

**WESTSIDE SAFE RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN**  
**MASKS REQUIRED FOR PK-6, MASKS OPTIONAL FOR 7-12**

*Published/Last Revised October 27, 2021*

Effective Monday, November 1, Westside Community Schools will transition to optional mask usage for students and staff in buildings with grades 7-12 and in buildings without students.

- **Fully vaccinated students in grades 7-12 and SECONDARY staff will have the option to wear masks.**
- **All who visit/learn in our ELEMENTARY buildings, regardless of vaccination status, are required to wear masks inside our elementary facilities during the school day when children are present, to include school hours and Club 66.**
  - Masks are **not required** while students, staff and visitors are outside, to include arrival/dismissal, recess, and other outside activities.
  - Underwood Hills Early Learning Center students, staff members, and visitors are subject to all elementary school guidelines.
- We strongly recommend all staff members, parents, and students who have not yet received the COVID-19 vaccine and are otherwise eligible to consider getting the vaccine.
- Westside will follow contact tracing procedures as directed by Douglas County Health, which could include quarantine for those not vaccinated and not wearing masks.
- **Westside Community Schools does not plan to provide Extended Campus Learning during the 2021/22 school year.**
- We intend to make decisions every few weeks and will notify families/staff. We will make necessary adjustments by following updated DHMs (Directed Health Measures) and recommendations from local, state, and national level medical professionals. Please understand we will continue to closely monitor the number of positive cases reported within our school district and community. We reserve the right to make adjustments as needed to include the elimination of required mask usage or the expansion of required mask usage to all grade levels and buildings.

\*\*\*

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- **ELEMENTARY GUIDELINES, pg 1**
- **SECONDARY GUIDELINES, pg 3**
- **GENERAL GUIDELINES, pg 4**
- **ADDITIONAL STAFF GUIDELINES, pg 5**

\*\*\*

**PreK & ELEMENTARY**

In order to follow expert medical advice available to us today, we have decided upon the following at the elementary level:

- **All who visit our buildings, regardless of vaccination status, are required to wear masks inside our elementary facilities and Underwood Hills Early Learning Center during the school day when children are present, to include school hours and Club 66 (we have noted 6:00pm as a point of reference in much of this document.)**
  - This supports our top two goals: the safety of all students and staff and maintaining in-person learning.
    - Families of students younger than 12 years do not yet have the choice whether their children will receive the COVID-19 vaccine.
    - Following Douglas County Health contact tracing protocols, without masks, our unvaccinated students (nearly all in elementary schools) and staff have a higher chance of quarantine, therefore extended absences, in the event of positive cases at school. Mask usage means self monitoring for symptoms in the event of positive cases, meaning students and staff can continue learning in-person.

- Exceptions to mask rules could include those with documented medical, behavioral, or developmental issues that could be impaired by masks. Exceptions will be granted as required by written medical exemptions and the law.
- This policy is in effect for all students, staff, and visitors at indoor activities at elementary schools through 6pm each weekday (when Club 66 has dismissed) and as directed by the Superintendent. Visitors, spectators, and non-student participants who do not comply with this policy may be asked to leave the premises.
- This policy is intended to protect PreK and elementary aged students, many of whose families do not yet have the choice whether their children will receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Masks are optional for vaccinated adults in elementary buildings when children are not present (examples include parent meetings, staff meetings, Community Club meetings, etc.)
  - We strongly recommend unvaccinated staff and visitors wear masks while inside our elementary schools, even when children are not present.
- We will follow contact tracing protocol from the Douglas County Health Department if/when we have a confirmed case.
- All elementary students may use their own masks.
  - An appropriate fitting mask must fully cover the student's nose, mouth and chin.
  - Masks will be subject to dress code compliance (no offensive, vulgar, or inappropriate language or messaging will be allowed.)
  - Face shields are not a replacement for masks but may be worn in addition to their mask.
  - No bandanas or gaiters will be allowed to substitute for masks.
  - Each elementary building will have masks available for students who cannot/do not provide their own.

