

Clearview Local Schools
Getting Back into a Semi-Normal Routine
Returning to School After Covid Time Out

Some students have not been in a physical school building in over a year and a half. Returning to school for students and some teachers may bring a little angst in their daily routine. We want to make sure that everyone feels welcomed and have some guidelines to help get through the day and the year.

I. Anxiety and nerves are to be expected

- Nerves and anxiety will be on the rise as we return to 5 days a week in person.
- Be on the lookout for signs of anxiety and nervousness. Find ways to cope with them throughout the day.
- Produce Positive Thoughts. Practice positive self-talk that counters worry. Refrain from the negative.
- Use Deep Breathing/Relaxation techniques to help students cope. Below are a few examples:
 - Inhale through the nose slowly and exhale out of the mouth (repeat).
 - Sit comfortably with your back straight, close your eyes, breathe in through your nose and exhale through your mouth (repeat).
 - The alternative to sitting is to try lying down. Put a book on your stomach. The book should rise as you inhale and fall as you exhale.

II. Talk about reservations and fears

- Talk to students about their worries, fears, reservations, and excitement.
- Allow them to have a safe space to share so that they do not hold it all in.
- Some students will be eager to see other students again. This will be a huge transition. It deserves a dedicated space to talk.
- Praise students for being courageous and facing their fears.
- How you handle your fears, stress, and anxiety will impact how the students react.
- Be honest and confident.

- Listen to their fears and concerns.
- Share your experiences.
- Answer questions based on fact and ideas that the students can understand.
- Explain that the school will make decisions based on CDC, ODH and LCPH department guidelines.
- Discuss new routines, activities, and safety protocols.
- Give reasons for the changes in school routines.
- Help students identify and understand facts vs. rumors.

III. Make mental health checks

- What are the short and long term affects of COVID-19? Anxiety? Depression? These issues are increasing at high rates. Basic needs, such as food, have been taken away from people. Make sure they are okay.
- As noted from past pandemics, mental health issues have lasted for many years.
- Mental illness is REAL.
- Check on people even if it has never been a concern.
- Look for signs (isolation, irritability, mood swings, lack of motivation, lack of enjoyment or normal activities, etc.)

IV. It will take time. Things will not change overnight.

- **New Beginnings.** This is a period of transition. Students are transitioning back to learning 5 days a week, in person with a classroom full of their peers.
- **Grades.** Did grades slip during the pandemic? Do not expect them to suddenly rise. However, take into consideration alternatives that will help with learning.
- **Social Life.** How was their social life during Covid-19? Do not expect it to suddenly be back to normal.
- **Have realistic expectations.** Just as you went through the pandemic, so did our students. Not everyone will be 100% ready.
- Getting into a regular flow may take some time.

Returning to School After Covid (continued)

V. Be Flexible and Adjustable

- Be ready to roll with the punches. Adapt and make the best of the situation. In other words, anticipate hiccups. Your way does not have to be the right way. Accept and expect change. Go with the flow.
- Protocols may change throughout the year as Covid-19 has not gone away. The Delta variant is invading us and may cause a rise in cases, closures, and/or concerns.
- Stay mentally flexible and ready to adapt.
- Things may be in a dynamic state before they settle down into something more consistent. Things could also be in a lethargic state. Gauge it by your students' behaviors and actions.
- Flexibility is easier said than done, but we are all in this together trying to create and maintain a safe environment for everyone. Changes can happen quickly so being **POSITIVE and FLEXIBLE** will prove to be a great advantage and benefit for everyone.

VI. Be Present and Consistent

- **Be There!**
- **Be Present!**
- **Be Predictable!**
- **Be Consistent!**
- **Be Supportive!**
- Students spend the majority of their day in school. You will be a big part of their lives. Remember parents are returning or returned back to work.
- The transition back to school may not come easy for some. Allow this to be a time for healing and growth.
- Be on the lookout for small stressors. Meet reactions with compassion, warmth, and calmness instead of immediate reaction. Try to channel peaceful energy so that you can meet them at the point of their needs. They will need it.
- **Listen!!** It is important to listen to students' concerns even if they seem to be extreme. Show understanding and empathy. It will allow for openness, dialogue, and problem solving.

Returning to School After Covid (continued)

VII. Getting back to semi-normal....AKA...the new normal.

- Embrace the new normal as a chance to teach life skills. Within that realm are issues such as problem solving, adapting to change, self-care, and caring for others.
- Talk about routines and how routines can help prepare for the day, yet be prepared to change routines.
- Answer questions about new safety rules at school.
- Discuss protocols of what should and should not be done.

VIII. The following guidelines are in place for Clearview Local Schools.

- **MASKS:**
 - **VES/DMS/CHS**—Masks are optional for grades K-12. However, masks are strongly recommended for all unvaccinated individuals and those who are age 11 and younger. (Subject to change)
 - **BUSES**-- CDC orders currently state that passengers and drivers **must wear a mask on school buses**. Therefore, masks are mandatory on all bus rides.
- Hand sanitizer is available throughout each building. However, hand washing with soap and water, on a regular basis, is strongly recommended.
- Anyone with covid symptoms should stay home until they are seen by a doctor.
- Anyone who is sick should also stay home.