

# **K-12 Handbook Supplement for Covid-19**



**Okemos Public Schools  
2021-22**

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## **SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Given the realities of this global pandemic, we expect there will be students who are both symptomatic and asymptomatic who will test positive for the virus. We anticipate that there will be cases of COVID-19 in our schools despite our best efforts to control the spread of the virus and Okemos Public Schools cannot guarantee a virus-free environment. Every student and family should consider this as they decide their level of comfort and decision to attend available in-person learning.

This addendum to the school handbook will be in place during the 2021-22 school year or until district administration deems it no longer necessary due to improved health and safety conditions. Where conflicts between this addendum and the approved handbook exist, the guidelines in the addendum shall outweigh those in the existing handbook. Topics not addressed in this addendum will be handled based on existing policy as identified in the approved handbooks. Additionally, the district reserves the right to amend this addendum as needed.

This document is intended to cover necessary safety and procedural protocols. Should guidance from the state government, MDE, or local health department change during the 2021-22 school year, updates may be made to this handbook to reflect new guidelines.

### **Arrival/Dismissal Expectations**

- Arrival and dismissal procedures will be established and communicated by each building. These procedures will vary by building, but will include arrival times, entering and exiting locations, safety procedures, etc.
- The district cannot guarantee social distancing of students during arrival and dismissal times; however, we will encourage students to do their best to maintain social distancing (3 feet of personal space) during transition times.
- Prior to the official start of the school day, students are expected to follow all behavior expectations and Code of Conduct rules that are outlined in the Board approved Student and Parent Handbook, as well as this K-12 Handbook for COVID 19.
- Students arriving to school late or returning to school from an appointment or other such event will enter the building unescorted, using the buzz-in camera system located by the main office entryway and check in at the designated office. At the elementary level and for other students as needed, an adult must escort the child to the main door and wait to ensure that the student is buzzed in.
- Parents/guardians dropping off or picking up their student(s) during the school day will not be permitted to enter the building except in cases of an emergency or other extenuating circumstance approved by district/school officials. Instead, parents/guardians must use the buzz-in camera system at the main office door and wait outside for their student to meet them.

### **Assemblies, Performances, Student Activities/Events**

- Indoor gatherings for assemblies, performances or events will be limited and require administrator approval with appropriate plan for mitigation strategies.

- Gatherings will be no greater than the amount indicated by the most current Ingham County Health Department or MDHHS guidance.
- All behavior expectations and Code of Conduct rules that are outlined in the approved handbook still apply.

## **Athletics**

All school sponsored after-school athletic programs will comply with all MDHHS and local health department orders, and in consideration of published guidance from Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) and *in line with Board of Education policy and action.*

The Okemos School District is following the recommendations of the Ingham County Health Department and other health organizations that everyone mask while inside buildings, including in facilities where social distancing is difficult or impossible. In an effort to keep students safe and keep our sports teams out of quarantine and actively participating, our expectation is that Okemos players and coaches wear masks indoors while at indoor practices. Visiting teams will be required to mask indoors as well.

### ***Athlete and Coach Expectations***

- All student-athletes and coaching staff must use proper hand hygiene techniques before and after all practices, events, or other gatherings.
- Each participant must use a clearly marked water bottle for individual use.
- All event staff and/or volunteers must utilize appropriate hygiene practices (i.e. handling of money, products, etc.)

### ***Facilities/Safety Procedures***

- Establish crowd-limiting measures to measure the flow of patrons according to MHSAA, MDHHS or other health agency.
- Limit seating occupancy to the extent necessary to enable patrons not of the same household to maintain 3-6 feet of distance from others.
- Post signs outside of entrances informing spectators not to enter if they are or have recently been sick.
- Every participant should confirm that they are healthy and without any symptoms prior to any event.
- Access to sanitizer/disinfectant will be available.

### ***Spectator Expectations***

Spectators, when allowed at events, will comply with health department or governmental guidelines, provided that facial coverings are used by observers and 3-6 feet of social distance can be maintained at all times. The number of spectators may be restricted according to health and safety guidelines and facility/capacity requirements.

