



# Ridgewood High School D234

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**August 20, 2021**

It has been over 18 months since the pandemic began and we are eager to return to full, in-person instruction to start the 2021-2022 school year. Our main priority continues to be everyone's health and safety.

CDC guidance directed K-12 school administrators to implement a layered mitigation approach in order to keep in-person learning environments safe for students and staff during times of fluctuating transmission.

The layered mitigation strategies are masking, social distancing, hand hygiene, screening testing, vaccinations, staying home when ill, student cohorts, contact tracing, quarantining, and ventilation.

**Effective August 4, the Governor declared all K-12 schools will require masks be worn by EVERYONE indoors.**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has mandated full, in-person instruction as the top priority and requires school districts to develop plans collaboratively with our local health agency, Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH).

The ISBE has also mandated a remote learning option be available for those students who are not vaccinated and need to quarantine.

**The RHS Health & Safety Protocols for the 2021-22 school year are:**

- Students & staff should monitor themselves for symptoms of illness before leaving home for school, **stay home if they have signs of any illness**, and contact their healthcare provider for testing and care.
- **Masks:**
  - Per the CDC, masks are required on buses and other school vehicles, including in Driver Education vehicles.
  - Per the Governor, masks are required to be worn by everyone, regardless of vaccine status. Students and staff who are masked and within 3-6 feet of a confirmed case are not considered close contacts in the new CDC guidance. This means that consistent and correct mask use will decrease the number of students needing to quarantine at home in the case of exposure. **With masking, fewer students will miss in-person instruction.**
- **Close contact :**
  - Everyone should maintain a distance of more than 3 feet as much as possible. Classrooms will be set up with desks 3 feet apart, when possible.
  - Students in quarantine will receive remote instruction during their time in quarantine.
- Practices around **ventilation, handwashing, and respiratory etiquette** will continue at school.

Changes in guidance from federal, state or local health officials or an increase of illness at school or our community could cause changes in practices throughout the year.

# Health and Wellness

## Social & Physical Distancing

Ridgewood will maintain 3-6 ft of social distancing in spaces, when possible.

## Health Protocols

When students arrive to school each day, they will be expected:

- To **wear a mask or face-covering** that will be worn for the duration of their school day.
- Families will self-certify that they will not send their student(s) to school if they exhibit the following symptoms:
  - Fever (100.4°F or higher);
  - New onset of moderate to severe headache;
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
  - New cough;
  - Sore throat;
  - Nausea or vomiting;
  - Diarrhea;
  - New loss of taste or smell;
  - Fatigue from an unknown cause;
  - Muscle or body aches from an unknown cause;
  - Congestion or runny nose
- A parent will be notified and the student will be sent home if they have a fever of greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit/38 degrees Celsius or exhibiting any of the above listed symptoms.
- The School Nurse or an RHS Administrator will contact the student's guardian to determine how the student can return home for the remainder of the day.
- The student should not return to school until current symptoms have subsided and the quarantine period has expired, if applicable.
- **When returning to school, the student must check in with the RHS Nurse before returning to in-person classes.**

### If a student becomes sick or feels ill while in school:

- The student should report directly to the Nurse's Office for an evaluation of symptoms and to assess needs.
- The student will remain in the Nurse's Office until a guardian can be contacted and spoken to.
- To maintain the health and safety of the larger school population, the student will be sent home from the Nurse's Office, OR given the option to test for COVID-19 with guardian/parent permission.
- The room or area where the student was located will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected in accordance with CDC guidelines.

### **If a student becomes sick while not in school:**

- Students who are sick or exhibiting any of symptoms related to COVID-19 should **not** come to school.
- The student's guardian should contact the RHS Attendance Office at 708-456-4242 x1258 or email the Attendance Clerk, Christine Olivo (colivo@ridgenet.org) with specific information regarding their student's illness, including current symptoms.
- Students will still be able to complete academic work from home on their school-issued iPad, and teachers and staff members will be available to address any academic, social or emotional needs.

