



**THE PLACE TO BE**

# Lancaster City Schools Preschool Reopening Plan

*Lancaster City Schools prides itself on being the place to be for learning, caring and succeeding. While the COVID-19 pandemic has certainly challenged us to think creatively, we are working diligently to provide options for families and students that allow us to continue to provide high quality education and a caring environment for student development, while maintaining safety standards for students and staff. The following Reopening Plan was created with this important balance in mind. We know this situation is not easy for anyone, and we ask for our community's continued patience and cooperation as we work together during the coming school year.*

## Guiding Principles

These general principles will guide each school within the Lancaster City School District as we move forward with re-opening our schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

1. The District will work closely with the Fairfield County Department of Health to promote safety in each school building. While the ultimate goal is to have all students in school each day, COVID-19 safety concerns will require us to remain flexible and institute operational changes. Additionally, the District will provide a full online option that families may opt-into for each semester of the school year, provided there are enough students interested in this option to proceed.
2. The District will implement recommended safety precautions to mitigate risks. The District will be transparent with all stakeholders that some level of risk will always be present when children and school district employees occupy school district facilities. We cannot eliminate the risk of contracting COVID-19, we can only reduce the risk. Reducing the risk will help keep us in school to maximize learning.
3. The District will strive for equity and access for all students. Our plans include teacher- directed instruction in all scenarios. Chromebooks are provided to all students and hotspots are available for homes without internet. Social and emotional support will continue to be a priority for the District.

4. The district will continue to operate with responsible budgetary practices while providing increased resources to implement additional safety precautions.

## Reopening Plan Options

Lancaster City Schools will provide two distinct learning opportunities for students. Enrolled students will automatically be enrolled in our “3 Model” school structure. Alternatively, families can opt-in to a “Full Online Option” for the year, but must do so before August 20th..

### The 3 Model School Structure

As described in our previous communication with the community, we have been working on 3 scenarios, or models, for the coming year. Which model we will implement will be based upon multiple factors as they relate to the spread of the Coronavirus in our county, our community, and our District.

It is important to recognize that the District may have to switch from one model to another during the course of the school year. This may happen multiple times. In addition, different schools may have to operate in a different model. For example, Thomas Ewing and Tarhe Trails may be in one model with the rest of the district operating in a different model.

For this reason, we have worked to adapt our curriculum to an online environment and to provide professional development to our staff before students enter school. This will allow us to move between the 3 models as seamlessly as possible.

Lancaster City Schools will use the Ohio Public Health Advisory along with district and community level health factors to determine which model we use. We will try to give parents advance notice of a change in models and begin in the new model on the first day of the week. District level conditions, such as staff and student absences, may require a change in models for a classroom, school building, or district with little advance notice. If a change is warranted for these reasons, we may have to notify parents in the morning, similar to a snow day.

### **Lancaster City Schools 3 Learning Models:**

1. **Traditional School Model with Safety Precautions in Place-** School will be open to all students in a face-to-face setting 100% of the time with safety precautions. The precautions include changes to procedures to support social distancing and ensure regular disinfecting of the classroom surfaces and materials within the classroom. Arrival and departure procedures will be modified, playground time is staggered, as well

as building routines to minimize interactions between adults and children from different classrooms. Surfaces, supplies and toys will be sanitized between use by children.

2. **Reduced Number Model With Divided Classrooms-** The first week of school, students will attend school based on a blended learning model. Students will attend school two days this week, during this week parents will self-transport, and participate in remote learning on the days they are not in attendance. This will give teachers time to instill new routines and safety protocols with students. After the first blended week, all students will attend school during their regular scheduled time four days a week. Classrooms will be divided in half to enable smaller staff to child ratio. Each group will contain up to 9 students to one teacher/educational assistant; while most groups will contain 7 students. Every effort will be made to ensure that students stay with their group throughout the week. Instruction will be planned and facilitated by the lead teacher, but may be implemented by an educational assistant. Therapists and extra Educational Assistants will not be included in the staff numbers. This model will be used if the Ohio Department of Education mandates a smaller class size to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
  
3. **Virtual School Model** - The preschool will implement a Virtual Learning Model. All preschoolers will be issued a Chromebook that will be used to access the preschool curriculum. A preschool staff member will facilitate live lessons featuring key components of the preschool day. Additional activities will also be posted online that families can use if they are unable to attend the live version. Therapists will also schedule a time for virtual therapy sessions to meet the needs of IEP students.