## **Attendance**

Student attendance and regular class participation is expected. Excessive absences will be addressed according to each buildings' attendance follow-up process.

### ***Illness Policy***

In the event a student experiences illness prohibiting in-person attendance, the teacher will provide materials through the google classroom or by providing packets for students as we have in the past. Support for students who may be out for an extended amount of time will be communicated by level.

The [ICHD published](#) guidance In August in regards to quarantine for schools. In general, if you are fully vaccinated and are a close contact you will not need to quarantine unless you become symptomatic. If you are unvaccinated and are a close contact you will need to quarantine. Our approach quarantine will include interventions and remediation but will not be a dual modality approach in general like we had last year.

The district will actively work with ICHD, [building spread indicators](#) to target our response. We will offer google classroom district wide so students can access content and will work to provide some support while the student is out, and interventions/remediation upon return.

### ***Taking Attendance***

Teachers will document attendance for pupil accounting purposes as they did prior to the 21-22 school year.

## **Behavior Expectations for Online Learning (when applicable)**

Teachers may use online meetings (typically through Zoom or Google Meetings) to communicate with students during learning. Individual teachers will establish some norms/expectations. The following are behavior expectations for all OPS students regardless of the individual classroom norms:

- It's still a classroom. Students are encouraged to think of virtual classrooms like being in a teacher's classroom at the school building. The same behaviors would be appropriate in each case. Teachers and classmates are there to connect and learn. Just like in a classroom, students are not permitted to invite others into the classroom who are not enrolled in the class.
- Teachers have the discretion to remove students or end the meeting if the behavior is disruptive/inappropriate or violates the code of conduct.
- Students are expected to make every effort to attend live instruction (synchronous learning) on time and remain present and engaged throughout the lesson.
- Use your name. Students must use their real, full name. When a student joins an online class/meeting, the student will go to a waiting room and the teacher will admit the student. If a student uses a name the teacher does not recognize, the student will not be admitted.
- Mute upon entry. Students are encouraged to enter quietly and mute the microphone until the teacher acknowledges them when joining an online class/meeting.

- Respect classmates' and teachers' privacy by not recording video or taking pictures of people in a virtual class/meeting.
- The Student Code of Conduct and Student & Parent Handbook guidelines apply. Infractions may result in classroom discipline and/or an administrator becoming involved.

## **Bus/Transportation**

For our updated transportation stops and schedule, please see the links below:

[Updated Routes/Schedule](#)

[OPS COVID Transportation: What to Expect \(Video\)](#)

### ***Bus Expectations***

- Masks must be worn by students, staff, and bus drivers during all school-provided transportation, including for activities such as athletics.
- Communication will be sent out frequently to families related to the mandatory nature of wearing a face mask on the bus and that all staff and students, if medically feasible, must wear it in order to be transported.
- Students must wear a mask that meets the guidelines and expectations of the district, Governor or health department.
- Face masks will be available at the entrance of the bus in the event a student does not come to the bus equipped with the necessary item.
- Communication documents will be developed to enable the drivers of the buses to know what the safety plans are for any students, who for medical reasons, will not be wearing a face mask.
- Students will not be permitted to take a mask-break on the bus.
- Students will not be permitted to eat or drink while on the bus.
- Students must use hand sanitizer (located on each bus) prior to boarding transportation vehicles.
- Students must adhere to loading and unloading procedures, as well as seating expectations during all portions of rides to and from school.
- Students must wear masks and socially distance themselves at the bus stop to the best of their ability.
- If a student becomes sick during the day, the student will not be permitted to ride home on the bus.
- Bus passes will not be permitted.

## **Communication with Students and Families**

- To preserve and protect instructional time for all students, teachers are unable to engage with parents during instructional time or when they are working with students.
- If a parent has a question for the teacher, alternative contact should be made (ie. email/phone call) coordinate a conversation outside of instructional times.

