East Maine School District 63

2020-2021 School Opening & Safety Plan

Under COVID-19 Conditions

UPDATED: AUGUST 19, 2020

This is a fluid working document that may be adjusted as conditions and/or guidance changes.

Alexandra Brook
Board of Education President

Dr. Scott Clay
Superintendent
A MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT DR. CLAY

Dear D63 Families:

There’s no question that this has been a time like no other. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, all of us find that decisions we made a month ago - or even a few weeks ago - are subject to change.

District 63 is no different. Throughout the summer, our D63 Steering Committee has considered a wide range of back-to-school scenarios - acutely aware that whatever the “final” plan, it might have to pivot to something entirely different as circumstances change. As the Committee worked to develop a proposed plan that was flexible, followed state and CDC guidelines, and weighed the risks and benefits, our July Parent Survey provided a great deal of insight. More than 61 percent of our families responded, sharing their input, concerns, and questions. A heartfelt thank you to all those who participated (see the Appendix for details).

Our final District 63 Safely Back to School plan—approved by our Board of Education on August 6, 2020 - reflects our best efforts to adapt and respond to the uncertainty we all face.

Our landscape has altered so much over the past six months. But some things don’t change, including our commitment to providing your children with high-quality instruction and a meaningful education that empowers them to succeed in a changing world. We are confident that this plan will enable us to meet this goal.

We know you have questions, and we hope this plan answers many of them. We look forward to starting our 2020-2021 school year—and we want to thank the members of our D63 Steering Committee for their leadership and guidance in establishing this plan.

Sincerely,

Dr. Scott Clay
Superintendent

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Alexandra Brook, President
Tom Simmons, Vice President
Katie Anderson
Walter Gluzkin
Janet Kaczkowski
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Lauren Leitao, Nelson School Principal  
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Leslie White, District Nurse  
Eileen Murphy-Downer, Apollo Teacher Assistant  
Dina Gussie, Melzer Parent  
Simona Masini, Washington Parent  
Silva Shamoon, Twain Parent  
Judy Sibal, Nelson Parent  
Ninette Thomas, Apollo Parent  
Sherrone Thompson, Gemini Parent
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**TIMELINE**

**August 20**
First day of school for all grades, PreK-8. All instruction provided in a fully remote format through 63 Online.

**Each Month**
Monitor defined COVID-19 metrics (see appendix) for Region 10 (suburban Cook County) and local community with a full review at the October 1, 2020 Board meeting regarding possibilities for shifting to hybrid learning.

**When Safe and Appropriate**
Phased-in shift to dual learning environment by grade, beginning with preschool/kindergarten (parent may choose):
- **Hybrid environment**: onsite learning in school buildings in the morning coupled with remote learning in the afternoon.
- **Fully remote educational environment**: continue e-learning from home.

**If Necessary Throughout the School Year**
Pivot back to fully remote learning.

*Due to the ever-evolving COVID-19 pandemic, plans may change. At any time, based on state regulations or metrics that indicate it is no longer safe to have students or staff in our schools, the District may shift back to a fully remote learning environment.*
The health and safety of our students, staff, and families is of the utmost importance. When the 2020-2021 school year begins, school will be much different than previous years due to COVID-19. District 63’s school year plan is based on current guidance from public health officials and state agencies, and will be updated as the situation evolves.

Our 2020-2021 school year will begin on August 20 with remote learning for all students.

This will:

- **Possibly reduce the likelihood of frequent school closures and re-openings** due to COVID-19 cases in our buildings. When our schools closed in March, the seven-day rolling daily case average was approximately 480. As of August 19, that average was approaching 1,900—and the positivity rate for Region 10—suburban Cook County—had increased to 6.4%, with no signs of abating. Delaying face-to-face learning builds in more time for Illinois to make positive progress toward reducing caseloads, positivity rates, and hospitalizations—and for the medical community to learn more about the virus and treatment options while making progress toward developing a vaccine.

- **Provide additional time to create a safe in-person learning environment.**

- **Give students a chance to begin building relationships with teachers** while staying safely at home—before they return to a very different in-school environment that requires adjusting to face coverings, social distancing, and more.

- **Permit a sharp focus on learning as we launch the school year**—without the distraction of adjusting to the complexities of onsite school in the time of COVID-19.

