



FORWARD TOGETHER

A RETURN TO
SCHOOL GUIDE FOR
STUDENTS &
FAMILIES



2021-22

*Huntley Community
School District 158*

UPDATED: March 4, 2022

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March 4, 2022: This guide to Huntley 158's COVID-19 response and mitigation strategies has been updated to reflect the most recent public health guidance and the removal of Governor Pritzker's mask mandate in Illinois schools. This plan was presented to the Board of Education at the district's Committee of the Whole meeting on March 3, 2022. It is now set to be approved at the next regular meeting on March 17, 2022 and will take effect upon approval from our Board. The approval of this plan will mark a shift in our practice to transition Huntley 158's decision making and COVID-19 mitigation framework to a locally controlled decision.

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A Message from Superintendent Dr. Rowe

Friday, March 4, 2022

Dear Huntley 158 Families, Staff & Community,

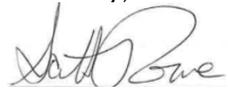
I want to begin this message by acknowledging the immense challenges brought on by the 2021-22 school year. After what felt like an impossible year in 2020, our students, staff and community were faced with new and unforeseen obstacles, forced to make sacrifices and tasked with making difficult decisions in order to provide a safe in-person learning environment for all of our students. As we look ahead, it seems inevitable that the course of this school year and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will leave lasting marks on our community, both in the form of resiliency and rifts that we will continue to confront in the coming weeks, months and years.

While all those who choose to serve students in public education, as well as every parent who has seen their children through the last two years of learning and living in unfamiliar circumstances, share in this sentiment, I believe that the course we chart in Huntley 158 can and will set us apart. We are a community that has proven to excel when challenged. We serve students who thrive in new and innovative environments, we boast a passionate and tenacious staff, and more than anything, we know the value of listening to one another.

The updates in this plan detail our path forward to a more traditional educational environment, one that uses common sense mitigations in realistic ways to reflect the evolution of COVID-19 and its impact on our school system. It reflects what I believe to be a more comprehensive understanding of this virus and a manageable strategy to keep our students and staff safe in its presence. After two years, we know that COVID-19 may never truly disappear and its impact on our behaviors and priorities will more than likely persist. However, what has held true over the course of this historic event is that education remains a centerpiece of our society; in short, it is integral to the success and well-being of our children. We know that providing valuable, engaging learning opportunities will continue to require creativity and flexibility, but the importance of education is clear. In a world where it has become increasingly easy to disagree with one another, the necessity of education and the joy it can bring to our students' lives remains unquestioned.

What I hope for as we begin to move forward in our classrooms and our daily lives is that we will continue to work to find common ground. As educators, parents and neighbors, we owe ourselves and our students the chance to heal and to emerge as a stronger, more capable school district. Huntley 158 has been a beacon of innovation, hard work and compassion long before the onset of a global pandemic and I know we are capable of reuniting around these ideals. Even in the most challenging days of this school year, I found motivation in this shared history and our shared desire to do what is best for our students—always. Now, as we reflect on our shared experiences since March 13, 2020, I hope you will join me in our partnership and pledge to make Huntley 158 the best we can be.

Sincerely,



Scott N. Rowe, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Huntley 158 Priorities

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Huntley 158 has used a series of priorities to shape decisions made about health, safety, and the quality of our students' educational environment.

- 1 Provide strong social emotional support through a physical school experience.
- 2 Provide equitable learning experiences for all students, which requires an in-person schooling option.
- 3 District financial wellbeing will be considered in decision making to ensure long term fiscal stability.
- 4 Maintain safety of students and staff following IDPH recommendations.
- 5 Provide the highest quality education possible for our students during this crisis.
- 6 Provide service to our community to assist them in returning to work.

