



# West Hancock Community Schools

“Empowering all students to thrive in an ever-changing world”

## Return to Learn (Reopen) Plan Update

Dear parents, guardians, students, staff, and community,

We wanted to keep you updated on where we are at with plans to reopen on August 24th. We believe education is an essential part of children’s’ development and there is no better way to educate them than through a traditional school setting. This is why our full intent is to have students back here on August 24th.

We will continue to use established communication channels to keep you informed. Continuous evaluation of the situation may lead to changes over time. We will always base our decisions on Hancock County Emergency Management, Department of Education, the Governor, and Iowa Department of Public Health guidelines.

We have eliminated half of the professional development early out days in order to gain more instruction time this year. We have also canceled parent/teacher conferences at the beginning of the school year. There will be special activities developed for certain grades and each building to allow students and parents to meet their teachers and to get acquainted with our buildings. Look for the information at a later date. Because there will be no back to school conferences we will start school with all K-prep-12 students on the 24th. The 3 and 4 year olds will start on the 26th.

All families should have access to the internet and a device to use in case we go back to online learning. We will reissue hotspots and devices to those families needing them should we go back to online learning or if an individual has a need to learn from home. Each classroom will be prepared to livestream their classroom to those who may not be able to attend school. We also will be doing online learning days if we have weather related day so we do not have to make up that time. Prior to any online learning situations we will address attendance and etiquette protocols for all students and staff to participate in a fair and equitable environment.

Face to face instruction will take place with as many mitigations possible within our district to still be able to provide a good education in a safe environment. The same would go for transportation of students to and from school/ events. Staff and students are highly encouraged to wear facemasks/shields should they fill the need. We will provide throw away masks for those that request them.

We will limit visitors to only those deemed essential to education during the school day. Initially parents/ caregivers will not be allowed in the building to pick up or drop off students. If entry is necessary, screening will be required. Student screening by parents each day before entering a school vehicle or building is highly encouraged. Buses will be disinfected before the am/pm routes and any other time of use.

If staff get infected with COVID we will follow state guidelines for leave and getting staff back to work. The same will apply to students. We will want to minimize staff and student absences while keeping everyone else healthy and safe. If a staff member or student would need to be quarantined, we would make arrangements for them to work and learn from home as the situation allows. A doctor's note will be required stating that students are not allowed to attend class. If students do not attend school we will follow our current policy which states, "Students who are absent from school may not practice or participate in an extracurricular or co-curricular activity unless the absence is authorized in advance by the Principal." COVID absences will not be considered for an advance authorization.

At this point we are assuming students staying home, for COVID-19 reasons, can utilize curbside lunch pick-up similar to the "summer" program we did during the closure. The exception being that meals would be charged as if the student were on campus.

Both athletic associations and the music association are planning on allowing schools to have fall activities. More details will be sent out by the AD concerning mitigations and other items that may look different this fall.

Look for more information to follow as we get updates and specific plans for building operations are finalized. More detailed information from building principals, the AD, teachers and activity supervisors will be delivered as we get closer to school starting.

Thank you for your patience in letting us work through the ever changing guidelines coming to us from other agencies.

Mr. Kronemann