

Safety

The Arkansas Department of Education, in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Health and the Governor's Office, released 2021-2022 COVID-19 Guidance for Schools (DESE, July 27, 2020) [Click Here](#).

Students PK - 12 years of age- Because students under the age of 12 are not eligible for vaccination at this time or are not yet fully vaccinated, it is important to emphasize implementing prevention strategies to protect people who are not fully vaccinated, including students, teachers, staff, and other members of their households, especially in areas where community transmission is elevated.

Hope Academy will continue practicing preventative measures such as encouraging masking, physical distancing, screening, testing, handwashing, and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine, and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection.

Vaccinations

Students who are ages 12 and older are now eligible to receive the Pfizer vaccination. Most local pharmacies have vaccines readily available.

Fully-vaccinated students or staff do not need to quarantine if deemed close contacts unless they have/develop symptoms.

Masks/Face Coverings

Although masks or other face coverings can no longer be mandated in Arkansas public schools, as prohibited by Act 1002 of 2021, the CDC currently recommends the following regarding the wearing of masks in school settings:

- **Indoors.** Mask use is recommended for people who are not fully vaccinated including students, teachers, and staff. Fully vaccinated people in areas of substantial or high transmission are recommended to wear masks in public indoor settings.
- **Outdoors.** In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. However, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission, the CDC recommends that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated.
- **School Settings:** Universal masking is recommended by the CDC for all students, staff, and visitors to schools regardless of vaccination status.



Masks/Face Coverings Con't

Individuals exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 will not need to be quarantined if they have no symptoms and both the infected and exposed individual consistently and correctly were wearing a mask.

Because children under the age of 12 cannot be vaccinated against COVID-19 at this time, Hope Academy encourages consistent and correct mask usage while indoors in all school settings with children under age 12. In addition, consistent mask usage is encouraged in any classroom setting where the vaccination status of students of any age cannot be confirmed.

Physical Distancing

To facilitate in-person learning five days a week for Arkansas students, Hope Academy will implement practices that promote physical distancing between individuals and groups of individuals when possible but will do so in a way that does not impede student engagement.

It is suggested that these recommendations be combined with indoor mask wearing by individuals who are not fully vaccinated to reduce transmission risk. Mask use by individuals who are not fully vaccinated is particularly important when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Learning Models

On-site	Virtual
Students attend class onsite 5 days a week. On-site Instruction: Hope Academy will have 178 seven-hour instructional days of Teacher-Student Interaction. The first day of school with students will be Monday, August 16, 2021.	Students will utilize SeeSaw learning management system to engage with their teachers and school work remotely from home.



Alternate Method of Instruction (AMI)

In the event Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas must modify on-site instruction and pivot to remote learning, the school will follow the approved Alternate Method of Instruction (AMI) plan. If positive cases have evolved to the point that an AMI day is necessary, the superintendent shall take the following steps:

- Notify the designated DESE Point of Contact (POC)
- Report the AMI day in the LEA Insights portal. The AMI day for the school or district will also be reported in eSchool; and,
- Participate in consultations with the DESE and ADH.

Teachers and staff will have the option to facilitate instruction on site if the school pivots to AMI due to COVID.

Attendance Policy

For onsite days, students will be marked absent or present in accordance with Hope Academy's attendance policies

For remote learning days, parents are responsible for making sure students engage with the assigned work. If parents are unable to engage with students, they will be responsible for reaching out to the classroom teacher to seek assistance.

Transportation

ADH and ADE recommend maintaining as much physical distance as possible between riders on the bus if possible. In addition, keeping siblings/household members seated together is also a helpful strategy. Masks are recommended due to the close nature of a bus environment.

Hope Academy's transportation staff will be working with drivers, office staff, and building administrators to help encourage social distancing.

- All bus drivers will be encouraged to wear masks and will frequently use hand sanitizing.
- All buses have hand sanitizing stations for the driver and students.
- Students should sanitize their hands before they enter the bus.
- All buses will be deep cleaned and sanitized daily.



School Visitors

Due to COVID-19, visitors to school buildings will be limited to only those with essential school business, as determined by the building principal.

