive remote instruction, a student must not have received a COVID-19 vaccine or not be eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine **and** simultaneously be under quarantine for COVID-19 reasons.

Under these conditions, students will receive remote instruction if they are well enough to participate sufficiently during instruction. Remote instruction will not be available to students who are traveling, ill with non-COVID conditions, or otherwise excluded from school for non-COVID medical reasons (please see below).

Students with health conditions documented by a physician resulting in extended exclusion from school will be provided with homebound instruction services, consistent with current practices.

## Continued Practices

**Mask Wearing** – As recently indicated by Gov. J.B. Pritzker, all students, staff, and visitors will be required to wear face masks that always cover the nose and mouth while inside District buildings. Staff members will be permitted to work without masks when alone inside a classroom with the door closed, as indicated in ISBE guidance. Students and staff may also remove masks when eating or drinking during lunch or snack times, but masks must be replaced immediately thereafter. Masks must also be worn outdoors when there is an expectation that unvaccinated individuals will be engaged in sustained or close contact.

**Handwashing Regimen** – All students, staff, and visitors will still be encouraged to wash their hands frequently and follow the CDC’s guidelines for handwashing, including performing the practice for 20 seconds or more. Where necessary, additional handwash stations have been placed at school buildings to allow continued adherence to the handwash regimens implemented last year.

**Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols** – District 90 will continue to clean and disinfect all classrooms, bathrooms, and common areas every evening. Custodial staff will also conduct a cleaning of Kindergarten and Preschool classrooms between the morning and afternoon sessions.

**Air Quality** – The District will continue to use upgraded air filters for the HVAC system to promote the best quality air quality. We will also continue to deploy stand-alone HEPA-rated air purifiers for each instructional space, implement purges, and maximize air exchange rates as controls allow.

**Social Distancing** – In line with the guidance from the IDPH, CCDPH, and ISBE, arrangements of classroom and instructional areas will maintain a three-foot minimum distance between desks. A six-foot minimum distance will continue to be maintained during lunch, which will be held in classrooms, lunch areas, and other school locations to ensure adequate distancing, as needed and determined by the Building Principal.

**COVID-19 Antigen Testing (BinaxNOW)** – At this time, District 90 will continue to offer COVID-19 antigen tests to symptomatic members of the D90 community. The need for the continuation of this testing option will be reassessed after the screening testing program for unvaccinated individuals is implemented.

**Travel Restrictions** – Unvaccinated individuals will continue to be subjected to Cook County travel restrictions based upon the City of Chicago’s Travel Advisory guidance. **Please be mindful of the**

**testing/quarantine requirements for unvaccinated individuals upon return to Illinois when considering travel to states indicated on the [Travel Advisory](#) list.** Any unvaccinated individuals traveling from Travel Advisory states or territories (“Orange” list) must obtain a negative COVID-19 test result no more than 72 hours prior to arrival in Cook County and continue monitoring for symptoms or quarantine for a 10-day period upon return. Negative test results for unvaccinated individuals should be provided to the school nurse if travel to “Orange” states is necessary. Vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine or receive a negative test.

**Student and Staff Absences** – While daily school attendance is important, the District requests that students and staff members stay home when they are sick, have tested positive for COVID-19, or display COVID-19 symptoms. Please contact the school nurse to report COVID-19 related symptoms, and use the attendance line at each school to report daily absences.

**Other Procedures** – Please note that other regular procedures that have become part of the District’s COVID-19 response efforts, such as restricting the use of water fountains, coordinating student arrival/dismissal (when possible), discouraging student or staff handshakes/“high fives,” minimizing sharing of supplies, and similar elements will remain in place. Faculty and staff will also participate in updated safety mitigation training during the District Institute Day at the start of the school year to ensure uniform application of safety mitigation measures.

*This Abbreviated Summary provides a brief overview of the major COVID-19 mitigation strategies included in this District 90 Safe School Reopening Guide for 2021-22. Additional information about the District’s efforts to reopen schools safely is included below. Please continue reading for more detail about the items addressed above.*

## Full Reopening Plan - Introduction

As District 90 prepares for the 2021-22 school year, we understand the imperative of operating safely while providing high-quality instruction and social-emotional supports for students and staff. With cases of COVID-19 and the Delta variant continuing to rise locally and nationally, measures such as social distancing, facemasks, cleaning and disinfecting procedures, and handwashing regimens will continued to be a regular part of our school experience. Yet along with these COVID-19 mitigation practices, the District will also continue to support the relationships between students, staff, and families, the ongoing pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning, and a continued commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable school community.

