

July 30, 2020

Dear Evangelical School Parents/Guardians,

We hope that this letter finds your family healthy and safe. The teachers and staff of Evangelical School are looking forward to a great school year. We are excited to have our students back with us. As we all work together, with God's blessing, we are confident that our students will grow academically, socially, and personally throughout this school year.

If you did not receive the link to log in to Gradelink to complete the enrollment process, please contact our school office.

Thank you for your patience as we have worked diligently throughout the summer to provide our present plan for reopening Evangelical School on August 19th. This plan has been developed based on the guidelines provided us by the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Public Health, with weekly meetings of the School Board, and input from the Evangelical School and Church staffs.

It is important to remember that these guidelines are subject to change pursuant to updated public health guidance from the State of Illinois and changing public health conditions in our region.

Please make special note of the slightly shorter school day and the absence of special classes this year. By dismissing a little earlier than usual, our teachers will gain much needed planning time and will be able to connect if necessary, with remote learners or students who need additional help. Please know that students will still receive religious instruction and will also get a recess at some point during the school day.

We appreciate the support of school parents during this difficult time of coping with the COVID-19 situation. We look forward to getting back to normal as soon as feasible.

We look forward to seeing all of you soon.

Sincerely,

Maria A. Baalman
Principal

Evangelical School

Plan for the Return of Students

Evangelical School has made plans for the return of students to our building. Using the guidance provided to us by the Illinois State Board of Education in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Public Health, the following safety precautions will be followed:

- All students and staff will be required to wear face masks while inside the school.
- Visitors to the school will be extremely limited. All visitors must wear a face mask while inside the school.
- Classrooms will be organized to space students six feet apart.
- Classrooms will be cleaned and disinfected daily. Emphasis will be placed on high touch surfaces and common areas. Restrooms will be cleaned multiple times throughout the day.
- All students and staff will be required to have a symptoms screening upon entering the building. This screening will take place while the student is in the car prior to entering the building. It is our goal to prevent anyone who is symptomatic from entering the building. Any child or adult who is showing some symptom of COVID-19 will be required to return home to be monitored for a period of 72 hours. During this time, the symptomatic student will switch to remote learning to allow for the continuation of learning. When the student is symptom free, he/she will be allowed to return to school. Please find attached a list of symptoms that have been associated with COVID-19.
- Students will be limited to groups of 50 in any one area.
- Classrooms without sinks will be provided with handwashing stations.
- Students will be asked to bring water bottles, labeled with the student's name. Water bottle filling stations will be available.

Please keep in mind that our plans could change based on our local, regional, and state data and potential increase in positive COVID-19 cases.

PPE (Face Coverings and Masks)

State guidelines require that people, *including teachers, staff, and students*, wear face coverings in all school buildings, at all times. Face coverings help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others.

- Masks/face coverings must be worn upon entering Evangelical School.
- A mask/face covering can include disposable masks, cloth masks, neck gaiter, or surgical type masks.
- A mask/face covering must cover the nose and mouth completely. The covering should fit snugly but comfortably against the sides of the face and be secured with ties or ear loops to hold it in place.

- Any masks/face coverings that incorporate valves to facilitate easy exhaling, mesh masks, or masks with openings, holes, visible gaps in the design or materials, or vents are not sufficient face coverings because they allow droplets to be released from the mask.
- Masks/face coverings with references to beer or alcohol, or with inappropriate slogans may not be worn.
- Masks are to be fresh and clean each morning, so we encourage families to purchase multiple face masks to allow for time to wash and sterilize masks that have already been worn. We suggest that a clean mask be kept in the student's backpack. We will have masks available in the event a student soils his/her mask and doesn't have an extra one.
- It is not known if face shields provide any benefit as source control to protect others from the spray of respiratory particles. **CDC, ISBE and IDPH do not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings.**
- Face shields may be an alternative for students/staff identified by administration in coordination with the student's/staff's medical provider for those with a medical issue who are unable to wear a face mask that covers their nose and mouth.
- When approved, a face shield must extend below the chin and to the ears, and there should be no exposed gap between the forehead and the shields headpiece.
- Face coverings are not required for outdoor activities, as long as individuals maintain social distancing. Whenever possible, students will maintain a distance of 6 feet apart from one another.
- Not wearing or refusing to wear a face covering (unless a physician's note regarding inability to wear a face covering is on file in the school office) is considered a school policy violation and will be handled accordingly.

Schedule for School Day and School Calendar

Before School Care

Before School Care will be available for our students beginning at 7:00 a.m. Before School Care will be provided in the gymnasium. Drop off will be at the lower atrium door #10 (youth room door). Students will be screened by before-school-care personnel while parents are still present and before being allowed to enter the gym. There is a \$3.00 per day charge for Before School Care. While in the gym the students will remain with other students from their class, socially distanced from children in other classes.

