

INDIAN RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT

“A Model of Excellence”



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IRSD 2020 Reopening Plan Employee FAQs and Resources

Dear Fellow IRSD Employee,

As all of us prepare for the 20-21 school year, we have received questions related to reopening. Below you will find FAQs and some resources. If you have any human resources questions not included in the FAQs below, please do not hesitate to contact me via email-celeste.bunting@irsd.k12.de.us or on my cell at 302-236-6273.

1. What options are there for teachers and their families, even if we choose remote for our kids?

- All instructional staff will report to schools on August 31, 2020.
- Teachers and paraprofessionals will work from their assigned classrooms/school locations in remote and hybrid models.
- All 10-month and 11-month instructional staff will work remotely on Wednesdays to allow for the deep cleanings of buildings

2. What happens if we are sick?

- IRSD will follow CDC and DPH guidelines.
- All staff are expected to follow the daily symptom checklist before reporting to work.
- DPH will notify the district regarding exposures, positive results and contact tracing.

3. Do we shut down, do we notify everyone exposed?

- DPH will manage the contact tracing and notification processes and procedures.

4. How does the district expect us to use the mask/enforce the mask?

- IRSD will follow CDC and DPH requirements.
- All students and staff will be required to wear masks.

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The Indian River School District is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate or deny services on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender, creed, religion, veteran status, sexual orientation, marital status, citizenship status, pregnancy, age, ancestry, disability, gender identity, genetic information, military status or any other characteristic protected by law.

5. What do we do if we are exposed outside the building or inside the building?

- If a staff member is exposed inside or outside the building, DPH will manage the contact tracing and notifications.
- IRSD will follow DPH directives regarding quarantine, etc.

6. If custodians are the “who”, does the district plan to hire additional custodial help as the current numbers we have will not support the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of all areas that are mentioned in the DDOE plan?

- The District is evaluating staffing needs related to cleaning protocols.

7. How will instruction continue if a teacher is quarantined or out sick 14 days, as we know substitutes are not going to be readily available?

- The district has hired additional multi-school itinerant teachers and paraprofessionals work as substitutes.
- The district will continue to process additional substitutes.

8. How will staff that self-identify as high risk be accommodated?

- IRSD employees with disabilities have requested accommodations via email to Celeste T. Bunting, director of personnel.
- Two emails were sent to all employees.
- The deadline for requesting accommodations was 8/14/2020.

9. If we are transferred to a different building due to low enrollment, would we be the first teachers to come back or would it be based on seniority in the district?

- The district will follow the transfer process in the teacher collective bargaining agreement.

10. Are pregnant women being considered high risk and a protected group who are in need of accommodations or are they grouped in with everyone else?

- Every pregnancy is unique.
 - If an employee’s physician recommends reasonable accommodations based on the medical needs of the employee, the employee will submit a doctor’s note to Celeste Bunting, director of personnel, to determine if IRSD can reasonably accommodate the request for reasonable accommodations.
 - A pregnant employee may not require reasonable accommodations at one part of her pregnancy but may require accommodations at another.

11. If I am unable to receive the accommodation (remote work) through the ADA, is there some other document that exists that would get me this accommodation?

- If an employee does not have a documented disability and and/or is not approved for teaching remotely from home, said employee may:
 - Apply for short term disability based on a medical reason
 - This is done through the Hartford Insurance

- The Hartford Insurance Company, based on the information provided by your doctor, will approve or disapprove your request.
- The number for the Hartford Insurance Company is:
 - 1-866-945-7781
- Apply for FMLA
- Request leaves as allowed in the CARES Act
- Request an unpaid leave of absence

12. If nothing can be done, I see there is FMLA that can be taken for 12 weeks. Can I take that at the start of the school year and then take the parental leave provided by the state when I have the baby? The FMLA at the start of the year would be unpaid but the parental leave would be a paid 60 days?

- FMLA and Paid Parental Leave run concurrently.
- You can apply for short term disability prior to the birth of the baby through the Hartford Insurance Company if it is your doctor's medical opinion that you cannot return to work prior to the birth of the baby.

13. If remote work is not provided by the district, can I refuse to return to work without repercussions or can they lawfully fire me?

- All instructional staff are expected to work from their classroom whether the district is hybrid or remote, UNLESS the instructional staff member has a documented medical disability, and the employee's doctor requests working remotely as a reasonable accommodation for that employee.
- The district will review the request for any and all reasonable accommodations to determine if it can reasonably accommodate employees.
- If any employee does not meet any of the above, criteria, see question 12.
- If any employee refuses to report for work and does not avail him or herself of any options, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action.

