Our students will be prepared for and eager to accept the academic, occupational, personal and practical challenges of life in a dynamic global environment.

Middle School
COVID Safety Handbook
FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2021 - 2022

Issaquah Middle School
Principal: Carrie Reckling
600 2nd Ave. SE, Issaquah, WA 98027
(425) 837-6800

Issaquah School District, Middle School Education
5150 220th Ave SE, Issaquah, WA 98029
(425) 837-7072

www.issaquah.wednet.edu
www.issaquah.wednet.edu/issaquahms
Dear Issaquah Middle School Families,

This COVID Handbook for families has been created using guidance from the Washington State Department of Health to let you know what COVID mitigation procedures are in place and what the learning environment will be like at Issaquah Middle School as students return to campus for the 2021-22 school year. Our district website contains additional resources on the 2021-22 school year and Health and Safety Plans. These are valuable resources that we hope you take time to review. They contain specific and detailed information about district-wide expectations, procedures and protocols regarding safety in the hybrid setting.

You can access the district resources described above at https://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/covid

Thank you in advance for taking time to review our 2021-22 COVID Handbook. You will see that we have put forth great effort to ensure student and staff safety and to comply with Washington State and King County Department of Health guidelines and recommendations. We are dedicated to providing every IMS student the best possible learning experience while maintaining appropriate safety measures. We will continue to monitor updates and recommendations from the State and County Health Departments to stay current on our health and safety procedures and protocols.

We look forward to welcoming our Issaquah Panthers back to campus!

Sincerely,

Carrie Reckling, Principal
Becky Mullvain, Assistant Principal
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**Face Coverings**

Universal face coverings/masking means that face coverings are required to be worn by all individuals, regardless of vaccination status.

- All who enter our building must wear a face covering.
- School sites will have face coverings available for students who forget theirs at home.
- While at school, the face covering should be worn to cover above the nose to below the chin.
- Students and staff will wear masks at all times while indoors regardless of vaccination status.
- Masks are not required when eating lunch or when students are outdoors, but are strongly recommended for unvaccinated individuals when outdoors in crowded spaces or when in close contact with people from outside their household for a prolonged period of time.
- If a student has a documented medical condition preventing them from wearing a mask, please notify the office immediately.

**Hand Washing/Sanitizing**

Upon entering/exiting campus, for each class period throughout the day, and after using the restroom, students will wash/sanitize their hands. Hand sanitizer dispensers are located throughout the building and classroom are equipped with hand sanitizing spray bottles. Restrooms and most classrooms also have soap dispensers.

**Classroom Environment**

Upon return to in-person learning for the 2021-22 school year, students will find that some procedures and the physical set up of the classroom may look similar to Spring 2021 in order to keep everyone healthy. What students and families will find to be the same as they have experienced in the past is a warm welcoming teacher who is eager to greet students each day, develop relationships, promote community building and social emotional learning and provide quality instruction in the areas of reading, writing, and math with science and social studies integrated into core content areas.

To keep everyone healthy, below are some of the COVID mitigation procedures students can expect to see, and be asked to follow, in their classroom:

- **If you are feeling ill, stay home.**
- According to the WA State DOH, physical distancing should not prevent a school from offering full time, in-person learning to all students/families for the 2021-22 school year. The COVID mitigation strategies regarding physical distancing will be to the extent
• The arrangement of student desks will look different than they may have experienced in the past. Classrooms have been set up to ensure the recommended guidance of 3 feet of physical distancing to the extent possible between students.
• If there is space in the classroom, the teacher can choose to create a small group space, provided that the small group space still maintains 3 feet between all involved in the small group.
• ALL desks and tables will be cleaned by students at the end of each class period. Custodial staffs will be cleaning/disinfecting nightly.
• Shared materials will be cleaned/disinfected as appropriate for delivering instruction/lessons.
• Frequent handwashing and hand sanitizing will occur.
• High touch points such as doorknobs and railings within the building will receive continuous cleaning throughout the day and night.

***Students are encouraged to bring a personal water bottle. Drinking fountains in the halls will be closed. Paper cups will be available in classrooms for those who do not have a water bottle.

Attestations/Staying Home When Sick

Morning attestations for students and staff at school will not be required as we launch the 2021-22 school year. Additionally, temperatures will not be checked prior to students entering the building. Instead, we ask families to monitor any symptoms and temperatures of students before sending them to school. The Issaquah School District will continue to monitor the frequency/cases of COVID-19 and update processes accordingly based on guidance from WA State & King Co. Departments of Health. With that in mind, staying home when sick is essential to keep COVID-19 and other infections out of school and prevent spread to others.