- **Allow educators to “ramp up” for in-school learning**—sharing information about what the school day will be like and reassuring students before they enter our buildings.

When the District determines that returning to school buildings with a phased-in, grade-by-grade hybrid schedule is safe, parents will be asked to choose **either hybrid learning or fully remote learning**.

Once back in our schools, additional changes from hybrid to remote learning—or remote learning to hybrid learning—may be made at the start of a new trimester.

**Criteria for shifting to hybrid model**

The decision to move ahead with hybrid learning will be based on specific metrics determined by the District (see the Appendix) based on the Restore Illinois Plan, regional state-defined resurgence data for Region 10 (Suburban Cook County), and local factors including positivity rates and cases in the communities that D63 serves. The Board of Education will review these metrics at its October 1, 2020 meeting to re-assess the details and make any needed changes.
WHAT TO EXPECT AS THE SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS
REMOTE LEARNING START

63 Online—An Overview
Begins Thursday, August 20
The 2020-2021 School Year will begin with distance learning for all students

- Remote learning for all students will take place on the following schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Preschool</th>
<th>K-5</th>
<th>Gemini Grade 6</th>
<th>Gemini Grades 7-8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:45 Morning</td>
<td>8:15</td>
<td>8:25</td>
<td>8:55</td>
<td>School day begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>session begins</td>
<td>School day begins</td>
<td>Lunch begins</td>
<td>Lunch begins</td>
<td>School day begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>session ends</td>
<td>Lunch begins</td>
<td>Lunch ends</td>
<td>Lunch ends</td>
<td>Lunch ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15 afternoon</td>
<td>12:55</td>
<td>1:25</td>
<td>1:55</td>
<td>Lunch ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>session begins</td>
<td>Lunch ends</td>
<td>Lunch ends</td>
<td>Lunch ends</td>
<td>Lunch ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45 afternoon</td>
<td>2:25</td>
<td>3:16</td>
<td>3:46</td>
<td>School day ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>session ends</td>
<td>School day ends</td>
<td>School day ends</td>
<td>School day ends</td>
<td>School day ends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Curriculum will reflect changes and improvements, including increased teacher contact time and more synchronous instruction.

- D63’s 63 Online Program will include:
  - **Five hours of learning time** for grades K-8; two and a half hours of learning for pre-schoolers.
  - **Synchronous instruction** - live “real time” instruction, with students and teachers interacting through video conferencing and other real-time interaction.
  - **Asynchronous instruction** - occurring at different times, including recorded instruction, self-guided and individual learning time.
  - **Independent learning** - activities students can complete independently, with minimal support from adults at home.
  - **Grading and feedback** - report cards disseminated on the District’s regular schedule and available online.

- Curriculum will be based on Illinois Learning Standards for each grade and subject area.
- English learner, biliteracy, and dual language programming will continue.
- Students with Individualized Education Plans will receive their services as outlined in their Individualized Remote Learning Plans, developed with parents and the child’s IEP team.
- Students with 504 plans will continue to receive the accommodations and modifications listed in their plan.
- Meals for students who choose to purchase them or who qualify for free and reduced meals will be available for pick up (p. 18).
WHAT TO EXPECT AS THE SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS
REMOTE LEARNING START/SHIFT TO HYBRID MODEL

Shift to Hybrid or Remote Learning—An Overview

*When appropriate and safe D63 schools will phase in a shift to hybrid learning by grade, beginning with the youngest learners. See Appendix for details.*

Once back in our schools, parents will select either hybrid or remote learning. Additional changes from hybrid to remote learning—or remote learning to hybrid learning—may be made at the start of a new trimester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hybrid Learning</th>
<th>Remote Learning (63 Online)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grades K-8</strong></td>
<td><strong>All Grades</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Once metrics indicate that it is safe to do so, kindergarteners would return, followed by older grades over time.</td>
<td>• Students will <strong>attend school five days a week</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• K-8 students will <strong>attend school five mornings a week</strong>.</td>
<td>• <strong>Curriculum and instruction will remain much the same</strong> as it has been for the first six weeks of the school year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Breakfast for students who purchase or receive free or reduced cost meals will be served in schools in compliance with social distancing rules (p. 14)</td>
<td>• Meals for students will be distributed at Gemini and will be free of charge or at a reduced price if the student qualifies for Free and Reduced Meals. Otherwise, the student will be charged (p. 18).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Because of safety concerns, onsite learning will end prior to lunch.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lunch will be available for students as a <strong>sack lunch that they take with them when they leave</strong> (p. 18). Lunch fees will be applied to the student’s PushCoin account reflecting free, reduced, or full rates.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They will then <strong>participate in remote learning in the afternoon</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PreK</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Once metrics indicate that it is safe to do so, preschoolers would return,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• First Steps students will attend either a.m. or p.m. sessions on a slightly shortened schedule</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They will <strong>participate in remote learning activities for 45 minutes a day</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Shift to Hybrid or Remote Learning—An Overview

