



Covid Protocol 2021 - 2022

Indiana School for the Blind
and Visually Impaired
Adopted and Amended by the
Board on 9/13/21

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Introduction

Many states, communities and schools are relaxing Covid restrictions as the outbreaks continue to decline. A general national and state consensus indicates most students benefit more from an on campus direct learning in-school experience rather than remote/virtual learning. This is particularly true for students who are blind or have low vision. Therefore, the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired will return to a direct learning in-school experience at the start of the 2021-2022 school year.

The Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired is working in conjunction with and/ or following the guided recommendations of the Indiana Department of Education, the Indiana State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to prevent the spread of disease during the pandemic. This document focuses on taking steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students, faculty, and staff and is subject to change based on new public health and safety guidance and/or recommendations related to Covid protocols.

Mitigating Spread

Face Masks

All visitors while on the campus of the ISBVI must wear a face mask when entering all buildings, as well as in hallways, elevators, public spaces, common areas and outdoor spaces where physical distancing is difficult to maintain.

ISBVI Students, Staff and Service Providers must wear face masks at all times, with the exception of being in private offices or when alone in a space with a door closed or in outside spaces when appropriate social distancing can be maintained.

Face masks means a covering of the nose and mouth that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is wrapped around the lower face. A face mask can be made of a variety of synthetic or natural fabrics, including cotton, silk, or linen, that covers the nose and mouth. Face masks may be factory-made, sewn by hand, or improvised from household items, including but not limited to, scarves, bandanas, T-shirts, sweatshirts, or towels. Per the Centers for Disease Control guidelines, masks should:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face;
- Completely cover the nose and mouth;
- Be secured with ties or ear loops;
- Include multiple layers of fabric;
- Allow for breathing without restriction;
- Be able to be laundered and machine-dried without damage or change to shape.

Required face masks may be removed when eating or drinking when spaced at least 6 feet apart.

There are few exceptions to wearing a face mask. Students and athletes may not be required to wear face masks while engaged in activity or competition that prevent wearing face masks, but must wear face masks when on the sidelines, and any time 6 feet of social distancing is not possible, regardless of being indoors or outdoors.

Any ISBVI student, staff, or service provider who cannot wear a face mask due to a medical condition, including those with respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition, and students who would be unable to remove a mask without assistance, may not be required to wear a face mask if requested by the parent/guardian in writing and with documentation from a licensed healthcare provider. In the event a face mask cannot or should not be worn, a protective shield is required unless documented otherwise by a licensed healthcare provider. Individuals who are communicating or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing impaired or who has another disability, where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication, may not be required to wear a face mask and may use another type of face covering such as a plastic face shield, unless documentation is provided by a licensed healthcare provider. A face mask will be required in all other situations. The risk of not wearing a face covering may outweigh the risk of wearing a face covering, therefore, exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis in consideration of appropriate medical documentation.

In consideration of this newly adopted and amended protocol, students or staff currently exempted from wearing a face mask will be required to provide the appropriate medical documentation to continue to be exempted from the face covering requirement. This will help to ensure the safety of all students, while mitigating the spread of virus, contact tracing procedures, and minimizing the need for student quarantine.

Families are encouraged to provide their children with their own face coverings as required.

Social Distancing

It is also recommended that students be spaced three feet apart when in classroom/educational settings and six feet apart at other times to maintain proper social distancing. Students will be kept with the same group of students, in the same room or area, as much as possible and given assigned seats.

Screening Procedures

Plans and procedures have been developed in collaboration with the Indiana State Department of Health and the Indiana Department of Education. These guidelines are fluid and are likely to change. Please be patient and flexible.

Note: It is the expectation that parents/guardians will send only healthy students to school each day and faculty and staff will only report to work if they are healthy.

All students, faculty, and staff are encouraged not to come to campus if experiencing symptoms of illness such as fever, shortness of breath believed to be associated with illness, or cough believed to be associated with illness.

As part of the ISBVI registration packet, parents/guardians will sign a form that they will NOT send their child(ren) to school throughout the year, and faculty and staff will not report to work if they exhibit the following symptoms:

- Temperature of 100.4 or greater
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Rash
- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Muscle pain
- Congestion or runny nose

If your child has diagnosed allergies, asthma or other chronic health conditions that would exhibit COVID-like symptoms, we encourage you to discuss this matter with your physician for any needed recommendations to return and attend school.

