

Duchesne County School District School Reopening Policy

Purpose

The Board of Duchesne County School District (“DCSD”) has established this policy to meet or exceed the requirements for the safe opening of school for in-person learning beginning Fall 2020. This policy follows the framework provided by the Utah State Board of Education (“USBE”) and the Governor for assessing risk levels of various school settings and incorporating appropriate levers to mitigate risk.

This policy also reflects allowances for local flexibility and is subject to change as the context and information surrounding the pandemic evolves. DCSD’s Board reserves the right to adapt this policy to fit the unique circumstances of the school community, the school building, individual classrooms, and individual settings. This policy, and its requirements and guidelines, will be in place as long as the Governor’s Executive Order is in effect.

Elements of the Policy

The elements addressed by this policy include the following:

- Repopulating Schools
- Communication and Training
- Accommodating Individual Circumstances (e.g. high-risk, personal decisions)
- Enhanced Environment Hygiene & Safety
- School Schedules
- Implementation of Mitigation Actions in School Settings such as Classrooms, Transitions, Office Spaces, Transportation, Restrooms, and the Gymnasium
- Applying a set of principles and levers to mitigate risk of spread of COVID-19 across school settings
- Monitoring for Incidences
- Containing Potential Outbreaks
- Temporarily Reclosing (if necessary)

Communication and Training

The Board authorizes the Administration to develop protocols for the school’s reopening and actions plans and train teachers, staff, students, and caregivers on these protocols. The Board also requires the following related actions:

- Educate and train students and caregivers on DCSD’s protocols and action plans;
- Post and/or make protocols and action plans accessible to the school community;
- Designate a point of contact for questions or specific concerns;
- Regularly communicate to families, students, and staff on best practices for at-home preventive care, as well as school health and safety protocols;
- Use a variety of communication tools to reach varying stakeholder audiences including email, voice messaging, website, social media, and print mailings;
- Communicate the economic importance of supporting parents’ return to a normal workday;
- Express a willingness to evaluate, improve and reevaluate the plan as necessary;
- Be prepared for locally-driven crisis response communications;

- In consultation with local health, pre-write/draft statements for varying situations regarding outbreaks, positive cases, etc.
- Plan to include messaging to counter stigma and discrimination.

Accommodating Individual Circumstances

The Board authorizes the Administration to develop protocols to accommodate individual circumstances through identification of students, families, and staff who are high risk for severe illness due to Covid-19 and to have a plan in place to address requests for students' alternative learning. Protocols include the following:

- Creating a process for students, families, and staff to identify as high risk for severe illness due to COVID-19 and have a plan in place to address requests for alternative learning or additional safety protocols;
- Designate high-risk individuals and take reasonable steps to minimize and mitigate risks for employees who identify as high-risk as outlined in the Utah Leads Together Plan and by ADA;
- Systematically review all current plans such as Individual Health Care Plans, Individualized Education Plans, and 504 plans for accommodating students with special healthcare needs and update their care plans as needed to decrease their risk for exposure to COVID-19.

Enhanced Environment Hygiene and Safety

The Board authorizes the Administration to develop protocols for implementing an increased cleaning and hygiene regimen. Protocols include the following:

- Faculty and staff wear face coverings such as masks or shields when physical distancing is not feasible;
- Make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant readily available to staff, students, and visitors in controlled environments to ensure safe use;
- Maximize physical distancing, acknowledging that physical distancing of 6 feet or greater is not feasible in many instances.

School Schedules

The Board authorizes the Administration to implement strategies and schedules that allow students to attend school in-person while offering other options such as distance and blended learning as resources allow.

Implementation of Mitigation Tactics in School Settings

The Board authorizes the Administration to apply a set of principles and levers to mitigate the risk of the spread of COVID-19 across school settings. Protocols for specific settings are outlined below:

Classrooms

- Develop and provide educator training on implementing strategies to identify, mitigate, and manage risk in a classroom setting
- As much as reasonably possible the plan will seek to support contact tracing efforts by assigning seats and/or small groups and keep the same students and teachers or staff within the same groups.

Transitions

- Identify high traffic areas and apply floor markings or signage to direct traffic.
- When needed and where possible, staggered transitions times will be implemented to limit increased student traffic and congregating.

