



Dear Parents, Community and Staff of Elmwood CUSD #322:

I want to begin with a very straightforward approach in regards to our Return to School Plan for this coming Fall. Some of you are not going to agree with the policies that we put into place. You may not want your child to wear a facemask all day. The daily, early dismissal may not fit your schedule very well. You may find flaws or disagreements with other facets of the approach. **We understand.** The term that we continue to stress and utilize is TEMPORARY. In time, a treatment or vaccine will be developed to get us back to “normal.” Until then, these are temporary policies that have been developed to best create a safe environment in our schools in order to get our kids back to where we feel they belong: in school!

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) have provided schools with guidance on how to best prepare for a return to school this Fall. As they continue to learn more about COVID-19 and its impact on our local communities, their guidance evolves and changes are made. It is very important to understand that these criteria will affect Elmwood’s plan, and changes will need to be enacted to adhere to those guidelines. The plan we have today may not be the plan we have when we start school in August.

With the understanding that things may change and the possibility that we may end up going backward before we move forward, the following are important elements of the plan that we felt were critical for our parents and staff to know:

- The first day of school for students will be Tuesday, August 18, 2020.
- We will dismiss at 2:15 PM every day of the week, Monday through Friday. In order for our teachers to adequately prepare and deliver instruction for all students, they will be afforded an extra hour every day to plan their lessons so that they can provide both in-person and remote learning opportunities.
- Face coverings will be required for all students and staff while at school. It is important to follow the guidelines set forth by IPDH and ISBE in order to create a safe environment. We encourage you to practice wearing face masks with your students (especially the younger kids) before school begins. Additionally, it would be beneficial to have multiple, cloth masks as those will need to be washed regularly. We recommend having five masks: one for each day of the week.
- Families will have an option of attending school either in-person or remotely. If you do not feel comfortable sending your child(ren) to school, we understand. We will offer a remote platform for your student(s) to complete their work. That being said, if you commit to the remote platform, you will be required to stay in that mode for no less than 9 weeks (one quarter).

- Do not send your child to school if they have any of the following symptoms: 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. These are symptoms provided by ISBE and the IDPH. **If your child has any of these symptoms, they will be sent home for a minimum of 10 days.** Please understand that these are the guidelines set forth, and ones we must follow in order to maintain a safe environment for all. The district will be working on a self-certification process and will communicate those guidelines out soon.
- There may be a time when a portion of our student population has to quarantine at home due to exposure of an individual or group of individuals. The IDPH will help evaluate those circumstances on a case by case basis, and their recommendation must be followed.

I do not have to tell you that these are indeed unprecedented times. Our teachers, staff, and administration are doing everything we can to get our kids back to school while adhering to the guidelines set forth. As I have stated, at any given moment, things may change, and remote learning may need to be employed for either a portion of our student body, or our entire school.

We understand that all of this may be confusing, disagreeable, or in some regards, a bit overwhelming. We feel the same way. However, it is imperative that we follow the guidelines so that we minimize risk and create the best opportunity for us to have our children back in our classrooms.

If you have questions, which we know there will be many, please email your administrator and ask them! We will generate a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page that will be updated regularly on our website to share those questions and provide the answers, as there are likely many that share your concerns. Additionally, we will be sending home a survey to ask you to indicate your plans for your student(s) in regards to whether or not they will attend school with a mask, attend remotely, or choose another pathway for their education. Please be thoughtful in your response to this survey as these will be used to plan for our 1st Quarter of school.

We are all in this together and I am confident that we will get through these difficult times. Hopefully, a vaccine or treatment will be available soon, and we will all be able to return to our “normal” lives in the very near future. Thank you for everything you continue to do for our students and schools and for your understanding.

Sincerely,

Dr. Chad M. Wagner – Superintendent