All of the District's COVID-19 mitigation strategies are the result of guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) or recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This comprehensive back-to-school Safe School Reopening Guide is consistent with the most up-to-date "best practices" for K-8 schools. The safety protocols addressed in the Guide also reflect the fact that most D90 students (Pre-K through sixth grade) are not currently eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. The information in this Guide will be revised or updated as the situation with COVID-19 changes over time.

District 90 faculty, staff, and administrators are truly excited about welcoming our students back to full-time, in-person instruction this fall. We are dedicated to providing a safe and productive learning experience for all. This document outlines information about the District 90 Safe School Reopening Guide for 2021-22. It includes the following:

- Guiding Principles for Reopening Schools in August 2021
- Overview of Safety and Operations
- Overview of the Critical Components of the "Teaching and Learning Experience"
- Social-Emotional Considerations for Students
- Family Responsibilities

Due to the differing physical layouts among the three District 90 schools, each school may implement building-specific safety mitigation measures, including school-specific safety protocols, arrival/dismissal procedures, and other school-specific elements.

## Guiding Principles for Reopening Schools

The District 90 Safe School Reopening Guide for 2021-22 is grounded in several fundamental principles that exemplify the foundational elements of the District 90 philosophy. These principles are particularly important as our school community returns to a "new normal" resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the highly contagious Delta variant. The key principles have driven the decision-making process required

thus far to reopen schools safely, fully, and in-person – physically, social-emotionally, and with high-quality instruction.

Grounding this philosophy is the belief that the optimal environment for teaching and learning includes students and staff working side-by-side in school on a daily basis. Keeping our key principles at the fore helps ensure the intentionality of decisions and that our most important consideration – the needs of individuals – remains the focus. The fundamental principles include:

- Safety
- Equity
- Social-Emotional and Physical Wellness
- High-Quality Instruction

### **DESCRIPTION OF KEY PRINCIPLES**

**Safety** is the cornerstone of D90’s plan to reopen schools. The operational elements of this guide are based on procedures, processes, and protocols that are grounded in evidence and established best practices. It is important to stress that all members of the school community have a vital role to play in keeping our school community as healthy as possible. We request that all individuals abide by the procedures established in this Guide and associated guidelines and shoulder the responsibility to look after themselves and the well-being of others.

**Equity** represents a core value of District 90. Additionally, equity must guide the choices that we make so that all individuals are able to benefit from the available learning experiences. While it is important to acknowledge that every decision will have a different impact on individuals and families, it is crucial to minimize adverse effects and ensure that they are not based upon race, culture, gender identity, disability, economic situation, language, or other individual characteristics.

**Social-Emotional and Physical Wellness** are the fundamental prerequisites to learning. District 90 has a responsibility to see that students and staff are equipped with the skills that can help them navigate traumatic periods in a resilient, reflective, and positive manner. This charge includes incorporating additional social-emotional content in classroom instruction, providing movement and physical wellness activities, and promoting stronger relationships and a sense of school/classroom belongingness for all students and families.

**High-Quality Instruction** is our primary organizational objective. Teaching and learning are the main activities to which the school district is devoted. District 90 endeavors to offer an outstanding academic program that is challenging, student-centered, evidence-based, and closely aligned with state learning standards. Our faculty, staff, and administration collaborate to ensure both vertical and horizontal alignment of instruction for all students. A great deal of effort is dedicated to the pursuit of the District 90 Mission: “Inspire and empower all learners to achieve their personal best.”

These fundamental principles cannot be considered in isolation. To ensure that this Safe School Reopening Guide is functional and serves the needs of all individuals and stakeholder groups, the principles must be considered through an integrated perspective. All are current elements reflected in the D90 Strategic Plan for 2020-25.

