

Hardin County Schools Common Reopening Agreement

REVISED OCTOBER 13, 2020

This plan is effective upon approval by each individual Board of Education. This agreement is based on the guidance provided on July 2, 2020 in the [COVID-19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools](#), [Ohio Department of Education Reset and Restart Education Planning Guide](#), [Responsible RestartOhio](#), and mandates related to K-12 education. The plan will be re-evaluated by the committee once the pandemic designation is lifted or as guidance is updated.

Ada Exempted Village Schools, Mrs. Meri Skilliter, Superintendent
Hardin Northern Local Schools, Dr. Jeff Price, Superintendent
Kenton City Schools, Dr. Jennifer Penczarski, Superintendent
Ridgemont Local Schools, Ms. Sally Henrick, Superintendent
Upper Scioto Valley Local School, Mr. Craig Hurley, Superintendent
Midwest Regional ESC, Mr. Scott Howell Superintendent
Ohio Hi-Point Career Center, Dr. Rick Smith, Superintendent
Hardin County Board of DD, Mrs. Kara Brown, Superintendent
Hardin County Health Department, Shane Lotts, R.S. E.H. Director, and Cindy Keller, MSN, RN, Director of Nursing

PREAMBLE:

It is our shared belief that our schools are the best, most effective, and safest learning environment for the students of Hardin County. Therefore, we are proposing, to the furthest and safest extent possible, that students be allowed to return to the school buildings for a face-to-face education during the 2020-2021 school year.

INTRODUCTION:

All Ohio school buildings were closed for the remainder of the school calendar year beginning on March 16, 2020, by order of the Governor and State Health Commissioner in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. On July 2, 2020, the Governor of Ohio released guidelines for reopening schools in August of 2020. Hardin County school district leaders, along with leaders from the Midwest Regional Educational Service Center, Ohio Hi-Point Career Center, and the Hardin County Board of DD, in consultation with the Hardin County Health Department, came together to draft common practices and create a common reopening agreement for the 2020-2021 school year for the Hardin County Schools.

These general principles will guide each school district as they move forward with reopening schools throughout Hardin County in the fall of 2020:

- Each school district will implement recommended safety protocols to the highest degree possible.

- Each school district will work closely with the Hardin County Health Department to promote safety in each school building.
- Each school district will be transparent with all stakeholders that some level of risk will always be present when children and employees occupy school district facilities.
- School districts recognize the need for consistency in areas of operations while recognizing that individual differences in classroom sizes, school facilities, and building operations may lead to some inconsistencies.
- School districts are planning to maintain their previously approved school calendars with some possible modifications to the student start date and/or front-loading of employee professional development.
- This plan will be re-evaluated once the pandemic designation has been lifted or as the guidance for public schools is updated.
- These principles will be common to all Hardin County public school districts.

BASIC STATEMENTS:

- 1) Our school districts’ number one responsibility will be to provide the highest quality education possible while keeping our students and staff safe to the highest degree possible.
- 2) Decisions about the health and safety of our students and staff will be made in collaboration with the Hardin County Health Department based on the current guidance and the best evidence available to school leaders at any given time.
- 3) A pandemic is an ever changing crisis, and as such, this plan may have to rapidly change or evolve in response to current conditions. This plan is aligned to the [Ohio COVID-19 Risk Level Guidelines for the Public](#), [COVID-19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools](#), [Responsible RestartOhio](#), [Ohio Department of Education Reset and Restart Education Planning Guide](#), and mandates related to K-12 education.
- 4) School districts operate, at all times, according to guidelines from many, various agencies (i.e., County Health Department, State Highway Patrol {re: bus operations}, State Fire Marshal, Ohio High School Athletic Association, Ohio Department of Education, Insurance Companies, etc.).
- 5) Each school district in Hardin County has approved rules, policies, codes of conduct, handbooks, and operational procedures to maintain order, eliminate barriers to learning, and to promote the health and safety of our students and staff.

These principles will be common to all Hardin County school districts throughout the pandemic. Each district may choose to have additional safety protocols in place outside of this agreement.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

You may have COVID-19 if you experience one or more of the following:

- Fever and chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Symptoms range from mild to severe and may appear two to fourteen days after exposure to the virus.

