

South Spencer School Corporation: Back to School Plan 2021-2022



ALL STUDENTS ~ ALL THE TIME

South Spencer School Corporation

321 South 5th Street, Rockport, IN 47635

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**This document serves as a reference for changes in policy and procedures for the
2021-2022 school year within South Spencer Schools.**

**. This plan is subject to review and change based on state, local, and federal mandate,
subject to biannual review.**

Important Note from School Administration about our Back to School Plan

South Spencer School Corporation believes that in-person education provided by qualified instructors is key to student success and academic achievement. To that end the corporation reaffirms its commitment to providing in person instruction. South Spencer will not require our students and staff to wear masks for the 2021-2022 school year. Masks will be optional for our bus drivers and students on the school bus.

Any changes will be made with the goal of supporting the high quality academic program you as parents and the community expect balanced with the health and safety of our students, staff, and community.

The following pages constitute our plan for creating that balance of academic rigor and a safe/healthy environment. This document outlines policies and procedures that may vary from our South Spencer School Corporation Student Handbooks - 2021-2022. Any variations in policy or procedure outlined in this document supersede those stated in the Student Handbooks. Changes to this document will be made as needed to support an optimal school program while maintaining high standards for the safety and wellbeing of our students and staff.

This plan was developed and is revised as needed in working with the Spencer County Health Department, our school administration, our teachers and staff, and with other stakeholders in the community. We thank all of our community members for their continued support for our South Spencer school programs. We know that we will continue to serve your children by providing a world class education. Our students deserve nothing less.

Your Partner in Education,

Richard Rutherford, Superintendent of Schools

Contact Information and Communication

Below is a list of primary contacts for more information about this document.

District Leaders

Name	Position	Phone
Rutherford, Richard	Superintendent	812-649-2591
Schipp, Dean	Director of Technology & Facilities	812-649-2591
Jaggers, Jane	Food Services Director	812-649-4801
Meredith, Shelly	Director of Transportation	812-649-4456
Bush, Jim	High School Principal	812-649-9157
French, Scot	Middle School Principal	812-649-2203
Adams, Cheri	Principal Luce Elementary	812-359-4401
Hunt, Rick	Principal Rockport Elementary	812-649-2201

Board of Education

The Board of Education serves as the governing system for providing a free, public education as required by state law for children in the South Spencer School Corporation. The SSSC School Board meeting schedule, tentative meeting agendas, minutes of previous meetings, policies and names/contact information of Board Members are posted on the SSSC website on the "School Board" link (<http://www.sspencer.k12.in.us>).

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General Information

It is our intention to open South Spencer Schools for face-to-face instruction as calendared starting on August 4, 2021. Our expectation is to complete 180 days of instruction for the 2021-2022 school year. The number of days will only be adjusted in the event there are closures that do not allow for Virtual Learning to take place.

IMPORTANT: It is our belief that face-to-face instruction is the best way to deliver instruction and services for our students.

School Calendar

It is our intention to follow the current school calendar with no changes. The first day of school for students will be Aug. 4, 2021.

The master calendar for the school year is posted on the SSSC website and each school's calendar of events will be Updated and posted throughout the school year.

<http://www.sspencer.k12.in.us/calendar/2021-2022-school-calendar/file>

School Times

Currently, there are no adjustments being made to the school start and ending times.

Health and Wellness

Hand Hygiene

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds whenever hands are visibly soiled and in the following situations:
 - Before and after meals and snacks
 - Before and after recess
 - Before and after sharing supplies or equipment
 - After going to the restroom

Home Health Screening:

We are asking that all parents conduct a Health Screening prior to the students boarding a bus, walking or driving to school, or being brought to school.

Mask / Face Coverings:

• Unvaccinated staff and students

Masks are recommended indoors (except when eating); social distance at least 3 feet if all students are facing forward in the classroom; social distance at least 3 feet in all other areas of the school; and quarantine if identified as having had close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19.

• Vaccinated staff and students

Masks are recommended indoors (except when eating); use good judgment regarding social distancing, and no quarantine is needed if identified as close contact as long as they remain asymptomatic.

● **Track and Isolate Positive Cases:**

Individuals should stay home for 10 days following the onset of symptoms or a positive test result.

