

WILCO AREA CAREER CENTER

Maintenance of Health and Safety Emergency Operations Plan

It is the goal of Wilco to provide a safe and productive learning environment where all students can engage in the educational opportunities that are provided at the Center.

The below procedures were aligned to [CDC Guidance on Safety in Schools](#) to assist the Center in welcoming students back for the 2021-22 school year:

Masks:

Per the recommendations of the CDC, IDPH, ISBE, and the Will County Health Department and the mask mandate issued by the Governor of Illinois (August 4, 2021), Wilco will begin the 2021-22 school year requiring a mask of all individuals inside the Center. We will work through phases as metrics and mandates change to provide opportunities for fewer restrictions and protocols.

Phase I

Everyone should wear a mask in school. IDPH and ISBE endorsed the CDC recommendation that all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools wear a mask while indoors, regardless of vaccination status. On August 4, 2021, Governor Pritzker issued a mask mandate for schools in Illinois, and on August 11, 2021, the Illinois State Board of Education communicated the repercussions of noncompliance. Consequently, the expectation at Wilco is that all parties comply with the state mask mandate.

Exceptions are available for the following categories of people:

- A person who cannot wear a mask or cannot safely wear a mask because of a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Discuss the possibility of reasonable accommodation with workers who are not fully vaccinated who are unable to wear a mask, or who have difficulty wearing certain types of masks because of a disability.
- A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the relevant workplace safety guidelines or federal regulations.”

The CDC Order requires passengers and drivers to wear a mask on school buses. All persons, regardless of vaccination status, must wear a face mask at all times when in transit to and from school via group conveyance (e.g., school buses), unless a specific exemption applies. This is in accordance with the CDC Order, in effect as of February 1, 2021, which requires “the wearing of masks by

people on public transportation conveyances or on the premises of transportation hubs to prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.”

Exceptions to universal consistent use of face masks include the following limited situations:

- When eating.
- If using a face shield when other methods of protection are not available or appropriate. (View guidance on appropriate use of face shields.)
- For children while they are napping with close monitoring to ensure no child leaves their designated napping area without putting their face mask back on.
- For staff when alone in classrooms or offices with the door closed.
- For individuals who are younger than 2 years of age.
- For individuals who have trouble breathing; or those who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face mask without assistance.
- For persons with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of the disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), including:
 - o A person with a disability who, for reasons related to the disability, would be physically unable to remove a mask without assistance if breathing becomes obstructed. Examples might include a person with impaired motor skills, quadriplegia, or limb restrictions.
 - o A person with an intellectual, developmental, cognitive, or psychiatric disability that affects the person’s ability to understand the need to remove a mask if breathing becomes obstructed.
- For individuals who have a condition or medical contraindication (e.g., difficulty breathing) that prevents them from wearing a face mask.
- For fully vaccinated staff when meeting with other fully vaccinated staff outside of settings where unvaccinated persons are present.
- For staff and students when they are outdoors. However, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission, staff and students who are not fully vaccinated should wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated.

Staff and students who remove their face mask in these limited situations should be monitored and should maintain physical distancing to the greatest extent possible given the space in their facilities, with at least 3 feet recommended, but not required, between students and at least 6 feet recommended, but not required, between adults or between students and adults.

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, physical distancing should be maintained. Measures to reduce risk of exposure for these persons should be implemented, where possible.

Most students, including those with disabilities, can tolerate and safely wear a face mask. Students with an Individualized Education Program or 504 Plan who are unable to wear a face mask or face shield due to a medical contraindication may not be denied access to an in-person education if the school is offering in-person education to other students. Staff working with students who are unable to wear a face mask or shield due to a medical contraindication should wear approved and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) based on job-specific duties and risks and maintain physical distancing as much as possible. Other students should also remain distant from students who are unable to wear a face mask or face shield due to a medical contraindication. Schools should consult with their local health department regarding appropriate PPE for these situations.

When the mask mandate is removed, the county metrics improve and the Will County Health Department recommends, Wilco will move to Phase 2 of masking as originally outlined by the CDC.

Phase 2 of masking:

Vaccinated: Wilco students and staff who are fully vaccinated will not be required to wear a mask. Students will be encouraged to provide proof of vaccination to the Center (Please see the section on Vaccination Verification below), but this will be a voluntary process. The information will be securely coded in the student management system. Wilco will be supportive of staff and students who are fully vaccinated, but choose to continue to wear a mask, as a personal choice or because they have a medical condition that may weaken their immune system.