### **If a student tests positive for COVID-19:**

- The student's guardian should contact Candace Reid, the RHS School Nurse, at 708-456-4242 x1268 with specific information regarding their student's illness, including current symptoms.
- The student must quarantine in accordance with supplied guidance from the RHS Nurse and IDPH guidelines.
- RHS School Officials will alert the school community that an individual within the school has tested positive for COVID-19. The communication will protect the confidentiality of the individual and will also contain a symptom checklist that families can use at home in the event their student may begin to exhibit symptoms themselves.
- The School Nurse will contact local health agencies to alert them to the positive COVID-19 case. Based on the facts of the case, the local health agency may decide a contact-tracing investigation is necessary to determine if any staff members or other students may be at risk of contracting COVID-19. The RHS Nurse and School Administrators will assist in the investigation as needed.
- All areas of the building the student had been in contact with will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with CDC guidelines.
- The School Nurse will remain in contact with the student's guardian for the duration of the quarantine period to track symptoms, assess any current educational/family needs, and gauge the recovery process.
- The student will be required to see the School Nurse (or RHS School Administrator if the School Nurse is not available) for an evaluation before returning to any class or other area of the school building.
- Students in quarantine will receive remote instruction during their time in quarantine.

### **Hygiene**

Frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing are key to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Hand sanitizer will be placed in common areas throughout each school building. Our building has signage reminding everyone of the need for proper hand hygiene in the appropriate areas. If assisting a student requires close contact, hand washing, or sanitizing must be done before and after contact with students. It is recommended that hand hygiene is performed upon arrival to and departure from school; after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing; following restroom use; before food preparation or before and after eating; before/after routine care for another person, such as a child; after contact with a person who is sick; upon return from physical education; and following glove removal.

## Classroom Guidance

- Arrange seating 3 to 6 feet apart, when possible. It is recommended teachers provide assigned seating for students.
- Encourage hand washing throughout the day.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided in all classrooms.
- Clean classrooms daily.

## Hallways, Main Office, Common Areas

- Maintain 3 to 6 feet physical distancing when possible.
- Require face coverings for staff, students, and visitors.
- Hand sanitizer will be easily accessible around the school in common areas and hallways.
- Display visible signage reminding everyone of face covering usage at entryways, hallways, classrooms, and common areas.
- Clean high touch areas throughout the day.

# Operations

## Recommendations for Families

- State of Illinois mandated health examination and vaccine requirements will be due by September 1, 2021.
- Please make sure all emergency contact information is up to date before the start of the school year.
- Please make sure to assess your student(s) each morning to ensure they are not exhibiting any COVID-19-like symptoms before sending them to school.
- **If your child is experiencing any illness symptoms, they should stay home.**
- The CDC recommends everyone 6 months of age and older to get vaccinated **every flu season** with rare exceptions. Due to the fact that flu symptoms overlap with COVID-19 symptoms, it's encouraged to vaccinate your children for influenza this fall.
- When reporting absences related to illness, please be sure to report if your child...
  - Has been in close contact with someone positive for coronavirus
  - Is experiencing symptoms of coronavirus
  - Has been diagnosed with coronavirus
  - Has been diagnosed with influenza (respiratory flu)

# Communication

## Communication Methods:

Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, Ridgewood High School District 234 will utilize the following communication methods to keep stakeholders up to date on changes regarding all protocols:

- [D234 website](#)
- Phone, text and email alerts
- Tri-annual Ridgewood Newsletter

- D234 social media ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#))

All parents/guardians who wish to receive communication should make sure email addresses and phone numbers are up to date and follow RHS social media for more timely updates.

#### **Who do I contact if...**

- My student tests positive for COVID-19?
  - School Nurse, Candace Reid, ext. 1258
- I am a staff member who tests positive for COVID-19?
  - School Nurse, Candace Reid, ext. 1258

#### **So there was a confirmed case in RHS... now what?**

- We will immediately notify local health officials. The local health officials will help the RHS administration decide a course of action.
- IDPH guidelines will be followed for the purpose of quarantine.

#### **My student tested positive for coronavirus, how can they return to school?**

- The student's guardian should contact the Candace Reid, RHS School Nurse, at 708-456-4242 x1268 with specific information regarding their student's illness, including current symptoms.
- As new guidance emerges, ***guidelines may change.***