

Vail Unified School District #20

13801 E Benson Hwy
Vail, Arizona 85641
Entity ID: 4413
CTDS: 10-02-20-000
Phone Number: (520) 879-2000
Website: vailschooldistrict.org



Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan

Section 1: Introduction

The purpose of the American Rescue Plan Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP 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 describes how the Vail Unified School District (VUSD) will maintain the health and safety of students and staff during and following the return to full in-person instruction. Questions about this Plan should be directed to:

Ethan Hurley
Director of College and Career Readiness
hurley@vailschooldistrict.org

Summary of response to COVID-19 during the 2020-21 academic year:

Per directives from the State of Arizona and Pima County Health Department, VUSD operated under remote learning at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, August 10, 2020. As health metrics in Pima County improved, a hybrid learning instruction model was implemented in an effort to establish a safe and secure in-person learning environment for all students and staff. During the hybrid learning phase, a fully remote option, "Brick to Click," was also made available for families.

Shift to hybrid learning instructional model September 21, 2020:

- **High School:** 2 days of on-campus learning for a full day with 3 days of at-home learning. Option for Brick to Click made available to all families
- **Middle School:** 2 days of on-campus learning with 3 days of at-home learning with shortened school days. Option for Brick to Click made available to all families
- **Elementary School:** 4 days of on-campus learning, a shortened school day, one hour of at-home learning each of the 4 days, and independent learning on Fridays. Option for Brick to Click made available to all families

Shift to in-person instruction March 22, 2021:

- **High School:** 4 days a week, Monday through Thursday, with Fridays remaining asynchronous. Option for Brick to Click made available to all families

- **Middle School:** 4 days a week with continued shortened learning days, Monday through Thursday, with Fridays remaining asynchronous. Option for Brick to Click made available to all families
- **Elementary School:** 5 days a week with continued shortened learning days.

The District intends to begin the 2021-22 academic year with full in-person instruction, five days per week with a return to regular bell schedules and transportation routes.

Section 2: Maintaining Health and Safety

The District will continue protocols to ensure the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and division staff during and following the return to in-person instruction. A description of actions VUSD has taken and future plans are detailed below.

As VUSD transitioned to in-person learning, the COVID-19 School Reopening and Mitigation Plan” was created. The Plan was assembled with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Pima County Health Department (PCHD), Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS), and the Governor’s Executive Orders. The Plan will be updated, as needed to reflect the COVID-19 response of each respective organization. Furthermore, local community spread, transmission rates of COVID-19, and the number of hospital visits by person with COVID-like illness visits in Pima County will also impact current and future mitigation strategies.

The District has adopted protocols on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC and PCHD. Each strategy will be evaluated and protocols updated as needed:

- **Universal and correct wearing of masks** – VUSD acknowledges recommendations from the CDC and PCHD. VUSD will adopt changes to practices following CDC updates for fully vaccinated individuals. The District also evaluates local and community COVID outbreaks and transmissions.

Beginning July 1, 2021, the wearing of masks will be optional for staff, students, and visitors. This decision is due to the recent change in Arizona law that requires mask wearing be made optional.

- **Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing** – Per CDC recommendations, students may safely engage in a classroom setting 3 feet apart. Desks and tables will be positioned to appropriately distance students, as permitted by space restriction and/or student attendance. Starting the 2021/22 school year, school buses will operate at below 100% capacity to allow for distancing. Students from the same household may sit together on the bus.
- **Handwashing** – VUSD will provide hand sanitizer and hand soap to allow for frequent handwashing. Hand sanitizing dispensers are easily accessible and have been placed throughout each school campus, including classrooms, gyms, multi-purpose rooms, etc. The health plan provides the following handwashing guidance: wash hands often; use warm water and soap, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds; and use hand sanitizer with an alcohol content greater than 60% when water and soap are not available.

- **Respiratory etiquette** – Handwashing and/or hand sanitizing is expected to be performed after coughing, sneezing, nose blowing, or any time the hands are visibly dirty. Students and staff have been directed to follow this protocol. Signage containing respiratory etiquette reminders are placed throughout the school campus.
- **Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities** – HVAC systems are inspected and cleaned regularly. The systems are set to maximize outside air circulation. Preventative maintenance has been contracted through an outside vendor to maintain service and regularly change filters.
- **Contact tracing** – Will be done in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments. The District utilizes the protocols below for COVID-19 positive employees or students:

