

**#WESDReturnToLearn**

# Safe Return to Learning 2021-2022

(Updated July 2021)





## A Message from the Superintendent (Updated July 2021)

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Dear WESD Families and Staff,

Thank you for your patience and grace as we have all worked together during these unprecedented times. We are all human beings working together and planning for uncertainties. We know we must focus on the needs of our families and staff: first physiological needs (food, clothing, shelter); then the need for safety (employment, resources, health); then love and belonging; then esteem and finally self-actualization (academics). These have a long researched history by Abraham Maslow (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs).

We are updating this Reopening Plan based on the Arizona Governor and Legislature, recommendations from the Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) and based on the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) Guidelines. A few highlights are:

- The universal and correct use of masks for all unvaccinated individuals is strongly recommended.
- Students and staff riding in school buses, however, must continue to wear face coverings, as required by the federal mask mandate.
- The district will work consistently toward physical distancing to the greatest extent possible. The WESD has committed to reducing class size this year to help with this step.
- The WESD will continue to use handwashing and respiratory etiquette, cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities and contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantining to mitigate the spread
- MCDPH partnered with school districts and vaccine vendors to ensure that every Maricopa County School staff person working with public, private and charter schools has been offered COVID-19 vaccination in the early part of prioritized Phase 1B.
- MCDPH, Glendale Union High School District and the WESD partnered with vaccine vendors to offer COVID-19 vaccinations to all students age 12 and over.

Families will be asked to complete our Acknowledgment Form so as to know the expectations for the families and the school.

Our guiding principles throughout this process continues to be the health and safety of our students and staff; this is ALL of our situation and we will continue to share factual information.

We really appreciate our caring community that focuses on the needs of its families and children. We thank you for your patience and understanding.

With gratitude,

Dr. Paul Stanton, Superintendent  
Washington Elementary School District #6

Governing Board: Bill Adams, President • Nikkie Whaley, Vice President  
Jenni Abbott-Bayardi, Member • Lindsey Peterson, Member

Dr. Paul Stanton, Superintendent



# CDC Guidance

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## Key Takeaway

- Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction.

## Prevention Strategies

- Promoting vaccination
- Consistent and correct mask use
- Physical distancing
- Screening testing to promptly identify cases, clusters, and outbreaks
- Ventilation
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Staying home when sick and getting tested
- Contact tracing, in combination with isolation and quarantine
- Cleaning and disinfection

[Complete CDC Guidance](#)

## CDC Indicators and Thresholds for Community Transmission of COVID-19

Indicator	Low Transmission Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
Total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days	0-9	10-49	50-99	≥100
Percentage of NAATs (PCR) that are positive during the past 7 days	<5.0%	5.0%-7.9%	8.0%-9.9%	≥10.0%

\* NAAT - Nucleic Acid Amplification Tests

## Models for Learning

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### **In-Person Learning Model (Students in physical buildings)**

- Pre-K - Grade 8.
- Five full days per week (early dismissal on Wednesday).
- Enrolled in WESD Schools.
- Taught by WESD teachers.
- Frequent hand washing / hand sanitizing.
- Enhanced cleaning of high touch areas throughout the day.
- Physical distancing of three feet or more to the greatest extent possible.
- Enhanced ventilation with increased outside air intake.
- Enhanced air cleaning with High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) air scrubbers.
- Students will stay in cohorts, if feasible.
- Social Emotional Support provided by credentialed Social Workers, Behavior Specialists and Psychologists.
- Instruction in core content and specials/electives.
- Recess breaks.
- Accommodations and services provided (e.g., special education services as determined by the Individual Education Plan (IEP) team, Gifted, English Language Learners).
- Families must sign Acknowledgment Form describing measures they and the school will do to mitigate spread.
- Breakfast and lunch provided.
- Wednesday early release day.
- Face masks are strongly encouraged for all unvaccinated individuals.