As we prepare for the 2021-22 school year, the following principles provided a framework for all decisions made in Huntley 158:

- We have a responsibility to educate students in Huntley 158.
- To prioritize in-person learning, maximize learning potential, and reduce potential impact on family and work obligations, students must be able to avoid unnecessary quarantines and remain in our classrooms.
- We have a responsibility to ensure all of our students have access to a safe learning environment.
- We acknowledge our commitment to the community and value choice wherever possible.

— “ —

“One day, in **RETROSPECT**, the years of struggle will strike you as the most **BEAUTIFUL**.”

Sigmund Freud

— ” —

2021-22 Guidance: CDC, IDPH & ISBE

Is remote learning an option?

Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, all schools must resume fully in-person learning for all student attendance days, pursuant to a resolution from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). The continuation of mass and/or optional remote learning plans under “pandemic-related conditions” is no longer permitted under this guidance.

Who should be masked in schools?

Masking will be optional, recommended, or strongly recommended for all students, staff and visitors in Huntley 158 schools and on school buses based upon the district's response metrics and level of risk associated with COVID-19. CDC research shows masking does not just reduce the risk for the individual but reduces risk to those around the individual. According to the most up to date CDC guidance, those who are immunocompromised or at a higher risk for COVID-19 should consider masking in schools or indoors in public. Wearing a well-fitting mask indoors is also listed by the CDC as a individual-level prevention behavior to be utilized in times of *High* community level.

What is the requirement for physical distance in schools?

CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to reduce transmission risk. Because of the importance of in-person learning, schools where not everyone is fully vaccinated should implement physical distancing to the furthest extent possible within their structures (in addition to other prevention strategies), but should not exclude students from in-person learning to keep a minimum distance requirement.

Are vaccinations required?

Currently, there is no state mandate for students or staff to obtain the COVID-19 vaccine. The CDC and IDPH strongly encourage all individuals eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine to be vaccinated. CDC, IDPH and ISBE guidance emphasizes implementing layered prevention strategies (e.g., using multiple prevention strategies together consistently) to protect people who are not fully vaccinated, including students, teachers, staff, and other members of their households.

How are close contacts and periods of isolation determined in schools?

For teachers, staff and adults in the indoor K-12 classroom setting, CDC defines a close contact as an individual who was less than 6 feet away from a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. *Local health departments are the final authority on identifying close contacts.* **A period of quarantine is not required for students or staff who are deemed a close contact.** The District will continue to perform contact tracing to inform families if their student has been in close contact with a positive case of COVID-19. Students or staff who test positive for COVID-19 or are symptomatic will be required to isolate per CDC guidance. See **page 8** for details on contact tracing and isolation procedures.

How do schools determine additional mitigation strategies?

Localities should monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies (e.g., physical distancing, screening testing). Additional mitigation strategies include:

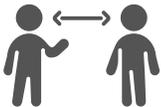
- Screening testing
- Ventilation
- Hand washing and respiratory etiquette
- Staying home when sick and getting tested
- Contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation
- Cleaning and disinfection

Health & Safety in Huntley 158

COVID-19 MITIGATIONS IN HUNTLEY 158:



Masking will be optional, recommended, or strongly recommended for all students, staff and visitors in Huntley 158 schools and on school buses based upon the district's response metrics and level of risk associated with COVID-19.



Physical distance of at least 3 feet will be maintained in classrooms and to the greatest extent possible in common spaces.



SHIELD COVID-19 saliva testing & BinaxNOW testing will be available for students and staff on a voluntary basis in order to monitor



Hand sanitizing stations are available in all classrooms and in common spaces. Proper hand hygiene is encouraged of all students and staff.



Nightly cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces will continue and be completed in all buildings. Additional custodial staff has been maintained to ensure a healthy learning environment in our buildings.



Enhanced filters have been added to HVAC system designed to capture microbes as they flow through system for cleaner air output.



Students and staff are expected and encouraged to stay home if they feel sick and/or visit the nurse if symptoms occur during the school day and to report any COVID symptoms.

