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Carrington School Families,

Please allow me to express my gratitude for all that you did to help us work through what was a confusing, sometimes frustrating, and at times, wonderful last school year. Thank you to the students, staff, parents, and community members who have helped us succeed through these unprecedented times. The 2020-2021 school year was challenging but we are proud of how our students worked through those difficulties.

The diligent work of teachers, principals, and parents over the past year has helped our school continue to improve, even through major adversity. We are again challenged with what next school year will look like. At this point, it is our plan to return to a normal school year with regular procedures and access as we have had in the past.

For academic, social-emotional, and economic reasons, we are compelled to strive to return to an exclusively in-person model. The district must continue to consider all practical steps to keep our schools from contributing to virus spread in our community.

This **FEDERALLY REQUIRED** plan represents many hours of critical thinking, research, modeling, work, and concern by our educators, staff, and school board. We also reviewed input gathered from our employees, community members, and parents.

We would appreciate it if you would take some time to review this plan. We encourage everyone to ask questions and respectfully communicate any concerns you may have as we move forward. Together, our school can continue to provide quality education to our children in a safe manner if we continue to collaborate to solve problems.

We will continue to ask for grace and understanding as we work through constant challenges together. Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation. It is truly appreciated. I want to extend many thanks to Dr. Benjamin Shaeffer of the Ray School District and Mike McNeff of the Rugby School District for their assistance.

Respectfully,

Kris Kuehn, Superintendent

Carrington School District #49
Return to In-person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan
June 2021
Revised: August 2021

Introduction

The purpose of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Fund is to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impacts of COVID-19 on the nation's students by addressing students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.

This plan will describe how Carrington School District #49 will ensure continuity of services for students while also maintaining health and mitigation strategies to keep students and staff safe. For any questions about this plan, contact Superintendent Kris Kuehn at (701) 652-3136 or kris.kuehn@k12.nd.us

We returned to in-person instruction on August 20, 2020, and never completely shut our doors thanks to the diligent efforts of our staff, students and parents following our return to learning plans. Our Health and Safety and Distance Learning plans were consistently followed during the 2020-2021 school year. All mitigation strategies were implemented, and we saw a major decline of cases in the spring of 2021. We are prioritizing student needs and will outline our plan for addressing those needs.

Health and Safety Strategies

Throughout the pandemic, the Carrington School District has prioritized the health and safety of students and staff during the return to in-person learning. Following these strategies allowed us to stay in school and keep everyone safe. Below is a description of the safety strategies we utilized and the current status of implementation.

Universal and correct wearing of masks

All visitors were required to wear masks for the duration of our 2020-2021 school year and outside visitors were very limited. Masks were recommended throughout the school year and required on bus routes where social distancing was not possible. Masks were required and later optional for students, staff, and visitors. As we begin the 2021-2022 school year students, staff and visitors still have the option to wear masks when on school grounds.

Physical distancing

Teachers and custodial staff refigured all classrooms during the summer of 2020 to create physical distancing in classrooms. Elementary students remained in classroom groups throughout the day and did not co-mingle with other groups. Moving forward, Carrington Schools will monitor the need for physical distancing to reduce transmittable moments as needed.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Stations are made available throughout school buildings which include hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, and anti-bacterial hand soap. Coughing and sneezing into a tissue or sleeve, proper disposal of used tissues and proper handwashing are stressed to students and staff.

Contact tracing

Foster County Health Department and school administrators administered contact tracing during the 2020-2021 school year.

Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students

Educator vaccine clinics took place in April at our school. Staff were encouraged to be vaccinated, if they chose.

Continuity of Services

Carrington Public Schools have taken and will continue to take actions to ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs.

Academic Needs

When we returned to in-person learning in the fall of 2020, we anticipated that student achievement may have declined due to the drastic change in educational setting in the final quarter of the 2020 school year.

Consequently, we have put the following items into place to meet the needs of students' learning.

- Refined assessment protocols to determine areas of need.
- Identification of student gap areas in reading and math
- Creation of reading pathways for multi-tiered systems of support

Other Services

Student transportation services to and from school have been provided during each reopening phase in compliance with CDC guidelines. Extracurricular and athletic activities were resumed for full competition under appropriate health mitigation strategies beginning last school year.

Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the return to learning plans, our team worked with the input of the Foster County Health Department, a team of staff, and the school board during several working sessions. Input from parents was gathered through both formal and informal visits and presentations and through the opportunity for public comment at board meetings.

Social/Emotional Learning

School Counselors have, and will continue to address Covid-19 social/emotional concerns by:

- working with classroom teachers and building principals
- conduct regular classroom, small group, and individual sessions.

Carrington Return to In-Person Learning General Guidelines:

- The ratios (people allowed in a learning space) set by the CDC and our Governor were followed when possible.
- Encourage the use of masks by students and staff when necessary
- Encourage good hygiene (handwashing with soap, coughing and sneezing into the elbow)
- Arranged students to allow for maximum social distancing when necessary
- Students not feeling well should not enter the school
- Ensured adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (art supplies, equipment, balls, weights, etc. assigned to a single student) or limited use of supplies and equipment by one group of students at a time
- Maintenance staff will continue to clean and disinfect the rooms/areas used
- Avoid sharing food or drink among students

Carrington School Position for the 2021-2022 School Year:

At the Carrington Public School we believe students and staff members are in control of their own health decisions. If students are “slightly” sick or if parents do not feel comfortable sending their children to school we strongly believe they should have the option to exercise the choice to remain home and continue learning. **This year we will not be offering an online curriculum for those not attending school.** We feel strongly that a student’s presence in school is vitally important to their success and ask all parents to make sure their child(ren) attend whenever possible. We believe it is vitally important for our students to continue to work to meet all standards and achieve learning goals.