## Emergency Drills

Emergency drills are required. Students are expected to participate in these drills so they are prepared in case of an emergency. We will adjust drills in order to practice these emergency procedures while maintaining safety protocols as a response to COVID. In the event of an actual emergency, emergency procedures will take precedence over COVID safety protocols.

## Facial Coverings (Masks and Face Shields)

### **Face Masks** ([CDC Guidance](#)) ([Types of Masks - CDC](#)) ([CDC Masks](#))

- Mask expectations will follow the most recent and up-to-date recommendations as defined by the CDC guidance provided within the above link.
- Mask expectations include multi-layer coverings and a secure fit.
- A mask is a facial covering made of cloth material that covers the nose and mouth.
- Cloth face coverings are masks made from material that are meant to cover your nose and mouth and to be secured under the chin and are not considered personal protective equipment (PPE). These are effective in reducing the spread of the virus. Reusable face coverings should be cleaned daily.
- Facial coverings may be secured to the head or simply wrapped around the lower face. They can be made of a variety of materials, such as cotton or linen, and may be factory-made or made by hand and should NOT contain a valve.
- Facial coverings shall be disposed of daily, or cleaned at home on a daily basis.

### **Face Shields**

- Face shields are not acceptable alternatives to mask wearing.
- The CDC does not recommend the use of face shields as a substitute for cloth face coverings. However, a face shield that covers the eyes, nose and mouth can be worn in addition to a cloth mask if desired. Moreover, a face shield may be worn by younger children who are not required to wear a cloth face mask.
- It is not known if face shields provide any benefit as source control to protect others from the spray of respiratory particles. CDC does not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for masks. Some people may choose to use a face shield (with a mask) when sustained close contact with other people is expected.

### **Mask Breaks**

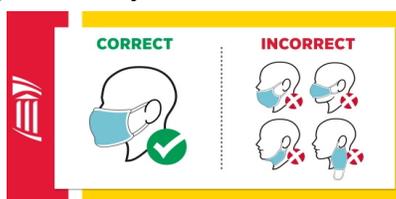
- Special circumstances may result in providing a mask-break to meet individual needs. Such situations will be coordinated by school staff and will provide the student with a safe, and socially distanced, location within the school.
- Should staff members determine that a student is not adhering to health and safety expectations, parents/guardians will be notified by teachers/staff members. Building administration will be notified and disciplinary action will occur in accordance with defined mask violation procedures.

### **Mask Exemptions**

- Okemos Public Schools will require documentation from a licensed medical professional for any student unable to wear a mask. Families may NOT “opt-out” their child from the facial covering requirement.
- Families will need to contact the main office of their student’s building to request a [Mask Exemption Form](#). This form must be completed and signed by a physician, and returned to the main office of the student’s school in order for an exemption request to be considered for approval.

### **Mask Expectations**

Appropriate masking of students and staff is required at school (bus stop, bus, school, on district grounds, during school activities). Expectations for appropriate mask-wearing include placing the mask over your nose and mouth, securing it under your chin, and ensuring that it fits snugly against the sides of your face as illustrated here:



*Photo credited to University of Maryland Medical System*

### **Mask Violation Disciplinary Action**

Okemos Public Schools will enforce compliance with district, state and local requirements for students and staff through our normal disciplinary and policy mechanisms. Mask-wearing violations will be documented through a behavior referral process.

A mask violations can be defined as behaviors such as, but not limited to:

- Continuous refusal
- Non-compliance
- Ignored requests to make mask adjustments that comply with health and safety expectations

When mask expectations are not followed:

- Student will receive a verbal warning by building staff and/or administrator
- Parent/guardian communication by building administrator will occur
- Administrator conference with student/parent/guardian, if recurring
- Possible disciplinary action aligned with the Code of Conduct as to be determined by the administration

### **Field Trips**

Field trips must be approved by administration with appropriate safety protocols and mitigation plans. Students and families may opt out of field trips as they are supplementary in nature.

