

## Lake Central School Corporation

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Dear Lake Central Families and Staff Members,

We are sending frequently asked questions to our families in order to share how our schools will look different as we begin the 2020-21 school year.

We have been working closely with our teachers, health officials, and other school officials regionally and across the state to determine the safety measures that best fit our communities.

This information should be used as a guide to help all families decide whether to return to in school instruction 5 days per week or choose an at home eLearning option if they are uncomfortable with the safety measures that will be implemented.

Whether our families choose in school instruction or the eLearning option, our mission remains the same. Our official mission statement continues to guide our efforts.

*The mission statement of Lake Central School Corporation, as a family, community, and school partnership, is to ensure that each student becomes a self-directed learner and a contributing and responsible citizen through an instructional delivery system that engages in achieving their personal best.*

We are confident that our plans will provide the safest possible environment for students and staff and will enable us to meet our commitment to prepare our children for a successful future.

Sincerely,

Dr. Veracco

## **Frequently Asked Questions About Returning to School on August 11th**

The following Frequently Asked Questions document includes questions we have already received and items that have been asked of other school leaders. While we have attempted to be exhaustive in producing the list, there still may be some less likely scenarios that are not covered.

We also want to share that despite our best efforts, Lake Central School Corporation cannot completely mitigate the transfer of communicable diseases like COVID-19. Enhanced safety measures can significantly reduce the virus spread but it will take all of us working together to achieve the best result. Everything we are implementing is in an effort to keep the spread of virus down in our schools and community so that we may maintain in school delivery of instruction.

The plan for opening our schools is guided by information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH), and the Lake County Board of Health. Local input was gathered from LCSC committees focused on "Measures to Minimize COVID-19 Spread," and "Enhancing E-learning." Additionally, several meetings with educational leaders including the Indiana Department of Education, Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents, Indiana Association of School Principals, Indiana Association of Business Officials and Indiana School Boards Association contributed to determining the best plan for returning to face to face instruction.

### **Introductory Topics**

#### **Why has the district waited until July 10th to ask parents if they intend to return to school on August 11th?**

*We selected a date that we feel will give us enough time to analyze the data but also is as close to the scheduled first day of school as possible. Conditions are changing quickly and we are asking parents to decide between in person instruction or distance learning. The COVID committee used the past six weeks to discuss much of what is included in this document. Additionally, the e-Learning committee was working to improve e-learning for those wishing to keep children at home. We want everyone to have a clear idea regarding how e-learning will become much more rigorous in addition to having the ability to weigh the most current virus information into their decision.*

#### **Why doesn't the district wait until it is closer to August 11th to ask parents if they will send their children back to the schools for instruction since the news is rapidly changing?**

*In order to allocate staff, we need a couple of weeks to arrange schedules. The district is asking families to complete the survey by July 15th and is asking all parents who want to change their decision to make contact with their child's principal no later than July 22nd.*

#### **How will the school calendar be different this year?**

*Lake Central Schools plan to maintain the normal school calendar for the 2020-21 school year and to meet the state requirement of 180 days of instruction. However, we must be flexible as possible as we know how quickly the situation may change.*

**What will be the biggest difference for our students this year?**

*The biggest change will be the requirement of students and staff to wear masks any time they are unable to maintain a 6-foot distance from one another. This will include while riding a bus to and from school or to and from other school activities. It will also include during passing periods and to and from lunch and after finishing lunch. This will not include while in classrooms if students are working individually and facing the same direction. Even though there will be times when students will not be required to wear a mask, such as recess, students are free to wear them as much as they choose. In order to be ready for transitions to crowded spaces or group work in classrooms, we ask that each student carry a mask with them at all times. Any family unwilling to have children wear masks will need to choose the e-learning option for this school year.*

**Why is the school corporation taking such a firm stance on mask wearing?**

*Experts at the national and state level have consistently stated that utilizing a mask when in a crowd will significantly reduce the chance for individuals to spread or contract the virus. Our objective is to be able to maintain in person instruction for the entire school year. This will only be possible if the amount of virus spreading in our entire school community remains manageable. Alternative face coverings or face shields may be acceptable if approved by the student's health care provider or if called for in a 504 plan or IEP.*

**What other new rules will impact or restrict student movement?**

*Our drivers will assign seats on buses and our teachers and administrators will assign seats in classrooms and in the cafeteria. This will be done in order to make it easier to notify individuals who sit next to each other in the event we are notified of a positive case of COVID-19. By assigning seats state authorities can do a much better job of notifying others of their potential exposure. For the beginning of the year and until further notice, children from the same household will be required to sit together and students will not be permitted to ride a friend's bus. Students may only ride on their assigned bus and must sit in their assigned seat in order for us to share seat partners if asked by state authorities.*

