



School of Expressive Arts and Learning
Public Health & Safety Manual
A Guide for the 2021 - 2022 School Year

Fall 2021

School of Expressive Arts and Learning will open their 4 campuses for in-person instruction on August 18, 2021. We will put safety and health initiatives in place to keep our students, staff and families safe, by following guidelines set forth by the Illinois Department of Public Health, Centers for Disease Control and Illinois State Board of Education.

This manual “reflects what we have learned about the transmission of COVID-19 in school settings, as more students in Illinois and across the country have returned safely to in-person learning during the 2020-21 school year” ([Revised Public Health Guidance for Schools](#)).

S.E.A.L. will consider multiple factors when making decisions this school year about implementing the layered prevention strategies against COVID-19. These decisions will be based on each campus’s population, families and students served, as well as local communities. The primary factors that will be taken into consideration are:

- *Level of community transmission of COVID-19*
- *COVID-19 vaccination coverage in the community and among students, teachers, and staff*
- *COVID-19 outbreaks or increasing trends in the school or surrounding community*
- *Ages of students served by S.E.A.L. and the associated social and behavioral factors that may affect risk of transmission and the feasibility of different prevention strategies*

Key Guidelines

On May 5, 2021, Governor JB Pritzker announced the [Restore Illinois Plan](#), which laid out a public health approach to safely reopen the state of Illinois. IDPH will continue to monitor key indicators to identify early, but significant increases of COVID-19 transmission. The key indicators will be used to determine whether additional community mitigation interventions are needed for a region or statewide to control the further spread of COVID-19.

Regardless of the level of community transmission, ISBE is recommending that all schools must use and layer the following five essential mitigation strategies. Pending any updates or modifications to these recommendations, S.E.A.L. will enforce and

follow the following in the 2021-2022 school year as these are key to safely delivering in-person instruction and mitigating COVID-19 transmission in schools:

1. Require universal and correct use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including face masks;
2. Require social distancing be observed, as much as possible;
3. Require contact tracing in combination with isolation of those with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and quarantine of close contacts, in collaboration with the local health department;
4. Require an increase in schoolwide cleaning and disinfection and maintenance of healthy environments; and
5. Require promotion and adherence to handwashing and respiratory etiquette.

1. Require universal and correct use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including face masks.

Face Masks

All persons, including students, classroom teachers, Support Specialists, counselors, expressive therapy staff, administrative assistants, administrators, custodial staff, etc. on the grounds of S.E.A.L. must wear a face mask at all times when in school or in transit to and from school via school transportation, unless a specific exemption applies.

There is significant evidence that face masks provide protection and decrease the spread of COVID-19. Face masks should have two or more layers to stop the spread of COVID-19 and should be worn over the nose and mouth, be secured under the chin, and should fit snugly against the sides of the face without gaps. Reusable face masks should be machine washed or washed by hand and allowed to dry completely after each use.

Face masks must be worn at all times in S.E.A.L. school buildings even when social distancing is maintained, except as follows:

- When eating.
- When outdoors and physical distancing of 6 feet can be maintained.
- For staff alone in classrooms or offices with the door closed.
- For individuals who have trouble breathing; or those who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face mask without assistance.

S.E.A.L. will schedule opportunities for mask breaks. There will be tents and seating outdoors. Staff will have times they are able to teach a class outside, take breaks, and counselors may hold sessions outside (weather permitting).

Individuals who have a condition or medical contraindication (e.g., difficulty breathing) that prevents them from wearing a face mask are required to provide documentation from the individual's health care provider. These persons may wear a face shield in lieu of a face mask; however, social distancing must be strictly enforced. Measure to reduce risk of exposure for these persons should be implemented, where possible.

Pay special attention to putting on and removing face masks for purposes such as eating. After use, the front of the face mask is considered contaminated and should not be touched during removal or replacement. Hand hygiene should be performed immediately after removing and after replacing the face mask.

Face masks with exhalation valves or vents are not recommended for source control because they do not prevent the user from spreading respiratory secretions when they breathe, talk, sneeze, or cough. The CDC does **not** recommend use of single-layer athletic face masks (e.g., "gaiters"/neck warmers) as a substitute for multi-layered cloth face masks.

Face shields do not provide adequate source control because respiratory droplets may be expelled from their sides and bottom.

Other Recommendations for use of PPE

S.E.A.L. will ensure that appropriate personal protective equipment is made available to and used by staff, as needed, based on exposure risk.

S.E.A.L. will provide annual training to staff prior to the start of student attendance on Wednesday, August 18, 2021 on the proper use of PPE, including the sequence for putting on and removing PPE. Training will also include directions on proper disposal of PPE.