## Overview of Safety and Operations Protocols

Health and safety procedures in District 90 are governed by public health guidance provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The processes, practices, and protocols contained in this Safe School Reopening Guide for 2021-22 may be revised, corrected, or changed based on any forthcoming guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), IDPH, CCDPH, or the CDC.

Before District 90 reopens any building and welcomes any student, faculty member, or staff member back to school, we must ensure that our safety procedures and protocols create the safest environment practical. While many individuals may have obtained vaccinations against COVID-19 by the time school reopens, as of this writing, students under the age of 12 remain ineligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Therefore, District 90 must implement all safety protocols consistently and adhere to best practices that can mitigate the transmission of the COVID virus.

The District ended the 2020-21 school year implementing multiple safety mitigation strategies, including social distancing, wearing of face masks, handwashing regimens, and disinfection procedures. Many of those practices will continue to be implemented for the 2021-22 school year, albeit with some amendments. These mitigation strategies are layered, enabling the District to reassess a safety measure individually when revising elements of the District's safety practices.

The safety mitigation procedures can be divided into two categories: Adjusted Practices and Continued Practices. Here is an updated overview of the safety mitigation practices that will be implemented as the District reopens schools:

### Adjusted Practices

**Adjusted Mitigation Practices** – Due to updated evidence-based studies, several mitigation elements that were in force previously to protect individuals from COVID-19 have been modified. These new practices will continue to advance the safety of students and faculty while simultaneously providing greater flexibility for revising practices should the situation regarding COVID-19 change. The adjusted or discontinued practices include:

- Daily online health certifications will no longer be required for students and staff before entering school. These should be conducted privately at home, however. Established symptoms of COVID-19 include *fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, muscle and body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, vomiting, or diarrhea*.

- Daily temperature checks upon arrival at school will be discontinued.
- Most extracurricular activities at Lincoln, Roosevelt, and Willard will be reinstated. These include FLIP, student-interest clubs, and athletics, though some will require heightened safety mitigation protocols. Club sponsors and coaches will communicate specific details about procedures that will be implemented to ensure that these activities can take place safely. In cases of activities with elevated risk, screening testing of non-vaccinated individuals will be required (contingent on the nature of the activity and rates of community transmission) for individuals to participate.

**New Screening Testing Protocols** – Screening testing will be required for students who elect to participate in high contact or “elevated risk” activities, such as basketball and volleyball, band, and extracurricular choral programs. Once established, screening testing will also be available to all unvaccinated middle school students (with family consent) and unvaccinated staff. District 90 is currently collaborating with the Rush Infection Prevention Team to conduct a risk assessment regarding the possibility for optional screening testing at the elementary level. At this time, it is expected that the D90 screening testing program will launch by mid-September. However, the District will continue to offer no-cost BinaxNOW testing for symptomatic individuals starting at the beginning of the school year. Screening testing differs from testing conducted on symptomatic individuals, with screening tests conducted on groups of asymptomatic people to detect the presence of COVID-19.

The state of Illinois has provided for testing regimens to be offered free-of-charge to all schools; any individual electing to participate in District 90 COVID-19 testing will do so without cost.

**Quarantine Protocols** – Guidance from IDPH, CCDPH, and the CDC has amended the quarantine protocols depending on an individual’s vaccination status.

- Vaccinated individuals who are not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms will not be required to quarantine for close contact with individuals who are symptomatic or have been diagnosed with the coronavirus.
- Masked individuals will not be required to quarantine for close contact unless social distancing is less than three feet for a cumulative 15 minutes or more during a 24-hour period.
- The District will implement amended quarantine protocols for fully vaccinated students and staff, as recommended by CCDPH and when appropriate. Amended quarantine protocols reduce the number of days in quarantine from 14 days to 10 days, though ongoing monitoring for the development of symptoms is necessary.
- Fully vaccinated students and staff who do not exhibit any COVID-19 symptoms will not need to quarantine after close contact with an individual who has a confirmed or probable case of the coronavirus.
- Fully vaccinated individuals should be tested three to five days after close contact exposure to someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, as indicated by the CDC.
- While IDPH and CCDPH are now allowing for alternative quarantine models, they have not permitted these models for children in the past. District 90 will launch the school year following the 10-day model until more information is known about the impact of shorter models (7-day with negative PCR test or “Test to Stay” models) on our continued ability to maintain in-person

instruction and overall school health. Shortened quarantine alternatives must not have a deleterious impact on the District's ability to maintain full-time, in-person instruction.