Exhibiting COVID Symptoms

If a student, faculty, or staff member presents symptoms consistent with COVID, the individual will be sent home and tested at an approved testing site/center. Negative results will permit the student faculty, or staff member to return to the school 24 hours after illness symptoms have subsided without the use of fever reducing medication. Positive results will require isolation in accordance with the Indiana State Department of health guidelines.

Contact Tracing

The ISBVI will immediately contact the Indiana State Department of Health upon learning of a positive COVID case among the student body, faculty, and staff. Contact tracing will be implemented per the Indiana State Department of Health recommendations.

Enhanced Sanitization/Disinfecting

ISBVI will utilize enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures in all buildings. Housekeeping crews will focus on “high touch” points in common areas throughout the school day where bacteria or viruses are most likely to be transmitted, which includes but is not limited to:

- Desks, chairs, tables

- Door handles and push plates
- Stair rails
- Water bottle refilling stations
- Lockers
- Restrooms
- Office equipment

COVID Training

All staff will be provided with training on safety protocols related to the prevention and transmission of COVID and other contagious diseases.

School Volunteers and Guests

Any unnecessary visitors will not be permitted in the school. Volunteers will be limited to coming onto campus. Group tours will not be scheduled. Students will be allowed to have no more than two parents or family members older than 18 years of age in the building with them for meetings, visits, or pick-up. Please check with your department principal or the residential director to arrange for your visits. All visits must be scheduled in advance and approved by the department principal or residential director.

A faculty or staff member may escort residential students going home for the weekend to the car of the parent/guardian who will sign them out.

Facility Modifications

Protective Barriers

Protective barriers will be installed strategically in various areas: the education offices, switch board area and student center to reduce the spread of contaminants and to provide another layer of protection.

Signage/Floor Decals

Social distance and CDC recommendation signage will be located throughout the buildings as will auditory reminders through numerous transmitter beacons utilizing a downloadable application.

Water Bottle Filling Stations

Water bottle filling stations are located around the campus. Traditional water fountains have been disabled. Water stations will be periodically tested by maintenance staff to ensure proper functioning. Otherwise, they will be closed for public use. Zip lock bags with zip ties have been placed over the fountain spigot to prevent usage as well.

Building Ventilation/Air Filters/Air Quality

All air filters have been changed prior to the start of school. Air filters will be changed biannually at minimum. Air quality will be monitored to ensure appropriate safe levels.

Hand Sanitizer Stations

Hand sanitizer stations are located throughout the campus.

Vehicle/Bus Sanitization

A cleaning protocol has been added to the Vehicle Checklist. Sanitizing wipes and/or sanitizing spray bottles are in each school vehicle. Staff using cars/vans will sanitize the vehicle before returning the vehicle for future use.

Classrooms

Teachers will assign seats to students and document the seating arrangements for contact tracing purposes.

Students will be expected to maintain social distancing in the restrooms as much as possible.

The teacher and/or students will disinfect desktops at the end of each class period before dismissing to their next class.

Teachers have the flexibility to move classes outside to maximize distance between students.

Teachers will sanitize hands before passing out papers. Students will not distribute papers to other students. Students will turn in paper assignments or tests to a central location.

Desks/workspaces and/or seating will be spaced at least 3 feet apart. Students will face the same direction when possible.

COVID Isolation Rooms

An isolation room(s) will be located within the Keever Health Center when a student displays symptoms of COVID. Parents will be expected to pick up their student immediately. If a parent cannot come to the school immediately, the local school will be called to transport the student home.

Program/Service Modifications

Transportation

The bus protocol established by the local education agency/district must be followed. All students must wear a mask when being transported by bus regardless of vaccination status. Loading and unloading protocols will also be established by the local education agency/district.

Concerns related to transportation should be addressed with the local bus driver or local transportation director.

Residential student's temperatures will be taken when arriving on campus prior to being admitted into the building. If their temperature is 100.4 or greater using non-touch thermometers, they will be required to return home via the provided transportation (Local Education Agency, Parent, etc.) They may return when formal written documentation from a health care provider determines they are COVID-19 or other contagious diseases free/negative.