## Models for Learning

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### Online Learning Model (Students Distance Learning)

- Grades 5 - 8
- Five days per week.
- Enrolled in WESD Schools.
- Taught by WESD teachers.
- District device provided, if needed.
- Internet connection required; scholarships available
- Real-time instruction throughout the day.
- WESD School's instruction, curriculum resources and assessments.
- Special area classes will be available in recorded and/or live sessions.
- Social emotional support provided by credentialed Social Workers, Behavior Specialists and Psychologists.
- Accommodations and support services provided (e.g. English Language Learners, Gifted).
- Special education team will work directly with families to schedule required in-person or virtual therapies.
- Instruction in core content and specials/electives.
- Curbside pickup breakfast/lunch.
- Wednesday early release day.

# General Health and Well-Being

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## Health Screening

- Students should stay home if they feel ill or are exhibiting symptoms of respiratory infection.
- Parents and guardians should assess their child's health daily prior to heading to school or the bus stop.
- If the staff member has concerns about a student's health, they will contact the school health office for guidance.
- Students will be reminded of proper respiratory hygiene, including:
  - Avoiding touching the eyes, nose, and mouth.
  - Covering the mouth when coughing.
  - Covering the nose when sneezing and safely discarding tissues.

## Hand Hygiene

- Frequent hand washing/cleaning will be encouraged at regular intervals throughout the day with both soap and water or hand sanitizer. Instructions for hand washing include:
  - Using soap and water, scrubbing for 20 seconds, and rinsing.
  - Using paper towels to dry hands, when feasible.
- Classrooms without hand washing stations will have access to alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Hand washing stations are in classrooms or entry ways to cafeteria.
- Hand sanitizer stations are installed in school and district office entryways.

## Face Coverings

- Face masks are strongly encouraged for all unvaccinated individuals.

## School Campuses and Classrooms

- During the In-Person Learning Model, student seating will be arranged to maintain social distancing when feasible. Desks will be faced in the same direction, rather than facing each other or students will sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart, when feasible.
- During the In-Person Learning Model, social distancing will be maintained in open areas, such as hallways, stairwells, gyms, playgrounds.
- Students will be encouraged to bring their own water.
- During the In-Person Learning Model, to limit exposure, students will maintain three feet social distancing, where feasible.
- Signage will be posted in all rooms and common areas explaining hygiene practices to prevent spread.
- During the In-Person Learning Model, adjustments to drop-off and pickup routines will be made to facilitate social distancing when feasible. Walking students will be encouraged to leave campus quickly. Busing students will wait in designated zone areas. Parents will wait in assigned pickup zone, while students wait under staff supervision.

## Enhanced Cleaning

- Additional disinfecting of high touch point areas, such as door handles, light switches, sink handles, elevator buttons, etc., per CDC guidelines.
- All classrooms will have an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) N-list registered disinfectant available for staff to disinfect high touch points as needed throughout the day.
- Staff training on the proper use of disinfectants.
- Continued air quality will be maintained by changing air filters as scheduled, keeping outside air dampers open to bring in additional fresh air and adding HEPA air scrubbers for classrooms, cafeterias, etc.

## Response to Reported Cases

- CDC protocols regarding reported cases and [specific guidance from the MCDPH](#) will be followed.
- School health technicians will follow established screening protocols, and will consult with public health officials to determine how best to handle students and staff who display or develop COVID-19 symptoms.
- Isolation areas will be set up within the school for students or staff who may get sick during the day.

## Visitors

- No outside visitors beyond the school office, except for the safety and well-being of students and approved service and program providers, for the first quarter of the school year.
- Parents will report to the front office and not go beyond unless it is for the safety or well-being of their child.



## Activities and Events

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### For Non-Classroom Activities:

- Suspend field trips and student travel for the first quarter.
- Group gatherings of limited numbers are permitted with mitigation strategies in place.
- Evaluate opportunities to incorporate virtual field trips and extracurricular activities.
- Suspend social activities such as dances and movie nights for the first quarter.
- Evaluate conducting other activities such as orientations, curriculum nights, Meet the Teacher nights and open houses in alternative or modified formats, including virtually.
- Refer to the Academic Support Department to address rental of facilities, including athletic and faith-based organizations.