Unvaccinated: Masks should be worn indoors by all individuals (age 2 and older) who are not fully vaccinated. Consistent and correct mask use by people who are not fully vaccinated is especially important indoors and in crowded settings, when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Transportation: All students and staff must wear a mask on Wilco and feeder schools' transportation.

Phase 3:

Phase 3 of masking is determined by the change of the CDC and IDPH recommendation of any masking in schools and on transportation regardless of vaccination status. All students and staff may resume indoor and outdoor activities regardless of spacing without masks.

Other Protective Measures:

Physical Distancing: The CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing by people who are not fully vaccinated, to reduce transmission risk. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, such as when students are working on skills in groups, it is especially important to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as indoor masking. When students are working in groups, they will be placed in a cohort. Cohorting will be utilized to minimize exposure during group activities.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette: People should practice handwashing and [respiratory etiquette](#) (covering coughs and sneezes) to keep from getting and spreading infectious illnesses including COVID-19. Wilco will monitor and reinforce these behaviors and provide adequate handwashing supplies.

- We will teach and reinforce [handwashing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- We will remind everyone in the facility [to wash hands frequently](#) and assist our preschoolers with handwashing.
- In classes without sinks, hand sanitizing stations containing at least 60% alcohol (for teachers, staff, and older students who can safely use hand sanitizer) are available for student and staff use.

Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities, including ventilation:

Cleaning

Wilco will continue to sanitize classrooms each day. Students will have the ability to clean their surfaces before and after each session.

Ventilation

Improving ventilation is an important COVID-19 prevention strategy that can reduce the number of virus particles in the air. Wilco has made changes to our air filtration system to increase the amount of clean air in the facility. In addition, HEPPA filters are being utilized in each classroom.

Illness, Contact Tracing in combination with Isolation and Quarantine:

Students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as [influenza](#) (flu) or [COVID-19](#), should stay home and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care. Two temperature stations have been set up for students and staff to self-monitor their temperature.

Vaccinated Exposure: Staff and students who are fully vaccinated and **do not** have COVID-19 symptoms do not need to quarantine or get tested after an exposure to someone with COVID-19.

Unvaccinated Exposure: Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keep COVID-19 infections out of schools and prevent spread to others. It also is essential for people who are not fully vaccinated to quarantine after a recent exposure to someone with COVID-19. Students will be provided guidance from their home school districts on the timeline and requirements to quarantine.

Diagnostic and Screening Testing:

Vaccinated:

CDC guidance provides that people who are fully vaccinated do not need to participate in screening testing and do not need quarantine if they do not have any symptoms; though decisions regarding screening testing may be made at the state or local level. However, testing will be made available should a fully vaccinated request to be part of the testing protocol.

Unvaccinated:

Wilco will provide screening tests for unvaccinated staff as requested. Students who are exhibiting symptoms or who have been exposed may request a test. Wilco is utilizing the BiNax test in conjunction with the Will County Health Department. Parental consent for minor students and assent/consent for students themselves will be needed before performing any test.

Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities: Wilco is partnering with Aunt Martha's to schedule vaccine appointments before the start of the school year and will monitor need amongst our students to offer additional clinics. We will also share via social media vaccine opportunities for students and staff.

Appropriate Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Ensuring that all of our students feel safe and included, Wilco will work with parents, students, and our feeder schools to meet the needs of individual students.

Coordination with State and Local Health Officials: Wilco will continue to work with the Will County Health department on testing and reporting COVID positive cases as well as contact tracing.

Vaccination Verification

Wilco will follow the below protocols in collecting vaccination information from our students and staff. Submitting information is **voluntary**. Parents/guardians may choose to provide their child's COVID-19 vaccination status, and school or district employees may choose to provide their vaccination status, to their school or district through official documentation of vaccination status, i.e., COVID-19 Vaccination Record or official documentation from their health care provider. Vaccination information is an important tool when reporting exposure to the Will County Health Department and determining a need for quarantining. Please see the information provided below for questions or concerns:

Existing laws and regulations require certain vaccinations for children attending school. K-12 administrators regularly maintain documentation of people's immunization records. Since recommended prevention strategies vary by COVID-19 vaccination status, K-12 administrators who maintain documentation of students' and workers' COVID-19 vaccination status can use this information, consistent with applicable laws and regulations, including those related to privacy, to inform masking and physical distancing practices, testing, contact tracing efforts, and quarantine and isolation practices. Schools that plan to request voluntary submission of documentation of COVID-19 vaccination status should use the same standard protocols that are used to collect and secure other immunization or health status information from students. The protocol to collect, secure, use, and further disclose this information should comply with relevant statutory and regulatory requirements, including Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) statutory and regulatory requirements. Policies or practices related to providing or receiving proof of COVID-19 vaccination should comply with all relevant state, tribal, local, or territorial laws and regulations.

As part of their workplace COVID-19 vaccination policy, schools should recognize that a worker who cannot get vaccinated due to a disability (covered by the ADA), has a disability that affects their ability to have a full immune response to vaccination, or has a sincerely held religious belief or practice (covered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) may be entitled to a reasonable accommodation that does not pose an undue hardship on the operation of the employer's business. Additionally, school employers should advise workers with weakened immune systems about the importance of talking to their healthcare professional about the need for continued personal protective measures after vaccination. Currently, CDC recommends continued masking and physical distancing for people with weakened immune systems. For more information on what you should know about COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act and other Equal Employment Opportunity Laws visit the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) website.

Definition of a Close Contact

For all individuals where exposure occurred outside of the classroom setting and for adults in the indoor P-12 classroom setting, CDC defines a close contact as an individual not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. For students in the classroom setting, contacts who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student do not require quarantine as long as both the case and the contact were consistently masked. If they were not consistently masked, then close contacts are classroom students who were within 6 feet of the infected student for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

In general, individuals who are solely exposed to a confirmed case while outdoors should not be considered close contacts.

The longer a person is exposed to an infected person, the higher the risk of exposure or transmission. The infectious period of close contact begins two calendar days before the onset of symptoms (for a symptomatic person) or two calendar days before the positive sample was obtained (for an asymptomatic person). If the case was symptomatic (e.g., coughing, sneezing), persons with briefer periods of exposure may also be considered contacts, as determined by local health departments. Persons who have had lab-confirmed COVID-19 within the past 90 days or those fully vaccinated, according to CDC guidelines, are not required to quarantine if identified as a close contact to a confirmed case; however, local health departments are the final authority on identifying close contacts.

Continuity of Services

Students' Academic Needs: It is the priority of the Center to ensure all students have access and support to the training, certifications, and dual credit opportunities at the Center. To assist our students during the upcoming school year, we are committed to the following supports:

- Classroom aides in areas of high enrollment or as need is present
- Tutoring support services
- Summer Enhancement Opportunities
- Online resources including the development of Google Sites for programs
- Reports to feeder schools on student progress
- Parent communication and notification of student progress

Students' and Staff Social Emotional, Mental Health Needs

- Partnerships with home school counselors and support Personnel
- Staff training on SEL strategy integration into the classroom and curriculum
- Mental Health Referral Information for students and staff
- Self-Care strategies for staff

- Attendance monitoring

Student Health and Food Services

- Testing available on site for vaccinated and unvaccinated students who have symptoms or exposure
- Temperature and Hand Sanitizing stations available
- Masks available for students who may need
- Partnerships with district personnel on quarantine guidelines
- Vaccination clinic information
- Coordinate with feeder schools on students with food insecurities

Other Student Needs

- Financial assistance for students who need specific program supplies, certification fees, and other miscellaneous expenses

Quarantine Guidelines

Students will follow the guidelines established by their home school in regards to quarantining.

Staff may follow the CDC recommended quarantine of 14 days; however, the Will County Health Department has provided schools with the ability to select one of the following options to return to work:

- Quarantine can end after Day 10 without testing and if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring.
- *When diagnostic testing resources are sufficient and available (see bullet 3, below), then quarantine can end after Day 7 if a diagnostic specimen tests negative and if no symptoms were reported during daily monitoring. The specimen may be collected and tested within 48 hours before the time of planned quarantine discontinuation (e.g., in anticipation of testing delays), but quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7.*

Plans outlined in this document are subject to change based on information and guidance provided by the CDC, IDPH, and the Will County Health Department. We are committed to providing our students and staff with a safe and conducive learning environment.