Equal Access to Learning

Carrington Schools will be diligent in providing equal access to educational opportunities for all students regardless of socioeconomic status, race, creed, color or disability. Each student is expected to use the tools provided to them to succeed in their own way.

American Academy of Pediatrics:

School is fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being and provides our children and adolescents with academic instruction, social and emotional skills, safety, reliable nutrition, physical/speech and mental health therapy, and opportunities for physical activity, among other benefits. These guidelines are provided acknowledging that our understanding of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic is changing rapidly.

The Carrington School District Return to In-Person Learning Plan will consider the following key principles:

- School policies must be flexible and nimble in responding to new information, and administrators must be willing to refine approaches when specific policies are not working.
- It is critically important to develop strategies that can be revised and adapted depending on the level of viral transmission in the school and throughout the community and done with close communication with state and/or local public health authorities and recognizing the differences between school districts, including urban, suburban, and rural districts.
- Special considerations and accommodations to account for the diversity of youth should be made, especially for our vulnerable populations, including those who are medically fragile, live in poverty, have developmental challenges, or have special health care needs or disabilities, with the goal of safe return to school.
- No child or adolescents should be excluded from school unless required in order to adhere to local public health mandates or because of unique medical needs.
- Pediatricians, families, and schools should partner together to collaboratively identify and develop accommodations when needed.

Assumptions & Assurances

- Every student should have the opportunity to engage in learning, regardless of the spread of any pandemic or other viruses in our community.
- Schools have a vital role in providing safe environments for students, focusing on both social-emotional and physical health.
- By working together with educators, staff, health care professionals, parents, students, and community members we can solve most challenges.
- Our district will make decisions based on the most current guidance from local, state, and national health care officials.
- Our School Board will work to ensure our plan meets the needs of a majority of our students, educators, staff and community while understanding that the administration may need to alter this plan based on new information without board approval.
- Every student and family will work to have the best attendance possible while being mindful of virus spread in our school and/or community.

Carrington School District COVID-19 PPE Guidance, If Needed

All Adults	<p>When required, cloth face coverings must be worn on school property when physical distancing cannot be maintained.</p> <p>When recommended, cloth face covering should be worn on school property when physical distancing cannot be maintained.</p>
All Students	<p>When required, cloth face coverings must be worn on school property when physical distancing cannot be maintained.</p> <p>When recommended, cloth face coverings should be worn on school property when physical distancing cannot be maintained.</p>
Exemption When Masks are Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will be provided mask breaks. ● Students who are participating in school activities outdoors, including, but not limited to recess. ● Students and adults with documentation from a healthcare professional may be exempted. ● Students with unique learning or physical conditions may be exempted.
Exemptions When Masks are Recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students and adults with documentation from a healthcare professional may be exempted. ● Students with unique learning or physical conditions may be exempted.

Health and Safety Protocols

Monitoring the health of students and staff will be an important component of maintaining a safe and healthy educational environment. Carrington Public Schools will take the following measures to ensure all students and staff are healthy at school.

Identifying Students and Staff at Higher Risk

- Parents should determine daily if their child is well enough to attend school each day. If a child is sick, he or she should be kept at home.
- Parents should inform the building principal if their child has a diagnosed risk factor.
- When the NDDoH or Foster County Health Department informs the district of a student or staff member that is COVID-19 positive that information will be passed on to the superintendent as allowable with district policy and law.
- If a child is believed to be exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, the procedures for sick students will be utilized.

Isolation and Quarantine

- Definitions
 - Isolation: For people who are sick with the virus. This prevention strategy is used to separate people who are sick with the virus from healthy people.
 - Quarantine: For people who are not sick but have been exposed to the virus. This prevention strategy is used to monitor people who were exposed for a period of time.
- The school district will cooperate with the NDDoH and require isolation and quarantine for the following instances: those that test positive with COVID-19 and those who are identified as household contacts. The NDDoH (not the school district) will carry out the close contact process. The school will notify those who would be considered close contact in the school setting. The school district will ask parents and teachers to monitor symptoms of those who are identified close contacts. It is strongly recommended that school close contacts stay home and follow the recommendations from the NDDoH. Students and staff that are sick need to stay home until their symptoms improve.
- In the unlikely event that students are sent to school while positive or listed as a household contact, students will be held in an isolated setting until the family is able to pick up the students to take them home
- When a student is in isolation, the teacher(s) will work with the family to create the best format for their learning while at home.

Food Service

The ability of the Carrington School District to provide high quality and nutritious meals is a crucial component of the educational environment. The district shall take the following actions to ensure the students of the Carrington School District receive nourishing meals safely.

Safety Measures

- Touchless points of sale will be used, as appropriate, or staff may enter all student lunch numbers to limit the touching/use of shared equipment.
- Food items commonly self-served, which required a shared utensil, may be individually served by service staff. Food items, if individually served and not requiring a shared utensil, may be self-served.
- Self-served food utensils will be replaced often and sanitizer will be provided at the beginning of the food line.
- Prepackaged foods will be provided when able.

Transportation

The Carrington School District remains committed to providing safe and reliable transportation for the parents and families of the Carrington School District. Families should be aware that school transportation is unable to ensure physical distancing on all buses at all times.

Bus Stops

- Students should maintain physical distancing from other riders, particularly in instances when the riders are not from the same family group.

On the Bus

- Expectations for facial coverings on the bus will mirror district protocol.
- Hand sanitizer may be available on the bus.
- Students may be assigned seats, if necessary.
- Students may be asked to share seats with members of the same household.