The highest level of safety for a school health personnel who is screening a sick individual includes wearing a fit-tested N95 mask, eye protection with face shield or goggles, gown, and gloves. Any staff member who may be involved in the assessment or clinical evaluation of a student or staff member with COVID-19-like symptoms should be trained on the type of PPE and how to put on and remove it correctly and safely.

School health personnel evaluating a student or staff member who is later determined to be a probable or confirmed COVID-19 case would **not** be recommended for quarantine as a close contact if appropriate PPE is worn.

2. Require social distancing be observed, as much as possible.

Socially distance for in-person learning is now defined as 3 to 6 feet for students and fully vaccinated staff. Maintaining 6 feet remains the safest distance, but schools can operate at no less than 3 feet in order to provide in-person learning. Current recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Health Organization support this range for in-person learning.

Unvaccinated staff should maintain 6 feet social distance as much as possible because adults remain more susceptible to infection than children. Further, the allowances of social distance of 3 to 6 feet means schools must ensure universal masking.

Meal times represent one of the highest-risk settings within the school. Masks are removed and the act of eating and talking, usually with increased projection, can increase transmission risk. ISBE recommends that schools consider the number of students and adults in the classrooms or cafeteria during each meal period and ensure that all individuals maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet when masks are removed for eating, and 6 to no less than 3 feet when masks can be worn during the process of serving food, disposal, and leaving the cafeteria.

Evidence suggests that staff-to-staff transmission is more common than transmission from students to staff, staff to student, or student to student. Nonessential exposures among staff should be minimized, including both social and professional meetings. Measures to prevent transmission among staff, including promotion of COVID-19 precautions outside of the school and vaccination, will likely reduce in-school transmission.

3. Require contact tracing in combination with isolation of those with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and quarantine of close contacts, in collaboration with the local health department.

Individuals who exhibit symptoms should be referred to a medical provider for evaluation, treatment, and information about when they can return to school, according to the [IDPH Decision Tree](#). Confirmed cases of COVID-19 should be reported to the local health department by the school health personnel or designee as required by the

Illinois Infectious Disease Reporting requirements issued by IDPH. S.E.A.L. will inform the school community of outbreaks per local and state health department guidelines while maintaining student and staff confidentiality rights.

Symptom Screening

S.E.A.L. will require self-certification and verification for all staff, students, and visitors prior to entering the school building. Families are confirming that their students are symptom free by sending them to school after completing the self-screening questions. IDPH and the CDC no longer recommend screenings upon arrival and on the school grounds. S.E.A.L. will begin the 2021-2022 school year without arrival temperature checks. If metrics and mitigation measures suggest that arrival temperature checks resume, we will notify guardians and begin the practice once again.

Any individual (fully vaccinated or unvaccinated for Covid-19) who have or self-report to have one or more known symptoms of COVID-19, such as Fever (100.4°F or higher), new onset of moderate to severe headache, shortness of breath, new cough, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, new loss of sense of taste or smell, fatigue from unknown cause, muscle or body aches from unknown cause. may not enter S.E.A.L. school buildings. These individuals should contact the S.E.A.L. Human Resources Department (sealhr@seal-il.com) as soon as possible.

A close contact is anyone (with or without a face mask) who was within 6 feet of a confirmed case of COVID-19 (with or without a face mask) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during the infectious period. Repeated exposures result in an increased amount of time of exposure; the longer a person is exposed to an infected person, the higher the risk of exposure/transmission.

Individuals who are not vaccinated are required to quarantine for 14 days after the last day of exposure.

Individuals who are fully vaccinated with no present symptoms, who are considered in close contact with a positive Covid-19 case are not required to quarantine. Fully vaccinated Individuals will still need to monitor for symptoms for 14 days after the last day of exposure.

Recommendations for Travelers

Travel increases chances of spreading and getting COVID-19. Details on COVID-19 Travel Recommendations by destination can be found on the [CDC's Travel Page](#). The CDC currently requires testing of all international travelers before they enter the United States. Additionally, wearing a mask is required when traveling in, out of, or within the United States on any public conveyance, as well as in airports and public transport stations. The CDC also recommends that travelers:

- Get tested three to five days after travel AND stay home for seven days after travel.
 - Even with a negative test, travelers should stay home for the full seven days.
- If you don't get tested, it's safest to stay home for 10 days after travel.

Local health departments may have additional requirements for travelers and should be consulted with any questions about travel restrictions.