Symptoms to monitor when considering keeping students home sick:
• Temperature/fever greater than 100.4 °F or chills
• Cough
• Shortness of breath
• Difficulty breathing
• Unusual fatigue
• Muscle or body aches
• Headache
• Recent loss of taste or smell
• Sore throat
• Congestion or runny nose
• Nausea or vomiting
• Diarrhea
**Arrival Procedures**

All students will enter the building through the main doors if they arrive on time before school begins. The doors will open at 8:00 a.m. (M,T, Th, F) and 10:05 a.m. (W). It is strongly recommended that students who are walkers or parent drop-offs do not arrive to campus until 8:00 or 10:05 a.m. in order to allow for a greater distancing of students. Once students enter the building they can make quick stops at the library or office as needed, but otherwise students are expected to go directly to their first period and not congregate in the hallways or common spaces.

**Late Arrival Students:**
- Students arriving late should enter through the office door and present an excusal note for the late arrival. Parents/guardians can also call ahead to the attendance office at (425) 837-6800 option1 or email IMSAttendance@issaquah.wednet.edu to provide a message to excuse the absence/late arrival.

**Attendance**
- Students are required by law to attend school. Any absences must be verified by the parent or guardian in order to be marked excused.
- Office staff member will send for student, sign the student out of school noting the date and time of early dismissal. Staff member will observe student exit the building and into the possession of the parent/guardian.

**Daily Schedule**

Schedules for middle school students will transition back to our pre-covid scheduling model. All students will attend daily Monday through Friday. There will not be a hybrid or remote option. We will maintain our late start Wednesday model. Bell times can be found on the district website.

**Lunch Procedures**

We will follow the guidance provided by the Washington State Department of Health issued on August 11, 2021. We will maximize the distance between students to the degree possible during lunchtime. This will be accomplished by providing outdoor eating areas when possible, and designated travel (walking) paths. Students will be prompted to hand sanitize or wash their hands at lunch.

Lunch service will return to normal operations, from a student’s perspective. They will have options for the normal lunch lines, enter their PIN at the POS terminal and have access to the
condiment bars. We are able to offer a free hot lunch to each student this year. Some a la carte items will be available for purchase as well. The menu may have less variety at the beginning as we get going but should also return to normal as staff adjust. For additional lunch information, please visit the ISD Lunches FAQ webpage.

Students are encouraged to dress warmly and bring coats so they can take advantage of outdoor eating areas year round. We have an extensive outdoor eating area in our courtyard with canopies to help protect students from the elements. Students will be required to wear their mask when they are not actively eating or drinking. They must keep their mask in close proximity (in their pocket or another sanitary location) so that they can put it back on when directed to do so. Students will be reminded when lunch ends to ensure their mask is on before going to their next class.

**Restrooms**

Restrooms will be closely monitored and sanitized throughout the day. Students will be permitted to go to the restroom as needed, provided that all restroom procedures are followed. Restrooms have a procedure for waiting which will include waiting in socially distanced designated spots.

- Masks must be worn at all times.
- Students will follow directions in the hallway to maintain social distancing.
- Upon arrival at the bathroom, students will check the bathroom to see if there is space.
- If spaces are filled, students will wait outside, socially distanced from any other students.
- Upon exit of the bathroom, students wash hands.

**Passing Time / Hallway Spacing**

When walking through the building, students will follow their walking path marked on the floor and will remain 3 feet apart to the extent possible. Hallways, stairwells, and restrooms will be marked with directional arrows.

**Locker Usage**

Lockers will not be in use at this time. Students should plan to access textbooks and other supplemental resources electronically to minimize the number of items the student will carry to and from each location in the building. Students will be allowed to carry a backpack throughout the day to transport laptops and other items students may need. If a lack of access to lockers creates a hardship for your student, please reach out to your student’s school counselor.
Water Fountain Use

Due to current safety guidelines, hallway water fountains will not be in use. We encourage students to bring their own filled water bottles. If necessary, students may fill their bottles or use a paper cup to get a drink from the classroom sink. There is also a water fill station located near Commons for students to access during passing period or during lunch.

Health Room Needs

We will have two locations to care for ill or injured students.

- **Health Room**: Will be used to care for students who are injured or for other reasons not related to COVID-19 symptoms.
- **Isolation Room**: Will be used for students who have a symptom or signs of illness that are known COVID-19 symptoms.

In both the Health Room and the Quarantine Room, there will be space for social distancing. It is very important that students experiencing possible COVID symptoms are picked up promptly.

What needs come to the Health Room:

- Blood that can’t be managed by a Band-Aid
- Falls/hard impacts/injuries/possible concussion
- Medication/health plan needs

What needs to come to the Isolation Room:

- Fever (≥100.4) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Unusual fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Recent loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

COVID Care (Isolation Space)

If a student arrives at school with, or starts experiencing COVID or COVID like symptoms during the school day, they will be sent to the isolation space and families will be contacted.
immediately. The student will be monitored until a parent/guardian arrives to pick the student up. Any areas of contact in the isolation area will be immediately deep cleaned and disinfected.

