

Sweet Springs R-VII School District



Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan (Re-Entry Plan)

2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 School Years

Dear Greyhound Family,

COVID-19 has brought about so many challenges and has required each of us to determine what the “new normal” will look like within our homes, schools, work environments, and communities. While it is recognized there are a variety of individual views on the situation at hand and many different plans being implemented by area school districts, please know the Sweet Springs R-VII School District is committed to providing a quality education for all students, while also ensuring the safety and overall well-being of students and staff.

Since the onset of COVID-19, the District has met with the Saline County Health Department, sent surveys to parents/staff/students, and collaborated with health officials, staff members, school board members, and parents to ensure our plan is reasonable and easily communicated, all while following guidelines set forth by local, county, and state agencies, and the CDC. In addition, the plan expresses the significant changes to practices we are making to continue to ensure safety of our students and staff.

Because the circumstances and situations concerning COVID-19 are fluid, it is important for all of us to remember that patience, flexibility, and cooperation is necessary as we continue to navigate through much uncertainty together. This plan will be adapted and adjusted as frequently as needed to best meet area conditions and guidelines, while trying to remain practical and effective. It is the district’s hope that this plan will provide a sense of security, structure, and normalcy to the lives and education of our students.

We ask that any concerns, suggestions, or ideas be communicated directly to building level administration to open lines of communication. As a district, we will be diligent in remaining as transparent as possible in our communication efforts, while adhering to FERPA and HIPAA laws.

I encourage each of you to move forward with optimism, grace, and compassion as we continue to work together to make the 2022-2023 school year safe and successful for our students and staff.

Respectfully,

Lori Price, Superintendent
Sweet Springs R-VII Schools

The guidelines and protocols outlined in this document are subject to revision as needed to reflect local, state, and federal guidance. Guidelines and protocols may also be revised as appropriate to reflect the needs of the local conditions.

This plan was approved on 07/23/20, and was updated/revised/reviewed on 06/01/21, 06/17/21, 07/08/21, 12/13/21, 01/12/22, 08/22/22.

Mid-year review was approved on 12/13/21 with opportunity for public comment and discussion from all stakeholders at the December 13, 2021, school board meeting and on 08/22/22 with the opportunity for public comment and discussion from all stakeholders at the August 22, 2022, school board meeting.

Commentary regarding COVID-19 guidelines and protocols

- Sweet Springs R-VII is committed to providing a quality education to all students, while also ensuring the safety and overall well-being of students and staff.
- The COVID-19 guidelines developed and presented below are based on the following guidance and recommendations:
 - DESE, DHSS, and the CDC have recommended layering mitigation techniques when returning to school.
 - State statute Section 167.191, RSMo. sets forth a standard regarding communicable disease and school attendance, saying: “It is unlawful for any child to attend any of the public schools of this state while afflicted with any contagious or infectious disease, or while liable to transmit such disease after having been exposed to it.”
 - Public commentary from all stakeholders is always welcome and may be directed to the Office of the Superintendent at 660-335-4860. Public commentary for the current school year was made available beginning June 1, 2022, and will remain open throughout the duration of the 2022-2023 school year. This plan will be reviewed and revised periodically as indicated in this document below.
- The original re-entry plan consisted of input from the Saline County Health Department, administration, board members, teachers/staff, parents, and students. Public commentary was made available for this current plan since June 1-21, 2021, and has been made available on the school district’s website.
- Parents/guardians with questions or concerns are asked to call the Sweet Springs R-VII School District at 660-335-4860 to discuss and address those concerns with district or building administration.

General (Ongoing) Mitigation Measures for Students and Faculty/Staff

Masks:

- Unvaccinated students and staff are encouraged to wear face coverings, but there is no requirement at this time.

Physical Distancing:

- Social distancing will be encouraged to the extent possible by all faculty, staff and students.

Hand Washing/Sanitation:

- Students will be guided to wash hands multiple times per day.
- Hand sanitizer has been provided at multiple locations throughout the school.

Cleaning/Sanitation Practices:

- Daily sanitizing and disinfecting will be a priority at all district facilities. Equipment has been purchased that enables the complete sanitation of all surfaces, to include classrooms (desks, tables, etc.), hallways (interior and exterior doors/doorways), lockers and locker rooms.
- Busses are also fogged/sanitized on a daily basis at the conclusion of routes.

Diagnostic/Screening of Students:

- Faculty and staff will be trained to recognize symptoms that may be associated with COVID-19. Training can include, but will not be limited to online modules provided by the Missouri United School Insurance Council as well as training from the local health department. The CDC lists the following as possible symptoms of COVID-19:
 - Fever or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Newly emerged loss of taste or smell
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
- **Screening begins in the home.** Parents are asked to play a role in screening students and keep your student home if students are experiencing:
 - A fever (100.4 degrees or higher) or a sense of having a fever;

- Chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, headache;
- New loss of smell or taste, new muscle aches;
- Or if your student or a close contact has been diagnosed or presumptively diagnosed with COVID-19.
- **Keep your circle small!!!** The fewer people that one person interacts with in a single day or over multiple days can help minimize the risks of spreading COVID. Furthermore, it makes contact tracing more manageable and fewer students and adults could be exposed. This is one of the main goals in the planning process.
 - CDC defines contact or exposure as being within 6 feet (3 feet for school districts) or less for more than 15 minutes.
 - Students and staff who have a fever (100.4 degrees or higher without fever-reducing medication and/or cough) will be asked to stay home and report the absence to the school attendance office or supervisor.