Health & Safety in Huntley 158:

Revised COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies

- Huntley 158 will transition between mitigation measures using this framework. Changes in *Mitigation Zones* and the measures outlined below will be communicated to families as they are made.
- Decisions to move between *Mitigation Zones* will be made based on in-district and community-based response metrics (page 6).
- This structure allows mitigations to be removed one at a time in order to give the district time to monitor COVID-19 risk in consultation with the local health department over a period of time to evaluate if further action is necessary.

Huntley 158's Current District Mitigation Zone:

LOW RISK

*McHenry County's 'Community Level', as determined by the CDC: **LOW***

MITIGATION ZONES ASSOCIATED WITH COVID-19 RISK LEVEL

<p>Mitigations in Place:</p> <p>Masking optional for all students and staff grades PK-12 & LIGHT in schools and on the bus.</p> <p>COVID-19 SHIELD testing to monitor transmission rates & school positivity.</p>	<p>Mitigations in Place:</p> <p>Masking recommended for all students and staff grades PK-12 & LIGHT in schools and on the bus.</p> <p>COVID-19 SHIELD testing to monitor transmission rates & school positivity.</p>	<p>Mitigations in Place:</p> <p>Masking strongly recommended for all students and staff grades PK-12 & LIGHT in schools and on the bus.</p> <p>COVID-19 SHIELD testing to monitor transmission rates & school positivity.</p> <p>Additional spacing mitigations applied to lunch spaces.</p>
<p>LOW RISK</p>	<p>MODERATE RISK</p>	<p>HIGH RISK</p>

Health & Safety in Huntley 158:

District Response Metrics & Action Plan

How will Huntley 158 determine the risk of COVID-19 in our schools?

These metrics have been selected in order to provide a more comprehensive and accurate picture of the incidence of COVID-19 and its impact on our school system. Metrics have been identified using guidance from public health organizations including the CDC, IDPH and MCDH in the following areas:

DISEASE TRANSMISSION | VACCINATION RATE | STRAIN ON SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY

HUNTLEY 158 METRICS	MCHENRY COUNTY METRICS
 Active Positive Cases	 Community Transmission
 In-District Positivity Rate	 County Vaccination Rate
 Strain on Schools: availability of staff, presence of outbreaks, positivity rate	 Strain on Community: hospitalizations, capacity of public health system

+ What is the process for deciding if a change needs to be made to the district's Mitigation Zone?

The district will use all of the metrics listed above in tandem to inform the need for a change in mitigation measures. If metrics shift towards higher rates of transmission of COVID-19 (i.e. high in-district positivity rate, increase in hospitalizations, high and/or increasing community transmission, or a significant number of outbreaks identified by the McHenry County Department of Health in our schools), then the district leadership team will work in consultation with our local health officials to determine if a change is warranted.

+ How will I be informed if a change is being made?

The district will communicate any changes in our mitigation strategy with staff and families as soon as it becomes necessary. Staff and families can expect communication from the superintendent via our mass notification system by email, text or phone call and through our website at huntley158.org.

+ Will this be a district-wide decision?

Yes, mitigation measures will be reflected across the entire district and will not change from building to building.

Health & Safety in Huntley 158

Physical Distancing

IN HUNTLEY 158: Physical distance of at least 3 feet will be maintained in classrooms and to the greatest extent possible in common spaces.