*When appropriate and safe D63 schools will phase in a shift to hybrid learning by grade, beginning with the youngest learners. See Appendix for details.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hybrid</th>
<th>Remote (63 Online)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pros**
- **Hybrid**
  - Traditional structured learning environment in a familiar face-to-face setting.
  - Allows for some student collaboration and social interaction (although such interaction will be somewhat curtailed due to the need to keep students separated as much as possible in the classroom).
  - Creates stable, positive routines for students.
  - Structured learning schedule.

- **Remote (63 Online)**
  - Increased teacher contact and synchronous instruction.
  - Students can do more work at their own pace.
  - While live instruction will be a key part of every school day, there is a greater level of flexibility in terms of when students can do their work.
  - Instructional programs can be tailored to student needs.
  - Low safety risk

**Cons**
- **Hybrid**
  - “In-person” school will be very different than it has been in past years, with far fewer opportunities for social interaction due to social distancing requirements.
  - Required social distancing (as possible) & PPE.
  - Based on changing circumstances, the program may shift back and forth between on-site instruction and fully remote learning.
  - If shifted to fully remote learning, students may need childcare and support at home.

- **Remote (63 Online)**
  - Remote learning cannot fully replace the responsiveness of in-person instruction.
  - Limited direct interaction with other students.
  - Increased need for parent support.
  - Requires self-discipline and self-motivation on the part of the student.
  - Some special programs (certain electives, for example) may not be available in this format.
  - Students may need childcare and support at home.
**Shift to Hybrid or Remote Learning—An Overview**

*When appropriate and safe D63 schools will phase in a shift to hybrid learning by grade, beginning with the youngest learners. See Appendix for details.*

**Athletics and Extracurricular Activities**

In order to minimize opportunities for the virus to spread, fall athletics and extracurricular activities will be cancelled; a decision about winter sports (some of which begin before Winter Break) will be made later in the school year. A full assessment will be made over the break and should circumstances change, athletics and extracurricular activities may resume in January.

*D63 schools will work with students and families to ensure equity and access to quality instruction. Accommodations for students with disabilities, students with diverse learning needs, students who are medically vulnerable, and English learners will be made as needed.*
When the school year shifts to in-person learning life in our buildings will look very different due to new health and safety measures. Our plan is based on Illinois State Board of Education requirements, and will be updated as conditions require.

**Face-to-Face Learning**
As noted above, schools will be open for onsite learning in the mornings (with the exception of PreK which will continue to offer a.m. and p.m. sessions). In the afternoon, students will learn remotely from home - or from Expanded Learning for those students who need childcare.

### How Will the School Day Look?

**Screening at Home:**
The state requires that all individuals must certify that they are free of symptoms before entering any District 63 building. Parents must certify that their children are symptom-free every day they attend school in our buildings.

A parent’s decision to send a child to school serves as this certification. (see p. 22 for a list of symptoms). Children who are ill or exhibiting symptoms must be kept at home.

Signage will also be posted at every school building.

Meetings with teachers and school administrators will be held virtually if at all possible and by appointment only. Visitors are discouraged (unless in the case of an emergency); if you must visit a school building, face coverings are required and you must self-certify that you are symptom free.

**During the School Day:**

**Arrival**
Students will enter at assigned doors to keep crowding to a minimum and will go straight to their classrooms. As it may take a little longer to unload buses, they will engage in independent activities under the supervision of the teacher until all students have arrived. Students will remain primarily in their classroom.

**Dismissal**
Students will be dismissed by group and will walk directly from classrooms to assigned doors, proceeding to buses or adults authorized to pick them up.

In some cases, arrival and dismissal will be staggered—either by type (buses/cars/walkers) or by grades (most likely at Gemini). Details will be made available when schools return to face-to-face learning.
Other School Day Considerations

- At elementary schools there will be outside movement breaks - but no recess.