Who is a close contact?:

- If unvaccinated students are masked and facing forward in the classroom, only individuals within 3 feet of a person diagnosed with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.
- If unvaccinated students are not masked and facing forward in the classroom, all individuals within 3 feet of a person diagnosed with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

Quarantine:

- Vaccinated close contacts do not have to quarantine, but should monitor for symptoms and isolate if symptoms develop.
- Unvaccinated individuals who are identified as close contact must quarantine.
 - Asymptomatic close contacts may return on day 8 (with specific negative testing and precautions), day 11 (with precautions), or day 15 (without testing or precautions).

Social Distancing:

Whenever possible we will encourage Social Distancing as a practice. Social distancing, also called “physical distancing,” means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. To practice social or physical distancing: Stay at least 3 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people.

Handwashing/Sanitizer Usage Guidance (Frequency):

- Handwashing instructions will be taught and reinforced several times throughout each school day with specific times identified for PreK-5 students directed by teachers/classroom assistants.
- 6-12 students will be provided opportunities to wash hands before lunch time or as needed throughout the day.
- Hand Sanitizer will be provided in classrooms and in other high traffic areas where appropriate.

Ongoing Classroom Cleaning:

- Elementary - Students will be instructed to safely disinfect desks and frequently touched surfaces at transition times as applicable.
- Middle / High School - Students will be instructed to safely disinfect desks and frequently touched surfaces at transition times as applicable.
- All Schools - Disinfecting spray bottles and disposable towels for each classroom will be provided. Each building is supplied with a disinfectant to be used by maintenance staff for sanitizing as necessary in all areas of the school buildings

Access to Water:

Drinking fountains will be disabled, or made inaccessible for use. Water bottles will be the primary way students will access water during the school day.

- Students should bring a reusable water bottle to school. This bottle should be clear and clearly labeled with the student’s name, and will be used only by the student. Water bottle refilling stations will be used to provide students access to water during the school day.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own clear water bottles to and from school daily. Daily washing of water bottles is advised.

Students suspected of being ill:

- Students suspected of being ill will be sent to the nurse's office for a temperature check.
- Students with a steady cough or other noticeable symptoms, but no fever, may be required to wear a mask upon returning to class if they are in a grade where this is not already required..
- Students with a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater will be required to wear a face covering and remain isolated in the nurse's office, or other designated isolation area, until personal transportation arrives.
- Emergency contacts will be used for contacting students and employees in need of transport.
- Students sent home with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher will not be allowed re-entry into school for a minimum of 24 hours.

Re-Entry after fever, COVID-19 Diagnosis, or for Persons with COVID-19 Under Isolation:

- The decision to discontinue home isolation for persons with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 should be made in the context of local circumstances. South Spencer Schools will work in conjunction with the Spencer County Health Department regarding Covid-19 “positive” persons.
- Students returning from a COVID-19 positive test, or having a fever of 100.4 or greater, will be transported to school by parent/guardian for screening prior to entering the building. Masks / face coverings must be worn until the temperature scan is complete.
- Repeated temperature screening will occur approximately every 2 hours following re-entry during the first 3 school days back in the building.
- Individuals with a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater will NOT be allowed re-entry into school for a minimum of 24 hours.

Attendance

We believe that excellent student attendance is a contributing factor in a student’s overall success in school. Our attendance policies outlined in the student handbook will continue to be in place for the 2021-2022 school year.

Normal attendance procedures will be utilized at all schools (see Student Handbook).

State statute gives public school districts authority to exclude students who have a contagious disease such as COVID-19 or are liable to transmit it after exposure (I.C. 20-34-3-9). In addition, the local health department has the authority to exclude students from school and may order students and others to isolate or quarantine (I.C. 16-41--9-1.6).

In the event of a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, or if a student has been required to stay home for 24 hours due to a fever or other symptoms, We will work with families on issues of student attendance. Whenever possible, students who are unable to attend school should participate in Virtual Learning Information on Virtual Learning

If a student, or member of the household in direct contact with a student, tests positive for COVID-19, state and local health department officials will initiate and maintain communication. In turn, these agencies will work with the school in making decisions and informing the school working within HIPPA guidelines for privacy.

- Please view this document “**COVID-19: When a student, faculty or staff member can return to school**” for updated information on policies related to required COVID related quarantine or absences.