 <p>CLASSROOMS</p>	<p>Huntley 158 classrooms are arranged to accommodate 3 feet of spacing between students wherever possible. Consistent physical distance of at least 3 feet is an effective mitigation measure to continue to curb the spread of COVID-19.</p>	
 <p>LUNCH (PreK-5)</p>	<p>LOW - MODERATE RISK</p> <p>Students will have a grab & go experience similar to the 2020-21 school year. Based on response metrics, buildings may return to table seating in the cafeteria and/or remove classrooms and gyms as lunch spaces.</p>	<p>HIGH RISK</p> <p>Students will have a grab & go experience similar to the 2020-21 school year. Lunch will be served in cafeterias and a combination of classrooms to increase spacing as needed.</p>
 <p>LUNCH (6-12)</p>	<p>MIDDLE SCHOOL: Students will flow through the lunch line normally. Based on response metrics, buildings may return to table seating in the cafeteria and/or remove classrooms and gyms as lunch spaces.</p> <p>HIGH SCHOOL: Students will flow through the lunch line normally. Based on response metrics, seating in the Central Gym may be moved back to traditional seating in the Commons.</p>	<p>MIDDLE SCHOOL: Students will flow through the lunch line normally and sit at desks spaced appropriately through the cafeteria and commons.</p> <p>HIGH SCHOOL: Students will flow through the lunch line normally and will be spaced to the greatest extent possible. Lunch will be served in the Central and East gyms at the high school level if necessary.</p>

Health & Safety in Huntley 158

Vaccination Status

IN HUNTLEY 158: Vaccines will continue to be strongly encouraged. Huntley 158 respects a parents' decision whether or not to vaccinate your student(s) and acknowledges it is a personal decision. Our encouragement should not be received as pressure, but an effort to communicate what health experts at the local, state and federal level are sharing with us.

KEY DECISION MAKING FACTORS:

- Vaccines will continue to be strongly encouraged based on research and guidance directly from the CDC, IDPH and MCDH.
- According to the CDC, "Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic."
- The county's vaccination rate has been identified as a key response metric to evaluate as the district determines which mitigation strategies to employ in order to stop the spread of COVID-19.

VACCINATION COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

- **McHenry County Vaccine Locations:** The McHenry County Department of Health (MCDH) offers COVID-19 vaccine clinics for anyone 5 and older at its offices located at 100 N. Virginia Street in Crystal Lake and 2200 N. Seminary Road Annex A in Woodstock. [Find an appointment at the MCDH website here.](#)
- **Community Vaccination Clinics:** To find vaccine clinics from other providers, visit [vaccines.gov](#).
- **Vaccine Information:** For more information regarding the three COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in the United States (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson), visit the [CDC's website here.](#)
- **Vaccine Eligibility:** For more information regarding the age eligibility for the primary series and booster doses of approved vaccinations, visit the [CDC's website here.](#)

SHIELD COVID-19 Saliva Testing

District 158 has partnered with the University of Illinois (SHIELD) program to assist with our efforts to monitor and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our schools and community. Testing for COVID-19 will be performed on a voluntary basis at each of our buildings and is free to all students and staff at every grade level. Families may OPT IN to the weekly testing program for *each* of your student(s). As you make this decision for your student(s) and family, please note the following details:

- The SHIELD test is a free, non-invasive diagnostic test for the COVID-19 virus conducted by collecting a saliva (spit) deposit in under five minutes, which provides results in 24 hours.
- SHIELD testing was developed at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and has a sensitivity rate of 97% and an accuracy rate of 99%
- Individuals should not eat, drink or chew gum within 60 minutes of providing a saliva sample.
- Families will be notified of any positive test results directly by the 3rd party vendor.
- Students' participation in this program will limit potential quarantine situations and allow students to safely remain in an in-person learning environment.

WHEN:

Testing will be performed once a week during the school day for students and staff. Testing must be performed no earlier than an hour after eating or drinking to ensure an accurate result.

WHERE:

Testing locations and processes will differ at each of our buildings based on daily schedules, meal times, and availability of staff and space.

RESULTS:

Test results will be available in your family portal 24 hours after each test is completed. Parents will be contacted directly by a 3rd party in the event of a positive test. Please visit our [website](#) for log in instructions.

