

# ASTORIA COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT # 1

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402 North Jefferson St. ~ Astoria, IL 61501 ~ USA

Phone 309-329-2111 ~ Fax 309-329-2214

Don L. Willett, Superintendent

## **Astoria CUSD #1 School Community:**

The start of the 2020-21 will be different than any other school year. Our administration, school board and Astoria transition committee have been working on our plan to return to school throughout the entire summer. Frankly, our plan has changed many times and will likely require adjustments, as we get closer to the first day of school. While the basis of our plan is to return to school for face-to-face education starting on August 19, we all understand that we are under the guidance of IDPH, CDC and the Illinois State School Board and Astoria Schools are committed to following the prescribed guidance. This plan is driven by the effort to keep our students and staff healthy and safe throughout the duration of change in educational protocol.

The requirements set forth by IDPH and ISBE during Phase 4 of Restore Illinois are as follows:

- \*Requires appropriate use of personal protective equipment, which includes facemask covering to be worn during the school day. All students and staff will be required to wear masks.
- \*Prohibits more than 50 individuals from gathering in one space.
- \*Requires social distancing to be observed as much as possible. 6-feet of personal space.
- \*Requires that schools conduct symptom screenings and temperature checks or require that individuals self-certify that they are free of symptoms before entering the school building. Astoria staff will check every individual every morning and will not utilize the self-certify process.
- \*Require an increase in school wide cleaning and disinfection.

Below are some of the processes that we have put into place for our transition back to Astoria Schools.

In order to comply with regulations and allow our students to attend school daily, we needed more space for some of our elementary classes. Our kindergarten and grades 3-5 would be housed at four local churches. Kindergarten-Woodland Church; 3<sup>rd</sup> grade-United Methodist Church; 4<sup>th</sup> grade- Astoria Christian Church and 5<sup>th</sup> grade-Grace Bible Church. We are very thankful that these churches are allowing us to use their facilities during this unprecedented time. These churches were chosen based on logistics and ease of access due to the many daily operations that will occur related to transportation, food delivery and services that will be required for students. Pre-K, and grades 1 and 2 will attend classes in the school building just as they normally would. Junior high

classes will remain at the school with all classes divided into sections of no more than 12 students per classroom. High school classes would be limited to 12 students per room. Additional sections of some classes have been added to allow class sizes to remain small.

### **Hand Washing and Hand Sanitizers:**

Teachers will provide a brief lesson on the importance of hand washing. Students will be provided demonstration on how to effectively wash hands. We have installed hand-sanitizing dispensers in each classroom and various locations throughout the building.

### **Social Distancing:**

As has been a common practice since the beginning of the pandemic, social distancing is a required component of reducing the spread of this virus. We will be observing social distancing to the best of our ability at Astoria Schools. Our classroom desks will be set up to give maximum space between students during class time. In our Junior High, when possible, we will have teachers move to different classes and students will remain in the same room. The high school presents many challenges related to social distancing during class changes most significantly. We are going to ask that students comply with the social distancing principals to the best of their ability. Teachers will be in the halls to ensure that students are not congregating, and that physical contact is not occurring. Locker assignments in the junior high and high school will be assigned using every other locker to ensure some space during class changes.

### **Masks:**

All students will be required to wear masks during the school day. Teachers will have the option during the day to take their classes outside to teach class or do activities related to class and at that time students and teachers may remove masks as a “mask break”. Social distancing will be observed during these mask breaks. During the school day, students are not to physically touch one another. **If students refuse to wear masks the parent will be contacted, and that student will be required to leave the building and go home. Students will be responsible for the schoolwork they have missed.**

### **Protocol for Sickness:**

If a students display symptoms during the day we are making available a quarantine room until a parent arrives to pick the student up. If a parent has knowledge of a confirmed case that your child has been in contact with, please inform the school and quarantine your child for 14 days. Individuals may return to work or school when:

- 72 hours (3 days) have elapsed with no fever without using fever-reducing medication, respiratory symptoms have improved, and 10 days have passed since the individual first experienced symptoms (whether or not they were tested).

- If there is a positive test result, then no fever, respiratory symptoms have improved, and he/she receives two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart.
- If the individual was only in close contact with someone with COVID-19, individuals may return 14 days after exposure occurred and no symptoms have manifested.

### **Transportation:**

Students riding busses will be required to wear masks. Social distancing measures will be a part of the daily ride. Students will sit in every other seat. Students in the same family will sit together to ensure we have enough room on each bus for the students. Each bus will have a bus aide. The aide's responsibility will be to take the student's temperature and ask a 5-question symptom check prior to the student getting on the bus. If the student answers yes to the symptoms and/or has a temperature of 100.4 or higher they will not be allowed on the bus and will have to return to their home. We understand that this is a very difficult position to be in for working parents. It is our suggestion that parents who have students who ride a bus, prepare for alternative daycare if their child exhibits symptoms and is not allowed on the bus. When a positive symptom check occurs the bus driver will radio into the appropriate school office and inform Carri Bridges or Jeanie Sager of the situation and they will immediately make a parent phone call to let the parent know of the situation.

### **Breakfast and Lunch:**

Breakfasts and lunches will be eaten in 3 locations at the school. We have set up desks in the cafeteria and the elementary gym that allow for social distancing. We will also allow for students to eat outside when weather permits. Breakfasts and lunches will be delivered daily to the churches for the elementary students. They will have the same meals provided to them that the students at the school building are eating.

### **Special Education Services:**

These services will be provided to all special education students as they would during a regular school day. We will have a traveling special education teacher that will work with the students at the churches. All OT/PT and speech services will be delivered where required.

### **School and Church Disinfecting:**

All aspects of our school, church, classroom and bus cleansing will be ramped up during this school year. Our busses will be disinfected daily. The classroom desks will be disinfected multiple times a day particularly in the junior high and high school. Drinking fountains are out of service, but the water fillers are allowable. Students must provide their own bottle. Desks in the cafeterias will be disinfected between each lunch

shift. We are utilizing cleaning products that are deemed effective to disinfect against the virus and are safe for schools.

### **Physical Education:**

Locker rooms will be closed. Students in grades 6-12 will not need to change for PE until restrictions are lifted. PE will look different moving away from activities that require close proximity to each other.

### **Social Emotional Learning:**

Our school social worker, Mrs. Dean and our School Counselor, Mrs. Dabney, will be providing regular social emotional lessons to all of the students within the district. We realize this transition back to school will be different than any other time coming back from summer break. We are bolstering our curriculum related to our student's social and emotional needs and we will continue this effort for as long as we need to. We are here to support our students and families.

### **Elective Courses:**

Art, Agriculture, Family Consumer Science and Music classes will all be part of our normal school day. They will just look a little different as group work and partner work will not be possible due to the restrictions in place.

### **Technology:**

We want to communicate to all parents that we have secured funding to purchase a great deal of technology, should we have to go to remote learning. The remote learning that we will experience in the future will be much different than what we experienced in the spring. We will be using the Google Classroom format across the entire district to promote consistency for all involved. We have learned a great deal from the feedback that the parent survey that was administered in mid-July. We have addressed the connectivity issue that some of you experience and the school will assist in that area if and when needed.

In closing, while we are constantly updating our plans, we are constantly reminded that things are going to continue to change with every day. It is important that all parties involved demonstrate patience, kindness and understanding during this transition back to school. There will be failures and there will be successes. The most important aspect that we all wrap our arms around is we need to communicate with each other and have conversations to ensure that our student's needs are being met. We all understand that this is one of the most difficult times in the history of our school district, the state, the US and the world. In the end we are supremely confident that we can continue to formulate our plan to meet the needs of our community.