14. What considerations and/or accommodations are being considered for employees who have children who attend school in IRSD?

- All Delaware public school districts and charters will collaborate with local childcare providers to identify available openings for IRSD employees at local childcare facilities.
- IRSD will participate in this collaboration.

15. Will there be a virtual teaching option for all teachers? I am better equipped at home to teach hybrid or remote than I am in my school building, as I have both reliable internet and PHONE SERVICE in my house. I also have a color printer/copier/scanner. This is not always true at school & our copier/printer is a shared space that I'm not comfortable using since ALL staff use it, and I am unsure how often it will be wiped down.

- All instructional staff are expected to work from their classroom whether the district is hybrid or remote, UNLESS the instructional staff member has a documented medical disability, and the employee's doctor requests working remotely as a reasonable accommodation for that employee.
- Teachers and paraprofessionals will work remotely on Wednesdays to allow for deep cleaning of buildings.

16. Do the 2 weeks of covered COVID leave if needed to quarantine or care for a family member subtract from the 12 weeks of paid parental leave for the birth of a child if taken within the same school year?

- The 12 weeks of Paid Parental Leave and the up to 10 work days of COVID leave are separate leaves.
- If DPH requires an employee to quarantine due to COVID, the employee will have up to 10 work days paid at 100% of his or her pay.
 - The CARES Act expires on December 31, 2020.
 - At this time the CARES Act only allows for up to 10 days TOTAL for all COVID- related leave.

17. Are substitutes being trained in safety protocol?

- Yes, substitutes will be trained on safety protocols.
- Student teachers will also be trained on safety protocols.

18. Are substitutes being trained on remote teaching platforms?

- Yes, substitutes will be trained on remote teaching platforms.

19. What happens if there is a lack of substitutes? Who will cover classes?

- IRSD will continue to process substitutes.
- Each school will address how substitutes are utilized.

20. Will teachers still have access to a tables and plexiglass dividers be installed to keep everyone safe? If not, what is the course of action to teach small groups within the ILC classroom?

- IRSD will follow CDC and DPH guidelines. All desks will face the same direction 6 feet apart.
- If a table is used for instruction, the instruction will be a 1:1 instruction.

21. Are there any options for employees who do not meet the criteria for reasonable accommodations for a documented disability?

- IRSD has worked to reasonably accommodate employees whose documented disabilities require them to work in a remote status from home.
- IRSD is in the process of determining if it can reasonably accommodate employees who have good cause reasons for remote (work from home) status.
- If IRSD is able to accommodate some employees for “good cause”, it will vary by school based on the needs of the students and the district.

22. What would social distancing look like for a program like T.O.T.S (2&3 year olds), Project Village (4 year olds), and other Sec Ed. D.E.L.C classes (4 year olds)?

- IRSD will follow all CDC, DPH and Delaware Department of Education guidelines.

23. Are the district Leaders considering allowing teachers to transport their own families without being reprimanded on contract time?

- All staff will be expected to work a regular work day (7.5 hours inclusive of lunch). Transportation of children is not permitted during the contractual work day.

24. In addition if we have to be in the building exposed to large amounts of people, our concern is that we will still be bringing the exposure home even if we choose the remote learning option. Is the Union considering that we are not given the option like the rest of the district families? We will be bringing it home, we will be exposed, and therefore exposing our families.

- IRSD will follow all CDC and DPH guidelines.

25. What will physical education and performance arts classes look like?

- DDOE has developed guidance that will be reviewed by IRSD.
- IRSD has formed subcommittees of physical education teachers and performing arts teachers and administrators to review, discuss and implement DDOE guidelines.

26. Who will be cleaning our equipment each day/each class and who will provide the sanitizers?

- IRSD will follow all CDC and DPH guidelines.
- Building administrators will provide specific plans.

27. Will teachers have space to teach pencil paper style?

- Yes, there will be space at student desks for "pencil paper style".

28. Do teachers have the same options as district families to teach remotely?

- Teachers and paraprofessionals will teach from classrooms unless they have been approved for remote teaching from home as a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability.

29. Will we have a Union Vote or Say in this Hybrid Decision?

- Although the recommendation is a district decision, Jr. Emanuele and Kathy Dulis have participated in our reopening committees.

30. What are some examples of reasonable accommodations?

- Reasonable accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis.

31. How is the district going to work with staff that have children in other school districts that would be on different schedules and do not have child care available? Can these teachers teach from home?

- At this time, the only staff members approved to work from home have been approved for reasonable accommodations due to a documented disability.