**COVID-19 Vaccination/Vaccination Status** – As of this writing, students under the age of 12 are not eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccinations. Yet, according to the CDC, IDPH, and CCDPH, vaccinations remain one of the most effective strategies to prevent getting and infecting others with COVID-19. District 90 strongly encourages all eligible unvaccinated individuals to obtain the vaccine. We will continue to promote local vaccination clinics and other sites providing the vaccine in communications to our families.

District 90 is also preparing a process to securely collect evidence of vaccination status from families and staff. Providing one's vaccination status is voluntary and will be kept strictly confidential, following the current practice for protecting student vaccination status for measles, mumps, or chickenpox or tuberculosis test results for staff. Providing this information will enable the District to quickly apply mitigation strategies that are appropriately based on individuals' vaccination status (such as not requiring quarantine for close contact). More information will be communicated about this in the future.

**Social Gatherings** – All three schools will refrain from holding any mass gathering or large community event indoors **or** outdoors with children present until at least November 1, when the District will reassess the conditions regarding COVID-19 community transmission. Regrettably, this impacts many popular back-to-school events, such as New Family Welcomes, Back to School Picnics, First Day of School Coffees, or Ice Cream Socials. Also, other events, such as Open Houses and PTO meetings, will be scheduled to occur virtually. While some of these events occur in outdoor settings (which is generally safer), they involve children who are mostly ineligible for vaccination. Their nature encourages individuals to remain in sustained, close proximity. Unlike similar events that may be occurring in the broader community, all individuals at large-scale D90 events are typically part of the D90 school community. As such, COVID-19 transmission occurring at these events could have a significant impact on our ability to maintain our in-person instructional program for all learners.

**Contact Tracing and COVID-19 Status Updates** – District 90 will continue to monitor community transmission rates and positive cases at each school. This information will help the District determine the effectiveness of the layered mitigation strategies in effect. District families are required to inform the school when students have a contagious illness, including COVID-19. The District will continue to report probable or confirmed cases of COVID-19 to the CCDPH, as required by law. Information about individual incidence of COVID-19 in District schools will be updated on the District's website on a daily basis instead of sending individual email communication. However, information about significant quarantines or potential outbreaks will continue to be provided via email, if those circumstances occur. As in the past, information that could be used to identify any affected student(s) or staff member(s) will not be included in notifications to protect affected individuals' privacy.

**Remote Instruction** – According to ISBE, remote instruction will only be available to students who meet specific criteria. Families seeking remote instruction must provide evidence that their student(s) meet both conditions to receive this type of instruction. To receive remote instruction, a student must not have received a COVID-19 vaccine or not be eligible to receive a COVID vaccine **and** simultaneously are under

quarantine due to close contact, a COVID-diagnosis, or COVID-related symptoms. Under these conditions, students will receive remote instruction if they are well enough to participate adequately during instruction. Remote instruction will be provided for qualifying students by their regular classroom teacher in a synchronous manner. Remote instruction will not be available to students who are traveling, ill with non-COVID conditions, or otherwise excluded from school for non-COVID medical reasons. Students with health conditions or circumstances documented by a physician resulting in extended exclusion from school will be provided with homebound instruction services, which is consistent with current practices.

## Continued Practices

**Mask Wearing** –Gov. J.B. Pritzker’s recent executive order requires that all students, staff, and visitors wear facemasks that cover the nose and mouth at all times while inside District buildings or participating in school activities, with limited exceptions for qualifying outdoor activities. Staff members will be able to work without masks when alone inside a classroom with the door closed, as per previously-issued ISBE guidance. Students and staff may also remove masks when eating or drinking during lunch or snack times, though they must be replaced immediately thereafter. Masks must also be worn outdoors when there is an expectation that unvaccinated individuals may be engaged in sustained or close contact. The Governor’s executive order is supported by guidance from the IDPH, ISBE, and the CCDPH. This action is also based on the revised and strengthened guidance from the CDC. The mask-wearing mandate in schools is required regardless of one’s vaccination status.