**How will lunch in the cafeteria be different?**

*Utensils will be wrapped in a napkin and placed on trays by cafeteria staff. Students will have additional carts on which to drop trays in order to avoid lines at the normal drop off points. Students will also be expected to wear masks while waiting in line and after they finish eating since physical distancing will not be possible. A full description of changes to cafeteria operation will be available by the end of July.*

**If the State of Indiana fully opens in early August without restrictions, why are the schools taking so many precautions upon returning to school?**

*We are not going back to business as usual. Until effective medicines or a vaccine is developed we have to do everything we can to minimize the number of people who get sick in our community. Wearing masks, physically distancing ourselves when possible, washing hands frequently and staying home when sick will help to protect our community from unnecessary spread.*

**How will the schools train our students in the new expectations described above?**

*At the beginning of the year, and periodically when necessary, students will be taught to self-screen each day prior to coming to school. Principals will use daily announcements and teachers will reiterate how to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19, social distancing expectations and best practice, proper hand washing techniques, and proper use of masks. Signage in restrooms will remind students to properly wash hands and cafeteria signage will assist students while waiting in line to be served lunch.*

**When will we receive the survey about returning to school and when is the deadline for responding?**

*The survey will be sent in a separate email on July 10<sup>th</sup> and all responses are due by July 15th.*

**LCSC Family Expectations**

**Will there be a standardized screening protocol for students and staff members prior to their entering of school facilities?**

*According to the ISDH, screening all students and staff for COVID-19 symptoms at school every day is not realistic for a variety of reasons. As a result, all families are asked to self-screen before coming to school each day. In order to minimize spreading the virus, sick students and staff members should stay home. Please note that all attendance incentives and awards for the 2020-2021 school year have been suspended. Remember that our ability to limit the spread of COVID-19 in our school and community is essential for us to maintain face to face instruction. The following are COVID-19 related symptoms that should prompt students and staff to stay home until they subside:*

- A fever of 100.4 or greater*
- Cough*
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing*
- Chills*
- Repeated shaking with chills*
- Muscle pain*
- Headache*
- Sore throat*
- New loss of taste or smell*

**What should we do if our child or a member of our household tests positive for COVID-19?**

*If an individual in one's home tests positive, then everyone in the household should also stay home for a minimum of 14 days. This could become a longer period of time if your student(s) becomes symptomatic. (See Student Guidance for Return to School chart at [www.lcsc.us](http://www.lcsc.us) under Important News)*

**How will the school be notified of positive cases?**

*Parents are encouraged to notify the school immediately upon learning of a positive COVID test. The school will then contact the local health department who will be responsible for contacting individuals who have been close contacts of the individual who has tested positive.*

**Will the schools require a medical provider's note to return to school if a child is sent home with COVID-19 symptoms?**

*If a student has symptoms of COVID-19, they should be presumed to be positive and quarantine for 14 days and be free of fever for 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine before returning to school. If the child's medical provider determines the symptoms were caused by something other than COVID-19, and the student is free of fever without the use of fever reducing medicine, the child may return to school with a note from the medical provider.*

**Will the school notify students when they are considered a close contact of someone who tested positive and that they should quarantine?**

*The Indiana State Department of Health will lead contact tracing and case investigation in consultation with the local health department. As stated above, the school will not be contacting individuals who have been in close proximity to the individual who has tested positive.*

**If the local health department or other contact tracing personnel contact the school, what information will the school share with the authorities responsible for contact tracing?**

*The schools will share with authorities the names of other students with whom the individual with the positive test had close contact. This could include who they sit next to on the bus, in a group at lunch, or next to in a classroom.*

**What will the school do after being notified that a student or staff member or a member of their household has tested positive for COVID-19?**

*If the school corporation is notified by the student or staff member, it will contact the Lake County Department of Health to inform them. Additionally, state statute "gives public school districts the authority to exclude students who have contagious disease such as COVID-19 or are liable to transmit it after exposure" (I. C. 20-34-3-9) Lake Central will ask the family to follow the ISDH quarantine guidelines.*

**If my child becomes ill at school for any reason, will I be able to come inside to pick them up?**

*Visitors to school are going to be severely restricted. If a child becomes sick at school, we will ask the parent/guardian to call the office when they arrive at the school and a nurse, administrator, or other staff member will escort the child to the main office door to meet their parent/guardian.*

