

WILLOW SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT 108
8345 Archer Avenue
Willow Springs, IL 60480

Frank C. Patrick, Superintendent
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July 3, 2020

Dear Willow Families:

. We know that in-person learning is the best for learning. With the State guideline of 6' social distancing between students, we don't have the space to have every student in school every day. The staff has been working on developing a learning plan for the coming school year using the guidelines provided by the State of Illinois. We've designed a Blended Learning Plan for in school and out of school learning to best meet your students' needs. The School Board approved the plan's framework on June 30.

The Blended Learning Plan

1. Kindergartners, First Graders, Second Graders and students in EC, XC1, XC2, XC3 and CD will be in school every day. We're calling this the Green group.
2. 3rd-8th graders will be in school on some days and learn from home on other days. Students will be assigned to a Gold Group or a Blue Group. Gold group students will be in school every Tuesday and Wednesday. Blue Group students will be in school every Thursday and Friday. Mondays will alternate between Gold and Blue. On days your children are not in school, they will have assignments made by the teacher to do during those days.
3. 3-8th grade students in the same family will be assigned to the same group – gold or blue.
4. The on-site school day will be shortened. We are working with the bus company on the exact school hours, but we believe students will be in school from 8:25-1:30.
5. When a student is working from home, s/he will be expected to work with their teacher from 2:30-3:30. This means that your child will be working directly with their teachers every day. Students in the Green group who are in attendance every day will also be expected to work with their teachers during that hour practicing what they will need to do when we are directed to return to complete Remote Learning.
6. All students will be assigned a Chromebook (grades 2-8) or an iPad (K-1). They will need to transport it every day to and from school.
7. Art, Music, PE and recess are important and will remain in our program. They will look different, but the kids will have these subjects.

Health Safety Enhancements

We've made many health and safety enhancements for your child:

1. Masks must be worn in school (Illinois guideline). The current guidelines allow a face shield in place of a mask when the students are at their desks and there is no movement. When there is movement, a mask is required. Face shield guidelines have changed twice in the past two weeks, and may change again.
2. Contactless hand sanitizer stations have been installed in every classroom.
3. Contactless paper towel dispensers have been installed.
4. New drinking fountains with water bottle filling stations have been installed. The "bubbler" part of the fountain has been turned off.
5. An additional janitor has been hired to clean the bathrooms during the school day. The bathrooms will be cleaned every hour and fifteen minutes.
6. Student desks will be placed 6' apart.
7. Materials will not be shared between students.
8. Lockers will not be used, nor the storage portion of desks. The school has purchased a storage tub for each student to keep their belongings in.
9. Teachers will move from class to class, not students.
10. Breakfast and Lunch will be served in the classrooms.
11. Temperature and symptom scans will be performed before entering school and before entering the school bus.

Transportation

If your child is eligible to ride the school bus (you live in Sterling Estates or west of Willow Springs Road), school bus services will be provided. The State of Illinois allows up to 50 students per bus and the students must wear a mask at all times. Honestly, this is one of the guidelines that confuses me because it contradicts other guidelines. As a parent, I might consider other options for getting my child to school rather than the school bus. We are working with the bus company to reduce the risks of spreading COVID19.

We will be temperature scanning before a child gets on the bus. Please check your child's temperature in the morning. Any child with a fever will need to be at home.

If you live near school, walking is a great option. We anticipate longer delays loading cars on Vinewood to keep social distancing in place during dismissal.

Switching to Remote Learning

The Blended Learning Plan works for days when the students can be in school. We believe that there will be times that an entire class will have to work from home or even the entire school. Most often, we believe that things will change quickly and there will be short notice to switch to Remote Learning. (Overnight?) It will be important to have childcare plans ready to put into place very quickly.

We learned a lot about learning from home during the spring. When learning from home, we will require the students to follow a schedule just as if they were in school. When the entire class is working from home, their teacher will be working with them during through the school day to provide instruction.

Childcare

We know affordable childcare is an issue for many of our families. No one was planning on not having kids in school every day. The YMCA has provided afterschool programming for our students for the past 10 years.

We are working with the YMCA to provide full day childcare at an affordable cost for the days when students are working from home. We're also working to expand their afternoon school program to start at 1:30 when school gets out. We're still working out all the details, but it looks like a very promising option for affordable child care.

More Information

I know there are a LOT of questions. What we're able to provide to you today is the Basic Framework. We still have work to do in fleshing out some of the details. We wanted to give you a heads up as quickly as we could so you could start making plans for next school year.

Mrs. Smuda will be hosting online sessions to go over our plan and to answer questions about it. Watch for details to sign up for one of these upcoming events.

And, we're always here to answer your questions. (Though, the office is closed on July 3 for the holiday.)

As always, your child and your family are important to all of us at Willow Springs School. It's going to be another school year that we've not seen before. But, I know that as a school community, we'll come through to the other side together. Happy 4th of July!

Sincerely yours,

Frank C. Patrick