



## Full Student Attendance Update

March 17, 2021

Dear Irvington School Community,

It is with great excitement that I write to confirm the District’s plans to increase daily student attendance. We could not be where we are without the incredible work of the Irvington UFSD staff and the support of the school community. Thank you!

This communication includes several important items that all parents must review. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact your child(ren)’s principal(s).

### Transition Timeline to Full, Daily Student Attendance

I am pleased to report that we are prepared to implement the timeline that was communicated to the school community last week and is outlined below:

	ICT students	Flex Wednesdays Phase out	Full Attendance
<b>Dows Lane</b>	√	√	March 22
<b>Main Street School</b>	√	March 24 - Cohorts B and C to be in person for am only	April 7
<b>IMS/IHS</b>	March 22 - all students with IEPs <u>in ICT classes</u> to attend 4 days per week until April 12	March 24 - Cohort B to be in person for am only (Early Dismissal schedule with shortened periods)  April 7 - Cohort A to be in person for am only (Early Dismissal schedule with shortened periods)	April 12
<b>100% distance learning will continue as an option in a <u>revised capacity</u>.</b>			

### School-Level Meetings

Our teachers, staff and administrators are eager to welcome all of our students back to full, daily attendance. While this communication provides many important details, there is school-specific information that will be conveyed to you. Each school will hold a parent meeting that will occur prior to the start of the increased student attendance. You will receive information about that meeting directly from the building principals.

### Transportation

As a result of the increase in daily student attendance, there will be some adjustments to the bus routes and schedules. We expect the transportation to be updated by Thursday afternoon. If your child is eligible for transportation and will be riding the bus to and/or from school, please visit the [transportation portal](#) before week's end to see if your bus pick up or drop off times have changed.

With the adjustments to bus routes and changes in local traffic patterns due to the increased student attendance, it is possible that buses could be running late during this period of transition. We ask for your patience and understanding.

Student safety on buses remains a top priority. Mask wearing will be required at all times and social distancing will be enforced to the greatest extent possible.

### Parent Drop Off/Pick up and Walkers

It is understandable that many parents are going to choose to drive their children to school. However, traffic on the school campuses and in town will inevitably become difficult as we transition into the new attendance model. Therefore, schools are implementing plans to manage traffic with the support of the Irvington Police Department. As we monitor traffic patterns, we may need to add staggered drop off and pick up times. Please do your part to comply with them, as your support will help to keep our student pedestrians safe and school schedules running on time.

If possible, please have your child(ren) walk to school independently or accompanied by you. Each car that can be eliminated will make a big difference in our ability to manage traffic. So, please take advantage of this opportunity to get some extra exercise and have great conversations with your child(ren) by walking with them to school.

### School Lunches

All schools will provide daily lunch service out of the cafeterias. The elementary schools will no longer require or accept advance orders (pre-orders will continue for Main Street School for March 22-26 and then end). Lunch continues to be free for all students. If your child(ren) will be purchasing ala carte items, please ensure that you have added money in their lunch account. We plan to add ala carte items/snacks at the elementary schools later in the year as staffing permits. Menus can be found on the District website in the Food and Nutrition section of the Departments Directory page, or can be accessed by clicking here.

Student seating for lunch has been altered in each school to provide for necessary social distancing. At least six (6) feet of social distancing will be provided during lunch times. Traditional cafeteria tables will not be utilized, rather individual desks or other seating will be provided. Supplemental seating has been added in each school through the use of an auditorium or gymnasium. Outdoor seating under tents will be available at IMS and IHS and, on select days, at MSS.

### Elementary Snack Time

The elementary schools will no longer offer snack time in classrooms. When possible, teachers will take their classes outside or to a large space for the students to enjoy their snacks. The elementary schools and teachers will communicate their plans with parents.

### **\*\*New York State Travel Requirements\*\***

Despite Governor Cuomo's press conference announcing that travel-related quarantines and/or the related testing protocols were not going to be enforced beginning April 1st, this proposed change in New York requirements has not been enacted. The District will continue to follow all NYSDOH guidelines. The Department of Health HAS NOT LIFTED THE TRAVEL-RELATED QUARANTINES or changed TESTING PROTOCOLS. Therefore, if one travels, they will be required to either participate in the REQUIRED testing protocols or quarantine. Please see the details below and REVIEW THE FOLLOWING SECTION ON STUDENT ATTENDANCE.