Bus Drop Off/Pick Up

No students will arrive at the school earlier than 7:00am. Students will sanitize/wash their hands when they get off the bus and before departing on the bus.

Students will wear a face mask when getting on the bus and follow the local education agency/district bus protocol for wearing the face mask during the ride home.

Car Drop-Off/Pick Up

Students may not arrive at the school earlier than 7:20am.

Students must wear a face mask as appropriate when entering the school and wash hands or sanitize hands before going to class.

Off Campus Therapies

Off campus therapies may continue with proper social distancing and/or masks/face coverings as determined on a case-by-case basis.

Food Services/Cafeteria

Breakfast will be served in elementary classrooms for day students at 7:20am. Dietary staff will deliver breakfast bags to the elementary classrooms.

Middle school/high school students will report to Churchman Dining Room for meals following proper social distancing and wearing masks as appropriate.

Field Trips and Large Group Gatherings

Off campus events and field trips may resume. Students, faculty, and staff will wear masks for the duration of the event, including while being transported.

Larger group gathering may resume as appropriate with the wearing of masks and ensuring social distancing. These events may also be held via Zoom or another type of online format. These events may include: Parent-Teacher meeting, annual case conference meeting, etc.

Community Based Instruction

Community based instruction may resume. Students, faculty, and staff will wear masks for the duration of the event, including while being transported.

On-Site Learning

Elementary

In-person instruction will resume.

Supplies and materials may not be shared. They will be stored in individual drawers or storage containers.

All physical education classes will take place outdoors, when possible, weather permitting. In the event of inclement weather, classes will be rescheduled or take place in the elementary gym.

Dismissal procedures for the entire campus will be staggered. Administration from both elementary, and middle school and high school will provide more detailed schedules as the start of school approaches.

Elementary students will participate in recess using a staggered schedule to promote social distancing. Equipment will be sanitized after each group use.

Grade level cohorts will stay together and play in established zones (playgrounds, open spaces, side-walk, multi-purpose room) and rotate weekly.

Close contact activities will not be permitted.

Elementary On-Site Schedule:

| | |
|--------------|---|
| 7:15 – 8:00 | Breakfast in the Classroom, Attendance |
| 8:00 – 9:00 | Reading Block |
| 9:00 – 10:00 | Small Groups/Special Area Classes/AM Recess |

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|---------------|--|
| 10:00 – 10:30 | Math Block |
| 10:30 – 11:30 | Small Groups/Special Area Classes/AM Recess |
| 11:30 – 1:00 | Lunch Rotations |
| 1:00 – 1:30 | Social Studies/Science Block |
| 1:30 – 3:00 | Literacy Block/Small Groups/Special Area Classes/PM Recess |

Middle School

In-person instruction will resume.

Passing periods may be adjusted and flexibility provided to minimize student contact. Steps will be taken to lessen congestion in the hallways and improve conditions for social distancing. Walking routes will be established (keep right) to promote one direction travel.

All physical education classes will take place outdoors, when possible, weather permitting. In the event of inclement weather, middle school classes will take place in the main gymnasium. Middle school students will not be required to dress for physical education.

Desks/tables will be arranged so students are facing the same direction when possible.

Lunch will be in the cafeteria and students will sit two to a table.

During elective classes 6th and 7th period, teachers will come and get students and leave time will be staggered to allow minimal contact with students not in middle school.

Dismissal procedures for the entire campus will be staggered. Administration from both elementary, and middle school and high school will provide more detailed schedules as the start of school approaches.

High School

In-person instruction will resume.

Steps will be taken to lessen congestion in the hallways and improve conditions for social distancing. Walking routes will be established (keep right) to promote one direction travel.

All physical education classes will take place outdoors, when possible, weather permitting. In the event of inclement weather, high school classes will take place in the main gymnasium. High school students will not be required to dress for physical education classes on inclement weather days.

Desks/tables will be arranged so students are facing the same direction when possible.

When able, teachers will move to class instead of students moving to and from class.

Release times from class may be staggered to minimize student contact with each other.

Dismissal procedures for the entire campus will be staggered. Administration from both elementary, and middle school and high school will provide more detailed schedules as the start of school approaches.

Short Course

Short Course Programming for Local Education Agency Students will resume.

Residential Program

Each student will be assigned a room without a roommate.