Arrival Procedures - Car Riders and Walkers

Parents will be expected to screen their children before the child leaves for school. Procedures for the Home Health Screening process are listed above.

We will be conducting health screenings as needed or required. This may slow entry into the building. Please allow for additional drop-off time in the morning.

Elementary Arrival Procedures:

Arrival procedures for car riders will be the same as is posted in the Elementary Student Handbook. However, students may be screened as required by the Health Department upon entry of the building. Screenings may include a quick question and answer and/or temperature check. If a screening is conducted, these screenings will be done as students exit their vehicles. Parents dropping off students should not leave until the health screening is complete in the event there is a concern that would prevent the child from entering the building.

In situations where the parent will escort the student to the entrance door (ex. Rockport Pre Kindergarten), parents should work to keep social distance (6 ft. apart from other parents and students while waiting to deliver the child).

Students who walk to school will enter via the main entrance closest to the school office. Students will be screened as required by the Health Department upon entry of the building. Screenings may include a quick question and answer and/or temperature check. If there is a concern that would prevent the student from entering the building they will wait in the school office area in the nurse's station for a parent to pick them up.

Middle School Arrival Procedures:

Students may be screened as required by the Health Department upon entry of the building. Screenings may include a quick question and answer and/or temperature check. If conducted, these screenings will be done at the door as students enter the building. Parents dropping off students should not leave until the health screening is complete in the event there is a concern that would prevent the child from entering the building.

High School Arrival Procedures:

Students may be screened as required by the Health Department upon entry of the building. Screenings may include a quick question and answer and/or temperature check. If conducted, these screenings will be done at the door as students enter the building. Parents dropping off students should not leave until the health screening is complete in the event there is a concern that would prevent the child from entering the building.

Students who ride the bus to school will enter on the west end near the English Department rooms. Students who are dropped off by their parents will enter via the main entrance closest to the school office. Students who drive will enter through the student parking lot doors. If there is a concern that would prevent the student from entering the building/attending classes they will wait in the school office area in the nurses station for a parent to pick them up.

Visitors and Volunteers

South Spencer Schools will allow school personnel and essential support services and/or volunteers within the school building. This may change as determined by the school corporation or the local health department.

If visitation or volunteering is allowed, all visitor and volunteer requirements will be the same as outlined in our student handbooks and by corporation policy.

All visitors and volunteers must enter via the front door and sign in at the front office. Visitors and volunteers may be subject to a health screening Q and A and/or temperature check as required by the local health department. This may include:

- Adults wishing to enter the main building beyond the school office will be “pre-screened” with a series of questions before being allowed to enter.
- Individuals with cautionary symptoms will be temperature checked.
- Individuals with a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater will not be allowed entry into the building.

School Bus

All efforts will be made to ensure a safe and healthy transportation of students on our school busses. Masks are encouraged to be worn on school buses.

Bus Cleaning- Ongoing

Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces in the vehicle at the beginning and end of each day and between transporting passengers who are visibly sick.

Bus Seating (Student Distancing)

- It is required that masks and face coverings be worn for the duration of the bus ride.
- To the greatest extent possible, students shall be spread out on school buses to limit physical and face to face contact. Requirements for physical distancing may not be feasible in all situations on school buses, but all efforts possible will be made to observe physical distancing.
- Students will have assigned seats.
- When possible, only household members will share bus seats.
- Bus Drivers will be required to wear masks and/or face shields.
- Drivers may remove face coverings to drive as necessary.
- Bus windows will be open as much as is reasonably possible.

Food Services - Breakfast and Lunch Program

Children need healthy meals to learn. South Spencer School Corporation offers healthy meals every school day. Students may participate in the breakfast and lunch program that is operated in accordance with federal, state, and local laws and health guidelines. We will adjust breakfast and lunch service as our local health department determines is best for the health and wellbeing of our students and staff.

Adequate distance between students will be monitored by teachers, aides and cafeteria staff during serving of meals. All meals are free this year, due to waivers from the USDA and IDOE. Parents should/need to fill out an application to qualify for textbook assistance, PBET funds, and other programs that require free and reduced information.

Breakfast:

Breakfast will be served in the school cafeterias.

