

Thornton Township High Schools District 205

District 205 Return to In-Person Learning Plan 2021-2022

“A Plan for a Safe, Healthy and Rigorous Learning Experience”

INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to serve as an outline of requirements and guidance for students, staff, parents, and the community. In some cases, there will be details that will and must be commonly adhered to, and, in other cases, specific implementation strategies will be developed by building leadership teams or other means and approved by the D205 District Administration.

Additionally, the document is intended to be fluid. This allows for edits and adjustments as external circumstances and new guidelines emerge.

The Return to In Person Learning Plan consists of the following sections:

- **Health & Safety**
- **Operations**
- **Technology**
- **Communications**

The undertakings by the District described in this plan are intended to be performed reasonably and practicably considering the uncertainties of COVID-19 and the frequent changes in guidance and standards from multiple governmental and private entities. Nothing in the plan constitutes a waiver of the District’s protections under the Illinois Tort Immunity Act, Illinois School Code or any other State or federal law, or creates standards of care different than those established by the Act.

HEALTH & SAFETY

District 205 has partnered with and has been guided by local, state, and federal agencies including the Cook County Department of Public Health, the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois State Board of Education, and the Centers for Disease Control. Any person entering D205 property will be required to follow all public health regulations as established by the above-mentioned agencies. Below is an explanation of the current health requirements which must be followed at all times (these requirements are subject to change, per guidance and/or direction by the above-mentioned agencies).

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Face Masks - Your Guide to Masks

Cloth face masks/face masks provide a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling by air, onto other people, when the person wearing the cloth face mask talks, coughs, or sneezes. In addition, the use of face masks will be added to the D205 Virtual Student Handbook.

Regulations related to face masks as follows:

- All individuals in a District 205 school building must always wear a face mask unless they are younger than 2 years old; have trouble breathing; or are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. Face masks must be always worn in school buildings even when social distancing can be maintained.
- The use and wearing of masks and face masks by all persons in the school building will be enforced. Students and staff with disabilities who are unable to wear a face mask may be provided reasonable accommodations per the Americans with Disabilities Act and other applicable laws.
- Families are responsible for providing their students with face masks/masks. However, D205 will provide face masks for students, on a backup basis.
- Language or pictures/depictions on face masks may not interfere with the educational environment; therefore, should not be offensive, provocative, or disruptive to instruction.
- The face mask must be layered, must fully cover the mouth and nose, and the mask must fit snugly against the sides of the face with no gaps.
- Signage for proper face mask usage will be posted throughout the buildings.
- The parent/guardian of a student, for whom wearing a mask is medically inadvisable, must provide a physician's note identifying the specific medical reason the student is unable to wear a face mask/mask. The district will then consider alternative methods of keeping the students and staff, who are around the student, safe; including allowing the student to wear a face shield which should wrap around the sides of the wearer's face and extend to below the chin. Also, the parents of students, for whom wearing a mask is medically inadvisable, are advised that the CDC does not recommend face shields as a substitute for cloth face masks.
- Parents of students who have medical conditions which pose additional risk of complication if exposed to COVID-19, should consult with their physician, and contact the school nurse to discuss the child's specific medication and medical needs within the school setting. Please see the following CDC reference for more insight: [People Who Are at Higher Risk for Severe Illness | Coronavirus | COVID-19](#).
- PPE will be made available for use accordingly throughout the school year.

Social Distancing Practices

- ISBE and IDPH Guidelines recommend that the school environment provide a 3-foot physical distance between persons as much as possible. The expectation pertains to students and staff members in all areas and settings.
- Assemblies, field trips, and staff meetings will be managed in observance of requirements from the Illinois Department of Public Health.
- Staff and students must abstain from physical contact, including, but not limited to, handshakes, high fives, hugs, etc.
- Floor decals, colored tape, and signs will be placed to provide guidance to students and staff of the flow and direction of one-way traffic and to identify social distancing intervals of 6 feet when standing in a line. Hallway and stairway traffic patterns will be developed and identified for students and staff.
- The use of face masks will be used in classrooms, hallways, and offices.

Personal Hygiene and Health Practices

- Handwashing is included in the first line of defense. Increased frequency of hand washing is expected throughout the school day.
- When handwashing with soap and water is not feasible, alcohol-based hand sanitizer of at least 60% alcohol will be made readily available for all grade levels in designated areas including common spaces.
- Staff and students will be encouraged to avoid touching the face to decrease the transmission of COVID-19 or other infectious diseases.

Home Symptom and Temperature Screening

The district recommends parents/guardians check for symptoms and temperature prior to sending their student(s) to school and using school provided transportation. The screening involves checking to ensure a temperature below 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit, and the presence of other COVID-19 symptoms. Staff and students must, either be kept at home if they have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or if they have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19. See: Stay at Home and Illness Procedure. Individuals who exhibit symptoms should consult with their medical provider for evaluation and treatment, as necessary.