## Communication

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- Provide information and updates to students, families, staff and the community on:
  - School health and safety measures.
  - Preventive measures staff, students and families should utilize to stay healthy and safe.
  - Changes impacting district and school operations.
  - Changes to district and school policies and procedures.
  - Information about community resources and support to help families and staff with basic needs.
  - Instructions for ways to prevent spread (e.g., hand washing, respiratory hygiene, social distancing).
- Respond to questions and other inquiries.
- Update District and school Web pages with information and resources.
- Translate and share information in all languages that are widely used in our community.
- Utilize a variety of communication methods including mail, marquees, email, ParentVUE, phone calls, text messages, and other media.



# Curriculum and Instruction

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## In-Person Learning Model

- Daily lessons taught by WESD educators focused on essential Arizona content standards in math, reading, science, social studies, writing and special areas skills.
- Intervention opportunities to support individual student needs.
- Small group instructional strategies to provide targeted skill development.
- Consistent monitoring and assessment of student progress to evaluate current learning mastery on a consistent basis.
- Support for students' social and emotional needs through a variety of lessons, activities and live sessions with WESD social workers, school psychologists and behavior interventionists as needed.
- Special Education, English Language and Gifted services provided.
- Utilization of technology and virtual learning tools embedded into classroom instruction.
- ParentVUE utilized to communicate effectively with parents on grades, lessons and progress.

## Online Learning Model

- WESD will offer Chromebooks for families without personal devices to utilize at home during online learning.
- Scholarships are available for families without Internet service.
- Technology support resources available for families to support virtual learning.
- Live daily lessons developed and taught by WESD educators focused on essential Arizona content standards in math, reading, science, social studies, writing and special areas.
- Assessment and monitoring of student learning and progress.
- Small group and intervention groups provided to meet individual needs of students.
- Special Education, English Language and Gifted services available for qualifying students.
- Access to student grades, assignments and communication tools with teachers through ParentVUE.
- Support for students' social and emotional needs.
- Access for families to request support services from WESD Social Services team and community partners.
- Teachers will be provided with ongoing professional development on effective distance learning instructional strategies.
- Online learning training opportunities for parents to support children with distance learning tools.

# Facilities

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## Custodial

- Custodial cleaning procedures follow EPA and CDC guidelines regarding approved products and methods. Disinfecting high touch areas (e.g., door handles, light switches, sink handles, elevator buttons, etc.) per CDC guidelines.
- Reinforcing the importance of compliance with CDC guidelines through staff education, training, and distribution of cleaning/disinfection products.
- Purchased electric airless sprayers and cart-mounted electric misters per campus/department to apply EPA N-List disinfectants efficiently and safely.
- Purchased mini washing machines for each campus for laundering microfiber cleaning towels; bulk purchased microfiber towels.
- Continuing to supplement our schools with vendor-provided cleaning staff as needed.

## Building Systems

- HEPA air scrubbers for classrooms, cafeterias and other locations.
- Continuing to maintain preventive maintenance schedules, repairs, and unit/component replacements, for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) units throughout the school district.
- Inspected and adjusted HVAC unit outside air dampers, economizers, and energy recovery units to reduce interior air recirculation and increase the amount of fresh air being brought into all interior spaces, per the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) guidelines.
- Keeping all exhaust fans running continuously to maximize the amount of local exhaust ventilation, per ASHRAE guidelines.
- Adjusted all HVAC schedules to start up two-hours pre-occupancy and continue running two-hours post-occupancy to further ventilate the interior spaces and maximize the amount of fresh air, per ASHRAE guidelines.
- Protective barriers installed in all school offices and department transaction counters.
- Installed new handwashing sinks at multiple schools.

## General Safety/Process

- Continue to utilize the MCDPH dashboard to regularly monitor district boundaries (i.e., the geographic area that best represents a school's student body) for community transmission.
- Face shields with masks will be worn by health staff when providing health services for students and staff.
- Ensure physical distancing of three feet or more to the greatest extent possible.
- Turn desks to face in the same direction, when feasible (rather than facing each other) or have students sit on only one side of the tables.
- Use individual student desks rather than common tables for students, if available.
- During the In-Person Learning Model, maintain social distancing when feasible between students and staff in hallways, stairwells, gyms, playgrounds, and other areas of gathering.