If you would like to OPT IN to the SHIELD saliva testing program to participate in weekly testing, please complete our electronic OPT IN form for each of your student(s):

- [OPT IN for Parents](#)
- [OPT IN for Staff](#)

**Families and staff members may OPT IN at any time. If you do NOT wish to participate in the SHIELD testing program, no further action is required.*

[For more information about the University of Illinois SHIELD program, access the program FAQ here.](#)

Isolation & Contact Tracing Procedures

January 10, 2022: Huntley 158 will adopt the new guidelines from the CDC, IDPH, and ISBE which reduce periods of isolation to 5 days for students and staff. As of **February 7, 2022**, periods of quarantine are no longer required of students or staff who are deemed a close contact.

Isolation: I tested positive for COVID-19.

Everyone, regardless of vaccination status:

- **Stay home for 5 days** (day 0 is your first day of symptoms or date of specimen collection, if asymptomatic)
- **If you have no symptoms** or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days, you can return to school.
- **If you have symptoms**, an individual must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and their other symptoms must improve before returning to school. *If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.*
- *Please continue to wear a well-fitting mask that covers the nose and mouth around others for an additional 5 days.*

I am symptomatic with a negative COVID-19 test.

- Students or staff may remain in school with symptoms (with the exception of fever, vomiting, diarrhea).
- If an individual is too ill to be in school, they may return to school when symptoms subside.

I am symptomatic withOUT a negative COVID-19 test.

- If there is no other present rationale for COVID-like symptoms and a student or staff member elects not to test, they are presumed positive and should remain home for 5 days.
- *Please continue to wear a well-fitting mask that covers the nose and mouth around others for an additional 5 days.*

When should a student or staff member isolate for longer than 5 days?

If an individual's symptoms have not resolved after 5 days, they should continue to stay home and remain in isolation. They may return to school once they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and their other symptoms have improved before returning to school (this may not include slight congestion, slight cough or loss of taste or smell. If you are unsure of persisting symptoms, please reach out to your school nurse).

If you are impacted by a period of isolation and you have specific questions regarding your child's next steps, please reach out to your building principal.

Will the district still be conducting contact tracing if quarantines are not required?

Yes. While students and staff are no longer required to quarantine if they have been deemed a close contact to a positive case of COVID-19, the district will continue to perform contact tracing as a result of an identified case of COVID-19. We believe that this process is an important step in remaining transparent and giving our families all of the information necessary to monitor your child's health and make decisions about their safety.

No quarantine is necessary if you are notified by an administrator or school nurse that your child is a close contact; the notification of positive cases in the school community and the process to inform those individuals who have been deemed a close contact will remain a part of our process to keep our families informed and prioritize our student's safety.

School Procedures

Food Service:



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has extended the period of free meal service for all students ages 18 and younger regardless of income through the 2021-22 school year. Meals will be free for all students in Huntley 158. Lunch procedures at the elementary and secondary level will be conducted with appropriate mitigations based on levels of risk.

Free breakfast meals will also be served at the middle school and high school level daily. Per updated ISBE guidance released on August 3, 2021, we are no longer able to send breakfast meals home with elementary students. Additional information about food service can be found on our website [here](#).

Specials Classes: (Band, Choir, Physical Education, etc.)



Band and choir classes will be held in an in-person learning environment with common sense mitigation measures in place. In addition to physical distancing and potential masking, classes may be staggered by 30 minutes to allow for proper ventilation and air turnover as students transition from class to class.

Physical education classes may be impacted by levels of COVID-19 risk in our schools and community. Students at the secondary level will resume changing into P.E. uniforms for P.E. class. Classes will be held outdoors as frequently as possible, weather permitting.

These procedures will be subject to change depending upon the status of response metrics and level of COVID-19 risk, as determined in collaboration with the McHenry County Department of Health.

Water Fountains:



Water fountains will continue to be turned off in our buildings as a safety precaution. However, bottle filling stations have been and will continue to be added across the district to provide contactless access to water. Students are responsible for bringing their own water bottles.