Proper PPE will be worn by all at all times in the isolation room. The student will be evaluated for exposure, diagnosis, and symptoms. The COVID Supervisor(s) will work with the families around next steps and what needs to occur for a student to return to school. Students are to remain home until a return date is established with the Covid Supervisor.

Returning to School after Illness or Quarantine

The Covid Supervisor will follow up with any symptomatic students or students directed to quarantine to determine return based on King County Health Department timelines and protocols.

Students are to remain home until a return date is established with the Covid Supervisor.

Mask Refusal

If a student refuses to wear a mask:

• They will first be asked to put their mask on/pull their mask up over their nose.
• If there is an issues with a student’s mask, a disposable mask can be provided to them.
• If a student still refuses, they will be escorted by an adult to engage in a conversation with an administrator to reiterate required health and safety protocols.
• If the student continues to refuse, a parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the student.
• Once a student has a mask on appropriately, they may return to their classroom.
• Should an exception to mask wearing be needed, an interactive process with your child’s IEP or 504 team will need to occur.

COVID Supervisor/Back-Up Supervisor

Each building in the district has a COVID Supervisor. This person’s role is to oversee all COVID protocols and to work with district administration on COVID mitigation during in-person learning. At Issaquah Middle School, Becky Mullvain, Assistant Principal, is the COVID Supervisor. Backup COVID Supervisor is Carrie Reckling, Principal. The COVID Supervisor will follow up with any symptomatic students or students directed to quarantine to determine return based on King County Health Department timelines and protocols. Students are to remain home until a return date is established with the COVID Supervisor.

Safety Drills

Safety drills will be conducted monthly. In the event of an evacuation drill, teachers and staff will guide students to have distance between them in line as they walk silently. Once outside,
staff will help students with social distancing as well as follow all regular evacuation rules. In the event of a true emergency, the safety of lives will take precedence over social distancing.

**Library Services**

Our school library will be open but may have occupancy limits, or adjusted times.

**Dismissal**

Before leaving campus, students will wash/sanitize their hands. Students will leave the building and will walk to their designated pick-up area.

Students will exit the building immediately upon dismissal from class and will not congregate with peers inside the school building.

- **Buses:** Once all buses are at school, students will be dismissed to buses and remain socially distanced.

- **Walkers:** Students who walk home are to walk out the front of the building and off campus.

- **Car pickup:** If you are picking up your child, please do so from the car by joining either of the two car pickup lines. Please do not park your car and walk up to pick up your child. Once exiting the building, students will proceed directly to their family member’s car. If students need to wait for their car to pull up, they will socially distance while they wait.

**After School Activities**

We plan to offer our typical athletics, clubs, and activities at all middle schools this fall. We will continue to follow the guidance provided by the Washington State Department of Health and other agencies to provide COVID mitigation strategies while continuing to offer activities.

**Visitors/Volunteers**

At Issaquah Middle School, we value our volunteers in so many areas of the work we do in our building, however, we also must be mindful of our continued efforts to ensure virus mitigation, so that our students stay in classrooms as much as possible this school year.

To that end, the Issaquah School District will phase in a return of our volunteers by starting with those that support academic and social-emotional programming first. These plans are subject to change as we adhere to guidance from the Department of Health for the state of WA and for King County, the Governor’s office and OSPI, for example. Both parties will work together before each phase to discuss current guidance and any COVID impacts to the community before
moving to the next phase of volunteers. This year, proof of COVID vaccination will be required as a part of the volunteer application.

For more information on volunteering, visit the ISD Volunteering Frequently Asked Questions page.

Additional Mitigation Measure to Support Those too Young to Vaccinate

Most classes available to 6th grade students consist of only 6th grade students. These include language arts, social studies, PE, and most elective classes. We do offer some classes that will consist of a combination of 6th, 7th and 8th graders. These are typically advanced math and science courses. In classes that have multiple grades we will make every effort to separate 6th graders from the others within the classroom. We will continue to maintain social distancing for all students as required by the guidance from Public Health of Seattle and King County.

To start the year, students will not be accessing hallway lockers in order to reduce the likelihood of close contacts during passing time. Additionally, 6th grader students will not be accessing the locker room for PE and will not be changing for PE classes. Student will meet their teacher in the proper location (gym) and participate in 6th grade only PE.

Additionally, 6th grade students will have a designated seating area at lunch separate from other grade levels in both indoor and outdoor eating areas. We will continue to monitor and adjust as the school year progresses.

Please see the ISD Middle School FAQs for additional information.

We look forward to having our students return to school, safely.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions you may have.