

July 1, 2020

Dear Yellow Springs Students & Families:

I hope your family is keeping healthy this summer.

While we are still waiting for the official word from Gov. DeWine regarding the reopening of schools in the fall, at this point Yellow Springs Schools has made the decision to resume regular, in-person classes for the 2020-2021 school year. The school year will begin for students one week later than originally scheduled. **The first day of school for students will be Thursday, August 27, 2020.**

We did not approach this decision lightly. Our decision was informed by the results of our parent survey, which indicated a strong desire to resume normal, in-person classes this fall. We are committed to working closely with Greene County Public Health to implement recommended health and safety protocols to the highest degree possible. Greene County Public Health Commissioner Melissa Howell has approved the following measures. Our more detailed safety and academic plan, to be developed **with full teacher collaboration** in the upcoming weeks, will also be submitted to Greene County Public Health for approval.

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS:

Daily Self-Monitoring

- Parents of students should monitor their child's temperatures and overall health on a daily basis before allowing a student to come to school.
- Regular washing of hands will be encouraged throughout the school day for both students and staff.
- Yellow Springs Schools may require more locally developed protocols for daily monitoring of students and staff in conjunction with Greene County Public Health.

Student Illnesses

- A student with a fever of 100.4 F or higher should stay home without exception.
- A student who has COVID-19 symptoms described below should stay home from school and should see doctor/primary care provider to be assessed for COVID-19:
 - Any of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing; or,
 - Two of the following symptoms: fever (measured or subjective), chills, rigors, myalgia, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, gastro-intestinal issues (nausea/vomiting or diarrhea); or
 - Any of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing, fever (measured or subjective), chills, rigors, myalgia, headache, sore throat, new

loss of taste or smell, GI Issues (nausea and vomiting or diarrhea) **AND** an epidemiological link to a case of COVID-19.

Returning to School after Illness

- If a student is diagnosed with COVID-19, the student must meet the following criteria in order to return to school.
 - 3 days with no fever (without using fever-reducing medication); and
 - other symptoms improved; and
 - 10 days since symptoms first appeared.
- To return to school after a confirmed case of COVID-19, the student must be transported to school by the parent and must be checked by the school nurse.
- Students who have only a fever and no other symptoms and have not had any contact with an individual who has COVID-19 may return to school after being fever-free for 24 hours without using any fever-reducing medications.
- Any other illness should be handled in the routine manner as prescribed in district policies.
- These protocols may change as determined by Greene County Public Health.

Communication Protocol When Student/Staff Member Has Been Diagnosed with COVID-19

- Communication protocol will be developed by Greene County Public Health-- *not Yellow Springs Exempted Village School District*. A **common template** will be developed by the Greene County Public Health to include the following:
 - Specify to parents which classroom/bus/school/other area the confirmed case was in.
 - A more generalized statement to the building staff as needed.
 - Yellow Springs Schools will cooperate with Greene County Public Health in contact tracing to identify close contacts of the COVID-19 case.
 - A quarantine period may be required for any student/staff member who is determined to have close contact with the COVID-19 case as determined by Greene County Public Health.

Sanitizing/Disinfecting School Environment

Yellow Springs Schools will follow sanitation guidelines as provided by Greene County Public Health. School personnel will frequently clean high-touch areas, objects, equipment, and surfaces such as water fountains (if used) and restrooms using cleaning products effective against coronavirus.

Food Service

Yellow Springs Schools will offer food service. Logistics for this service will be determined in July with our food service provider, in compliance with Greene County Public Health.

Face Coverings

Yellow Springs Schools will require face masks for all students and staff. Exceptions to this will be made by the superintendent in consultation with Greene County Public Health, as there may be unique circumstances where this is not feasible or medically recommended. As a reminder, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Ohio Department of Health, and Greene

County Public Health recommend face coverings for students and staff, particularly if they are within six feet of another person.

Classroom Occupancy

Safety protocols will be in place for each classroom. The district is currently in the process of purchasing desks and plexiglass dividers so that students can be in classrooms in the safest manner possible. Classroom occupancy will be determined based on individual circumstances with the maximum amount of safety considerations possible. It must be noted that even when safety protocols are in place, there is always a level of risk on campus. The likelihood of infection is significantly decreased with research-based hygiene practices, cleaning, and safety procedures. Again, being in a public place has a certain level of risk that cannot be eliminated.

Visitors/Volunteers/Parties

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, visitors are discouraged from being in Yellow Springs Schools, and visitors to each building will be highly limited.
- Safety protocols such as taking temperatures will be implemented for all visitors.
- Masks will be required of visitors.

Transportation

- Yellow Springs Schools may allow multiple students per seat depending on the situation.
- The district will attempt to seat siblings together.
- Seating charts will be created and maintained to assist with contact tracing if necessary.
- Face masks will be required for drivers and students.

Recess/Other Activities

- Yellow Springs Schools will make every effort to maintain consistency with other safety procedures for recess at the elementary school.
- Student access may be limited to certain pieces of playground equipment.
- Activities that are “high touch” and difficult to clean or maintain social distancing may be restricted.
- All students will be required to sanitize their hands after recess.
- As a general rule, and unless health guidance changes significantly, field trips and assemblies will not be permitted during the 2020-2021 school year.

COVID-19 is still a pandemic, and as such, is a risk for everyone. When we return in the fall, all students and adults will have a small risk of contracting the disease. However, we know that with appropriate safety precautions as indicated above, this risk can be highly mitigated. While the physical safety of our students is of utmost importance, so is their social and emotional health. In-person classes allow for students to begin reconnecting with their teachers and peers and return to learning in meaningful and engaging ways. Returning to school in-person also allows for parents/families to return to work without the worry of monitoring daily schooling at home. Of course, all of this must be done thoughtfully and cautiously. There have been considerable reports, studies and opinions about this, and I am providing a few links for your review as you see fit:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/06/29/884638999/u-s-pediatricians-call-for-in-person-school-this-fall>

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/06/24/yes-kids-should-be-going-back-school-fall/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/School-Admin-K12-readiness-and-planning-tool.pdf>

As we move through July, we will continue to push out details of our plan, which will include more specific information about our academic plan, the hours of operation at each building (for example, the new MS/HS start time of 8:30 a.m.), and the slightly revised school calendar. We hope to see everyone join us in the fall in a face-to-face environment. However, we know that for some of our vulnerable population, this is not a viable option. We will provide a complete online school option for those parents and families who are concerned about sending their vulnerable student(s) back to school. This option is available for students in Grades K-12; however, please note this is a semester-long commitment, and students who choose this option must stay in the online environment for at least a semester, at which time a decision for the next semester can be made. If interested in this option, please contact Student Services Director Donna First at 937-767-7381 or dfirst@ysschools.org to discuss.

Please look for additional communication regarding the Safe School Restart Plan in the coming weeks, and revisit the Yellow Springs Schools (www.ysschools.org) website for all current information. I look forward to safely reopening schools on Thursday, August 27th.

Finally, as a reminder, the governor may change everything when he issues his plan, but I felt I could not wait any longer to communicate. I thank all of you for your continued support of Yellow Springs Schools in these unprecedented times.

Best,



Dr. Terri L Holden
Superintendent