#### **Cafeteria/Meals**

- Students will use hand sanitizer and socially distance to the best of our ability while eating.
  - Students will have assigned seating during lunch.
- Self service will be limited to items that can be controlled, and procedures will follow building guidelines.
- All food is to be served by gloved and masked employees behind plexiglass.
- Students will be allowed to bring lunches from home.

#### **Community Club Events**

- Community Club events are optional for students, families, and staff.
- Community Club events taking place inside, when children are present during school hours/Club 66, must follow mask requirements as described above.
- Vaccinated students, staff, and visitors choosing to attend Community Club events taking place outdoors, or after 6pm (when Club 66 has dismissed), will have the option to wear or not wear masks.
- We strongly recommend unvaccinated students, staff, and visitors wear masks while inside our elementary schools after 6pm.

#### **Concerts**

- As elementary music concerts are distinguished as school-sponsored events, they will follow the mask guidelines when taking place indoors, regardless of which Westside facility they occur at.

#### **Field Trips**

- Field trips may again take place as they did prior to the pandemic.
- Field trips are subject to the same mask guidelines as if students/staff were inside elementary buildings.
  - Students and staff may go mask free if outdoors.

#### **Health Offices**

- Two health spaces will be available for use in each building.
  - One will be designated for COVID-19 related issues. The other will be used for general health needs.

### Visitors & Guests

- Volunteers, visitors, and mentors will be allowed in buildings during school hours. This includes parents, district contractors, and guests approved by administrators.
  - All who visit our buildings, regardless of vaccination status, are required to wear masks inside our elementary facilities during the school day when children are present, to include school hours and Club 66.
  - **We are continuing with our practice to not allow visitors at lunch times for the remainder of first semester.** We will reassess this prior to the start of second semester.
- Masks are optional for vaccinated adults in elementary buildings when children are not present (examples include parent meetings, staff meetings, Community Club meetings, etc.)
  - We strongly recommend unvaccinated staff and visitors wear masks while inside our elementary schools, even when children are not present.
- Regarding pick-up and dropping off materials, please follow directions from your building principal regarding vestibule access.

\*\*\*

### SECONDARY

Fully vaccinated middle/high school students and staff will have the personal choice to **not** wear masks in our schools and on our campuses.

- Unvaccinated students, staff, and visitors are strongly encouraged to continue to wear masks while in our buildings.
- We continue to encourage all families and staff to consider vaccination possibilities by reaching out to medical experts you trust. Students 12 years and older may now receive the vaccine if their families choose to do so. Please work with your pediatrician or family doctor.

### Cafeteria/Meals

- We will socially distance to the best of our ability utilizing traditional and non-traditional eating spaces and staggered eating schedules.
- All food is to be served by gloved and masked employees behind plexiglass.
- Students will be allowed to bring lunches from home.

### Extended Absences

- An extended absence is defined as an absence beyond three days.
- Access to student assignments will be available while students are at home for extended absences via Google Classroom. Teachers will update materials used in class and assignment information daily.

### Seating Charts

- Secondary teachers will be required to maintain accurate seating charts for contact tracing. Seating charts will be kept on file with administration.

### Social Distancing

- We will socially distance and de-densify to the best of our ability.

### Visitors & Guests

- Volunteers, visitors, and mentors will be allowed in buildings during school hours. This includes parents, district contractors, and guests approved by administrators.
  - Adult visitors who are vaccinated for COVID-19 have the option to wear a mask while inside our buildings.
  - Those who are not vaccinated are strongly encouraged to wear masks while inside our buildings.
- Volunteers will be asked about vaccination during standard background checks.
- At arrival/check in, the visitor will need to indicate his/her destination. Visitors should not deviate from the path.

## **GENERAL**

### **Building Engineering**

- Continue to deep clean dedicated facility entry/exit points.
- Secure all facility entry/exit points as needed.
- Continue to optimize the use of outside air, to include keeping as many windows open as possible throughout our facilities.
- We plan to continue to de-densify and watch our space as much as we can when we can.
- We continue to transition to MERV (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value) 13 filtering as recommended.