Parents - Checking Students In and Out

Parent access to the building will be restricted to the front office/foyer area unless otherwise approved by the building principal.

Parents - Eating Lunch With Children

At this time, guests will not be allowed to eat lunch with students in school buildings.

Parents - Meeting With Teachers

Parents are encouraged to meet with teachers via phone or video conferences when they have any questions or concerns. Currently, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) recommend limiting any nonessential visitors to schools. If necessary to meet face to face, parents who are requesting to meet with a teacher should follow the school's visitor process.

Parents - Special Conferences (Sped, 504, ESL, Ozark Guidance, Burrell)

In an effort to keep our students and staff safe during COVID-19, parents are encouraged to meet virtually for special conferences. Currently, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) recommend limiting any nonessential visitors to schools. If necessary to meet face to face, then parents who are requesting to meet for a special conference should follow the school's visitor process.

Hand Washing/Cleaning

Hope Academy will continue to provide hand sanitizer and/or handwashing stations with soap and water at entrances. They will provide hand sanitizer and/or handwashing stations with soap and water in every classroom. Students, teachers, staff, and campus visitors should be encouraged to sanitize and/or wash hands frequently.

Ventilation/Air Circulation

Hope Academy is equipped to provide fresh air to occupied spaces.

Nursing Preparations

The safety of the students and staff is a priority.

- Nursing stations will be disinfected regularly
- Non-touch infrared thermometers will be available
- Masks will be available



Nursing Preparations Con't

Parent information

- If a student is not feeling well, he/she should stay home
 - Students need to be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before returning to school
 - If a student has been exposed to someone who is positive for COVID and the student has not been vaccinated, parent should contact the school nurse and remain home for further instructions
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Custodial Preparations

Hope Academy will follow these strategies in the custodial department:

- Breakfast & Lunch - Day personnel will be staggered to help with opening, clean-up from breakfast and lunch.
 - Hand sanitizer - Sanitizing stations are placed in each classroom.
 - School Facilities will continue to be atomized.
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Food Service and School Meals

Hope Academy will establish procedures that maximize physical distance as much as possible when students are moving through the food service line and while eating.

Hope Academy is implementing the following strategies in the food services department

- Breakfast and Lunch meals are free to all students
- Staff will continue to practice proper handwashing procedures and use single-use gloves while preparing and serving food.
- No contact thermometers are available for staff to monitor temperatures. Employees with a fever are required to stay home from work.
- Disposable face masks are available for staff that chose to wear face coverings.
- Kitchens, serving areas, and tables are sanitized at the end of the day and between each meal period.



Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

How will the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) needs of our students be addressed?

1. Ozark Guidance Center (OGC) will help teachers address specific SEL needs of their students due to COVID-19.
2. School counselor and family advocate will be available to support students, families, and teachers.

School-Related Activities

Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas is mindful of activities associated with regular school operations that could create a higher risk for COVID-19 transmission. The district will review ADH guidance for specific activities and event protocols.

Point of Contact and Reporting of Positive Cases

To promote the continuation of last year's successful communication strategy, Hope Academy has a designated Point of Contact (POC) who will initiate the contact tracing process when positive cases are reported at school and notify the ADH of positive cases as they occur. If an individual has been in school and has tested positive for COVID-19, the district will continue to follow the established ADH reporting processes.. There are some conditions that could exempt an exposed individual / close contact to the quarantine/isolation requirements that are discussed below. School nurses can help verify the status of a potential close contact to help POCs and school officials determine responses.

