

Firebird Return-to-School Overview- 2022-2023

The following is our anticipated return-to-school plan for this fall developed by the administrative team with guidance provided by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). These plans were developed through consideration of what measures can reasonably be implemented in an in-person, school-based setting. We will continue to consider what measures will best meet the unique needs of our district based on the circumstances that may arise in a classroom, grade level, or throughout the entire school building. In addition, these plans will need to be adjusted based on any requirements that may be set by the Oneida County Health Department or the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC).

Safety

As we did in the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years, Minocqua J1 School District (MJ1) will implement the following recommendations for preventative measures from the CDC: "Encourage students and staff to take everyday preventive actions to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses. These actions include staying home when sick; appropriately covering coughs and sneezes; cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces; and washing hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol." To further assist with these efforts, the District has handwashing stations in the commons that will be used immediately prior to students going through the food service line.

In June 2021, the Board of Education decided that the wearing of face coverings (masks) in our school building would become optional. We still have a supply of masks for students to request, if needed.

Although DPI recommends vaccination for vaccination-preventable illnesses, we are not making requirements at this time.

Bus Transportation

At this time, we are not anticipating any extra efforts in regards to our bus transportation.

Parent Drop-Off/Pick-Up and Visitors

In recent years we have made modifications to our process for parent drop-off and pick up that were prompted by school safety concerns and concerns related to disease prevention during the pandemic. We have gotten quite a bit of positive feedback about this. Therefore, for everyone's safety we will be continuing to limit non-essential visitors. We will continue to utilize the pull-through lane in the parking lot by the main entrance for parent drop-off so that parents will not have to get out of their car and the south parking lot for pick-up.

Although we have started to reintroduce opportunities for parents to participate in activities within the school, we ask that participants respect our requests in staying only within the area of the building that is designated for the event. We anticipate that we will be able to allow parent chaperones for certain field trips, but will determine that on a case-by-case basis.

We are preparing to host our annual Open House from 2:00-6:00 p.m. on Monday, August 29, 2022. Participation is optional and should only be attended by those who feel comfortable in group gatherings. It will be operated in a similar fashion to our Open House in 2021.

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Teaching and Learning

We are developing a start-of-year plan that includes ideas for how to adjust if, and when, circumstances change. Our intent is to be in school, five days per week for grades K-8/four days per week for 4K, following the District calendar. Our plans will provide for brief terms of virtual learning and support for instances in which students need to stay home for health- or quarantine-related reasons. Anticipating that far fewer students/parents may be seeking full-time, full-year virtual learning, we have partnered with Rural Virtual Academy (RVA) for at-home virtual learning.

Food Service

We intend to provide breakfast and lunch in a manner similar to pre-pandemic, except for some serving practices that we found to be more effective and efficient that will stay in play. The universally free breakfast and lunch to all students, as sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is expected to end this summer and not be available for the 2022-2023 school year.

Out-of-School Activities

Only time will tell whether our students will be able to participate in athletics, field trips and other events that are being held at other schools or in the community. We intend to offer them if circumstances allow, but will need to follow any safety expectations set by the host for those events.

Policy and Procedure

Returning to school during these unprecedented times is likely to cause many interruptions in our day-to-day operations and our ability to follow our handbooks and policy as currently written. We will do our best to keep the Board of Education and school community aware of these modifications as the circumstances arise.

Social Emotional

Almost two and a half years will have passed before we are able to have some of our students back in the school with us after being sent home in the spring of 2020 and choosing virtual learning for the last two years. For some, it will be a child's return to participating in anything in a public setting. Although we are very concerned about the academic time that may have been lost, we first need to focus on the individual so that we can set the stage for students and faculty to be academically engaged and successful this year.

Ill Persons & Confirmed Cases

One of the most effective ways of reducing the spread of COVID or other communicable diseases is by people who are sick staying home. Our school nurse will work with families so that they are aware of what symptoms they should be watching their children for and the circumstances under which they need to keep them home.

We will continue to prepare for our response if a student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID. However, we fully intend to take each diagnosis on a case-by-case basis, with guidance from our school nurse or the local health department, in order to respond appropriately. The CDC has changed their recommendation for isolation during different stages of the pandemic, so it would be futile to script any steps at this time. Please watch for more information regarding potential circumstances that may warrant our response as situations warrant it.

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During the 2021-2022 school year we spent countless hours, for multiple personnel, to attempt to track the COVID prevalence in our building. As the year went on, we experienced a decline in the amount of information being relayed by health officials as more and more people were utilizing home tests. Therefore, we were basing our data on the information that was self reported by families who were willing to share that information. That said, we believe that it is futile to continue a COVID dashboard on our website as the data is likely to be inaccurate or misleading.