According to IDPH, 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

If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

Visitor Health Screening

- Visitors to the schools will be limited.
- Visitors must complete a health screening immediately upon entering the school building.
- Visitors showing symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed to enter nor will be allowed to remain on campus and should consult with their healthcare providers for further guidance.
- Visitor information will be maintained in visitor logs, including contact information, reason for visit, and locations within the school visited in case contact tracing is required.

Health Monitoring and Interventions

- Schools will engage in wellness and symptom screening as needed during the school day.
- The District will provide students with a clear backpack containing: a Chromebook case, five disposable face masks, one cloth face mask, two face shields, and a personal size bottle of hand sanitizer. All these items will be distributed prior to the beginning of in person learning and will be at the school's designated COVID supply designation for restocking.
- If a student or staff member is symptomatic, that is exhibiting flu-like symptoms, while entering campus or during the school day, the nurse must be notified and advised of the person's flu-like symptoms. The ill person will be separated from others, cared for in an isolation area, and will be required to wear a face mask until the parent or emergency contact of the student can be reached and the student can be transported home or to a healthcare provider. Ill staff should contact their supervisor immediately and then leave campus. Parents and families will be reminded to keep their children home if they are not feeling well.

- The isolation area used by an ill person will be cleaned per CDC guidelines.
- Individuals who exhibit symptoms will be receiving further guidance from District HR for when they can return to school.
- Many students have health and medication needs during the school day, and prompt and ongoing attention to their health-related concerns is of vital importance. Parents should be prepared to discuss their student's health needs with the school nurse to identify and develop the necessary health plan and/or medication regimen. Additionally, clean areas inside and outside of the nurse's office will be designated for attending to the health care needs of students who do not demonstrate virus symptoms.

Attendance

To protect our school community, all staff, parents, and students are expected to report COVID-19 exposures, symptoms, and diagnoses when reporting absences. Attendance personnel and nursing staff will utilize attendance information to support our ability to monitor the health of the District 205 students and staff. District 205 attendance will be reported as required by local health officials.

Early Childhood - (Pre-K & Infant Care Center)

- Attention to our youngest learners is especially important when considering social events that prepare and orient this group of learners to the routines, schedules, and patterns of their school environment that may not be possible as usual. Young students may struggle more than other students with understanding and complying with social distancing and wearing face masks.
- Students will remain in small groups with the same students and remain 3 feet apart as much as practical. Having instruction outside will be utilized, when possible, to help with social distancing requirements. Developmentally appropriate activities for smaller group activities will be implemented.
- Teachers will rearrange furniture and play spaces to meet social distancing requirements when practical and find creative ways to allow students to create their own space using yarn, masking tape, or other materials.
- Teachers will implement strategies to model and reinforce social and physical distancing and movement, including the following:
 - Using carpet squares, mats, trays, or other visuals for spacing.
 - Modeling social distancing when interacting with children, families, and staff.
 - Creating and developing a scripted story/role play around social distancing, as well as hand washing, proper etiquette for sneezes, coughs, etc.
 - Giving frequent verbal reminders to children.
 - Hanging pictures within the school building to give constant reminders.
 - Sending home, a tip sheet to parents and caregivers so they can also learn about social distancing.

- Offering more opportunities for individual play and solo activities, such as fine motor activities (e.g., drawing, coloring, cutting, puzzles, and other manipulatives).
- Planning activities that do not require close physical contact between multiple children and keeping groups separate for special activities, such as art, music, and exercising.
- Staggering indoor and outdoor play and adjusting schedules to reduce the number of children in the same area.
- Our teachers will teach, model, and reinforce healthy hygiene habits and social skills including the following:
 - Explaining to students why it is not healthy to share drinks or food.
 - Practicing frequent hand hygiene by teaching a child-friendly song or counting to 20.
 - Teaching students to use tissue to wipe their noses and to cough inside their elbows.
 - Modeling and practicing hand hygiene before and after eating, coughing, sneezing, playing outside, and using the restroom.
- Our teachers will create a classroom environment that promotes positive teacher and student relationships that support student social-emotional well-being and self-esteem, including through virtual instruction. For example, teachers will work on:
 - Promoting empathy through conversations about other people’s feelings and perspectives and talking about responsibilities.
 - Building a coping toolbox that includes body and mind calming strategies.
 - Reading children’s books to help support the children when they may be feeling anxious or sad.

COVID-19 and Communication in the School Community

- Individuals who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and are in quarantine, will receive instruction remotely, utilizing the Google Classroom platform.
- In accordance with current IDPH guidance, when a student, teacher, staff member, or a member of their household tests positive for COVID-19, and has exposed others at the school, the local health department will be notified as required by the Illinois Infectious Disease Reporting requirements issued by IDPH.
- District 205 will cooperate with health officials regarding contact tracing for persons confirmed positive with COVID-19.

