News Release
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New Education Reopening Guidance for Wyandotte County
Educators, Superintendents, and Public Health Officials Collaborate on Guidance

Today, school districts across Wyandotte County, in partnership with the Unified Government Public Health Department (UGPHD) announced a new set of early childhood, K-12, and higher education reopening guidelines. The school guidelines act as an addendum to ReStart WyCo Plan and a complement to the Kansas Ad Astra reopening plan.

“We know the sooner we release guidance, the better – our schools need to start planning for the 2020-2021 school year now.” said Dr. Erin Corriveau, Deputy Medical Officer with the UGPHD. “A committee of educators from schools across our County and public health experts have collaborated to develop standards for each reopening phase. We are still fighting to curb the spread of COVID-19 in our community, and we could find ourselves at different reopening phases over the course of the school year. This additional guidance will help our schools keep their students, faculty, and staff as safe as possible, no matter what reopening phase we are in.”

The Education ReStart WyCo Plan was developed in partnership with education and public health experts who represent:

- Bonner Springs/Edwardsville Unified School District (USD 204)
- Kansas City, Kansas Community College
- Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (USD 500)
- Kansas State School for the Blind
- Piper School District (USD 203)
- Turner Unified School District (USD 202)
- The Unified Government Public Health Department (UGPHD)
- University of Kansas Medical Center

“Our educators stressed the importance of getting students back in the classroom. The closing of schools this Spring was necessary for public health, but it has taken a toll on the learning and the wellbeing of students,” said Dr. Greiner, Chief Medical Officer with the UGPHD. “We must work to strike a balance between protecting the immediate health of our community members by reducing the spread of COVID-19, while providing quality education, which we know has longer-term health impacts on individuals and our community as a whole.”

What is Covered in the Guidance
The Education ReStart WyCo Plan covers physical distancing standards for each reopening phase, from Stay At Home, to Phases 1-3, to Phase Out. It also includes information on meal preparation and service, hygiene, cleaning, personal protective equipment, and symptom screening.
Wyandotte County is currently in Phase 3 reopening until at least July 6. It is not known at this time what phase Wyandotte County will be in when the school year starts. For illustrative purposes, here are examples of the guidance for Wyandotte County early childhood care and education, K-12 schools, and higher education during Phase 3.

**Early Childhood Care and Education**
- Children who live with vulnerable adults (have senior-aged or immune compromised guardian) should not be in child care if possible.
- Children should be cared for in rooms of 25 or fewer with the same caregiver each day (and grouped so the same children are in the same room each day).
- Staff and children aged two or older may wear face coverings, when feasible.

**K-12 Schools**
- Parents and guardians may choose not to enter their child into school, and online/remote options should be offered when possible.
- Schools will reopen at regular capacity for student instruction and activities.
- Student athletic practices may resume based on KSHSAA guidelines.
- Grade level pods would operate as “schools within a school” including shared lunch time, shared recess time, and limited interaction between grade levels.
- Masks/face coverings are recommended for employees, visitors, and students.

**Higher Education**
- Most education will continue virtually. Hands-on learning will be offered with social distancing and possible need to alternate students.
- Workspaces and common areas will be adjusted to maintain 6-foot social distancing.
- Employees, students, and visitors are encouraged to wear masks/face coverings at all times in public areas.

**Face Coverings Strongly Recommended; May be Required**
The Education ReStart WyCo Plan recommends masks or cloth face coverings whenever possible for anyone over the age of two at every level of education. The guidelines also acknowledge that the UGPHD may require by order that face coverings be worn in education settings.

“Dr. Greiner and I are seriously considering issuing a public health order that would require face coverings be worn in all of our schools,” said Corriveau. “Data we are seeing from other countries shows an increased risk of the virus spreading in schools when masks aren’t worn. Some countries had to close schools again as a result. Wearing masks will give us a better chance of keeping schools open for longer.”

The Education reopening guidance and additional information and resources on COVID-19 in Wyandotte County can be found at wycokck.org/COVID-19 or by calling 3-1-1.

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