A self-assessment should be done by each student, employee, support worker or visitors on a daily basis prior to leaving for school.

If a student, employee, support worker, or volunteer is experiencing any of the following symptoms, they should follow their school district's sick leave and absence policies and not report to the school building.

Sick leave and absence policies will not penalize a student for staying home when in quarantine or isolation as determined by the local health department.

Sick leave and absence policies should be followed by all school employees when symptomatic, quarantined, or isolated.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AT SCHOOL

If a student, employee, support worker, or volunteer begins to show symptoms, or has a temperature above 100 degrees F while at school, they must immediately report to the school nurse or designee. If the student, employee, support worker, or volunteer is not able to leave school immediately, the individual must be separated from others, given a face covering, and monitored by a designated employee. The school nurse or designated employee must wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and maintain physical distancing when possible.

The space where an individual will wait before he or she goes home should be separate from other areas people are likely to visit. After the individual leaves the premises, the area of the building the person occupied should be thoroughly sanitized by the appropriate school employee, according to the cleaning protocols.

The school nurse or designee will refer the individual displaying symptoms of COVID-19 to a qualified healthcare professional and/or testing site.

The school nurse will contact the Hardin County Health Department in the case of a positive COVID-19 test result, or in the case of a suspected COVID-19 case in a school building.

HEALTH ISSUES NOT DIAGNOSED AS COVID-19

Any student, employee, support worker, or volunteer not diagnosed with COVID-19, but who has a fever above 100 degrees F, should stay at home until fever free without medication for 72 hours (three full days) and symptom free (as designated in the COVID-19 SYMPTOMS section of this document).

In order for a student to return to school, he or she must be transported to school by a parent or guardian and must be checked by the school nurse or designee.

Any employee, support worker, or volunteer will have their temperature taken by the school nurse or designee upon their return to school.

HEALTH ISSUES DIAGNOSED AS A COVID-19 POSITIVE CASE

Communication, specific to parents and school employees, will be developed in collaboration with the Hardin County Health Department.

The Hardin County Health Department will work in collaboration with other local health departments when the person lives in a different county.

The school district will cooperate with the Hardin County Health Department's work in contact tracing.

The Hardin County Health Department will determine the quarantine protocol.

The Hardin County Health Department and school district will collaborate to develop letters for people in direct contact and exposure when there is a positive case.

UNIVERSAL SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Students, employees, support workers, and volunteers should practice frequent handwashing for at least 20 seconds.

Each school will provide opportunities for handwashing throughout the day.

Hand sanitizer (at least 60-95% alcohol based) will be provided in high traffic areas, including but not limited to, entrances to the building, classrooms, cafeteria, and gymnasium.

All students, employees, support workers, and volunteers should avoid touching their mouths, noses, and eyes since the virus easily enters the body through these membranes.

Signs, posters, and other methods to reinforce the importance of frequent hand washing and sanitizing, and proper prevention strategies will be posted throughout each school building.

Each district will develop cleaning protocols for their school buildings paying close attention to high touch areas and shared materials.

Sanitation wipes and disinfectants labeled for use against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) will be made available in each classroom space and in high touch common areas.

The sharing of supplies and materials will be minimized to the extent possible by each district with all shared items being sanitized between each use.

Physical distancing of three feet or more will be adhered to whenever possible. Teachers and students should use as much physical distance as possible when actively playing an instrument or performing.

Visual cues such as floor markings and/or signs will be used throughout each building as a reminder to the physical distancing protocols.

FACE COVERINGS (MASKS AND SHIELDS) SCHOOL EMPLOYEES AND SUPPORT STAFF

School districts will follow all federal, state, and local mandates regarding face coverings for staff in K-12 public schools, and their locally developed face covering policy as approved by their local Board of Education.

Facial coverings will be provided to any school employee or support staff upon request.

School nurses or designees who care for individuals with COVID-19 symptoms must use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) in accordance with [OSHA standards](#).

FACE COVERINGS (MASKS AND SHIELDS) STUDENTS

School districts will follow all federal, state, and local mandates regarding face coverings for students in K-12 public schools, and their locally developed face covering policy as approved by their local Board of Education.