### **Food Expectations (Breakfast, Lunch and Snacks)**

- All students are eligible for free meals through a Federal Grant for the 21-22 school year.
- [Meal Pick-up](#) will remain available for families through the food distribution system. Children 18 years of age and younger may access this free program and do not need to be enrolled at Okemos Public Schools.
- Students in grade PPK-12 will be permitted to consume food/snacks at school in the designated areas.
- While standing in line, and transitioning to or from the lunchroom or lunch tables students shall remain masked, Students may unmask only when seated and eating. (See lunch, snack and Recess Section)

## Hallway and Restroom Behavior Expectations

This pertains to passing periods and time in hallways during and after the school day:

- The district cannot provide social distancing of students during passing periods.
- Students are expected to wear masks and are encouraged to space when using the restroom.
- Students will abide by the hallway and door direction markers during passing periods.
- Students will use appropriate indoor voices.

## Health and Safety Expectations

- Symptomatic students, regardless of vaccination status, will be sent home and must be kept home until health screened or completely recovered (per CDC guidelines) prior to return.
- Students and staff will adhere to all procedures at each school building.
- Students will respect and follow the various signs and floor markings promoting proper social distancing for the safety of all members of our school community.
- With the exception of eating and while outside, students will wear masks at all times while in the building, including but not limited to bus stops, school busses, etc. (Those under two years of age will be exempt according to guidelines as will those with an approved medical exemption.)
- Students are encouraged to use hand sanitizer (provided in each classroom and at various stations within the building) frequently.
- Water refill stations will be used throughout the building (but not the fountains) and students will be able to maintain hydration throughout the day by using personal, reusable, closeable water containers.
- Students will refrain from sharing drinks, or any other personal items. Where feasible, shared materials will be sanitized between uses.

## Health and Safety Violations

Students not adhering to health and safety expectations may be subject to measures outlined in the Student Code of Conduct located in each building's Student-Parent Handbook, or other district policy. Restorative practices and/or other means to address the situation will be utilized depending on the frequency and severity of the student's behavior and the impact on the safety of the learning environment for all.

## Health Screening Daily Protocols

### ***Home Screening Expectations***

- For the health and safety of our students, we encourage families to [screen](#) their students for symptoms of COVID-19 before entering the school.
- Due to the time and interruption to education, the health department and the CDC do not recommend these screenings be done by the schools.

### ***International Travel***

- Please consult with the [Ingham County Health Department](#) and [CDC website](#) for guidance on international travel and recommended protocols.

### **Homebound and Hospitalized Services**

Homebound and Hospitalized Service is provided to pupils unable to attend school because of a medical condition. The provider brings the curriculum from the teacher of record to pupils in the home or in the hospital to help the pupils keep up with their studies. This is a self-guided study that will allow the pupil to continue progressing in their learning while unable to attend school. General education pupils will receive a minimum of two 45-minute periods per week. Pupils receiving the service under the special education rules receive a minimum of two nonconsecutive hours of instruction per week. The two one-hour sessions for a pupil with an IEP may be on the same day; however, there must be an adequate break between the two sessions.

For more information please visit: [Homebound OPS Information](#).

### **Illness Policy/Positive COVID-19 Test Result**

Okemos Public Schools will cooperate with the [Ingham County Health Department](#) (ICHHD) regarding implementing protocols for screening students and staff, handling students and staff with potential symptoms of COVID19, and in the event of a positive test for COVID-19.

Students who present symptoms of COVID 19 will be required to be picked up from school and may require a negative test result to return.

### ***Communication with School Related Close Contacts***

If a confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified in any student or staff member, the contact information for any close contacts of the affected individual from two days before the person showed symptoms to the time when the person was last present at the school will be collected and given to the ICHHD.

Anyone who was known to be within close contact of the case (less than three feet apart for 15+ minutes) will be contacted. Unvaccinated close contacts will self-quarantine as required by the local health department after exposure or a positive test result. Close contacts who are fully vaccinated and have no symptoms may return to school and must monitor for the onset of symptoms. Vaccinated close contacts with symptoms will self-quarantine as required by the local health department after exposure or a positive test result.