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# Facilities

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## General Safety/Process

- Installed physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and students remain apart in lines and at other times. Created “one-way” routes for students and staff to navigate the campus. Provided signage on interior walls and tape on the floor to communicate this message.
- Continuing to secure and track essential supplies (e.g., tissues, paper towels, toilet paper, hand sanitizer, soap, disinfectants, etc.).
- Installed hand sanitizer stations in the school offices and district lobbies, as well as other building main entries.
- Continuing to encourage staff and students to bring their own water to minimize use and touching of water fountains.
- HEPA air scrubbers for classrooms, cafeterias and other locations.

## Finance

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- Research any changes in requirements for use of existing federal, state, and local funding.
- Access new revenue from federal, state and local emergency funds.
- Research new funding opportunities to assist with increased costs.
- Consider potential enrollment changes and the impact to the budget.
- Review and revise district and school budgets as needed.
- Document costs related to COVID-19.
- Contact vendors to confirm inventory of and future delivery of necessary supplies.
- Prioritize budget and purchasing of any supplies or improvements necessary to provide a safe environment for students and staff.

## Health and Wellness

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- Review and revise health policies and practices, as needed, and communicate any changes in health policies and practices to students, families, and staff.
- Teachers will informally screen students for respiratory symptoms. If the staff member has concerns for a student, the health office will be contacted.
- Ensure posters are in place at the entry to each classroom to assist with identifying symptoms.
- Post signage in all rooms and common areas explaining hygiene practices to prevent spread.
- Provide training for all staff related to identification of COVID-19 symptoms and management of safety measures to minimize transmission.
- All staff will self-assess their own health for symptoms of respiratory infection daily and not report to work if there are any indications of illness.
- Establish safe procedures for any basic health screenings (e.g., annual hearing, vision).
- Provide school health personnel with any necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) in alignment with identified needs (e.g., gloves, goggles, face shield, procedural masks).
  - Require use of hand sanitizer or hand washing prior to entering the health office.
- Provide school staff working with medically fragile students, as identified in individual health plans, with any necessary PPE.
- Provide staff who work with students with an IEP with more significant needs with any necessary PPE as recommended by the Special Education Department.
- Provide training to staff for use of procedural PPE.
- Update health records for students in alignment with Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements.
- Establish isolation areas for students or staff who may be sick after coming to school.
- Require students and staff to stay home if ill or exhibiting symptoms of respiratory infection.
- Use screening protocols, assign appropriate staff, provide necessary PPE, and consult with public health officials to determine how to handle persons who display or develop COVID-19 symptoms.
- Use processes for staff involved in screenings to report findings to school, district, and public health officials in alignment with medical privacy laws.
- Provide on-going instruction to staff on how to clean and disinfect objects and high touch surfaces.
- Provide on-going instruction to staff regarding:
  - Respiratory hygiene:
    - Avoiding touching the eyes, nose, and mouth.
    - Covering the mouth when coughing.
    - Covering the nose when sneezing and safely discarding tissues.
  - Hand washing:
    - Using soap and water, scrubbing for 20 seconds, and rinsing.
    - Using paper towels to dry hands if feasible.
    - Using alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - Face mask
    - Provide instruction on how to wear face masks.

# Nutrition Services

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## In-Person Learning Model

- Breakfast will be served in the classroom at all schools.
- Classes will be staggered to arrive in cafeteria to maintain distancing when lining up for lunch, when feasible.
- Additional lunch periods will be added at some schools.
- Cafeteria entries and serving lines will be marked for social distancing.
  - Students will be socially distanced while eating lunch using the cafeteria, stage, classrooms, and outdoor areas, as weather permits. Lunch tables will be separated and students will be facing one direction, when feasible.
- Students and school staff will wash and/or sanitize hands prior to entering serving area.
- All lunch entrees will be individually portioned.
- When shared objects (utensils, tongs) are used, continue to change and replace according to the food safety code.
- Sharing of food is not allowable.
- Continue using touchless point of sale.
- Follow public health guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting, preparation, and meal service.
- Enhanced air cleaning with HEPA air scrubbers located in the preparation, service and seating areas.