Volunteers & Visitors:



We are eager to welcome back our parents and volunteers to enrich our students' classroom experience while maintaining a safe in-person learning environment for all of our students, staff and community members. All volunteers should review and be aware of **these safety considerations** before entering Huntley 158 buildings.

Transportation & Extracurriculars

Transportation



- Per the most up to date CDC guidance, masking is not required on Huntley 158 school buses. It will continue to be optional, recommended or strongly recommend based upon the district's response metrics and level of risk associated with COVID-19.
- School buses will maintain regular capacity limitations.
- Our community will be able to utilize transportation services in Huntley 158 with no limitations.

Questions about transportation services should be directed to transportation@district158.org.

Athletics & Extracurriculars

At this time, there are no restrictions to scheduling or spectator limitations, nor are there any changes to the IHSA calendar for any sports. Extracurricular events will continue as scheduled.

As of February 28, 2022, masks are no longer required of students or spectators during athletic competitions or practices.

Updates to guidance, event calendars, and spectating requirements will be communicated to families by the district, building administrators and coaching staff as needed. If your student(s) is identified as a close contact as a result of participation in an athletic event, you will be contacted by a school nurse (no period of quarantine is required).

Resources for Students & Families

CDC, IDPH, ISBE & IHSA Guidance & Resources:

- February 25, 2022 - [Updated CDC Guidance & Community Levels](#)
- January 7, 2022 - [IDPH & ISBE Announce Plans to Adopt CDC Isolation & Quarantine Guidelines](#)
- December 27, 2021 - [CDC Updates & Shortens Recommended Isolation & Quarantine Period](#)
- August 25, 2021 - [MCDH P-12 Interim School Guidance](#)
- August 4, 2021 - [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)
- August 2, 2021 - [IDPH & ISBE Adopt Updated CDC Guidance in K-12 Schools](#)
- August 4, 2021 - [IHSA Announces Updated All-Sports Policy](#)
- CDC - [Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

McHenry County Department of Health Community Resources:

- Visit the [MCDH Dashboard](#) for the most up to date data and metrics in McHenry County.
- August 4, 2021 - [McHenry County K-12 Interim School Guidance](#)
- Access COVID-19 vaccination information and opportunities on the MCDH website [here](#).

Resources Available in Huntley 158:

- For social emotional learning resources, access Huntley 158's [Virtual Calming Room](#) on the district website for mental health resources, anxiety and stress management tools and recommendations for families.
- Academic support opportunities and interventions will continue at all grades levels and in all buildings to ensure knowledge acquisition and foster student success.
- Bullying of any kind is not tolerated in Huntley 158. To report any instances of bullying in our schools, please use the [Bullying Report Form](#) on the district website so our staff may provide necessary support.

University of Illinois SHIELD COVID-19 Testing Informational Resources:

- Access an FAQ from the University of Illinois SHIELD program [here](#).
- Informational Video: [Shield Illinois K-12 Schools Collection Examples](#)
- Informational Video: [SHIELD Illinois: How the Saliva-Based PCR Test Works](#)

Communications:

District and building communications are sent via email, SMS/Text message, and/or voice alerts to families using our mass notification system, SwiftReach. Communications and district updates are also shared on our website at huntley158.org.

Please ensure email addresses and phone numbers are correct in PowerSchool and SwiftReach. For instructions on checking and updating your contact information, visit <https://huntley158.org/alerts/>. For additional questions related to your student(s)' learning, please email superintendent@district158.org.

Respect, Patience and Understanding in Huntley 158:

All members of the school community are being affected by the ongoing pandemic in different ways, and all are reacting to those effects in different ways depending on their situations and viewpoints. The District understands and respects the diverse circumstances and viewpoints of our families and will continue to act in what it determines to be in the best interest of safety, health, and learning. All who engage with our schools will be expected to exhibit respect for each other and for the guidelines in place. Doing so will require patience and understanding as we all aim to do what is best for our families and community.