OPERATIONS

Thornton Township High School District 205 Operational Services understand the need to be flexible and respond to the educational model that maximizes in person instruction and complies with local health orders. Transportation, food service, and operational functions will support students and staff.

Operations and support groups include the following:

- Transportation
- Facilities
 - Facilities Management
 - Athletics/Activities
- Food Services
- Technology

Below is an explanation of the health regulations we anticipate based upon current information:

TRANSPORTATION

- The D205 Transportation Department supports students by providing safe and timely transport services for eligible riders attending on-site programs whether the education model is traditional. The District will continue to meet special education student transportation needs.
- Transport service will follow public health guidelines and ISBE transportation.
- All individuals on a bus must wear a safe mask.

FACILITIES

The Custodial Services Department will ensure appropriate and timely measures are taken to preserve the health and safety of our students, staff, and community in accordance with CDC ISBE, Cook County Public Health, IDPH, and District office personnel.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

- The Facilities Department will provide necessary student accommodations, both internal and external, to support educational learning. To the extent necessary, District 205 facilities staff will be available to create an atmosphere that is as safe and healthy as possible.
- The District 205 Facilities Team will maintain all interior and exterior site daily operations:
 - Custodial
 - Maintenance
 - Grounds
 - Environmental
 - Energy Management
- Indoor facility rentals are at the discretion of the district so that nightly cleaning and disinfection can take place.
- The Facility Master Plan will continue as scheduled.

- Ventilation

- District 205 has partnered with both Midwest Mechanical and Global Plasma Solutions to implement Needle Point Bipolar Ionization technology. This technology serves to reduce particles and kill pathogens while reducing energy consumption. The patented technology uses an electronic charge. As the charged ions travel through the air, the charged ions attach to particles, pathogens, and gas particles. The ions kill pathogens by robbing them of life-sustaining hydrogen. Additionally, the ions this system produces travel by air into occupied spaces, cleaning the air where the ions travel, even in unseen spaces. Currently we are supporting 73 large air handlers and an additional 330-unit vents to support classrooms that the 73 large air handlers do not reach.
- Independent testing Results against listed pathogens.



Pathogen	Time in Chamber	Rate Reduction
SARS-CoV-2	30mins	99.4%
NoroVirus	30mins	93.5%
Human Coronavirus	60mins	90.0%
Legionella	30mins	99.7%
Clostridium Difficile	30mins	86.8%
Tuberculosis	60mins	69.0%
MRSA	30mins	96.2%
Staphylococcus	30mins	96.2%
E.Coli	15mins	99.6%

- The Facilities Team will engage in the following COVID-19 air quality mitigation procedures:
 - Ensure that ventilation systems and fans operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible.
 - Increase the frequency of air filtration filter replacements.
 - HVAC schedules will start one hour prior to students and staff entering the Building.
- Schools must meet high cleanliness standards prior to reopening and maintain a high level during the school year. Custodial Services cleaning practices will be focused on cleaning for health, which includes an emphasis on disinfecting surfaces where bacteria or viruses are most likely to be transmitted. Custodians will disinfect frequently—at least daily—high-touch surfaces, such as:
 - Door handles
 - Handrails

- Drinking fountains/Bottle fillers (Fountain will be shutdown/Fillers will be operational)
- Restroom surfaces
- Light switches
- Phones
- Pencil sharpeners
- Art supplies, instructional materials

Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

Thornton Township High School District 205 will continue to promote and support student participation in athletic and other extracurricular programs to the extent permitted, while adhering to Illinois High School Athletic Association (IHSA) parameters for sports and activities programs.

Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)

Thornton Township High School District 205 will continue to provide meal service to students. The meal service program will be a combination of in-school serving and a “grab & go” program. The following health and safety guidelines apply to food service workers and services:

- All food service and support employees will wear face masks and gloves whenever cleaning or sanitizing an item or surface.
- All cleaning and disinfecting of facilities will be in accordance with CDC guidance.
- All federal, State, and local health and safety standard protocols will be followed by FNS staff and serving support.
- All meals served will follow federal nutrition requirements.

TECHNOLOGY and INSTRUCTION

Thornton Township High School District 205 will make every effort to ensure that students have access to the technology needed to support them in school and during any remote learning period(s).

At present, per ISBE, beginning with the 2021-22 school year, all schools must resume fully in-person learning for all student attendance days, provided that, pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-30, remote instruction be made available for students who are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine and are under a quarantine order by a local public health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Per ISBE, school districts may choose to create local policies to provide remote learning to individual students beyond those required above, if that best meets the student’s learning needs, through 105 ILCS 5/10-29 or create blended programs consisting of a combination of face-to-face and online learning through 105 ILCS 5/10-19.05(k)(4). See Board of Education Policies 6:185 (Remote Educational Program), which can be accessed here:

https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=thornton_205&s=199525, and 4:180 (Pandemic Preparedness;

Management; and Recovery), which can be accessed here:
https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=thornton_205&s=199420.