## **Health Safety Practices and Protocols While at School**

### **What has the school corporation done to make it easier to keep hands clean?**

*The district has added 30 stand-alone touch free antibacterial gel dispensers and 75 wall mounted touch free dispensers. These devices will be spread throughout all buildings with the larger stand-alone units being located near main entrances and cafeterias. Additionally, touch free paper towel dispensers will be installed in all bathrooms prior to the first day of school.*

### **What has the school corporation done to ensure cleaner buildings?**

*The district has added 9 custodians to ensure that every classroom is cleaned every day. This will include desks, doorknobs, cabinet handles and other commonly touched surfaces. Additionally, as in the past, all offices, nursing stations and restrooms will be cleaned throughout the day.*

### **What type of CDC approved germicide is the district using to clean classrooms?**

Please go to [www.lcsc.us](http://www.lcsc.us), under Important news to view the Safety Data Sheet on the cleanser being used in our schools. (listed under Safety Data Sheet)

### **How will elementary schools maintain recess while making it safer?**

*The square footage of the playgrounds will be increased in order to reduce the number of children on the playground in one area at the same time. Barricade arms will be employed to mark these areas. The playgrounds will be zoned in an attempt to keep classrooms together. Playground supervisors and teachers will make hand washing after recess a point of emphasis.*

### **How will students who report to the nurse's office with COVID-19 symptoms be isolated?**

*Each nursing office will use a curtained off space or separate office to place any student who demonstrates or describes viral symptoms. Other students who are ill without indicating viral symptoms may be asked to wait to be picked up in areas in the main school office.*

## **Athletics/Extra Curricular and Adventure Club**

### **Where can I find the athletic plan for easing back into practice for sports and high school marching band this fall?**

*Those plans may be found at [www.lcsc.us](http://www.lcsc.us), then under the athletic or extracurricular tabs.*

### **Will the Adventure Club be back up and running on August 11, 2020?**

*Yes, the Adventure Club will assume its normal hours (6:30 AM to start of school for before school care and end of school to 6:00 PM). Students and staff must wear masks during Adventure Club time. Adventure Club programming will be slightly modified to meet the physical distancing guidelines.*

## **2020-21 E-learning Option**

**How will the school corporation accommodate students and families who choose not to return to school in person?**

*Families will be asked to choose between on campus learning and e-learning at the end of the parent survey which will come out via email on July 10<sup>th</sup>. Students and families' must remain at home and receive instruction through e-learning for the entire semester if they choose e-Learning. Students and families who choose on campus instruction must remain on campus for the entire semester unless they encounter a COVID-19 situation in their household.*

**What will be the most significant changes to the e-learning program for this school year compared to Spring 2020?**

*Per the IDOE and Indiana code (IC 20-30-2-2), the school day must meet the instructional hour requirement of a regular school day which is a minimum of 5 hours for grades 1-6, and 6 hours for grades 7-12. Students will need to log in at the same time as students who are physically at school to begin their instructional day then follow their normal schedule. For a quick reference guide of E-learning for 2020-21, go to [www.lcsc.us](http://www.lcsc.us), then Important News.*

**Why is the district requiring students who choose e-learning to complete all work during the regular school schedule?**

*During the spring of 2020, many students fell far behind, resulting in some completing the work at less than their best effort. Additionally, some students fell behind to the point where they did not even attempt some of the work. For these reasons, we believe it is in the best interests of our students to follow the regular school day schedule.*

**How will the district assign staff to support students who choose e-learning?**

*This question is difficult to answer prior to knowing how many students will select the distance learning option.*

**If we choose e-learning, will we be guaranteed an opportunity to take all elective courses?**

*It will not be possible to guarantee that all elective courses can be offered via distance learning. All core classes will be offered via e-learning.*



## **Other Matters**

### **Will school open houses and individual teacher conferences still be held in person at the schools?**

*Unless otherwise dictated by the building principal, all parent conferences shall be conducted via teleconference or via a virtual meeting option. Teachers will record their traditional. open house presentations in order to share their learning goals for the course, major projects etc. Email correspondence will remain our preferred inquiry method for most issues and concerns. Individual conversations with parents/guardians when necessary may be scheduled but for the time being will be conducted via teleconference.*

### **Will the schools have the annual picture day?**

*Yes. While the school district will minimize outside visitors, photographers will be permitted to complete this task. All outside visitors will wear masks while on campus and will not invade the 6' space of any student.*