- Students who get breakfast at school will eat in school cafeterias, spaced six feet apart. If it is not possible to space students six feet apart in the school cafeteria, students will be broken up into groups and will eat in additional spaces.

- There will be no lunch consumed inside of buildings. Students who receive free or reduced meals - or who choose to purchase lunch - will take a sack lunch with them when they leave.

- Water fountains will not be accessible. Students are encouraged to bring a personal water bottle to school - there are many water refill stations.
In compliance with Illinois State Board of Education requirements all staff, students, and visitors will be required to wear a mask that covers both the nose and mouth at all times when in the presence of other people.

No one without a medical exemption will be permitted to remain in the school without a face covering.

This includes:

- While in the classroom
- While waiting to enter or leave the building
- While in any enclosed space within the building (restrooms, office, teacher lounge, nurse’s office, hallways, etc.)
- On school grounds when it is not possible to maintain six-foot social distancing.
- While on the bus
- Staff and students will be encouraged to provide their own masks, but we will have disposable masks for anyone who needs them.
- As needed, staff who are in regular close contact (within six feet for 15 minutes or more) to meet the academic, functional, hygiene needs of students will be provided with additional PPE, including face shields, gloves, and disposable gowns.
- Gloves are not recommended for use by students or staff, with the exception of those conducting cleaning, first aid, or providing hand-over-hand instruction.

For additional face covering information and exemptions, see the Appendix.
Social distancing will limit the spread of the virus. And in compliance with ISBE regulations, schools will adhere to the following strategies to maintain social distancing as much as possible:

- Markers will be placed outside the elementary buildings, spaced six feet apart, for parents who walk to pick up students after school.

- Non-essential furniture will be removed from classrooms, allowing maximum space for students and staff. To the extent possible, allowing for classroom size, students will be placed six feet apart. **It is important to note that it may not be possible to keep students six feet apart at all times.**

- Group activities will be limited. As noted previously, there will be no athletics, extracurricular activities, regular musical programs, or assemblies at least through the fall.

- Only essential visitors will be permitted in the schools and all visitors must use a face covering. Meetings will occur virtually unless a parent requests otherwise - and during an in-person meeting, most participants may still attend the meeting virtually.

- Routes will be designated for entry, exit, and other transition times.

- Staff will be asked to practice social distancing, including but not limited to:
  - When working indoors or outdoor areas
  - Before and after the school day
  - Coming and going from vehicles
  - Entering, working, and exiting physical buildings or other structures
  - During breaks and lunch periods

- Elementary students will be encouraged to maintain social distancing during outdoor movement breaks where possible.

- Students who get breakfast at school will eat in school cafeterias, spaced six feet apart. If it is not possible to space students six feet apart in the school cafeteria, students will be broken up into groups and will eat in additional spaces.

- There will be no lunch consumed inside of the building. Students who receive free or reduced meals - or who choose to purchase lunch - will take a sack lunch with them when they leave.
OTHER SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

**Hand washing and sanitizing**
- All staff and students will **wash or sanitize their hands upon arrival in the building**. Sanitizer will be provided in classrooms that do not have a sink.
- Staff and students will be expected to **wash/sanitize their hands regularly**.
- Every classroom and work station will have **hand sanitizer to use**.
- Sanitizing stations will be **placed at each entrance and any common areas that don’t have sinks**.

**Cleaning protocols**
- Each building will have a **commercial-strength disinfectant sprayer**.
- D63’s maintenance staff will be **sanitizing surfaces daily**.
- Bathrooms will be sanitized **multiple times per day**.
- High touch areas, including desks/tables, door knobs, sinks, and work-stations will be **sanitized by custodial staff every night**.
- Sanitizing wipes will be **distributed to all teaching staff** and available in each classroom for use during the day.
- Custodians will **complete a daily cleaning/sanitizing checklist**.