If remote learning is utilized, the Google Classroom platform will continue to be used to provide real-time, synchronous access to the teacher and/or classroom content and material.

COMMUNICATIONS

Stakeholder Engagement and Communications

Thornton Township High School District 205 Communications and Public Relations Department aims to inform, engage, and inspire all stakeholders and the community, no matter the environment. Whether functioning in a traditional school model or implementing remote learning or a hybrid plan, the district's Communication and PR team will continue to keep D205's staff, students, their families, and the extended school community informed.

The D205 Communications & PR Department utilizes a variety of real-time, multilingual delivery mechanisms for critical information. District translation resources include internal staff and online tools to ensure that all non-English speaking families receive (or have access through online translation mechanisms) information in their chosen language(s) at the same time as every other family in the district.

External Communications

External communication will be situationally responsive. Major announcements and day-to-day messaging for the community (families, students, employees, community members, media, elected officials, and others) will include emails, newsletters, phone and text messaging, websites, media engagement and news coverage, social media, and video. Highlights of key communications tools to support the opening:

- External Website - A new public-facing microsite called OpenD205 will be developed to convey remote and hybrid learning plans, implementation, and supports for families and students. Content will include high-value topics: school schedules, curriculum resources, student expectations, tech support, meal distribution, mental health, special education, FAQs, and community resources.
- E-Newsletters - A regularly scheduled E-newsletter which provides critical updates and information for all stakeholders. Specific information for each learning mode will be highlighted as needed.
- Videography - Production of high quality, visual storytelling for all audiences. YouTube, Instagram TV, and potentially new broadcast outlets will serve as content distribution platforms.
- Social Media - Maximizing the use of our three district social media channels to provide content that encourages interaction and participation with external

audiences. A key tool to engage students and staff to share learning experiences with a wider audience.

- Media Response - Reactive and proactive activity with local, national, international media to provide timely and accurate responses to media inquiries. Produce and promote D205 stories about schools, student achievement, and district activities. Our objective is to position the district as a leader in education and expert resource.
- Voice & Text - The district and all schools provide important updates and crisis alerts in multiple languages utilizing the School Messenger broadcast platform. With the potential for fluctuating schedules and plans in the hybrid model, these immediate contact tools become increasingly important.

Community Outreach & Engagement

The district must continue to develop and nurture partnerships and relationships with community organizations, interest groups, and initiatives that align with and support D205's mission and strategic needs. The Communications & PR Department in partnership with Foundation 205 and other local, state, and regional agencies provide leadership, coordination, and information dissemination for outreach and engagement initiatives conducted by, or in cooperation with, other district departments. Examples include securing funding or other resources to resolve critical needs and food insecurities, mental health support, and affordable internet access for families and students.

Family Engagement

Family engagement initiatives create opportunities, programs, and resources for families to partner with their student's school, connect to educational progress, and engage in aspects of learning with their student. Engaged families have a direct impact on learning outcomes and are especially critical for the success of remote learning. The District 205 Communications and PR Department will create specific messages and products to support the learning and information needs of families through the District website and social media channels, district and school newsletters, direct mail, webinars.

Internal Communications

D205 Communications & Public Relations provides crisis and regular updates to D205 Employees via multiple channels including internal website, email, newsletters, dedicated social media channels, video, face-to-face, and/or virtual meetings.

D205 Communications & Public Relations Department Support

In tandem with activities driven by remote and in-person learning, business-as-usual initiatives will continue to support the strategic communications needs of Thornton Township High School

District 205. We anticipate constant fluidity and priority shifts for what is necessary today, while simultaneously executing for the future state of schools.

Multilingual Communication Delivery

District 205 will continue to offer communications in multiple languages to service all our stakeholders.

When District 205 returns to in person learning, the bell schedule below will be followed:

Bell Schedule	Duration	Starts	Ends
First Period	50 Minutes	8:00	8:50
Second Period (Announcements)	55 Minutes	8:55	9:50
Third Period	50 Minutes	9:55	10:45
Fourth Period	30 Minutes	10:50	11:20
Fifth Period	15 Minutes	11:25	11:40
Sixth Period	30 Minutes	11:45	12:15
Seventh Period	15 Minutes	12:20	12:35
Eighth Period	30 Minutes	12:40	1:10
Ninth Period	15 Minutes	1:15	1:30
Tenth Period	30 Minutes	1:35	2:05
Eleventh Period	50 Minutes	2:10	3:00
CP	25 Minutes	3:05	3:30