**Handwashing Regimens** – All students, staff, and visitors will still be encouraged to wash their hands frequently and follow the CDC’s guidelines for handwashing, including performing the practice for 20 seconds or more. Where necessary, additional handwashing stations have been retained across the District to allow continued adherence to the handwashing regimens implemented last year. These regimens include elementary teachers establishing specific handwashing intervals during the day for all students, and adequate time provided during the passing period for middle school students to maintain hygiene. In addition, antibacterial gel pumps are available to students and staff in hallways and common areas.

**Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols** – District 90 will continue to clean and disinfect all classrooms, bathrooms, and common areas each evening. Custodial staff will also conduct a cleaning of Kindergarten and Preschool classrooms between the morning and afternoon sessions. With students eating in areas that are not typically used for lunch to ensure adequate social distancing, school administrators will work with custodial staff to ensure that all refuse is removed from learning spaces at the end of each lunch period and desktops/tables cleaned before and after eating.

**Air Quality** – The District will continue to use upgraded air filters for the HVAC system to promote the best quality air quality. We will also continue to deploy stand-alone HEPA-rated air purifiers for each instructional space, implement purges, and maximize air exchange rates as controls allow. Starting this fall, all three D90 school buildings will be air-conditioned to improve the learning environment and comfort level.

**Social Distancing** – In line with the guidance from the IDPH, CCDPH, and ISBE, arrangements of classroom and instructional areas will maintain a three-foot minimum distance between individuals. A six-foot minimum distance will continue to be maintained during lunch, which will be held in classrooms, lunch areas, and other school locations to ensure adequate distancing, as needed and determined by the Building Principal (please also see above, Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols).

**COVID-19 Antigen Testing (BinaxNOW)** – At this time, District 90 will continue to offer COVID-19 antigen tests to symptomatic members of the D90 community. The need for the continuation of this testing option will be reassessed after the implementation of the screening testing program for unvaccinated individuals. Individuals requesting BinaxNOW testing are asked to contact the school nurse for details.

**Travel Restrictions** – Unvaccinated individuals will continue to be subjected to Cook County travel restrictions that are based on the City of Chicago’s Travel Advisory guidance. **Please be mindful of the testing/quarantine requirements for unvaccinated individuals upon return to Illinois when considering travel to states indicated on the [Travel Advisory](#) list.** Any unvaccinated individuals traveling from Travel Advisory states or territories (“Orange” list) must obtain a negative COVID-19 test result no more than 72 hours prior to arrival in Cook County and continue monitoring for symptoms or quarantine for a 10-day period upon return. Negative test results for unvaccinated individuals should be provided to the school nurse if travel to “Orange” states is necessary. Vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine or receive a negative test.

**Student and Staff Absences** – While daily school attendance is important, the District requests that students and staff members stay home when they are sick, have tested positive for COVID-19, or display COVID-19 symptoms. Please contact the school nurse to report COVID-19 related symptoms, and use the attendance line at each school to report daily absences.

**Other Procedures** – Please note that other regular procedures that have become part of the District’s COVID-19 response efforts, such as restricting the use of water fountains, coordinating student arrival/dismissal (when possible), discouraging student or staff handshakes/“high fives,” and similar mitigation elements will remain in place. Faculty and staff will also participate in updated safety mitigation training during the District Institute Day at the start of the school year.

## **Critical Components of the Teaching and Learning Experience**

With the reopening of school in August 2021, the District’s primary focus will be to ensure that a strong foundation is in place so that all students will continue to thrive in the fall and afterward. Our faculty and staff have been working to refine plans to support social-emotional needs and ensure that any potential gaps in essential learning standards across grade levels are identified and addressed in the coming school year.

All District 90 students will return to full in-person instruction every day, with the exception of students who are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine and are under a quarantine order. In the elementary schools, classes will be in session from 8:20 a.m. – 3:10 p.m. District 90’s half-day Inclusive Preschool and Kindergarten programs will also receive daily in-person instruction. Middle school classes will be in session from 8:30 a.m. – 3:20 p.m. Students will continue to follow the block schedule of four periods of 80 minutes each day. Both elementary and middle schools will have staggered lunch and recess periods based on each school’s unique circumstances. All elementary schools will remain “nut-free” to provide special consideration for students with food allergies.