### **Bussing/Transportation**

- Drivers and students will be expected to follow Federal Transportation Guidelines until they expire.
- Drivers will be supplied with masks, which must be worn by all staff members and students, while inside the vehicle.

### **Contact Tracing Guidelines**

- Westside will follow contact tracing protocols issued by the Douglas County Health Department.

### **Events**

- No attendance restrictions on events outside of the school day.

### **Extended Campus Learning**

- **Westside Community Schools does not plan to provide Extended Campus Learning for the 2021/22 school year.**

### **Extracurricular Activities**

- Vaccinated students, staff, and visitors choosing to attend activities will have the option to wear or not wear masks.
- We strongly recommend unvaccinated students, staff, and visitors to wear masks while attending indoor extracurricular activities.

### **Hand Washing/Hand Sanitizing**

- We will remain committed to continue with frequent hand sanitizing and washing, particularly when using shared materials.
- We will follow sanitation protocols put into place during 2020/21.
- Students will be encouraged to use hand sanitizer and wash their hands frequently throughout the day.

### **Notification Practices**

- We will continue to update positive case counts on the District website.
- We will communicate updates to staff/families who are directly exposed to positive cases.

### **Pre-Screening For Students**

- We will not conduct student screenings at school, based on repeated and consistent advice from medical experts. Parents should screen children at home for cough, chills, fever, shortness of breath, muscle pains, loss of taste/smell, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, fever, and/or contact with a COVID-19 positive patient.
- We will continue to provide a link on our website/app to take the Symptom Screener at home when concerned about COVID-19.

### **School Calendar**

- We will follow the traditional school calendar, posted on the District website at [www.westside66.org](http://www.westside66.org).
- Elementary start time is 8:30am

- Secondary start time is 8:00am
- We will follow traditional Wednesday early release times and all other standard dismissal times.

### **Staff Trainings**

- School nurses, health aides, and front office administrative assistants have participated in COVID-19 training with local medical experts.
- We will have training for substitute teachers and full-time sub that we are adding to our staff.

### **Water Fountains**

- No mouth drinking from fountains.
  - We will continue to convert water fountains to water filling stations, which is more eco-friendly and helps us work towards our goal of being more green.
- Students bring their own water bottles. Each building will have water bottles available for students who cannot/do not provide their own.

\*\*\*

## **STAFF**

### **Masks**

- All staff members, regardless of vaccination status, must wear masks during the school day while in elementary buildings when students are present.
  - This policy is intended to protect elementary aged students, many of whose families do not yet have the choice whether their children will receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Masks are optional for vaccinated adults in elementary buildings when children are not present (examples include parent meetings, staff meetings, Community Club meetings, etc.)
- Vaccinated staff members who work in multiple buildings at different levels will be required to wear masks while in elementary buildings when students are present, but they will have the option to remove those masks while working in secondary buildings.
- Unvaccinated staff members are strongly encouraged to wear masks while inside any and all Westside Community Schools facilities.

### **Staff Meetings/PLC**

- Staff members who have been vaccinated will have the personal choice to wear masks while attending staff meetings/PLC, parent meetings, and other events taking place when students are not present.
- Staff members who are not vaccinated are strongly encouraged to wear masks at all times while inside Westside Community Schools facilities.
- Optional social distancing seating will be available.

### **Touch Surface Cleaning**

- Buildings/staff will be provided with cleaning wipes to touch surface clean areas throughout the day.
  - Staff members with health concerns (pregnancy, etc.) regarding sanitizing wipes may contact their building leader or Facilities leaders to access a different type of cleaning product.

\*\*\*

***Published/Last Revised October 27, 2021***

*We intend to make/share decisions every few weeks and will notify families/staff. We will make necessary adjustments by following updated DHMs and recommendations from local and state level medical professionals. We are making decisions based on information we have available.*

**Westside Community Schools, 909 S. 76th Street, Omaha, NE 68114, 402-390-2100**  
**QUESTIONS? Visit [www.westside66.org](http://www.westside66.org) or email [feedback@westside66.net](mailto:feedback@westside66.net).**