Lunch:

Lunch will be served in the school cafeterias.

Students may bring in a sack lunch from home, but nothing will be allowed to be shared with other students.

No outside food (such as fast food, pizza...) will be allowed to be brought into the school for a student during the school day.

Individual snacks may be brought in by students, but these should not be shared among students. These should follow the South Spencer Health Plan.

School Instructional Programs

In-Class Instruction

- Student seating will be spread out to the greatest extent possible with classroom furniture arrangements.

Special Education and Title 1 Services

- Special Education Meetings, Evaluations and IEP Decisions - All special education law compliance timelines for school districts will continue to be followed (evaluations, annual case reviews, etc.).
 - Annual Case Reviews: Case Conference Committee (CCC) must use available information to determine the need to adjust the frequency and/or duration of services.
 - Evaluations for special education services: No changes in pre-referral, referral, and evaluation protocols
 - CCC meetings will continue to be provided remotely as needed using Google Hangouts/Meet.
- In addition to building-wide cleaning/disinfecting protocols, special education classrooms, resource rooms and therapy rooms will receive enhanced attention.

- Considerations for Students with Disabilities (SWD) Who are Deemed “Medically Fragile”
 - NOTE: If you are the parent or guardian of a student that has been recently ordered to stay home from school by his/her medical doctor due to COVID-19 concerns, please contact your school’s principal immediately.
 - Students deemed medically fragile that may incur severe medical complications if exposed to COVID-19 may be unable to attend school.
 - These students will require remote services that will be decided upon by the CCC and address their specific educational needs.
 - Services may be delivered on-line or in a virtual format, via instructional phone calls or other curriculum-based instructional activities.
 - CCC must consider technological competency and the need for assistive technology to support on-line and/or virtual learning.

Recess

We believe that recess for elementary students is important for social-emotional and physical health. Recess will be held each day as outlined in each school’s daily schedule. To support safety and health during recess:

- Recess will be held outside when possible.
- When possible students will stay in cohort groups.
- Classrooms can utilize recess equipment but it will need to be wiped down after usage.

Hallways and Passing Periods

To reduce the amount of time in congested hallways during passing periods, school staff will work to maintain the flow of foot traffic. In general, students will be asked to travel along the right side of the hallway.

Large Gathering Spaces (Auditoriums, Gymnasiums, Media Centers etc.)

- Student seating will be spread out to the greatest extent possible with seating arrangements in all large gathering areas..
- Auditorium/Gymnasium capacity will be limited to allow for greater spacing

Field Trips, Release Time, and Other Off-Campus Activities

Field trips are activities that are held off school grounds and will only be conducted as appropriate and where safety and health considerations allow.

Increased Stress and Anxiety in Students:

Typical childhood and teenager anxiety and stress can be magnified during a pandemic and the need for social/emotional supports can be more prevalent in our students.

Our Counselors and Social Workers are trained to be aware of the signs of increased anxiety, and our teachers will also be trained in recognizing these symptoms.

Symptoms:

- Younger students may appear 'clingy' and not want to leave caregivers' side, requiring constant contact.
- Older students may withdraw away from family members, social groups, and activities.
- Crying or overly emotional.
- Students may feel easily overwhelmed, strongly emotional, reacting with anger or silence.

The National Association of School Psychologist list these specific examples of actions and behaviors:

- Preschoolers—thumb sucking, bedwetting, clinging to parents, sleep disturbances, loss of appetite, fear of the dark, regression in behavior, and withdrawal.
- Elementary school children—irritability, aggressiveness, clinginess, nightmares, school avoidance, poor concentration, and withdrawal from activities and friends.
- Adolescents—sleeping and eating disturbances, agitation, increase in conflicts, physical complaints, delinquent behavior, and poor concentration.

Supports from Teachers, Counselors, and Social Workers

Teachers

- Classroom teachers quickly recognize when a student is struggling and they are often the first to recognize anxiety or depression in a student.
- Counselors will have a list of resources available to share with teachers when needed.
- Teachers are role models. Students react to and follow teacher reactions. Teachers will model a safe and calm demeanor as we re-open the school.
- Teachers will help students establish and maintain daily routines as well as offering emotional support for their students.
- Above all, teachers will help reassure students that they are safe at school.