Further, District 90 will continue to emphasize a “Universal Design for Learning” (UDL) methodology. This responsive teaching approach addresses the needs of a wide range of learners by adapting content, process, and product in response to student readiness, interest, and learning profile within a mixed-ability classroom. It includes the planning, preparation, and implementation of comprehensive, meaningful, flexible instruction that challenges students to create, apply, synthesize, and evaluate content at a high level. The UDL approach to instruction also aligns with the D90 Standards-Based Learning initiative, which will continue to be fundamental to providing optimal instruction. Faculty members will continue to receive professional development in these complementary instructional approaches throughout the school year.

### **Assessment Practices**

Student assessment represents an essential component of the educational process and helps ascertain whether students have attained the requisite academic skills and objectives. District 90 operates with the belief that no single assessment represents a complete picture of student learning. This philosophy is the reason that all learners will engage in a range of assessment practices over the course of a unit of study, including:

- *1:1 teacher/student interviews for reading and math fluency*
- *Assessments before the beginning of a unit to determine what students know, understand, and are able to do*
- *Formative or ongoing assessments to check student understanding and progress toward learning goals as they move through a unit*
- *Summative, or end of unit assessments, to determine students’ overall knowledge of skills and concepts taught over the course of the unit*
- *Teacher feedback on assignments and projects*
- *Use of rubrics to evaluate assignments and projects.*
- *1:1 or small group conferences between teacher and student(s)*
- *Unit quizzes and tests*
- *Student self-assessment/reflection*
- *State-sponsored standardized assessment*

### **Grading**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) recognizes that grading is a local decision and recommends timely feedback be given to students to support their growth and achievement. Practices may be modified

to reflect the current learning circumstances. Teachers will engage in formative (ongoing) assessment and summative (end-of-unit or project) assessment to ensure that students progress relative to the Illinois Learning Standards. Grading practices upon the reopening of school will remain at the teacher's discretion and consistent with District and school's grading parameters.

### **Remote Learning Provisions**

District 90 will remain in compliance with directives from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) regarding the provision of remote learning. At this time, those provisions require that remote instruction be made available only to students who have not received a COVID-19 vaccine or are not eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine **and** are simultaneously under quarantine order by a local public health department or the IDPH. Please note that students receiving qualifying remote instruction must feel well enough to participate sufficiently. If indicated by a physician, students with any health conditions that prohibit receiving instruction in school will be provided with homebound instruction services, as is consistent with current practices.

### **Special Education, Section 504, Students with Unique Needs, and Related Services**

District 90 understands the impact COVID-19 has had on our most vulnerable student populations. We remain committed to providing free and appropriate educational opportunities for students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible and aligned with public health guidelines. To address the unique needs of students with disabilities, IEP and 504 team members will continue to work with families to identify the essential services and accommodations for each student in a collaborative manner. Each student with a recognized disability will have an individual plan based on the needs of the learner. As we look to reopen schools this fall, we have developed the following elements, as suggested by ISBE, to ensure a safe and instructionally effective environment:

*Preschool and Elementary School Students with IEP and 504 Plans:* Like all general education students in D90, students with IEP and 504 plans attending Willard and Lincoln will receive daily instruction, including all needed special education and related services.

*Preschool students attending River Forest Community Center (RFCC) or receiving walk-in speech services:* All students with an IEP attending RFCC and receiving walk-in speech services will continue to be provided services.

*Middle School Students with Section 504 Plans:* Students with 504 plans are considered general education students and will continue to receive accommodations, modifications, and services listed in their 504 plans with appropriate supports to address safety concerns. Students with medical exemptions may be eligible for remote learning instruction if they meet the requirements stipulated by ISBE. Otherwise, medically fragile students will be provided with homebound instruction.

*Students with IEPs receiving resource level and co-taught services:* Students with IEP plans receiving resource or instructional services will continue to receive services in the least restrictive environment with their general education peers. They will continue to receive accommodations, modifications, and services as listed in their IEP's with appropriate supports in place to address safety concerns. Students with medical

exemptions may be eligible for remote learning instruction if they meet the requirements stipulated by ISBE. Otherwise, medically fragile students will be provided with homebound instruction.