- Please note that gatherings of more than 50 students/staff in one space are prohibited. This will apply to our Before/After School program. Spaces will be reserved on a first come/first serve basis. Please refer to the registration form for details.

School Day

The school day will start at 8:45 a.m. for students in kindergarten, second, fourth, and sixth grades. These students should arrive at 8:15 at the following locations:

K - door #4 (school office entrance)

2nd - door #3 (upper church circle).

4th - door #9 (lower atrium)

6th - door #12 (middle school entrance)

The school day will start at 9:00 a.m. for students in first, third, fifth, seventh, and eighth grades.

These students should arrive at 8:30 at the following locations:

1st - door #4 (school office entrance)

3rd - door #3 (upper church circle).

5th - door #9 (lower atrium)

7th & 8th - door #12 (middle school entrance)

- Older students with a younger sibling arriving at the earlier time may be dropped off at the younger sibling's arrival location.

Elementary children will be screened, including a temperature check, while in their vehicle before being allowed to enter the building. School will dismiss at 2:00 p.m. for students in K, 1st, & 6th and 2:15 for students in 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th, & 8th. Students will be dismissed from the same locations as they were dropped off. A school day, as defined by the State of Illinois, is a minimum of 5 hours of classroom instruction and homework. This will also be applicable if we at any time must switch to remote learning. While at school the students will cohort with students in their class and practice social distancing to the best of our ability.

- Older students with a younger sibling dismissing at the earlier time will be dismissed with the younger sibling.

After School Care

After School Care will be available for students until 6:00 p.m. beginning at 2:00 p.m. in the gymnasium. When picking up, parents should go to door #10 (youth room door). There is a \$7.00 per day charge for students in After School Care.

- Please note that gatherings of more than 50 students/staff in one space are prohibited. This will apply to our Before/After School program. Spaces will be reserved on a first come/first serve basis. Please refer to the registration form for details.

Screening Procedures

Elementary vehicles line up as they arrive. A staff member will come to each vehicle and perform the necessary screening activities before students are allowed to enter the building. Parents are to remain in their vehicles.

Health screening activities at the beginning of each school day are:

- Temperature check of each student
- Responses from the parent or authorized adult to a brief oral questionnaire

Once students are cleared for entry to the building, they will go into the building at the entrance designated for their grade.

A face covering must be worn into the building.

Social Distancing

Research has shown that social distancing has been very effective in helping to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Social distancing — defined as 6 feet or more between individuals — is to be observed by everyone whenever possible. Classrooms will be organized to space students apart to the greatest extent possible while retaining educational function.

Building Procedures

Once inside the building, students go directly to their classrooms. They take their backpacks and other personal items with them to their seats.

Classroom Procedures

To minimize the risk of a potential wide spread infection, students will consistently associate with only the members of their class. Each class will remain in its own classroom throughout the day except for the following activities:

- Restroom breaks
- Scheduled “brain/study” breaks
- Outdoor recess
- Outdoor classes
- Worship, on assigned Wednesdays

We will have additional hand sanitizing stations throughout the building as well as in each classroom. Teachers will build in time for hand hygiene and/or schedule hand hygiene breaks upon exiting and returning to the classroom. Each room is equipped with a sink, soap, and paper towels to allow students to wash their hands in the classroom. Rooms will be furnished with additional hygiene supplies.

All books, learning materials, and personal school supplies will remain with the students in their respective classrooms. In an effort to eliminate the co-mingling of classes in the hallways, middle school students will not have use of lockers to store coats and backpacks.

Middle school students will be organized into consistent cohorts of students, and teachers will travel to each classroom rather than the students moving between hours.

Playground Procedures

Face masks are not required for outdoor activities as long as students are practicing reasonable social distancing. Playground equipment will be sanitized each day.

Restroom and Drinking Fountain Procedures

Restroom breaks will be scheduled by class regularly throughout the day, and students will be escorted by the teacher whenever possible to help maintain social distancing and insure proper hand hygiene. Handwashing is mandatory before students return to their classrooms.

Drinking fountains will be cleaned and sanitized periodically throughout the day. Each of our drinking fountains will be equipped with no-touch water bottle filling station. For the time being the children will not be able to drink directly from the drinking fountain. Students are encouraged to bring their own labeled refillable water bottle which can be refilled with the no-touch water bottle dispenser.

Lunch Procedures

Students and teachers will eat lunch in their respective classrooms. Hand hygiene will be performed prior to and after eating a meal or consuming any food items in the classroom. Since face coverings will be removed while eating special attention will be given to social distancing. Desks/tables will be cleaned and sanitized before resuming classroom activities.