**Building & Other Modifications**
- Heating and cooling system will run **24 hours a day** to ensure a steady supply of fresh air in each classroom.
- All staff members will complete **an online training** about safe in-school practices before students return to the buildings.
- Clear **Plexiglas physical barriers** have been installed in all school offices where face-to-face interaction with the public occurs.
- Schools will **limit sharing of supplies** between students to the extent possible and encourage students to take home personal items for cleaning daily.
- Signage promoting **social distancing, hand washing, face coverings, and health hygiene practices** will be posted throughout the schools.
- **One-way hallway and stairwell markers**, as well as **social distancing markers** will be placed throughout schools.
- **Lockers will not be used** and students will need to use a backpack to carry their belongings.
- **Drinking fountains will be disabled**. Students will be encouraged to bring refillable water bottles; each building has multiple bottle filling stations.
SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- **Some related services may be provided differently than in the past.** A number of methods may be used to service students, including:
  - the use of clear barriers or face shields during therapy sessions.
  - recorded sessions assigned to students through their therapy provider.
  - real-time virtual lessons.

- For students with significant medical needs and sensory differences, wearing a mask for the entire school day will present challenges. **Decisions regarding students with documented sensory, cognitive, behavioral, or physical needs being required to wear facial coverings will be made on a case by case basis by the child’s team.**
  - Teams will work with families to build student tolerance for wearing masks or face coverings whenever possible.
  - All are encouraged to use a face shield or covering if at all possible.

- Special Services Teams will work with the parents of medically fragile and immunocompromised students to discuss specific needs and determine how to best meet these needs. Parents may also elect to use remote learning when offered by the District. Special education services would be provided as outlined in the student’s Individualized Remote Learning Plan.

- **Special education meetings will occur virtually** unless a parent requests otherwise. While a parent may request an in-person meeting, some team members may still attend the meeting virtually in order to adhere to recommended social distancing guidelines.

- Adults in some of our classrooms will have **access to isolation aprons, face shields, gloves, and masks.**
TRANSPORTATION

Bus Transportation

- In compliance with state guidelines, no more than 50 students will be on any bus at any time.

- Students will fill the vehicle from back to front. They will exit the vehicle from front to back.

- All buses will keep their windows down (weather permitting) to ensure maximum ventilation.

- Students will be required to wear face masks. Drivers will wear masks if at all possible when driving (unless the mask inhibits driving) and at all times when loading and unloading buses.

- Students will practice social distancing. While getting on the bus, students should line up six feet apart as they board and keep a distance of six feet between them as they exit the bus.

- Parents of preschool and special education students who assist in securing and taking off seat belts and clips will continue to assist in these tasks, but will be required to wear face coverings and gloves while on the bus.

- While parents are expected to supply these items, every bus will have a box of gloves for any parent who does not have gloves.

- Should a student inform the driver that they have become ill while in transit, they will be isolated in a dedicated seat directly behind the driver.

- D63’s transportation provider, First Student, has implemented cleaning and disinfecting procedures for all buses. Its Vehicle Disinfection Protocol provides protection up to 30 days without the need for chemicals or alcohol. Likewise, Citicare, which provides transportation for students with special needs, had implemented rigorous cleaning and disinfecting procedures.

Car Drop Off and Pick Up

- Drivers must stay in their cars at all times, following the designated carline route at each school. Guidelines for preschool drop-off and pick-up will be shared in future communications. (please note: car lines are likely to be long as many students will be shifting from using the bus to parent pick up and drop off.)

- Students must exit the vehicle in a face covering.

- Students must enter the building at their assigned entrance and walk directly to their classroom (no congregating on the playground or in any other common area).
District 63 will continue to provide breakfast and lunch during the 2020-2021 school year.

With the school year beginning, it will return to its usual practice: as part of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), it will provide meals free of charge or at a reduced price if the student qualifies for free or reduced price meals. Otherwise, students will be charged $2.85 for lunch and $1.65 for breakfast.

**Fully Remote Learning Format**

- Parents / guardians of registered D63 students who qualify for free and reduced meals or who choose to purchase them will be able to pick up meals at Gemini Middle School on Mondays and Fridays from 9 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

- Parents / guardians don’t need to have their child present when picking up meals, but they must provide the name of the registered student in order to receive the meals.

- The District will provide a card with a barcode for each students. Parents can drive by and show the card, which will be scanned to speed up the carline.

**Hybrid Format**

- Students who get breakfast at school will eat in school cafeterias, spaced six feet apart. If it is not possible to space students six feet apart in the school cafeteria, students will be broken up into groups and will eat in additional spaces.

- No lunch will be consumed in school buildings. School staff will confirm which students want lunch every morning and those students will be sent home with a sack lunch.