### ***Communication of Positive School Related Cases***

In cases of confirmed COVID-19, the school's parents/guardians and staff will be notified by email while maintaining confidentiality consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other applicable federal and state privacy laws. Close contacts will be notified by the school by phone and email.

### ***Communication of School/Program or District Closure***

In cases of a school building or program closure, the school's or programs parents/guardians and staff will be notified by email while maintaining confidentiality consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other applicable federal and state privacy laws.

In cases of a district closure, the entire district will be notified using the districts school messenger system and posting the information on our website.

### **Lockers and Backpacks**

Locker utilization will be determined at each level depending on ability to meet safety guidelines. Students are permitted to bring backpacks.

### **Lunch, Snacks**

Students will be permitted to unmask while actively eating or drinking during approved school meal or snack times. When students are transitioning to and from eating spaces, for any reason, they are expected to mask. When indoors and students have finished eating and are socializing, they are expected to mask. Additional eating spaces may be utilized such as gymnasiums, hallways, and exterior areas to assist in adding additional spacing for students.

Where appropriate, assigned seating and seating charts may be utilized. All students are encouraged to hand wash or sanitize before and after eating. Hand sanitizing stations are available in each classroom as well in each lunchroom. Cafeterias surfaces will be disinfected after each use. Ionization systems are installed as an additional mitigation measure. Additional mitigation measures may be enacted by the district, if needed.

Masking is optional for students who are outdoors.

Specific lunch plans will be communicated by each school and will include mitigation measures such as:

- Plans for lowering density, duration and/or proximity
- Cohorting by classroom or peer groups
- Masking expectation unless actively eating or drinking
- Hand washing and sanitizing
- Disinfecting of eating spaces
- Ionized air system

Breakfast and elementary snack time will have similar mitigation measures at the elementary level. Breakfast on site will have the same mitigation measures as well.

## **Mental Health Supports**

OPS recognizes mental health is critical to children’s success in school and life. Students who receive social–emotional and mental health support achieve more academically. School climate, classroom behavior, on-task learning, and students’ sense of connectedness and well-being all improve as well. Mental health encompasses social, emotional, and behavioral health and the ability to cope with life’s challenges. OPS will:

- Universally screen students to identify areas of need
- Provide students grade-level appropriate social-emotional lessons/resources to address identified areas of need within the student body
- Provide direct support from counselors and social workers to students requiring more intensive intervention via online or in-person appointments
- Provide resources for parents/guardians to connect students with mental health services from community providers
- Continue the professional development of our staff to respond to mental health emergencies

## **Parent/Guardian-Teacher Conferences**

Virtual conferences and meetings will be held to ensure that parents/guardians and teachers are able to meet. Parents/guardians will receive more specific information from school staff regarding dates, times and scheduling information for Parent-Teacher Conferences.

## **Technology Expectations**

### ***Computer Damages and Care/Loss or Theft of Computers***

- In the event of damage to the computer not covered by the warranty, the student and parent/legal guardian may be billed for the damages.
- The administration has the authority to waive or modify charges if the cause of damage is judged to be beyond the student’s control.
- Computers that are lost or stolen need to be reported to the school’s main office immediately.
- If a computer is stolen or vandalized while not at an OPS sponsored event, the parent/or legal guardian shall file a police report and notify the school’s main office as soon as possible.
- If a computer is lost or stolen, the student may be financially responsible for its replacement.
- Lost, damaged, or stolen devices in the care, custody, and control of a student may be covered by the homeowners’/renters’ policy of the parent/guardian. Most homeowner/renter policies will provide some limit of coverage for the “damage to the property of others” under the comprehensive personal liability coverage part of the policy and is not normally subject to any deductible. Please consult your insurance agent for details about your homeowners’/renters’ coverage.
- This equipment is, and at all times remains, the property of OPS and is herewith loaned to the student for educational purposes only for the academic school year. The student may not

deface or destroy this property in any way. Inappropriate use of the machine may result in the student losing their right to use the device and may lead to disciplinary action.