*Students in Multi-Needs/Functional (Skills) Program utilize a functional curriculum:* Students in the Multi-Needs (Skills) program will form their own cohort to the best extent possible. Related services will be provided through push-in services in an “engineered classroom.” Individual access to general education will be scheduled to meet the LRE recommendations of the IEP to the greatest degree possible.

## **Social-Emotional Considerations for the District 90 Community**

It is imperative that this Safe School Reopening Guide attend to the social and emotional needs of all individuals within our school community, including students, families, faculty, and staff. In March 2021, the D90 Social-Emotional Advisory Panel (SEAP) was formed and met several times to establish the essential priorities that must be addressed to ensure the school community continues to thrive in fall 2021 and beyond. The 35-member panel identified five focus areas and developed specific recommendations to meet its charge of bolstering the social-emotional health of the District’s students, staff, and families. The five focus areas are *Relationships, Social-Emotional Programming, Trauma-Related Issues, Screening and Measurement, and Student-Specific Needs*. Starting in fall 2021, District 90 will implement various SEAP recommendations, including the following examples:

- Implementing social-emotional programming through an equity lens
- Supporting relationships between students, between students and faculty/staff, and between D90 families, including informal and programmatic elements, such as Student Advisory and PTO activities and events.
- Collaborating with external partners, families, and others to strengthen social-emotional learning
- Leveraging and expanding current social-emotional efforts to help the D90 community understand trauma and the support services to address trauma, such as PTO activities, student service clubs, elementary social-emotional learning curriculum, middle school supports, etc.

The SEAP recommendations for social-emotional learning and wellness for the 2021-22 school must be considered through an integrated perspective and reflected in the implementation of the D90 Strategic Plan.

## **Family Responsibilities**

When the school year begins in August, it will be imperative that families continue to respect the importance of keeping any student home who is showing signs of illness. Faculty and staff members will continue to be instructed to stay home if they show any signs of illness. All members of the school community will be required to follow current quarantine requirements for COVID-19 related reasons.

Visits by non-staff or students will be restricted and only allowed when approved. All visitors will be required to wear a facemask when inside any D90 building.

Families planning to travel any time immediately before and after the start of the 2021-22 school year are asked to review the District's guidance regarding travel, especially if traveling out of state. Updated versions of the District's Travel Guidance will be available on the District's website. D90 continues to adhere to the Cook County Department of Public Health's (CCDPH) Travel Guidance, which is aligned with the city of Chicago. Further, the School Nurses and Infection Control Officer will be able to provide the most current information about this safety protocol.

Students who become ill while at school with COVID-like symptoms will be escorted to a predetermined quarantine area while the School Nurse or School Office staff reach out to their families or emergency contacts. Students will be supervised until a family member or a family-approved adult arrives to pick up the students. District 90 will continue to follow all IDPH and CCPHD guidance pertaining to symptomatic individuals, quarantine/isolation periods, confirmed COVID-19 diagnoses, reporting requirements, and best practices in contact tracing.

District 90 will be requesting evidence of vaccination status from families and staff. Providing this information remains voluntary and will be kept strictly confidential, similar to the current protocols that protect any health information such as the vaccination status for measles, mumps, or chickenpox. Providing this information will enable the District to apply mitigation strategies that are accurately based on individuals' vaccination status.

At the start of the 2021-22 school year, District 90 will request that families ensure that their PowerSchool account has the necessary emergency contact information for students. PowerSchool is the District's student information system that enables parents and students to log into a secure account to access student information. It is important that the information in PowerSchool is accurate and up-to-date, especially during times of COVID-19.

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*The D90 Safe School Reopening Guide for 2021-22 outlines the direction that District 90 intends to take as it welcomes students back to school for the upcoming school year. District 90 believes that high-quality, equitable, in-person learning represents the optimal academic experience for the vast majority of our students. Appreciation is extended to the many individuals who assisted in the development and refinement of these protocols, including (but not limited to) the D90 Nursing Team, the members of the RFEA/ADCO Working Team, the District 90 Administrative Team, the Rush University Infection Prevention Team, and other members of the District 90 school community. Thank you for reviewing this guide and supporting our efforts to make the school year as safe, positive, and instructive as possible.*