32. The state mentions that we receive one "approved" quarantine time amount off. How is this "fair" that I would be required to use my sick days (which are slim to none due to my child's illnesses since birth) to quarantine due to my exposure to a staff member, student, etc? So, because of "others" I could run out of sick time? Seems very unreasonable and unethical to do this to staff when we didn't "agree" to come back into the classroom with students during a pandemic and unprecedented times.

- IRSD and the state of Delaware are following federal regulations and guidelines. If there is any additional time added designated for COVID-related sick and/or quarantine time, we will communicate this out to all IRSD employees.
- The CARES Act expires on December 31, 2020. As a result, the 10 work days of COVID leave will cease as of December 31, 2020 unless it is renewed by the federal government.

33. DSEA mentions that teachers should NOT be expected to provide PPE. So, I want to clarify that the district will be providing a new mask to every staff member every single day for the entire school year? And, they will provide enough sanitizer, cleaning supplies, gloves, tissues, etc. for each day? At that rate, hand sanitizer will be depleted in less than a week in each classroom.

- IRSD has ordered all are necessary supplies for the 20-21 school year and will replenish them regularly.

34. How do employees apply for Emergency Paid Sick Leave in order to be paid for 2 weeks of quarantine ordered by their doctor?

- You must notify your building administrator(s).
- You must enter the leave in AESOP under COVID leave.
- If you believe you qualify for up to 10 calendar days of emergency paid leave per the CARES Act, fill out the attached form and return to payroll/benefits.

35. How will IRSD help make up student hours due to the delayed start of school for students?

- IRSD will present a revised calendar to the Board of Education for approval at the August 24, 2020 meeting.
- To the greatest extent possible, IRSD will work to preserve holiday breaks.

36. The state guidelines suggest in each scenario that the students should not share materials. Excluding personal student items such as bookbags, pencils, etc, our classrooms and especially specials classrooms do not have enough materials so that students do not share. How will the district ensure that teachers have the necessary items to support instruction while following safety protocols? Who will provide those items? Will the district provide extra funds to purchase necessary items?

- Please communicate needs with building principals.
- IRSD will work to provide necessary materials to students.

37. Can teachers who do the in-person teaching wear scrubs?

- All employees are expected to dress professionally.

38. What is the workload balance for teachers teaching hybrid (between in-person and remote)?

- The Department of Instruction and building administrators have worked to ensure workload balance for hybrid and remote teachers.

39. If all students are home on Wednesdays, will teachers have to report to buildings, or will they plan from home?

- All instructional staff will work remotely on Wednesdays.

40. Who is being considered for staffing the Remote Learning Academy?

- Staff approved for accommodations due to a documented disability will teach remote students.
- Building administrators will work with teachers and staff to identify remote teachers based on the needs of the students and the district.

41. If nothing can be done, I see there is FMLA that can be taken for 12 weeks. Can I take that at the start of the school year and then take the parental leave provided by the state when I have the baby? The FMLA at the start of the year would be unpaid but the parental leave would be a paid 60 days?

- FMLA and paid parental leave run concurrently.
- The employee can apply for short term disability if the doctor and the Hartford Insurance Company determine that the employee meets the requirements for short term disability.
- The employee can take an unpaid leave.

42. Are schools “babysitting” students before school hours because kids get dropped off much earlier/prior to the actual start day?

- Arrival times of students are dependent on bus routes, etc.

43. Is Remote Academy IRSD teachers, a program, or is someone else (a company) providing this service? Are IRSD teachers responsible for what goes in the Remote Academy? I know that sounds silly, but the district phone call was the first I have ever heard of that term.

- Hybrid and Remote teachers will follow the same IRSD curricula

44. If an employee travels to a state where there are quarantine requirements and the employee has to self-quarantine upon return, does the employee have to use his or her sick/dock time to quarantine?

- If the employee chooses to travel to a state that results in a self-quarantine situation, the employee will use his or her sick/dock time. This is a personal choice of the employee and not directly related to his or her work as an employee of a public school district.

IRSD Employee Resources

1. Employee Assistance Program
 - a. All state of Delaware employees have access to the Employee Assistance Program.
 - b. If employees are struggling with personal issues including, but not limited to, mental health, substance abuse etc., employees may call 1-800-343-2186.
 - c. This is a confidential service.

2. Employee Right-Family First Coronavirus Response Act
 - a. See attached flyer.
 - b. See attached form.

3. Short Term Disability
 - a. See attached flyer

4. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
 - a. See attached forms.

5. COVID-19 Decision Tree