Entry/Exit Points

- Designate entry/exit flow paths to minimize congestion;
- Frequently clean high-touch areas in entry and exit points.
- Establish protocols for drop-off/pick-up and communicate updates and expectations to families;

Visitors and Volunteers

- Limit nonessential visitors and volunteers to campuses and programs -DCSD reserves the right to determine essential versus nonessential visitors and volunteers;
- Establish protocols for any visitors and non-regular staff, including at a minimum temperature checking and the wearing of face coverings;

Transportation

- Require face coverings for students, staff, other passengers – DCSD may make exceptions for unique student circumstances;
- Implement strategies to ensure driver safety;
- Develop protocols for minimizing mixing of students from different households and regularly cleaning and disinfecting seats and other high-touch surfaces;
- Make reasonable efforts to support contact tracing.

Restrooms

- Provide education and display signage on proper hand hygiene;
- Create schedule for cleaning high-touch areas (e.g., faucets, paper towel dispensers, door handles);
- Ensure PPE (gloves, masks) is available for staff providing support in restrooms, including custodians;
- Provide training for proper cleaning protocols for COVID-19.

Cafeteria/Lunchroom

- Mark spaced lines and designate serving line flow paths;
- Food service workers wear face coverings;
- Implement student hand hygiene routines before and after meal services;
- Increase cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch areas;
- Remove self-service salad bars, buffet, and vending machines;
- When needed and where possible, staggered lunch times will be implemented to limit increased student traffic and congregating.

Large Group Gatherings Such as Assemblies, Concerts

The Board authorizes the Administration to ensure group gatherings are organized with health and safety principles and requirements in place and, as needed, in consultation with the Tri-County Health Department.

Unique Courses with Higher Risk of Spread

The Board authorizes the Administration identify courses that would be more at risk and make plans with support from the TriCounty Health Department, as needed, to mitigate risks.
(Choir, Drama, Dance, PE, Band, Sports)

Recess and Playgrounds

The Board authorizes the Administration to ensure that recess and playgrounds are managed with health and safety principles and requirements in place and, as needed, in consultation with TriCounty Health Department.

Special Education, Related Services, or School Counseling (School Psychologist, Speech Language Pathologist)

The Board requires the Administration provide plexiglass, face shields, and/or auxiliary aids for one-on-one close contact to ensure students with disabilities have equal access to information. The Board further requires that the Administration offer reasonable accommodations for students who are unable to wear face coverings in settings where it is required for other students.

Symptom Monitoring

The Board authorizes the Administration to develop training on protocols for symptom monitoring for administrators, teachers, and families. Protocols include the following:

- Establish a plan to assist families in conducting symptom checking at-home;
- Assist families in access to thermometers, or other items, as-needed to fulfill appropriate symptom checking requirements;
- Carefully monitor staff symptoms, student symptoms, and absenteeism;
- Educate and promote to staff, students, "If you feel sick; stay home"
- Do not allow symptomatic people to physically return to school unless their symptoms are NOT due to a communicable disease as confirmed by a medical provider;
- Implement more lenient absentee policies during periods of mild to moderate and sustained local COVID-19 transmission.

Containing Potential Exposures & Outbreaks Preparation Phase

The Board authorizes the Administration to develop training on protocols for containing potential outbreaks. Protocols include the following:

- Consult with the TriCounty Health Department regarding procedures for tracing a positive COVID-19 case by an employee, student, visitor, or those who have come into contact with an individual testing positive;
- Designate quarantine rooms at each school to temporarily house students who are unable to return home immediately;
- Communicate health and safety issues transparently, while protecting the privacy of students and families.

Temporary Reclosing Protocols

The Board authorizes the Administration to develop training for administrators, teachers, and staff on DCSD's protocol for temporarily reclosing schools, if necessary. Protocols include the following:

- Establish a plan in consultation with the TriCounty Health Department on responding to confirmed cases and the coordination of temporary closure of school;
- In the event of an exposure, contact TriCounty Health Department in order to trigger the pre-established plan which may include the following: class dismissal, school dismissal, longevity of dismissal based on community spread, cleaning/sanitization, communications, contact tracing, etc.
- Develop a communication procedure for students and faculty in the case there is a temporary reclosure;
- Review original Continuity of Education Plans that were implemented during the spring 2020 soft closure and analyze lessons learned; Consider making changes accordingly and incorporating into transition management plans;
- Analyze remote learning capabilities;
- Explore extracurriculars, in-person events that may also need to be temporarily postponed, canceled, or transitioned to virtual events.