### **Will field trips still be scheduled?**

*For the foreseeable future, no field trips will be scheduled.*

### **Will classroom parties for special occasions still take place?**

*The celebrations will still take place but, in an attempt to limit visitors to our schools, they will be run by teachers and instructional assistants for this school year.*

### **How will library books be reissued after being returned?**

*Books checked out to students from all LC school libraries will be quarantined for 72 hours upon return prior to being placed back on the shelf.*

### **How will club members be spread out during their meetings?**

*The larger clubs may have to be moved from individual teacher classrooms to larger open spaces or classrooms in order to provide the best distancing possible.*

## **Suspension of In-class Learning**

The one category of questions that we have been frequently asked that was not included above is what is the amount of infection that would cause us to temporarily suspend in class instruction and place the entire district into an e-learning model. This question has been discussed at length both locally and at the state level but we have not yet come up with a number of student or staff absence that would warrant such a decision. We believe it would be dependent upon the amount of pressure being placed on our health care systems, which varies by community. If hospitals are nearing capacity and infections rates are rising, we believe higher authorities will make the decision to close school and return to e-learning for us. We will not make any decision without consulting with both the county and state departments of health. As mentioned previously, our ability to limit the spread locally is the only way we can ensure that we get to remain in school for instruction.



Should any parent, guardian, or student have a more specific question that will factor into a decision to choose between daily face to face instruction and e-learning, please send it to:  
**[familyquestion@lcscmail.com](mailto:familyquestion@lcscmail.com)**

## eLearning Option for 2020-21 School Year

If a parent chooses not to send their child back for in-person instruction and instead opts for Lake Central to provide eLearning instruction at home, the following guidelines will apply:

1. Per the IDOE and Indiana code (IC 20-30-2-2), the school day must meet the instructional hour requirement of a regular school day (a minimum of 5 hours for grades 1-6, and 6 hours for grades 7-12).
2. **Elementary School**
  - a. At the elementary level, students will be expected to log in at 8:10AM with their eLearning teacher.
  - b. They will have online instruction for their academic subjects as well as independent work time.
  - c. They will also have instruction for computer science and specials during the week.
  - d. Instruction will include live instruction and interaction via video conferencing.
  - e. There will be breaks for independent work, lunch, and movement.
  - f. The school day will end at approximately 2:30PM.
  - g. All assignments and assessments will have specific due dates that students will have to meet, same as they would if they were in the classroom.
  - h. Grades will be determined by the assignments and assessments that they take via eLearning.
3. **Middle School**
  - a. At the middle school level, students will be expected to log in by 8:47AM for advisory.
  - b. After advisory, students will follow their normal bell schedule and rotate through eLearning classes with various teachers that will be about 45 minutes in length.
  - c. Classes will be a blend of live instruction and interaction via video conferencing.
  - d. There will be breaks for independent work, lunch, and movement.
  - e. The school day will conclude at approximately 3:40PM.
  - f. Not all electives may be available via eLearning, and schedules may be adjusted accordingly.
  - g. Edmentum, an online learning platform, may be utilized for elective courses depending on the number of students who opt into eLearning.
  - h. All assignments and assessments will have specific due dates that students will have to meet, same as they would if they were in the classroom.
  - i. Grades will be determined by the assignments and assessments that they take via eLearning.
4. **High School**
  - a. At the high school level, students will be expected to log in at 7:15AM.
  - b. Students will follow their normal bell schedule and rotate through eLearning classes with various teachers that will be about 90 minutes in length on blue/white days and about 45 minutes in length on traditional days.

- c. Classes will be a blend of live instruction and interaction via video conferencing.
- d. There will be breaks for independent work, lunch, and movement.
- e. The school day will conclude at approximately 2:09PM.
- f. Not all electives may be available via eLearning, and schedules may be adjusted accordingly.
- g. Edmentum, an online learning platform, may be utilized for elective courses depending on the number of students who opt into eLearning.
- h. All assignments and assessments will have specific due dates that students will have to meet, same as they would if they were in the classroom.
- i. Grades will be determined by the assignments and assessments that they take via eLearning.

**5. Students with IEPs**

- a. The case conference committee will reconvene to develop a distance learning plan for the student.
- b. Service delivery models and minutes will be determined by the case conference committee and the student's IEP will be revised.

Depending on the number of families who opt for eLearning, students may receive instruction from teachers from across the district, not necessarily from their particular school building. All teachers selected to provide eLearning will be very capable with the programs and tools that will be utilized.

**If a parent selects eLearning, they are committing to it for at least a semester.** We cannot have students moving back and forth between eLearning and in person instruction due to the size of our student population and scheduling limitations.