Employee

- If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, the COVID Support Team will interview the employee for a list of close contacts, defined as those identified to have been within 6 feet for longer than 15 minutes (current CDC definition of “close contact”)
- Close contacts will be notified that they have been exposed to a person who has COVID-19. If the close contact is fully vaccinated per CDC guidelines, they will not need to quarantine
- The supervisor will coordinate absence and working arrangements with the employee(s)
- The District will submit names and contact information of COVID positive employees and close contacts to PCHD
- The COVID Support Team will monitor the staff member(s) throughout their quarantine and will determine a return-to-work date
- Other employees, students, and their families of the respective school/program will receive notification of the COVID positive situation

Student

- If a student is reported to have been diagnosed with COVID-19, the school will notify the District COVID Support Team
- The designated COVID site representative will contact the parent/guardian to confirm and conduct the contact tracing
- Additional interviews with teachers and support staff may also be necessary to identify close contacts
- Parents/guardians of those identified as close contacts will be notified and provided quarantine and return-to-school instructions.
- The District will submit the name and contact information of the COVID positive student and for anyone identified as the student’s close contact. PCHD will contract trace these individuals
- The designated COVID Site Representative will monitor the student throughout their quarantine and will determine a return to school date

- Other employees, students, and their families of the respective school/program will receive notification of the COVID positive situation

Additional Information for COVID-19 exposure or diagnosis for staff and students

- All notifications of a student seeking testing, presumed or confirmed positive, should be immediately relayed to the school’s administration or health aide
- All reports of an employee seeking testing, presumed or confirmed positive, should be immediately relayed to their supervisor and to the COVID Support Team
- Employees and/or students are encouraged to seek medical care during the quarantine/isolation period, if needed
- An asymptomatic individual may test out of quarantine on or after day 6 of the 10-day quarantine period
- If the person is symptomatic, a negative COVID-19 test will exempt them from further quarantine as soon as symptoms have improved
- A negative COVID test is not required to return to work or school after completion of the 10-day quarantine/isolation period
- HIPAA and FERPA information, as applicable, will be protected

Diagnostic and screening testing – VUSD continues to collaborate with the PCHD to conduct COVID-19 diagnostic and/or screening testing. Testing resources have been made available through the District website.

Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities - VUSD coordinated with United Community Health Center and PCHD to offer all employees an opportunity to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. PCHD has partnered with VUSD for multiple vaccination clinics for staff, families, community members, and students 12 and older. VUSD will continue to organize vaccination events for staff, students, and families.

Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies – The District will meet students’ needs to deliver instruction according to their abilities while observing appropriate health and safety protocols. The District will continue to offer home-bound services, virtual learning, and in-person modified instruction for students with a qualifying disability and/or eligible chronic health condition.

Section 3: Continuity of Services

Vail School District has 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**
 - Increased learning opportunities will be provided outside of the school day to students via targeted before/after school tutoring, intersessions, and online learning modules.
 - Student level data will be tracked to provide differentiated learning designed to remediate and accelerate students during the school day.
 - Increased credit recovery learning opportunities will be provided to high school students.

- **Social/Emotional/Mental Health**
 - VUSD has hired 10 new counselors to support those struggling with social, emotional, and mental issues that have been exacerbated by the pandemic.
 - VUSD will evaluate and implement a K-12 Social Emotional Learning curriculum.
 - A multi-tiered system of support, based on behavioral data, focused on both staff and students that integrates positive interventions, relationships, and community building.
 - Support provided will include small group and classroom lessons to support school-wide implementation.

- **Food & Child Nutrition Services**
 - Free meals will continue to be offered to in-person students through June 30, 2022.

Section 4: Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the ARP ESSER Plan, Vail School District will seek staff, student, family and public feedback using multiple strategies, including but not limited to: public comments during Governing Board meetings, town halls, surveys, school site council meetings, and other appropriate venues. Public input will be taken into account for future revisions of this Plan.

Section 5: Periodic Review and Revision of Plan

During the period of the ARP ESSER award (until September 2023), Vail School District will periodically review and, as needed, revise its plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services. The plan will be reviewed at least every six months, and VUSD will seek and consider public input during the review process. Plan revisions will address updated CDC guidance on safely reopening schools, if any are issued.

Section 6: Making the Plan Available to the Public

The District plan is posted at <https://vailschooldistrict.org/school-opening-and-covid-19-information/>

For assistance with a printed or oral translation, please contact: Shannon King, kings@vailschooldistrict.org or 520-879-3940

Upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, as Amended, may be provided with the plan in an alternative format accessible by contacting: Shannon King, kings@vailschooldistrict.org or 520-879-3940