General Health Information for students and faculty/staff:

- Parents and students, as well as staff members, are encouraged to self-screen for potential COVID-19 symptoms before coming to school. Anyone with symptoms of illness should stay home.
- Students at school who display health symptoms that could suggest COVID-19 concerns will be checked by the nurse. If evaluation by the nurse suggests potential for COVID-19 infection, the student will be masked (if the student does not have one) until picked up by a parent/guardian.
- Students with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher will be sent home per our regular policy. If the student presents no other COVID symptoms and has no known exposure, they can return after being fever free for 24 hours.
- A student excluded from the school environment due to COVID-19 concerns may return to school based on the following CDC recommendations:
 - **Students/staff with symptoms, but tested negative for COVID-19** may return when fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.
 - **Students/staff who have tested positive for COVID-19** may return based on the most recent recommendation of the CDC and when symptoms are improving.
 - **Students/staff who have tested and are awaiting results** should remain at home until the results are received.
 - **Students/staff who have been exposed to a positive COVID-19 individual** will be notified if they are considered to be a close contact if the exposure occurred at school. Exclusion from school is not necessary unless the exposed student develops symptoms, at which point student will be excluded from school until they are 24 hours symptom free.

Other scenarios regarding student/staff health will be handled according to CDC recommendations.

Vaccination Assistance:

- The district has partnered with the Saline County Health Department to provide on-site vaccination opportunities for staff. Anyone still wishing to be vaccinated may contact their local/county health department.

Contact Tracing:

- Contact tracing will be done by the school district for exposures at school.
- To better assist with contact tracing, the District will encourage seating charts within the classrooms, cafeterias, busses, etc.
- In addition, the District will upgrade its camera/security system to better assist with contact tracing.

Other Mitigation Measures:

- Students will be encouraged to bring personal water bottles from home, rather than use the drinking fountains. They should be labeled with the student name, and in clean, sanitary condition. Drinking fountains with bottle fillers have been installed throughout the district.
- Student activities and athletics will be conducted as usual to the extent they are permissible under local, state, and federal guidelines. These are voluntary activities where students and parents have a choice to participate or not.
- All students will report to homeroom at the beginning of each day and not congregate in the gymnasium, locker rooms, commons area, restrooms, or hallways.
- Students will use district Chromebook/iPad assigned to them for all classes. Chromebooks (for grades 7-12) are picked up in homeroom at the beginning of the day and returned to homeroom at the end of the day. Students may check out the Chromebook over night with permission of their homeroom teacher should student need it for classwork.
- Attendance incentives for students and staff will cease. Staff and/or students who are sick are advised to stay home. Student absences due to COVID or COVID exposure will be excused under the attendance policy.
- Phone/intercom systems will be upgraded, and potentially purchased for each classroom to eliminate touching of same surfaces by multiple people.
- Parents/visitors will be permitted to visit the school office, but will not have access to any other areas in the building unless a scheduled meeting has been pre-arranged.

Transportation Information

- Parents/guardians are still encouraged to drop off students at school instead of using bus service. Drop-off and pick-up systems will be organized to ensure social distancing to the greatest extent possible.
- The school will only be open during posted hours found the in the district handbook. Early drop-offs will not be permitted.
- Students riding the bus from the same household will be required to sit together.
- Buses will be sanitized daily.

- Students who must be sent home because of illness or quarantine by health/district officials must be picked up by parents/guardians; they cannot be transported by bus or other district transportation.
- Students WILL NOT be allowed to ride a bus they are not assigned to (riding home with a friend, cousin, etc.)

Continuity of Services

The District primarily remained in-person for the 2020-2021 school year and did remain in-person for the 2021-2022 school year. It is the intent of the District to remain in-person for the 2022-2023 school year as allowed per local, county and state conditions and guidelines. Please note this can change to best reflect local, county, and/or state conditions. At this time, the AMI-X Plan is not being provided as an option for school districts during the 2022-2023 school year. This is the plan the District primarily followed during the 2020-2021 school year.

In the event the District would need to close due to COVID-19 related issues, the District may activate the AMI Plan, which is similar to the AMI-X Plan that was used this past year. This would be used if the District were to close for an extended period of time due to COVID-19 or another large scale emergency. All students would work online at that time. All students MUST make progress in their learning during this time to earn course credit or work towards grade-level advancement. Students would check out District Chromebooks and will be provided with a hotspot during this closure if internet access is limited. This plan will be approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and is an option for the District per Board Policy of the Sweet Springs R-VII School District.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The health and safety of all students who are enrolled at Sweet Springs R-VII is of the utmost importance. Any needed accommodations will be made to ensure that plans and policies of the District do not discriminate against students with disabilities. Should the district need to be made aware of a possible accommodation, please reach out to Tara Merrick, Director of Special Services by calling 660-335-4614.

Communication Procedures

- Administration will share information with students, staff and community on an as needed basis through text, email and other avenues of communication.
- Weekly posts will not be provided as they were last year as the present situation does not necessitate it.

Periodic Revision

- This document may be revised periodically to adjust to the often-changing variables. This review and/or revision will occur no less than every six months with appropriate stakeholders: administration, members of the board, parents, teachers, students, and/or local health department personnel via a committee meeting, email, video/telephone conference, and/or at a local board meeting.

Use of ARP Funds

- Revenue received via the ARP will be used within the guidelines https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/03/FINAL_ARP-ESSER-FACT-SHEET.pdf provided by the federal government of the United States and the State of Missouri. At the time of this publication, monies have not yet been allocated and the district has until September, 2023 to obligate its allocation of funds. Therefore, district administration will take time to evaluate and prioritize its needs and use these proceeds in a way that will most benefit the students and the district as a whole.

*If you need or know someone who needs this plan translated or read to them, please contact district administration. Contact information can be found below:

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