

### **Our Goal**

To return to school for the 2020-21 school year with protocols and guidelines in place to protect our students, staff, and families from the potential spread of COVID-19. Every school will offer traditional classroom instruction, as well as virtual learning options, to meet the needs of students and families during this unique and challenging time.

*As guidelines are subject to change based on the level of community spread, this plan is likewise subject to change. Thank you in advance for your flexibility and patience.*

### **Our Process**

The Rhea County Leadership Team consisting of central office leaders, school principals, school board members, and health department members, have reviewed a variety of resources, studied guidelines, and worked diligently to create plans for returning to school. Rhea County Department of Education will focus on making decisions that are practical and feasible with a student-centered approach.

Rhea County students will return to school on August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020 for the first full day of school. Our priorities are the health and safety of our students and staff and providing academic instruction to prepare students for the future.

Schools will open in a traditional manner with a RC virtual option for families. For planning purposes, the choice for the virtual option must be made no later than July 31<sup>st</sup>. Parental support and commitment are requirements for a student to be considered for the virtual path. Students that are planning on taking advantage of the RC virtual school and would like to try out for sports must notify the Director of Schools in writing prior to July 31<sup>st</sup>. A student that chooses the virtual path must remain on the same path for one semester unless approved by the principal. More information about the RC virtual school will be sent out next week.

We will continue to communicate through school cast, our website, Facebook and Twitter.

## **Health and Safety Protocols**

The following protocols will be implemented, but not limited to:

- Hand sanitizer stations will be in all classrooms and common spaces
- Intensive cleaning throughout the building during and after school hours. Victory electrostatic foggers will be used to disinfect.
- Masks will be the option of the parent and student. Masks will not be mandatory for students or teachers.
- Signage will be posted in all buildings encouraging frequent handwashing and social distancing.
- Students and Staff should remain at home if they are sick.
- Parents are requested to complete temperature checks prior to sending children to school. Temperature checks will be conducted at all schools.
- All staff will log their temperature daily. If a temperature exceeds 100.4, the employee will be sent home and required to stay home until they maintain a regular temperature for 24 hours immediately prior to returning to work.

## **Academic Instruction**

- *Traditional Instruction* – daily instruction will be provided for all students in-person.
- *RC Virtual Instruction* – virtual learning will be provided for families as an alternative option. Specific guidance about requirements for virtual learning will be provided.
- *Instruction in the event of school closure* - instruction will be provided via google classroom and google meet / zoom in the event of a school closure.
- *Rhea County Department of Education has ordered enough computers (CARES ACT) to have the ability to provide every student with Chromebook computer. Computers will be assigned to high school students first.*

## Operations

- *Visitors – visitors will only be permitted during normal operating hours by appointment only. All visitors will have a temperature screening. Parents will not enter the building for student check-outs.*
- *Custodial Services – enhanced daily and weekly cleaning protocols.*
- *Extracurricular Activities – will require prior school board approval. (TSSAA, CDC, TDOE)*
- *School Assemblies – > 50 students must be preapproved by the Rhea County Board of Education.*
- *Health Services*
  1. *Hand sanitizer in all classrooms and commons areas.*
  2. *Nurses in all schools.*
  3. *Daily staff and student checks.*
  4. *No drinkable water fountains. Only bottle water fountains.*
- *School Nutrition*
  1. *Grab-and-Go and pre-plated meals available.*
  2. *Spaced seating when possible. (each school is different)*
  3. *No self-serving lines.*
  4. *Enhanced cleaning protocols.*
  5. *Disposable plates and utensils. (middle / high school)*
  6. *No students touching pen pads.*
  7. *Cafeteria workers will be required to wear a mask.*
  8. *All cafeteria staff will receive Health Inspector training concerning food safety guidelines with an emphasis of COVID-19 (July 29<sup>th</sup> PD)*
- *Transportation*
  1. *Encourage parents to transport students.*
  2. *Driver's will be required to wear a mask.*
  3. *The bus will fill the seats from back to front.*
  4. *The seat directly behind the driver will not be occupied.*
  5. *Seating with family members will be encouraged.*
  6. *Guest riders will be limited to emergencies. Must be approved by the principal.*
  7. *Bus windows will be open when conditions allow to create a negative airflow in the bus.*
  8. *Buses will be disinfected daily.*
- *Classroom seating – It is suggested that seats will face the same direction with the maximum amount of social distancing that is feasible.*
- *Student Movement within the School – traffic will flow in one direction in schools where this is feasible.*

### Procedures for a confirmed case of COVID-19

1. If a positive test for COVID-19 occurs in a school building with a student or a staff member, district and school administrators will work with the regional Health Department who will take the lead on notifications and contact tracing.
2. Potential school closures will be based upon the risk levels determined by the Rhea County Department of Education and the Rhea County Health Department. If school is closed due to COVID-19, virtual classes will begin. The trigger to begin discussion with the Rhea County Health Department will be when the positive COVID-19 cases exceeds 1 per 100 students. Rhea County Schools will have the ability to close individual schools or the entire system.

### Return to school

- Any student or staff who exhibits symptoms consistent with COVID-19 are to be masked and isolated immediately and sent home as quickly as possible.
- Students and staff may return to school if the answer to **ANY** of the following questions is **YES**:
  - **Did a healthcare provider confirm that the individual's illness is not due to COVID-19 because another explanation was identified. e.g., fever due to urinary tract infection, strep throat confirmed by a positive strep test, rash from poison ivy, etc?** (Diagnoses of upper respiratory tract infection (URI), pneumonia, viral illness, etc DO NOT exclude the diagnosis of COVID-19 and should not be considered an adequate to authorize return to school.)
  - **Did the individual have a positive COVID-19 molecular / PCR test and complete isolation for a minimum of 10 days AND had resolution of symptoms for at least 72 hours?** (Results of antibody tests are not reliable and should not be considered proof of immunity or lack of infection.)
  - **Has the individual been well for at least 72 hours and have documentation of TWO negative COVID-19 molecular/PCR tests at least 24 hours apart during the most recent absence due to symptoms consistent with COVID-19?** (Results of tests that precede the dates of the most recent absence are not acceptable, nor are results of antibody testing.)
  - **In the case of an individual with symptoms that did not obtain testing, did the individual complete isolation for a minimum of 10 days AND have resolution of symptoms for at least 72 hours?**

### Procedures for a temperature over 100.4

The following guidelines are for students that only have a fever greater than 100.4 but have no other symptoms.

1. Students will be monitored in a designated room until the student can be picked up.
2. Staff will immediately be sent home.
3. All student and staff must be fever free for 24 hours immediately prior to returning for a full day.
4. School Board Policy 6.403