- Meals for students who continue to learn remotely will continue to be available via pick up at Gemini on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:30—11:30 a.m.
D63’s Expanded Learning Program traditionally provides before- and after-school enrichment for K-8th graders - as well as offerings during school breaks and early dismissal days at the District’s Family Resource Center.

This year, it will be expanding its programming to provide care for children who may not be able to stay at home for remote learning. While the District’s goal is to keep students and staff safe by keeping school buildings closed or limiting the number of hours students are in our schools, we do recognize that in some cases parents have no other option than to access care for their children.

**Fully Remote Learning (Begins August 20)**

Full-day childcare will be available from 7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. to support families who must go to work by providing their K-8th grade children with a safe place to spend their day. Space is limited.

- NEW registration forms are required and are posted on the District website.
- **Bus transportation is available;** select this option on the registration form.
- Students will be grouped by grade. During the remote learning portion of the day staff will provide ongoing support as students navigate remote learning on their Chromebooks.
- Staff will facilitate additional fun activities that encourage physical distancing and safety.
- Expanded Learning will provide a snack.
- **There is no fee for care provided during the remote learning school day** (see p. 7 for a schedule). Parents will be charged a fee for care provided outside of this time frame.

**Hybrid Learning (When Determined to be Safe and Appropriate)**

Once the District shifts to hybrid learning, Expanded Learning will continue to offer childcare services in the afternoon for K-8th grade students who cannot return home for the remote learning portion of the school day.

- Regular before-school care will be offered. Students will be bused to their home schools in time for the start of the school day.
- Programming will run from the end of the school day through 6:15 p.m. Students will be bused from their home schools to the FRC.
- Registration is required.
- Students will be grouped by grade. During their afternoon remote learning (time varies by school and grade), staff will provide ongoing support as students navigate remote learning on their Chromebooks.
- Students will be able to bring a lunch from home OR collect their school-provided lunch as they exit their school.
- Expanded Learning will provide a snack.
- **There is no fee for care provided during the remote learning afternoon.** Regular Expanded Learning before- and after-school care fees applies outside of this time frame.
Safety Precautions & Protocols

As is the case in our school buildings, Expanded Learning will operate under strict health and safety standards.

In some cases, protocols differ from our schools as this school-aged childcare program follows the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) guidelines.

- Car pick-up and drop-off will be contactless.
- Parents will pull up to the front of the building and remain in their cars.
- A staff member will greet them, at a safe distance, collect any self-certification data and a temperature check, then accompany the student to their classroom.
- Once the District shifts to hybrid learning, students traveling to Expanded Learning at lunchtime will do so by bus. See page 17 for information about bus transit.
- Classrooms will be limited to approximately 12 and no more than 15 students in order to maintain a six-foot social distance. Groups will have designated classrooms and will not mix with other groups. Groups will travel together to outdoor play and any other activity.
- Face coverings will be worn at all times except when eating.
- To the extent possible, when not participating in remote learning, time will be spent outside. During good weather, all meals will be eaten outside, with students spaced 6-10 feet apart.
- The Family Resource Center will follow the same sanitizing and disinfecting policies carried out in the school buildings (p. 15).
- Additional DCFS requirements will include:
  - Daily temperature checks of all staff, children, and visitors who enter the building.
  - Daily self-certification by staff, children (parents), and visitors that they have not experienced COVID-19 like symptoms in the past 24 hours
- Children or staff members diagnosed with COVID-19 may not return to the facility until **ALL three of the following are met (per CDC guidelines; DCFS may institute different guidelines):**
  - Individual is free from fever without the use of fever-reducing medications for at least 24 hours.
  - Individual’s symptoms, including cough, have improved.
  - It has been at least ten days since the onset of the individual’s illness.
D63 is committed to supporting students' social emotional wellness and offering resources to ensure students transition back to school smoothly. Families and schools will need to work together to check how students are feeling and assess their individual needs to provide the support our students need during these challenging times.

**District Resources**

- **School-based support**
  - Each D63 school has full time social workers, psychologists, and nurses on staff to support students and their families. Check your school website for details.

- **Family Resource Center**
  - **Self-care Saturday series**: all presentations are [posted to the District website](#) in English and Spanish
  - **Virtual Programming for Families** starting in mid-September, including parenting classes focusing on social emotional wellness, English classes, mindfulness workshops, and more to maintain a sense of connection with our community. Check the [Family Resource Center webpage](#) in the second half of August.