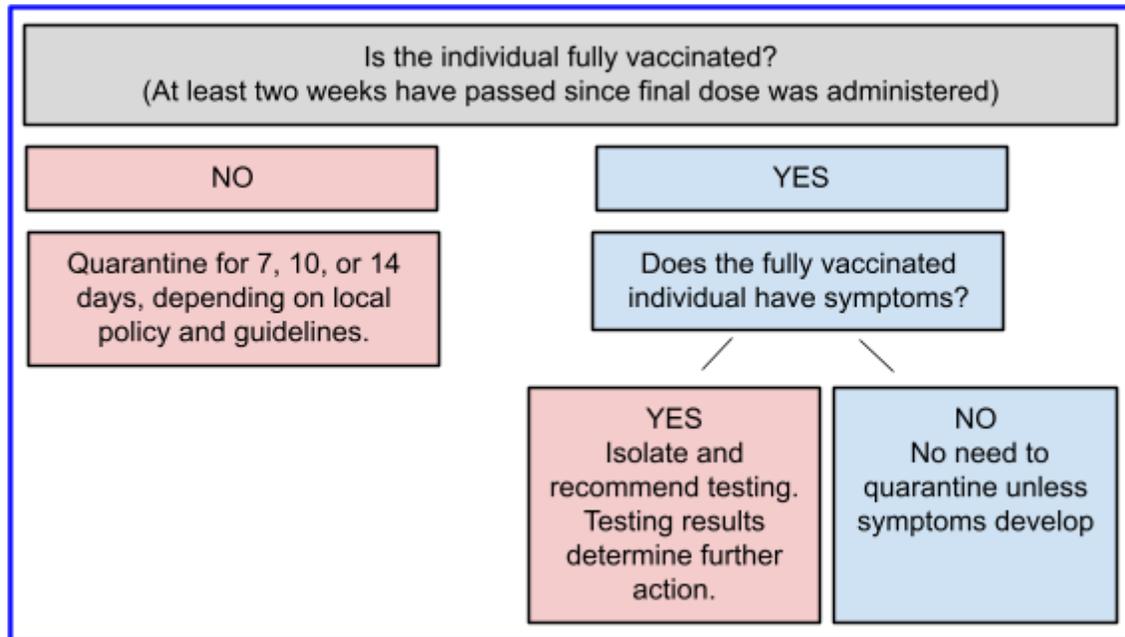
Close Contact Determination and Responses

The CDC defines a close contact as an individual confirmed to have been within six feet for 15 cumulative minutes or longer within a 24-hour period during the infectious period of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

1. Individuals who have previously tested positive for COVID-19 and recovered and who are subsequently exposed to someone with COVID-19 within three months of their original diagnosis do not have to stay at home or get tested again, as long as they do not develop new symptoms. Individuals who develop symptoms again within three months of their first instance of COVID-19 should see their physician as they may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.
2. Individuals exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 will not need to be quarantined if they have no symptoms and both the infected and exposed individual consistently and correctly were wearing a mask. Individuals who are fully vaccinated may not have to quarantine.

To help determine whether a fully vaccinated individual should quarantine, refer to the following chart

Point of Contact and Reporting of Positive Cases Con't



School officials should review with POCs the local process for identifying close contacts and the process for communicating with parents, staff, and students whether an individual will need to stay home and/or be tested.

Quarantine of those exposed to someone with COVID-19

As of December 2, 2020, the CDC amended its guidance to allow two shorter options for the quarantine period. Based on current CDC guidance, the quarantine period can end for individuals experiencing no symptoms according to the following guidelines:

1. After 10 full 24-hour periods since close contact exposure without testing, or
2. After seven full 24-hour periods since close contact exposure and after receiving a negative test result (sample taken no earlier than five 24-hour periods after exposure).

If individuals return to school from these shorter quarantine windows, they should regularly monitor themselves for symptoms to ensure they remain symptom-free and take appropriate precautions for the duration of the 14-day incubation period.

Isolation of those with COVID-19

The person who tests positive for COVID-19 is still required to isolate at home for 10 days from the onset of symptoms or, if asymptomatic, 10 days from the positive test date. A person who is immunosuppressed or was hospitalized may need a longer isolation period of 20 days.



Public Health Considerations

Educational Options

Based on increasing numbers of positive cases, schools should expect interruptions to the school year and plan for contingencies. DESE and ADH will work closely with districts to monitor local situations and to assist if prolonged school closures or prolonged remote learning becomes necessary.

Guidance will be updated as needed if additional or new guidance is made available by the CDC. DESE and the ADH will continue to monitor conditions and work with districts to respond accordingly. School officials, parents, and community members are encouraged to work together to plan and implement as many strategies as possible to make the return to school and continued in-person learning opportunities successful again this year.