### Location of Learning Commitment and Student Attendance

Parents will be required to make a commitment for their child(ren)'s location of learning, either choosing in-person learning or 100% distance learning for the remainder

of the school year. If a parent does not complete the District survey on this topic, the school will reach out to you to do so. Students will not be permitted to switch locations of learning. Should a hardship arise, parents should discuss the matter with the school principal. However, in all cases, I, as the Superintendent of Schools, will make the determination as to whether a change in location of learning will be granted.

If a child is quarantined or has to isolate due to COVID-19 and they are enrolled to attend school in-person, distance learning will be provided for that period of time only.

Students will not have the flexibility to switch between distance or in-person learning. Distance learning will not be provided for those students who have to quarantine due to travel plans or if they are sick for a day or two. Such absences will be managed as they were prior to the pandemic. Teachers will provide work via Google Classroom and students will be afforded time to make up work according to school practices.

Student attendance will be required daily for all students, regardless of their location of learning.

### **COVID-19 Surveillance Testing**

The District will begin facilitating a COVID-19 surveillance testing program no later than the week of April 12, 2021. The goal of the surveillance testing is to monitor the health within the District and each school. The District has contracted with a professional service to administer the [BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen Test](#), which is a non-invasive lower nasal swab. All tests will be administered by medical professionals. All positive COVID-19 tests results will be communicated to the WCDOH and the respective parent(s).

### **Consent for Participation**

**Consent for participation in surveillance testing is required. [Parents are asked to complete the consent form survey linked here](#) by no later than Wednesday, March 24, 2021.** Participation in surveillance testing is not required and students who are not granted consent to participate will be able to attend in-person learning. Please keep in mind that the results of the testing can help provide some state of mind for families as well as helping the District monitor the health of individuals in the schools.

### **Testing Methodology**

The District will facilitate surveillance testing semi-monthly. Every two weeks, 5% of the students and staff members who are physically present on school premises will be tested. This means that a total of 10% will be tested monthly.

### **Scheduling of Testing**

Random sorting of students and staff will be completed for each testing administration. The District anticipates that each student will be tested once through the balance of the school year. When your child(ren)'s names are selected randomly for testing, you will receive an email with an appointment time and testing location that will be within the Village of Irvington. Testing will occur on Monday mornings between the hours of 7:00 - 8:30 am. Parents will be asked to drive their child(ren) to the testing site. You will have the opportunity to be present for the testing.

### **Evaluation of Surveillance Testing Data**

The Irvington UFSD and the District Medical Director will review surveillance testing results on a semi-monthly basis to evaluate the prevalence rates in the District and in each school. Individual testing data will be reported to the WCDOH and NYSDOH on the date of testing.

The District rate of prevalence will be compared to the Westchester County rate or the Village of Irvington rate, whichever is higher. If the Irvington UFSD rate is higher by 1% or more, the model of student attendance will be re-evaluated.

### **Illustration:**

*If the prevalence rate for Westchester County is 4% and the Village of Irvington is 5%, the rate for Irvington will be applied. If the rate within the District or a single school was 6%, the District would implement measures to mitigate potential viral spread.*

### **Positive COVID Cases**

Current District protocols, aligned with DOH guidelines, will be followed if/when an individual tests positive.

### **Health and Safety Measures**

The District will continue to take all steps necessary to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, which includes:

- Mask wearing at all times on school grounds and on school buses
- Use of barriers on all desks and tables in classrooms
- Maintaining proper adequate ventilation in classrooms
- Enforcing social distancing
  - Classrooms: minimum of three (3) feet
  - Cafeterias/dining locations: minimum of six (6) feet
- Providing hand sanitizer in all spaces and encouraging frequent hand washing
- Managing hallway and stairway traffic to limit student interactions
- Reinforcing proper hygiene for sneezing and coughing
- Limiting the sharing of materials

These are exciting times for our students but to ensure that the District and its schools can remain open for full student attendance, we must continue to have a strong home-school partnership. This requires all parents to communicate openly regarding COVID-19-like symptoms, being transparent with your travel plans and **completing the daily health screener**. Failure to complete the daily screener in a timely manner strains health office and school resources which are better served assisting your child(ren).

I ask that you PLEASE do your part to ensure that our schools are safe. Failure to comply with the aforementioned requirements will put the health of others and the District's ability to maintain full student attendance at risk.

Together, we are providing the very best opportunities for our students and are eager to welcome them back to full attendance over the coming weeks. Thank you for your support and trust.

Every student, every day,

Kris

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