**Local Mental Health Resources**

- **Niles Family Services**. Provides affordable counseling for Niles residents. Call 847.588.8460.
- **Maine Township MaineStay Youth & Family Services**. Provides affordable counseling and psychiatric services via video or phone sessions. Call 847-297-2510 x 258 to get started.
- **Call4Calm**. Illinois Department of Human Services' free and anonymous support line. To speak to a mental health professional, text the word “TALK” or “HABLAR” (for Spanish speakers) to 552020. Within 24 hours, you'll receive a call from a mental health professional employed by a local community health center.
- **National Suicide Prevention Hotline**. Provides 24/7 free and confidential support for people in distress, and prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones. Call 800.273.8255.

**Other Resources**

Families seeking other resources (food, help with utilities) are encouraged to visit our [Community Resources webpage](#).
WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMEONE GETS SICK?

Best practices regarding quarantines, testing, protocols for individuals traveling to “hot spots,” and more are continuously changing. Before schools open for any face-to-face learning, the District will review the latest information and update its COVID-19 protocols and policies below as appropriate.

Additional details may be found in the District Health Office’s COVID-19 FAQs guide.

COVID-19 Symptoms
People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

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

Source: Centers for Disease Control. Please note that this list does not include all possible symptoms. The CDC will continue to update this list over time.

Self-Screening
As noted elsewhere in this document, in compliance with state guidelines Districts must require self-certification and verification for all staff, students, and visitors entering school buildings. At District 63, the fact that parents are choosing to send their children to school - and that staff members are coming in to work - serves as new self-certification every day. Keep your child home (staff members should also stay home from work) if any of the symptoms listed above appear without other known reasons.
WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMEONE GETS SICK?

Students or Staff who Present Symptoms While at School

- Staff members will be isolated, asked to go home immediately and advised to contact a health care provider.
- Students will go to a designated safe isolation area until they can be picked up by a parent or guardian. Note: Parents should be prepared to pick up their student(s) immediately in the instance they develop COVID-19 symptoms while at school. Please be sure to have updated emergency contacts in PowerSchool.
- The area of the school used by the person exhibiting symptoms will be cleaned and disinfected.

COVID-19 Protocol and Notification

Should the District become aware of a positive COVID-19 case among a student or staff member, the District will follow protocols outlined by the Illinois Department of Public Health (as of August 18, 2020), including:

- Students and staff who test positively for COVID-19 must isolate for ten calendar days after symptoms begin - and remain isolated until 24 hours after their fever has broken.
  - Students and staff who exhibit symptoms but do not test positively will still be required to stay home for 14 calendar days after the onset of symptoms and be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to our buildings.
- Following state guidelines, staff members or students who we believe have been in close contact with a person who has tested positive for the virus (within six feet for more than 15 cumulative minutes indoors) will be informed, and must self-quarantine for 14 days. Due to medical privacy laws, the individual will not be identified.
- The District will notify local health officials of the identity of the person testing positive.
- Notification of any student or staff who may have been exposed will include (if possible):
  - If known, date of potential exposure.
  - Information on the incubation period and safety protocols that help to limit exposure (hand washing, face coverings, physical distancing).
  - Information about local testing sites.
  - Students: Return to school protocols.
  - Staff: Employee leave information if remote work is not an option.
- In addition, positive COVID-19 cases may lead to an “Outbreak Response” and the closure of a classroom, multiple classrooms, or even a school. This will be determined by District administration with direction from the Cook County Department of Public Health.
Protocol Regarding Travel Outside of Illinois
District 63 **strongly encourages** staff and families to follow national and local guidelines regarding returning from out-of-state travel:

- **International travel:** [Centers for Disease Control guidance](https://www.cdc.gov) recommends that any individual returning from overseas travel self-quarantine for 14 days before returning to school or work.
- **Domestic travel:** [Cook County Department of Public Health guidance](https://www.cookcountypublichealth.org) released in July 2020 directs travelers returning to suburban Cook County from states with surging COVID-19 rates to quarantine for 14 days.