4. Require an increase in schoolwide cleaning and disinfection and maintenance of healthy environments.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

S.E.A.L. has developed sanitation procedures per recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and local health departments in regards to frequent cleaning and disinfecting the building to reduce exposure. These procedures include routine cleaning and sanitizing of the building each evening along with scheduled disinfecting with electrostatic sprayers.

Staff are encouraged to clean frequently touched surfaces (e.g. door handles/knobs, desktops/tabletops, countertops, light switches, computer keyboards, phones, toys, sinks, faucets, etc.) on a daily basis. Cloth toys or other cloth material items that cannot be disinfected should not be used

If soap and water is not feasible, staff should disinfect with a household disinfectant (provided) that has been registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and follow contact times on labels.

Areas used by an individual with COVID-19-like symptoms (e.g., examination room in the school health personnel's office) will be closed off for as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Person performing environmental cleaning should use PPE, including a fit-tested N95 mask, eye protection with face shield or goggles, gown, and gloves.

Ventilation

ISBE recommends increasing outdoor air ventilation whenever possible.

- When weather conditions allow, increase fresh outdoor air by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children on campus.
- Increase ventilation on school buses. S.E.A.L. will operate with this notion when transporting students on S.E.A.L.-vehicles (not district provided vehicles).

5. Require promotion and adherence to handwashing and respiratory etiquette.

Hand Hygiene

S.E.A.L. will encourage frequent and proper handwashing. We will ensure availability of supplies, such as soap and paper towels, hand sanitizer, tissues, etc., for all grade levels and in all common areas of the building. Cloth towels will not be used. Handwashing with soap and water is always the first recommended line of defense, but where this is not feasible or readily accessible, the use of hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol may be used.

Hands should be washed often with soap and water for 20 seconds. It is recommended that hand hygiene is performed upon arrival to and departure from school; after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing; following restroom use; before food preparation or before and after eating; before/after routine care for another person, such as a child; after contact with a person who is sick; and following glove removal.

S.E.A.L. will post handwashing posters from the CDC in the bathrooms, hallways, classrooms and other areas as appropriate. S.E.A.L. will also provide staff with materials to properly train students or to review this content. Along with increased handwashing, staff and students will be directed and encouraged to avoid touching the eyes, nose and mouth to decrease the transmission of COVID19 or other infectious diseases.

Additional Measures to Control the Spread of COVID-19 in Schools

COVID-19 Testing- S.E.A.L. will continue to follow the [IDPH Decision Tree for Symptomatic Individuals](#) when handling potential COVID-19 cases. Contract tracing will begin immediately in the case of any individual from S.E.A.L. who tests positive for COVID-19.

Covid-19 vaccinations have become available for individuals ages 12 and older.

The gathering of vaccination information does help aid in our programming as well as helping us distinguish close contact proceedings which will continue to help us make the most informed decisions for individuals, classrooms, and our S.E.A.L. community.

If your child has received the full Covid-19 vaccination and you would like to provide us a copy of the CDC record, we ask you to complete the following steps:

1. Fill out the authorization form attached
2. Make a copy of your child's CDC" record card" that was provided at the time of the vaccination or a record from your child's physician.
3. Send both the authorization form and copy of the Covid-19 vaccination record in the following convenient ways:
 - Send it with your student to school
 - Email it to your student's teacher
 - Drop it off at the front desk during school hours
 - Mail it to the school

Daily Procedures at S.E.A.L.

Classrooms

Students should remain in their seats to the greatest extent possible. Teachers may also develop a marked path of travel inside the classroom to maintain social distance from the entry point of the classroom to the student's assigned seat.

Creating SPACE is the optimal goal. Desks will be spaced with maximum allowable space between the desk chairs (3-6 feet). The teachers may use visual spacers for students to indicate desk and chair position on floors.

Face masks are required in classrooms.

Staff will build in hand hygiene breaks, including before/after eating snacks/meals and upon exiting and returning to the classroom.

Classrooms will have built in restroom breaks within their daily schedules. Additional breaks will be given as required/needed.

S.E.A.L. will provide hygiene supplies, including tissue, hand sanitizer, extra face coverings and gloves (if needed).

Hallways Rules

Face coverings must be worn at all times.

S.E.A.L. will limit the number of persons traveling within hallways at any given time to the greatest extent possible.

Floor markings will designate socially distant spaces in hallways. Additional markings will be present to identify proper flow of traffic in hallways and larger common areas.

Restroom Breaks

Students will follow hallway rules and social distancing guidelines while traveling to and waiting to use the restrooms. Hand washing/sanitation signs are posted in the bathrooms to remind students to use proper techniques when cleaning up. Hand dryers will be reactivated for use beginning in the fall of 2021.

One student will be able to use the bathroom at a time.