Learning Environment for Students

Our school's diverse learning environment is designed to respect the needs of all students and families. Both in-person and remote learning options will be available.

Options for Learning

Daily in-person learning will begin August 19, 2020 for kindergarten through 8th Grade.

Parents may choose the option to complete remote (virtual) learning for their child instead of in-person learning. Remote learning will be provided through synchronous (students on a computer with the teacher at the same time) and asynchronous (student watching recorded instruction at their own pace) methods. Internet access in the home is a necessity for this method of instruction. Attendance, grading, and assessment requirements will be the same as those for in-person instruction. Parents requesting remote learning for their child must commit to this format for the entire first semester. After the first semester, students will have the opportunity to transition to in-person instruction. **In order to prepare for the instructional needs and supports of remote learning students, parents must notify our school office with a request for this option no later than Friday, July 31st.**

- **Should Illinois return to Phase 3 at some point during the school year, we would have to move to a Blended Remote Learning situation or possible remote only. The daily school schedule in either case would look similar to the one followed while in class.**

Technology

If for any reason in-person learning is interrupted, we will provide students with the technology devices they need to successfully participate in remote learning.

Grading

The Illinois State Board of Education recommends that schools return to traditional grading policies and make modifications as necessary. Beginning in August 2020, we will return to our traditional grading policies.

Attendance

Daily attendance and engagement of students is expected, whether students are part of in-person classroom learning or remote learning.

Worship Procedures

Worship attendance will be on a rotating basis with some classes in the church sanctuary and the rest of the classes viewing the service by livestream (or Facebook live) in their classrooms.

Unfortunately, parents and other adult guests are not permitted to attend worship in person until further notice. They may view the livestream with a link which we will provide.

Classes that do attend worship in person will maintain a distance of 30 feet between class groups. No more than a total of 50 people will be in the sanctuary at one time.

Extracurricular Activities and Clubs

In an effort to minimize contact between classes, all extracurricular activities and clubs are suspended until further notice, as well as health, music, PE, Spanish, and library. Teachers will have grade appropriate books in their classrooms for the students.

School Events

All parent and family events normally held at the school are suspended until further notice. Meetings with teachers will take place via Zoom (or another agreed upon platform) at either the teacher's request or the parents' request.

Individual school pictures are scheduled to take place as usual during the school year.

Health and Safety Protocols as based on IDPH Guidance

Teachers and staff will be trained on health and safety protocols related to COVID-19 prior to in-person instruction.

Symptomatic Students, Teachers, and Staff

If any student, teacher, or staff member is not feeling well and has COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, muscle and body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea), they are required to go home.

The CDC and IDPH guidelines for individuals suspected of having COVID-19, whether they were tested or not, state that 72 hours must elapse from resolution of fever without fever-reducing medication and 10-days must pass after symptoms first appeared.

We will be relying on our Evangelical families to follow these guidelines to protect our children and families and to allow us to continue in-person learning.

If a COVID-19 test is obtained and the test results are negative, the teacher or student may return to the classroom as long as they are symptom free.

If the test results are positive, the teacher or student is required to notify the school office immediately. The Madison County Health Department will be notified immediately, and we will follow their recommendations. The parents of the other families in the classroom will also be notified, so they can monitor for developing symptoms in their children. In the event that a student(s) must be quarantined, the teacher or substitute teacher will transition to remote learning for that student the next school day and for the rest of the quarantine period.

Those who have had contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 or is suspected of having COVID-19 infection should isolate at home and monitor for symptoms. We will follow the guidelines of the MCHD to determine when it's safe for that individual to return to school. Close contact means the individual was within 6 feet of the individual with symptoms for more than 15 minutes. Individuals who did not have close contact with the person who is sick can return to school or work immediately after disinfection of the classroom, office, gym, or building.

If a staff member feels ill and has COVID-19 symptoms, he/she will be required to go home and continue to monitor symptoms. If symptoms persist or further develop within 72 hours, that staff member will be required to have a COVID-19 test done at a certified testing facility or other medical facility. We will immediately contact and follow the recommendations of the Madison County Health Department to address the situation.

As cold and flu season approaches, we fully recognize that managing symptoms and following recommended procedures may be more challenging. These are the current recommendations. We will continue to monitor the guidelines for updates in procedures and best practices.

The following resources were considered when developing Evangelical School's Reopening Plan. Please remember the guidelines could possibly change as more information and data becomes available about the spread of the COVID-19.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/covid19.aspx>

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Part-3-Transition-Planning-Phase-4.pdf>

Center for Disease Control (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

Illinois Department of Public Health Guidance for Schools (IDPH)

<https://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus/schools-guidance>

Symptoms of Coronavirus

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. The Centers for Disease Control will continue to update this list as they learn more about COVID-19.