Returning to School After a COVID-19 Diagnosis
After a positive diagnosis is made, students and staff members may not return to school unless **ALL three of these conditions are met:**

- Individual is free from fever without the use of fever-reducing medications for at least 24 hours.
- Individual’s symptoms, including cough, have improved.
- It has been at least ten days since the onset of the individual’s illness.

Students and staff should not return to school until they have been cleared by a medical professional; school nurses will work directly with families and staff members to ensure that they are cleared before returning to school.
## Metrics for Transitioning to Hybrid Learning

Decisions about when to phase in hybrid learning will be based on the metrics detailed below—which pertain to the state’s Region 10—suburban Cook County, as well as other, more local factors—including positivity rates and cases in the communities that D63 serves. A benchmark: as of August 2, 2020, the positivity rate in Region 10 had increased to 5.7 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric Target</th>
<th>Hybrid Phase In</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decreased seven-day rolling average (seven out of ten days) in the positivity rate as of September 20 with a maximum of 3.5%.</td>
<td>Hybrid preschool/kindergarten may begin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased seven-day rolling average (seven out of ten days) in the positivity rate as of October 20 with a maximum of 3.0%.</td>
<td>Hybrid 1st and 2nd grades may begin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No kindergarten classrooms have been closed due to COVID-19 infections.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased seven-day rolling average (seven out of ten days) in the positivity rate as of November 20 with a maximum of 2.5%.</td>
<td>Hybrid 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades may begin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No K-2 grade classrooms have been closed in the preceding month due to COVID-19 infections.</td>
<td>Hybrid District-wide Instruction may begin (including all grades at Gemini).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased seven-day rolling average (seven out of ten days) in the positivity rate as of November 20 with a maximum of 2.0% .</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No classrooms have been closed due to COVID-19 infections in the preceding month .</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At any point, if the positivity rate reaches 2%, districtwide hybrid instruction may begin. Conversely, any sustained rise in positivity may result in a return to fully remote learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The District 63 Board of Education will review these metrics on October 1, 2020, to further assess the benchmarks and make any necessary changes. The above metrics are also subject to revision based on changing guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Department of Public Health, and/or the Centers for Disease Control.
Parent Survey Results: Highlights

In July 2020, District 63 disseminated its Safely Back to School Parent Survey in English and Spanish. The survey garnered 1,547 responses - representing approximately 61 percent of our families. Highlights:

Q: Given the circumstances surrounding COVID-19, how comfortable are you with sending your child(ren) back to school for onsite learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comfort level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very comfortable</td>
<td>10.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat comfortable</td>
<td>38.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral/No opinion</td>
<td>18.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat uncomfortable</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very uncomfortable</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: Taking your comfort level into account, will you be sending your child back to D63 for any scenario that involves onsite learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>41.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>23.46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: hundreds of respondents expressed a high level of skepticism that D63—and schools in general—could enforce protocols consistently and successfully (face masks, social distancing), particularly for younger children. Many noted that their “maybe” responses might shift to “no” as the start date approached.
APPENDIX

Q: In the case of a hybrid schedule, will your child(ren) need childcare when they are not in school?

Childcare Needs?
R=1547

- Yes: 25.27%
- No: 74.72%

Q: If you originally planned to use D63 bus service, what will you do?

Plans to Use Bus (For Those Who Usually Do)
R=1386

- Sign up and use it from the first day: 42.48%
- Sign up, but hold off on using it to see how things go: 33.69%
- Not use it at all given the circumstances: 23.80%
Centers for Disease Control (CDC) COVID-19 Prevention

Everyone should:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you've been in a public space, after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not regularly available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Stay at least six feet (about two arm's length) from other people. Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover.

Risk for Severe Illness From COVID-19

Based on what we know now, those at high-risk for severe illness form COVID-19 are people:

- with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma.
- who have serious heart conditions.
- who are immunocompromised.
  - Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications.
- with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher).
- with diabetes.
- with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis.
- with liver disease.
- who are pregnant (might be at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 compared to non-pregnant people).
Exemptions to Face Covering Requirement

- Persons age two years or under.
- Persons with a verified medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering (parents must submit documentation from a medical professional). This includes persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a face covering could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance.
- Persons who are hearing impaired or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
- Persons for whom wearing a face covering would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.

Additional Resources

Centers for Disease Control
Cook County Department of Public Health
Illinois Department of Public Health
Illinois State Board of Education: Starting the 2020-21 School Year June 23, 2020