### ***Repair Information***

Students should utilize their building LMC for device repair. If needed, students or families may direct computer repair questions to [helpdesk@okemosk12.net](mailto:helpdesk@okemosk12.net).

## **Virtual (Live Video) Sessions (when applicable)**

### ***Parent/Guardian Classroom Formal Observation During Online Learning***

Consistent with Policy 6139 and state law, parents/guardians are encouraged to actively participate in their students' education. Parent/guardian participation must not, however, disrupt student learning or the virtual classroom. We recognize and appreciate that parents/guardians will observe some portions of their students' virtual classes and may be present to assist their students during the class. We further recognize the developmental appropriateness of parent/guardian help with online learning given the child's needs and age level. Assistance of a child with online learning is different from a formal classroom observation.

Parents/guardians are not permitted to formally observe virtual classes during testing. A parent/guardian whose presence disrupts the learning environment will be required to cease observing the classroom.

### ***Assessment Expectations***

It is expected that all Okemos Public Schools students express their own original thoughts/ideas on assessments and assignments to demonstrate understanding of the curriculum. Information gathered through various assessments (informal and formal) offers the opportunity to support students' needs as defined by the assessment results. Therefore, individuals (ie. parents/guardians, tutors, siblings, peers, etc.) must not interfere with students' independent completion of such assessments as we want to ensure authentic student learning.

The Parent/Student Handbook outlines policy on practices of academic integrity. During virtual learning, these same standards apply as it is very important to obtain accurate information on students' current learning. By honoring the learning process of students, appropriate instruction can be provided to meet students' specific needs. When students' ability is not reflected in assessment responses due to a parent/guardian or other individuals providing guidance or responses (ie. answers to questions, verbal input, prompting, etc.), the opportunity to implement early interventions and/or reteach content may be missed. Individuals (ie. parents/guardians, tutors, siblings, peers, etc.) are prohibited from recording or documenting (ie. taking pictures, copying, etc.) all assessments.

### ***Parent Communication with Teachers***

To preserve and protect instructional time for all students, teachers are unable to engage with parents during instructional time or when they are working with students. If you have a question for the teacher, please email them with your questions or to schedule a time to meet with them outside of instructional times.

## Visitor/Volunteer Policy

Parents/guardians or other visitors/guests are not allowed in schools/buildings, except under invitation, extenuating circumstances as determined by district/school officials. While parent volunteers have always been appreciated, volunteering is not permitted until deemed safe by the district.

## RECOGNITION OF POTENTIAL FUTURE AMENDMENTS OR SUPPLEMENTS

Handbooks are always subject to revision and are generally updated after each school year. In light of the unique challenges posed by the outbreak of COVID-19 and the measures necessary to mitigate transmission of COVID-19 at school, as well as the expansive, recently-issued federal Title IX regulations, the rules and information provided in this handbook may be supplemented or amended by the District's administration at any time, consistent with applicable law, state or federal guidance, and board policy.

All students and parents/guardians will be notified of any changes to handbook language by the District's regular means of contact. By enrolling your child in our district, families agree that you will read any such information and communications, discuss them with your student, and that you and your student must comply with all school rules, procedures, and requirements, including those included within this handbook and those included in any supplement or amendment to this handbook.

Examples of policies that would be suspended, in whole or in part, under this handbook addendum may include, but are not limited to:

- Board Policy 1250, which encourages school visits
- Board Policy 1330, which permits outside groups to use District facilities
- Board Policy 3323, to the extent it imposes any bidding or purchasing obligations in excess of state law, which could conflict with obtaining PPE or engaging in consortia PPE purchasing with other districts and the ISD
- Board Policies 4141.5 and 5141.5 regarding communicable diseases, to the extent those policies conflict with applicable executive orders;
- Board Policy 6139, which addresses parent involvement and encourages parents to volunteer in school buildings;
- Board Policy 6153, which encourages field trips;
- Board Policy 6179, which mandates quality physical education and requires supervised physical activities for students.