## Online Distance Learning Model

- Breakfast and lunch will be available for curbside pickup.
- Continue to follow Nutrition Services standard operating procedures for food safety and sanitation.

# Social Emotional Support

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## Social and Emotional Well-Being and Mental Health

- Provide access to social services support at all WESD schools and campuses for social, emotional and mental health well-being for students, families and staff.
- Provision of a systemic approach to monitoring, assessing and addressing student, family and staff needs.
- Sustain emotionally, academically safe and supportive classroom and school environments
- Employ relationship-building and interaction strategies with students and families.
- Implement consistent and predictable classroom routines.
- Offer support to individual and groups of students as indicated through the provision of a multi-tiered system of support.
- Routines and procedures will employ following principles:
  - Safety
  - Trustworthiness & transparency
  - Peer support
  - Collaboration and mutuality
  - Empowerment of student voice and choice
  - Thoughtful consideration of cultural, historical, and gender issues
- Utilize community partnerships to offer an expanded range of supports to identified students, families and staff.

## Social and Emotional Learning Supports

- Promote Social/Emotional Learning (SEL) through specific and integrated avenues of instruction, so that all members of our community possess the necessary skills to contribute positively to our community.
- Provide ongoing support to staff to teach SEL skills through modeling and integrated instruction.
- Create and provide opportunities for students to practice SEL skills, focusing on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision making and relationship skills
- Provide opportunities to elevate student and family's voices in school planning related to social emotional support and learning.
- Promote positive student socialization and opportunities for guided play and relationship building.
- Incorporate trauma-informed practices and SEL in a manner that supports equity, inclusion and reflects cultural responsiveness.
- Provide training, support, guidance and consultation to all school personnel related to SEL specific and integrated instructional strategies.

## Staff at the Workplace

- The utmost preference is to maintain current staff employment even if it means re-purposing employees to identified positions of need.
- Staff are to return to work with few exceptions. Exceptions include:
  - Staff provided temporary accommodations with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
  - Staff with conditions compliant with the district-approved leave, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and other federal acts.
  - Staff using existing leave accrual benefits in compliance with Governing Board policy.
- Staff will be required to adhere to safety and health guidelines.
- Staff members are strongly encouraged to wear masks.

## Staffing Protocols and Procedures

- Staff are to comply with the employee safety and health protocols.
- WESD may reallocate the budget of vacant positions for other positions of need.
- WESD may have to transfer staff to areas of need throughout the District.
- WESD will ensure compliance with positions' funding source.
- WESD will consider additional staffing needs with the priority of safety and health related duties.
- WESD will consider the need to increase FTE, overtime, and extended work calendar.

## Technology

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- Monitor staff and student access to devices to support learning.
- District approved programs and materials to be used across all classes and grade levels.
- All Internet browsing restrictions in place on WESD Chromebooks will be active on devices both in school and at home during online distance learning.
- WESD student accounts have their communications limited to within the wesdschools.org Google domain. Students may only email or communicate with other WESD students or WESD staff. External communications are prohibited with a WESD student Google account.
- WESD student and staff devices are supported by MIS troubleshooting or by replacement, if unable to resolve the issue.
- Technology support is available to all WESD staff via the Help Desk at ext. 2865. Families in the Distance Learning Program will have an established process for assistance.

## Transportation

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- Require staff and students to wear face coverings on school buses, per the federal mask mandate.
- To assist with limiting the number of students on buses, parents are encouraged to transport bus eligible riders to school.
- Parents and students are encouraged to practice social distancing at bus stops.
- Visible signage is placed at the entry of each bus to remind students not to ride if they are symptomatic, to wear a mask, and to keep their distance.
- Implement other measures to prevent spread:
  - Clean and disinfect buses regularly (between runs and at the end of the day).
  - Increase fresh air ventilation on school buses by opening windows (weather permitting).
  - Continue to communicate with families to establish transportation needs.
  - Enforce requirements regarding students who are eligible for receiving transportation.  
For students on Open Enrollment, transportation will be the responsibility of the parent unless the transportation is required by the Individuals With Disabilities In Education Act, McKinney Vento Act or Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA).