



**Southeast Polk
Community Schools**
Return to Learn
2020-2021

*Moving Forward
Together*

LEARN. LEAD. LIVE.
Success for college, career and civic life.
***Engage all students in learning a challenging curriculum delivered through
quality instruction.***



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Introduction

Southeast Polk Families, Students, and Staff,

As we prepare for the 2020-2021 school year, many people have been working hard to develop our Southeast Polk Return to Learn Plan. We are committed to a continued focus on academic excellence as well as providing for the health, safety, and emotional well-being of students, staff, and community. Our plan is designed to anticipate what education can look like in the presence of COVID-19 and the many different challenges it provides us. I am proud of the work that has been done by staff members from all areas of our organization.

Based on guidance from the state health and education officials, Southeast Polk has created models for Onsite Learning, Online Learning, and Hybrid Learning. Our plan includes a flexible approach, understanding that we may start the school year with one instructional schedule model and, as new information becomes available about health and safety, we may transition to a different model.

The intent of this document is to provide an overview of the Southeast Polk Return to Learn Plan. The plan is based on the information that we have available now. It is likely that information will change over time. We will continue to work closely with our public health officials, education partners, and community government. As conditions change, we will adapt our plan accordingly. The health and safety of our students, staff, and community is always our top priority.

It will take all of us working collaboratively to make our plans a success for the students of Southeast Polk. I am confident that together we will achieve this.

Sincerely,

Dirk Halupnik, Ed.D

Superintendent

Southeast Polk Community Schools





Overview

As we plan for a return to school, Southeast Polk is committed to a continued focus on academic excellence as well as providing for the health, safety, and emotional well-being of students, staff, and community. The Southeast Polk Return to Learn plan is designed to provide onsite learning for students during the upcoming school year in a safe environment while being flexible and responsive to the challenges of COVID-19. The health and safety of our students, staff, and community is always our top priority and we designed our plan accordingly.

Our priorities include:

- Ensuring that basic needs are met during the pandemic.
- Providing for the health, safety, and emotional well-being of students, staff, and the community.
- Making sure that parents and families have the resources they need to continue learning.
- Clear and consistent communication regarding expectations and adaptations.

Health and Safety

Health Guidelines

The health and safety of Southeast Polk's teachers, staff, students, and families are first and foremost in planning for the 2020-2021 school year. Southeast Polk Community School District collaborates with the Polk County Health Department, Iowa Department of Public Health, and local healthcare providers to provide guidelines which define when a student is well enough to attend school. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the guidance is modified to meet appropriate public health and safety needs.

These guidelines are for the general student population. Consult your primary healthcare provider to provide guidance regarding your child's specific health needs. A medical note may be required to return to school after an illness.

The general message to families, students, and staff is to stay home if you are not feeling well.





- All students are required to take their temperature at home daily and perform a self-screening before coming to the school buildings.
 - A fever is defined as above or equal to 100.4 degrees fahrenheit.
 - See below for symptoms requiring students or staff to stay home.
- It is recommended that staff take their temperature at home daily and perform a self-screening before coming to the school buildings. They are required to perform a wellness check upon arrival into the building.
- All students and staff are required to wear face coverings, especially when social distancing cannot be achieved. See [Student Face Covering Guidelines](#).
- Students exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated in a designated area and will be required to wear facial coverings (either their own or school provided) until a parent/guardian comes to pick up.
- Parents/guardians should plan ahead to arrange how your child will be cared for if they are required to stay home, or need to go home, from school due to illness.
- We ask that ill students be picked up within one hour of notification.
- Notify the school if your child is ill and will not be at school. Be prepared to notify the attendance secretaries of all symptoms your student is exhibiting.
- Always notify the school office *immediately* if your child's emergency contact information changes.
- Food will not be allowed to be brought into the school except for students bringing their own lunch. Food as birthday treats will not be allowed. Teachers will provide a menu of non-food birthday celebration ideas.



Symptoms Requiring Students or Staff To Stay Home

- COVID-19 symptoms with no other confirmed cause or explanation for the symptom:
 - a. *fever or chills (“feeling feverish” or a temp of $\geq 100.4^*$)*
 - b. *cough*
 - c. *shortness of breath or difficulty breathing*
 - d. *fatigue*
 - e. *muscle/ body aches*
 - f. *headache*
 - g. *new loss of taste or smell*
 - h. *sore throat*
 - i. *congestion/runny nose*
 - j. *nausea/ vomiting*
 - k. *diarrhea*
- Active vomiting or diarrhea due to a suspected contagious illness
- The first 24 hours of various antibiotic treatments for bacterial infections (i.e. strep throat, pink eye, etc.)
- Rash or skin condition that is of unknown cause, undiagnosed, new, and/or needing treatment for a contagious cause.
- Doctor's note requiring an individualized plan of care to stay home.
- Other communicable illnesses which pose a risk of disease transmission to others.

Conditions for a Safe Return to School or Work

- ***Fever - 72 hours fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication***
- ***After 24 hours on antibiotics for variety of identified bacterial causes***
- ***Doctor's note of clearance for various student-specific medical conditions***
- The “72 hours” guidance will be reviewed frequently and lifted to “24 hours” when appropriate according to Public Health Guidance.



Southeast Polk Return to School Buildings or Activities After COVID-19

Based on Guidance from [CDC](#) and Polk County Public Health Dept.

If staff/student tests positive for COVID-19, has had close contact* with a person with COVID-19, or is symptomatic** for COVID-19:

**Symptoms include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle/ body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion/runny nose, nausea/ vomiting, or diarrhea

Or

ISOLATION

A staff/student who has had close contact* with a person with COVID-19 must not return to school activities or enter the school buildings until the following criteria have been met.

- Stay home until 14 days after last exposure
- Check temperature twice a day, monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 every day
- If you become ill, contact your provider and/public health for guidance
- Maintain social distance (at least 6 feet) from others at all times

*At this time, close contact is defined as less than 6 feet from the person with the positive case for longer than 15 minutes from 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms. At the time of exposure, guidance from Public Health will be obtained to determine how 'close contact' is defined.

QUARANTINE

Staff/student who has tested positive or waiting for test results must not return to work/school/practice/games until the following criteria have been met.

- **No fever** for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers)
- other **symptoms** have **improved** (i.e. when your cough or shortness of breath has improved)
- **at least 10 days** have passed since your symptoms first appeared.
- a primary care provider or respiratory clinic note may be required prior to return

Note: if you have symptoms of COVID-19, without known exposure, and your test is **NEGATIVE**, you may go back to daily activities 24 hours after your fever and other symptoms **RESOLVE**.



Social Distancing

Southeast Polk will plan for appropriate, building-wide social distancing as possible and as needed. Administrators will calculate the safe building capacity of each building and assess the utility of/repurposing of any available space as needed.

Student wellness checks	Student wellness checks are done passively, in their homes, collaboratively with an adult.
Facial coverings	All students and staff are required to wear face coverings, especially when social distancing cannot be achieved.
Employee passive wellness checks	Employees are encouraged to conduct periodic individual, in-home passive wellness checks.
Employee active wellness checks	Employees must successfully complete active, at-work wellness checks prior to beginning work/entering the building.
Employee facial coverings	Employees are expected to wear facial coverings on campus, except when they are in places where social distancing is easily achieved.
Volunteers and visitors	Only essential volunteers and visitors are allowed into buildings. They must also complete active wellness checks before entering the building and must wear facial coverings in areas where social distancing is not easily accomplished.
Signage, protocols, and traffic patterns	The building administration and Buildings and Grounds Department will collaboratively create and post signage and floor markings for maintaining social distancing.
Morning arrival at school buildings	Student entry into school is staggered to accommodate distanced school entry. Students will enter school and will immediately, 1) collect a grab and go breakfast (or not) and then 2) go to their assigned learning areas. Staff members are assigned to arrival captain positions to assure an orderly entrance into school.
Learning spaces	Chairs and tables are spaced 6 feet apart in learning areas and cohort groupings of students are to be maintained when possible.
Passing time, student foot travel	Creative and thoughtful scheduling of start and stop times for learning sessions are to be implemented to reduce the numbers of students who contact one another in hallways and bathrooms.
Afternoon release from school buildings	Principals offer multiple exits and appropriately stagger the release of students at the end of the day to accommodate social distancing when dismissing from school. Again, release captains are assigned to ensure an orderly, socially-distanced release process occurs.



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Outdoor spaces	Outdoor spaces, recess areas, and playgrounds are divided into zones for ease in cohort activities, PE, and social distancing. Facial coverings may be let down outdoors, provided students remain 6 feet or more apart at all times and are in an organized, adult-supervised activity.
Lunch and "specials"	K-12 lunch by delivery, elementary art instruction, elementary music instruction, and school-librarians' work with students take place in existing classrooms to maintain cohort groups and limit movement. Lunch may also be served in an appropriately distanced lunchroom.
Classroom deliveries	Classroom deliveries are made by office personnel to ease office and hallway traffic. Extra copies, notes, or other information are delivered to classrooms or other areas.
Non-Instructional spaces and social distancing	Only one employee at a time may enter into areas that customarily feature larger groups (excluding gymnasiums, auditoriums, etc.). Areas like staff lounges, staff bathrooms, copy machine locations, mail rooms, and main offices are limited to one person at a time. Note: main offices may have more than one person working in them and may be appropriately partitioned off using social distancing principles. Floor markings will be observed in these work areas.
Deliveries	Deliveries will only be accepted at docks or outside dock doors using a hands-free, contact-free approach.
Meetings and communications	Staff meetings, staff development sessions, or other large group gatherings must occur virtually (unless there is a space that could accommodate a larger group while still observing social distancing); communications between pairs of or among small groups of employees must include facial covering and maintaining a 6-foot distance. Those communications could occur more safely and or with increased confidentiality over the phone, via email/text, or through instant messaging.
Field trips and excursions	Field trips and excursions off campus are prohibited until further notice.
Large group events	Avoid scheduling large-scale assemblies, in-person music performances, and/or any other large gathering events until permission and guidance are offered.



Cleaning and Sanitizing

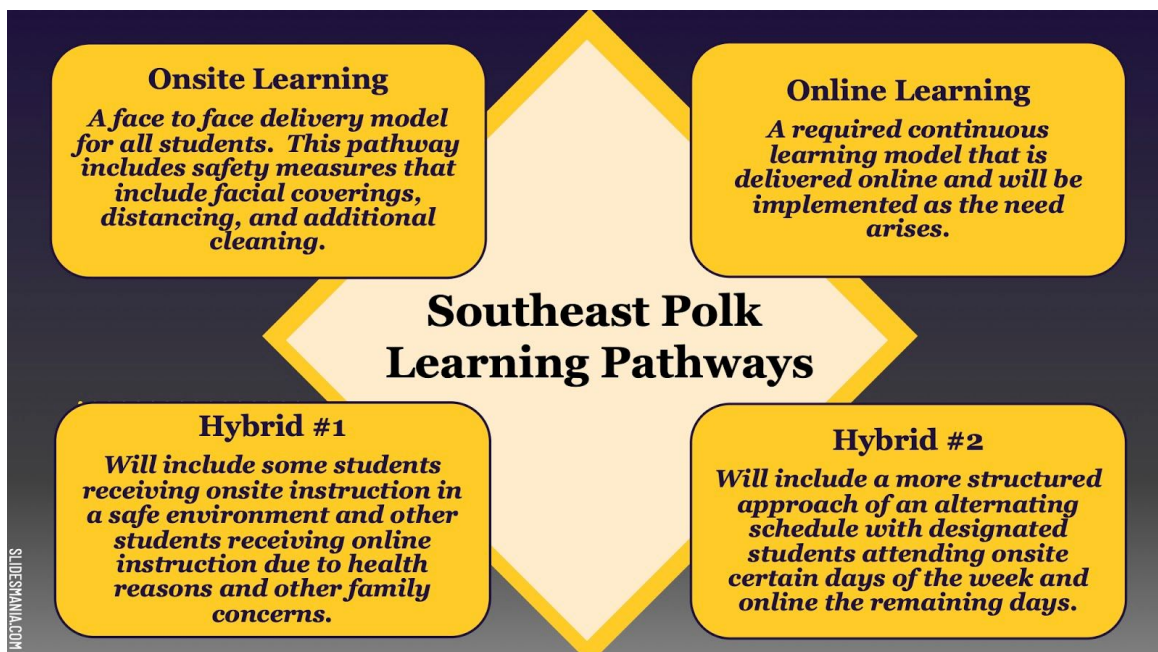
The Southeast Polk Community School District is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all of our staff, students, and the community.

- Hand sanitizers will be placed throughout buildings and as close to entrances as possible
- Sanitizing wipes will be available in every classroom
- Staff will maintain standards for routine and advanced cleaning and disinfecting of buildings, including all offices, classrooms, cafeterias, and other common areas
 - Routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces
 - Clean surfaces using soap and water, or identified cleaning agent, and then a disinfectant
 - More frequent cleaning and disinfecting may be required based on the level of use

Academics and Curriculum

Learning Pathways

Based on the guidance from the Iowa Department of Education, Southeast Polk has created models for Onsite Learning, Online Learning, and Hybrid Learning. Our plan includes a flexible approach, understanding that we may start the school year with one instructional schedule model and, as new information becomes available about health and safety, we may transition to a different model.





Onsite Learning

Onsite Learning is a face to face delivery model for all students. This pathway includes safety measures that include facial coverings, distancing, and additional cleaning. A safe building reopening will be combined with opportunities to determine student learning needs and address unfinished instruction. Social emotional needs and well-being will also be a priority when students and staff return to buildings for onsite learning.

Online Learning

Online Learning is a continuous learning model that is delivered online and will be implemented as the need arises. This is a required model that will include new learning and participation of all students. Consistent learning management systems will be important for families should the online learning model be put into place. Southeast Polk will be using Google Classroom as a learning platform at the elementary level and Canvas at the secondary level.

Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning

The Southeast Polk Online Learning Model will be a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Synchronous consists of the teacher offering a lesson to the class of students at the same time; **Asynchronous** provides the student with tools to complete the work on their own time, and direct involvement from the teacher can happen anytime.

Regular attendance will be taken during online learning.

- Synchronous
 - Attendance at online class sessions
- Asynchronous
 - Course progress
 - Exit slips built into recorded online class session

Grading: We will continue to use letter grades during reporting periods. The use of proficiency scales will identify where students are in their progression of learning and support planning for accelerated instruction.





Hybrid Learning

While our goal is that all students will return to onsite learning in a safe environment, we recognize that there will be circumstances when students are not able to attend due to concerns of students and families. We will implement a flexible learning model where some students will receive instruction face to face and some will be provided instruction online.

One option of the hybrid model will include students receiving face to face instruction in a safe environment and other students receiving online instruction. This might include students or families who have underlying health conditions, students who have tested positive for COVID-19, or students who are in isolation due to contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, or other family concerns.

Another option of the hybrid model will include a more structured approach of an alternating schedule with designated students attending onsite certain days of the week and online the remaining days. Half of the student population will report to school on specific days each week, while the remaining half of the school population participates in distance learning at home. Students will be provided assignments to support their learning on the days in which they do not report to school that could include paper, pencil, eLearning or a combination.

Accelerating Student Learning

Our goal at Southeast Polk is to create an instructional plan that prioritizes accelerating students' learning by ensuring their exposure to grade-appropriate content along with the supports and pre-teaching that will fill any gaps related to unfinished instruction. Accelerated learning requires that students consistently receive grade-level materials, tasks, and assignments, along with appropriate scaffolds that make the work accessible.

Social-Emotional Learning

The social emotional health and well-being of Southeast Polk's teachers, staff, students, and families is first and foremost in planning for the 2020-2021 school year. In our current public health crisis, we have the potential for high levels of stress among adults and students, and we know that the economic impact and potential for grief and loss could create prolonged impacts on our community. It's important for educators to prioritize our own wellbeing so that we can continue to be present for students in the weeks and months ahead.



Students need a safe and supportive environment through welcoming routines and clear expectations. Student connectedness and belonging increases engagement--even one relationship with a caring adult makes a difference. Instruction in social-emotional skills promotes resilience and achievement. All adults are responsible for monitoring the social-emotional behavioral needs of students and consulting with school counselors when a concern is present. We will continue to use the frameworks of PBIS and Olweus (K-8) and Mentors in Violence Prevention (9-12) to build strong student-student and student-staff relationships.

Staff members also need a sense of belonging, safety, support, and flexibility to prevent burnout. Developing adult resilience through building social-emotional skills promotes positive outcomes for students.

Social Emotional Resources

[Resources for SEP Families](#)

Equity

Creating equitable learning opportunities is of the utmost importance to Southeast Polk educators and families. Equity in this context is focused on ensuring all students:

- Have access to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE),
- Are able to access the Iowa Content Standards, and
- Have the supports needed to progress in their learning.

As we plan our Return to Learn, we have a unique opportunity—to ensure students with disabilities and other special populations are fully integrated into every aspect of preparation and participation, and to ensure the needs of all students are addressed and the decision benefits all students, staff, and families.

Special Education

The provision of special education services and support services across any of the learning pathways are predicated on the following core beliefs:

- IEPs will direct the provision of special education services.
- While teachers strive to assist students to increase academic achievement time will also be allocated to address students' social and emotional needs.



- Focused instruction tightly aligned with both Core Curriculum standards as well as IEP goals will be provided to each student.

The individual needs of each student will be identified and ways of meeting these needs will be addressed under each of the delivery models. Through collaboration, a team will review the specific associate supports listed in student's IEPs as being provided when the student is at school. This team will then determine those associate supports, if any, that will be necessary during implementation of hybrid or online learning.

English Learners

The Southeast Polk Return to Learn Plan is designed to ensure English learners and their families have equitable access to materials and instruction. Educators will consider students' levels of language proficiency and plan for instruction and assessment that will allow them access to materials and tasks.

Gifted Education

As a part of providing equitable instruction, it is important to establish accelerated and enriched learning opportunities, including time for collaborative teams to identify students and plan for appropriately rigorous advanced learning.

At-Risk Learners

As part of the Return to Learn plan, we need to be aware of and have an increased understanding of the many challenges and barriers students and families face due to trauma and various aspects of their environment and identities. All staff need to take a trauma-informed approach. Students who were already at-risk are more vulnerable than ever, and student engagement is critical to equity for at-risk learners. Building relationships with students and their caregivers and creating community partnerships will help increase student engagement.

Professional Learning

To maximize instructional time and provide additional opportunities to address unfinished learning, the release schedule for professional development will be revised to an every other week schedule. Below is a draft of the professional development schedule for the 2020-2021 school year.

[Southeast Polk Staff Development 2020-2021 DRAFT PROPOSAL](#)





Communication

Ongoing feedback among the school and community stakeholders is an essential component for the success of the Southeast Polk Return-to-Learn plan. The content, type, and frequency of communication will be determined by our needs. Communication will consist of proactive measures to prepare internal and external stakeholders for the Return to Learn Plan and responsive measures that may occur due to circumstances indicating a change to the plan. The plan will support routine communication with parents and staff regarding steps the school is taking to promote health and safety of students and staff. Components include:

- Ongoing communication among school and community stakeholders
- Develop a variety of media to present information
- Seek feedback from school and community regarding concerns, ideas, and suggestions to help inform the Return to Learn plan.
- Create an FAQ document to address concerns and explain key points.

Next Steps

Timeline of Return to Learn Process

7/15/20	Communicate Process Timeline
7/16/20	Board Discussion
7/17/20	Plan Description Online
7/17/20	Parent Survey
7/20/20	FAQs Posted Online
7/20/20	Staff Survey
7/22/20	Staff Learning Sessions
7/23/20	Parent Learning Session
7/24/20	FAQs Updated to Include 7/23 Session
8/6/20	Formal Recommendation to Board at Meeting