## **Transportation**

Transportation will be provided special transportation as part of their IEP services. Drivers are required and students are strongly advised to wear face masks because social distancing of six feet cannot be maintained. Bus seats will be cleaned after the morning and afternoon runs and loading procedures will be modified to reduce close contact. However, social distancing of six feet cannot be maintained on school transportation, even in the reduced numbers model. Therefore, parents are encouraged to transport their students to school to the greatest extent possible.

## **Risk Considerations**

Under the Fairfield County Department of Health's current guidelines, any person who has been in close contact with a person who has contracted COVID for 15 minutes or more in the previous 48 hours, has to self-quarantine for 14 days. Close contact is defined as a person who was not socially distanced from another person, in other words, within 6 feet of the person. This is regardless of whether the persons were wearing a cloth mask or not. Also, a negative COVID test does not release a person from quarantine who was in contact with a COVID positive person. Therefore, under the traditional model, each person contracting COVID will cause the addition of multiple students and staff to be excluded from school in order to self-quarantine for 14 days.

Under the traditional model, with the exception of the school bus, social distancing is maintained to the greatest extent possible. Therefore, it is much less likely that a person contracting COVID would cause multiple people to be excluded from school for 14 days.

### **The Full-time Online Program**

Families that do not feel comfortable sending their child to school, Lancaster City Schools preschool will provide an online program that is based on the preschool curriculum. This program will take into account any Individualized Education Plans for the student and work to provide a therapy/education plan for each family. The district will provide each child with a Chromebook and internet access if it is not available.

- The online preschool program will provide live virtual interactions with a Lancaster City Schools preschool teacher four days per week.
- Activities will be structured to provide hands on activities whenever possible.
- a preschool teacher/intervention specialist will provide virtual learning experiences for IEP students.
- Therapists will provide teletherapy for services listed in the IEP.
- Extra activities and resources will be uploaded to the online platform for children who have an interest in the subject area or were unable to attend the live meeting facilitated by their preschool teacher.

**Note:** In order for us to assign staff, we need parents to make a commitment to the online program **by Wednesday, August 19th** [Sign up here](#)

### **Safety Precautions and Operational Changes:**

In order to decrease the likelihood of infection the Lancaster City Schools have established the following protocols for protective measures for staff and students returning to school. However, being in a public place there is always a certain level of risk that cannot be eliminated.

1. All families will perform health checks on students before coming to school each day. If a student has an elevated temperature or any other sign of illness, they must stay home. Parents/guardians will need to swiftly pick up from school any students found to have a fever or to be exhibiting signs of illness during the school day. Lancaster City Schools Preschool will be doing daily temperature checks on students upon arrival.
2. Upon arrival to school students will receive a health check from a Lancaster City Staff member. If a student has an elevated temperature or any other sign of illness they will be sent home immediately.
3. All staff will be required to wear cloth face coverings (face masks). Preschoolers will be strongly encouraged to wear face coverings. Families must provide cloth face coverings for students that cover the nose and mouth. Families can begin working with their children now to practice mask-wearing and determine which style of mask will be most comfortable for their student(s) during the school day. We also recognize that our high school and preschools may need additional accommodations, such as use of a virtual learning day or early dismissal, due to lack of air conditioning should we face days with extreme heat.
4. Hand sanitizer will be provided throughout the building. Handwashing and hand sanitizing will be required regularly throughout the day.
5. Shared surfaces will be frequently cleaned and sanitized on a daily basis in the buildings and on buses.
6. Student drop off and pick up procedures will be modified to reduce student contact.
7. Visitors and volunteers will be limited to the office areas of buildings only.
8. Drinking fountains will be shut off. Students are encouraged to bring water bottles that may be refilled at school