Drinking Fountains

Individuals will not be permitted to place their mouth near the spout of the fountain. All fountain use will be to fill cups located in dispensers near the fountains or to fill reusable water bottles.

Safe and sanitary procedures for using the fountains will be posted near all fountains.

Fountains will be sanitized regularly throughout the day.

Expressive Therapy Groups

Expressive therapy groups will transition to the designated therapy classrooms (e.g., art therapy room, music therapy room, etc.) this fall. All activities will allow for 3-6 feet of social distancing between persons as much as possible. Face masks must be worn at all times.

Any shared equipment must be cleaned and disinfected at the end of each class/cohort. Students should perform hand hygiene after the use of each piece of equipment.

Counseling and Related Services

Counseling will continue traditionally with direct services.

Counselors may be able to hold sessions outside (weather permitting). S.E.A.L. will provide tents and seating for opportunities to spend time outside the buildings for locations who do not already have these designated areas.

Related Services will continue traditionally with direct services. In the case a student requires remote teletherapy they will be set with a date and time.

Each office will be equipped with plexiglass shields for desk tops and individual therapeutic supplies. Surfaces should be disinfected after each session.

Incentive Groups

Earned Activity will occur only in our larger areas (gym, lunch room, outside tents).

Prize Shop will continue, but with minor adjustments. Prize shop will provide a catalogue of items, similar to S Bucks, for students to choose from. The item will be given to students upon dismissal.

CAAEL (Sports and Academic competitions). On June 8, 2020 CAAEL indicated that they would be working on a contingency plan for the fall and would notify all participating schools by the end of summer.

Recording Studio (Lombard) will be on hold due to the inability to socially distance, poor ventilation from the sound insulation material, and “high-risk” activities like singing. As the equipment is delicate, we will also be unable to sufficiently sanitize for COVID19 at this time.

Level 4 Privileges

All students on Level 4 will be expected to maintain the new guidelines for re-entry. In order to ensure all sanitation and health protocols are followed, level 4 students will be supervised closely by staff across the buildings. If a level 4 student is unable to maintain their privilege of being independent in the building due to noncompliance with COVID-19 protocols, they will have those privileges partially or completely revoked.

School Jobs

Junior high and high school students who have earned the privilege and responsibility of having a school job will be able to participate in this facet of the program to its full capacity beginning in the fall of 2021.

Remote Incentive Program

The program that was activated for remote learning will no longer be in effect this school year. The token economy and points/levels system will resume to nearly full capacity beginning in the Fall 2021.

Lunch

The cafeteria will have no more than 20 students at a time.

Students will adhere to social distancing at the tables (at least 3-6 feet apart when eating, 3 to 6 feet apart and masked during the process of serving food, disposal, and leaving the cafeteria area). Students will be allowed to remove masks when eating and drinking.

S.E.A.L. will ensure that meals will be:

- individually plated
- served to students (rather than students helping themselves)
- served on disposable food service items (e.g. utensils, dishes)

After each lunch period, tables will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

All lunches brought into the building no longer need to be self-sustaining in the container (lunchbox). Student lunches will now be placed in the refrigerator upon arrival to school. Microwaves/toaster ovens will still be unavailable to students.

Use of vending machines will be opened to full capacity beginning in the fall of 2021.

Structured Outdoor Activity

Opportunities for students to be outside will be scheduled. Social distancing will be required. This will be an opportunity to remove masks as long as social distancing is adhered to during this time.

For campuses with a playground onsite, ISBE recommends that playground equipment be monitored closely while in use including the number of students using each piece of equipment at a time. Staggering playground times to allow one class in a playground

space at one time rather than multiple classes playing together should be implemented. High-touch surfaces made of plastic/metal, such as swings/slides, railings, and other play structures, should be cleaned routinely and disinfected as per the most recent CDC guidance.

Students should perform hand hygiene prior to touching playground equipment and upon return from the playground.

Dismissal

Adults transporting students from S.E.A.L. will enter the property and wait in the designated vehicle line. Once the vehicle reaches the designated *loading zone*, a staff member will dismiss the appropriate students.

Students will remain in their seats until their classroom teacher has dismissed them to leave the building. Once dismissed, students will collect their belongings from the arrival/dismissal tables and go directly to their transportation.

Education Platforms for 2021-2022

Students who are at increased risk of severe illness, who have special health care needs, or who live with people at increased risk must be given the option of remote instruction. Students who are not at increased risk of severe illness, who do not have special health care needs, or who don't live with people at increased risk may be given the option of remote instruction. ISBE recommends that schools review information such as physician's note documenting the medical condition for any individual who is not able to participate in in-person learning.