Visitors will not be allowed in dorms. A family member may schedule time to visit their child on campus and in a designated visitation area, preferably outdoors, weather permitting.

Upon arriving in their assigned dormitory, the student can take their mask off provided social distancing is followed.

Shower schedules will be developed, and students will be expected to keep personal belongings in their own room.

The Student Center will be open with a limited number of students at a time. Face masks will be required if social distancing protocol cannot be maintained.

Recreational activities may resume. Outdoor space will be utilized as much as possible. Students, faculty, and staff will wear masks for the duration of the event, including while being transported.

The Student Work Program will resume.

Library

Modified services will be made with requesting materials. All returned materials will be cleaned before redistribution.

Athletics and Extra-Curricular Activities

All athletic events may resume following appropriate ISBVI masking/social distancing protocol or that of a hosting school. Intramural events may be held by following proper safety protocols. Extra-curricular activities may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Choir

Students will be seated/standing in straight rows, facing the same direction, and as distantly spaced as room sizes allow while wearing face masks and/or face shields. Consideration should be given to utilizing the largest spaces possible (e.g., auditorium).

Sectional/split rehearsal groupings will be employed as space allows.

Students will not share sheet music and must have their own copies.

Participation in auditions, contests, festivals, and other events is not permitted.

Public/school concerts will not be permitted at this time.

Band

Students should be seated in straight rows, facing the same direction, and as distantly spaced as room sizes allow.

Sectional/split rehearsal groupings should be employed as space allows.

Instruments should not be shared. If sharing is absolutely necessary (e.g., large percussion instruments), proper disinfection should be completed between each use with an EPA approved product.

Masks are expected for entry/exit to spaces and when not engaged in direct participation with instruments.

Music stands should not be shared, and all stands must be disinfected between each use/class.

Students should not share sheet music and must have their own copies.

Participation in auditions, contests, festivals, and other events is not permitted at this time.

Public/school concerts will not be permitted at this time.

Social and Emotional Supports

Students needing extra emotional support throughout the pandemic/changes in school routines may meet with the social workers and school psychologist. Staff in need of social and emotional supports may utilize programs available through the Indiana State Personnel Department.

Parent/Guardian Expectations

Commit to supporting your child for as long as your child needs it.

Help provide a daily structure and routine for your child.

At the elementary level, read aloud to your child often and ensure access to books and other reading materials.

Participate in the process of success by regularly communicating with teachers and monitoring child progress.

Be open to suggested educational experiences outside of the virtual learning environment to add to your child's education.

Roles of Families

As ISBVI plans for a return to school, students may feel a bit of anxiety or fear about all the changes. Teachers and staff will do their best to make sure that families are aware of the procedures and safety protocols to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Important tips and reminders for families to discuss with their child(ren) prior to school starting:

- Families will help by not sending their child to school with COVID symptoms.
- Families will be notified of any new updates or changes.
- Families should review the emails and information that is sent out.
- Families are encouraged to begin discussing the new changes with their child prior to returning to school.
- Families will stay calm and positive to support the child by taking the time to chat with them about their concerns and questions without increasing their stress, anxiety, or fears.
- Families can chat about the different strategies that they can practice keeping them and others safe with social distancing, wearing a mask and hand washing. Practice wearing face coverings at home prior to sending them to school and gradually increase the amount of time they wear it.
- Families will keep regular school routine for bedtime and wake up time prior to start of school.
- It would not be unusual for a child to display some out of characteristic behaviors during this time of transition, do your best to approach these behaviors in a supportive, yet consistent manner.

ISBVI Administrative Contacts

ISBVI is here to support you and help make this a smooth transition. Please reach out to the following individuals if you have concerns or questions.

Interim Elementary Principal

Cara Kennett – 317-253-1481 ext. 105

email – ckennett@isbvik12.org

Residential Director

Jason Askren – 317-253-1481 ext. 185

email – jaskren@isbvik12.org

Middle School/High School Principal

Jay Wilson – 317-253-1481 ext. 140

email – jwilson@isbvik12.org

Interim Asst Superintendent of Programs

Tiffany Sanders – 317-253-1481 ext. 100

email – tsanders@isbvik12.org

Superintendent

James Durst – 317-253-1481 ext. 141

email – jdurst@isbvik12.org