Facial coverings will be provided to any student upon request.

VISITORS/VOLUNTEERS

Visitors are discouraged from being in school district facilities while under any Ohio COVID-19 Risk Level or pandemic.

Visitors should call ahead and schedule a time to come to the school building.

Safety protocols, such as taking temperatures, short health questionnaires, etc. may be required before gaining access to the building.

Facial coverings are required for all visitors unless they qualify for an approved exemption.

A facial covering will be provided to any visitor upon request.

FOOD SERVICE

All districts will offer food service.

Logistics will be determined by each district in compliance with the HCHD based on:

- 1). Alternative locations for breakfast and lunch may be utilized by individual districts, buildings, or grade levels.
- 2). No self-service by students will be provided.
- 3). Individual condiments, rather than shared containers, will be utilized.
- 4). Students should wash and/or sanitize hands prior to, and after breakfast and lunch.

TRANSPORTATION

Parents and guardians who utilize school transportation must understand there exists some inherent risk.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to transport their bus riding children to school when possible.

Parents and guardians should establish backup plans for transporting their children in the event transportation must be adjusted or canceled.

All students who participate in school transportation are required to wear a face covering.

Hardin County school districts will allow two students per seat, and in some instances three students, if the students are younger and smaller.

Districts will attempt to seat siblings together.

Disinfection of surfaces will be completed after each bus route.

Seating charts will be used to assist with contact tracing should it be necessary.

Districts may use alternative schedules and adopt minimum requirements for transportation to reduce the number of students who are eligible for school district transportation

CLASSROOM OCCUPANCY

Seating charts and assigned seating are strongly recommended for every classroom.

Protocols for social tracing of students within the school building should be established to aid the health department in contact tracing should a case of COVID-19 be confirmed.

Transitions during the school day should be kept to a minimum, with student areas being disinfected between each transition.

INSTRUCTION

School-Based Learning

Districts will inform parents of the safety protocols in place, with the understanding that any student who attends school in person will incur some level of risk.

Districts will decrease the likelihood of infection and spread with hygiene, cleaning, and safety protocols as outlined in this document and the [COVID-19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools](#), but being in a public place has a certain level of risk that cannot be fully eliminated.

The Superintendent from each school district will determine the days, hours, and times for attendance based on recommendations from the Kenton-Hardin County Health department and the 4 Risk Levels outlined in the [Ohio COVID-19 Risk Level Guidelines for the Public](#). Types of instruction may include, but are not limited to 100% face-to-face learning, hybrid (reduced capacity of face-to-face learning), and remote learning.

Each school district will communicate any change in their instructional model to all members of the school community in a timely fashion.

Remote learning may be necessary for all students should the school building or district need to be shut down due to an outbreak, need for contact tracing, need for extensive cleaning, or other change in recommendations, orders, etc.

Remote Learning

Districts will inform parents of safety protocols in place, however, any parent or guardian who does not want their child to physically attend school may choose an online learning option if provided by their local school district.

Individual districts will determine what an online educational option will encompass and follow ODE guidance in establishing these programs.

School districts will determine when and how often a student may switch from the in-classroom learning option to the remote learning option.

SCHOOL PARTIES/CLASSROOM FIELD TRIPS

School parties and classroom field trips are strongly discouraged.

Parties and classroom field trips should be held virtually whenever possible.

RECESS AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

School districts will make every effort to maintain consistency of the universal safety protocols, outlined in this agreement, when it comes to recess and outdoor activities.

Students must wash and/or sanitize their hands before and after recess.

SPORTING EVENTS

Districts will develop protocols based on the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) protocols and the [Responsible RestartOhio](#) guidelines for all athletic activities, practices and competitions.

GATHERINGS AT SCHOOL BASED EVENTS

Districts will develop safety protocols for school events aligned to the [Responsible RestartOhio](#) guidelines.

Districts will communicate these safety protocols to visitors prior to the event, with the understanding that any visitor who attends the event will incur some level of risk.

Gatherings at school based events may be modified or canceled at the discretion of the Superintendent with minimal notice.