



South Eastern Special Education Reopening Plan 2020-2021 August 11, 2020

Plan for Reopening Classrooms and Services
Based on Guidance from
ISBE, IDPH, & CDC

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Summary	2
Health & Wellness	2
Social & Physical Distancing	2
Classroom/Materials	2
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Face Masks	3
Face Shields	3
Hygiene	3
Requesting Exemptions	4
Refusal to Wear Mask / Removing Mask at Inappropriate Times	4
Training	4
Health Screenings	4
When a Student or Staff Member Becomes Sick	5
Visitors	5
Instruction	6
Instructional Day	6
Decisions Regarding In-Person/Remote/Blended Learning	6
Remote Learning Plans	6
Grading	6
Attendance	6
Safety Education for Students	7
Student Who are Medically Fragile or at Higher Risk	7
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)	7
Other	8
Related Services	8
Meetings	8
Physical Education, Gymnasiums, and Playgrounds	8
Field Trips	8
Food Services	8
SESE Staff Providing Services In District Buildings	8
Requirements	8
Services	9
Certification	9
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	9
Contact Information	9

Summary

On June 23, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Department of Health (IDPH) published a joint guidance for Illinois schools titled [Starting The 2020-21 School Year: Part 3 - Transition Joint Guidance](#). South Eastern Special Education has prepared educational plans and operational protocols, based on this guidance as well as guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the state's five-phase reopening plan, [Restore Illinois](#) as well as from the Fall 2020 Learning Recommendations (July 23, 2020).

[Executive Order 2020-40](#), filed on June 4, 2020, allowed schools to reopen for In-Person Instruction in Phase 3. In-person instruction is strongly encouraged in Phase 4; however, it is critical to note that this does not signify a return to pre-pandemic operations. Appropriate social distancing, face coverings, enhanced sanitation measures, and other accommodations will be necessary to ensure the safety of students, staff, and their families. During Phase 4, IDPH guidelines will:

- Require use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including face coverings;
- Prohibit more than 50 individuals from gathering in one space;
- Require social distancing be observed, as much as possible;
- Require that schools conduct symptom screenings and temperature checks or require that individuals self-certify that they are free of symptoms before entering school buildings; and
- Require an increase in schoolwide cleaning and disinfection.

All public and nonpublic schools in Illinois serving prekindergarten through 12th grade students must follow these guidelines. ([Guidance - p. 3](#))

SESE serves several students from communities across South Eastern Illinois. Each of our classrooms are likely to have students from different towns and counties. Additionally, many of our students are likely to have underlying health conditions and therefore are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Therefore, SESE has developed this plan to strictly adhere to ISBE, IDPH, and CDC guidance. Our goal is to provide our students with the best educational services possible while maintaining strict safety standards for our students and staff. SESE will work collaboratively with our students' resident districts to provide a variety of instructional models including In-Person Instruction, Remote Learning, and blended Remote Learning opportunities in order to meet the individual needs of our students.

Health & Wellness

Social & Physical Distancing

SESE has developed procedures to ensure six feet of physical distance from other persons as much as possible. This expectation pertains to students and staff members in all areas and settings to the greatest extent possible. Visual reminders will be posted throughout classrooms and visuals will be designated (signs, tape, etc.) as indicators of safe distances in areas where students congregate or line up (e.g., arrival and departure, lunchroom lines, hallways, recess lines, libraries, cafeterias). Staff and students should abstain from physical contact, including, but not limited to, handshakes, high fives, hugs, etc.

Classroom/Materials

Students and staff are highly encouraged to limit the borrowing or sharing of any items. The CDC recommends that electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids not be shared. Electronics, including, but not limited to, tablets, touchscreens, keyboards, remote controls, etc., will be cleaned before and after use.

Items that must be shared or communally used, must be cleaned after use.

Use a wipeable cover on electronics or use wipes or sprays of at least 70% alcohol and dry completely.

Hand sanitizer will be used before and after the use of books. Machine washable cloth toys will be used by one individual at a time and cleaned in between uses or not be used at all.

Building guidelines will be followed in regards to use of carpet and cleaning procedures. If a staff member or a student in the classroom test positive for COVID-19, the classroom and contents will be thoroughly cleaned.

Lockers will not be shared. Furthermore, the use of lockers will be staggered, if possible.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Face Masks

As required by IDPH, except while eating, face coverings must be worn at all times in school buildings, even when social distance is maintained. All individuals in a school building must wear a face covering unless they have a medical contraindication, are under 2 years of age, have trouble breathing, or are unconscious, incapacitated, or unable to remove the face covering without assistance ([ISBE FAQ](#)). Face coverings do not need to be worn outside if social distance is maintained. SESE will maintain a supply of disposable face coverings in the event that a staff member or student does not have one for use. After use, the front of the face covering 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 covering.

Some educational tasks may require additional PPE such as gloves, face shields, gowns, or N95 masks. SESE will identify these tasks and provide the appropriate PPE to staff and students for these tasks. Employees and students may use their own face covering.

Face Shields

Face shields are not considered an effective protection against coronavirus and should only be used in situations when other methods of protection are not available. In cases where individuals need facial visualization for instruction and communication, IDPH recommends video instruction to promote social distancing. If video instruction is not available or appropriate, face shields may be used with the understanding that they have not been deemed effective for source control. As such, heightened attention and adherence to 6-foot social distancing is critical for individuals using face shields. Individuals using a face shield for instruction should do so only for the time necessary to deliver the instruction and a face mask should be worn at all other times.

Hygiene

Frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing are key to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Staff members must clean hands as often as possible with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be used. Staff must avoid touching their mouth, eyes, or nose as much as possible. Staff and students must use hand sanitizer upon entering the classroom each time. Hand sanitizer will be placed in common areas throughout each school building. Each classroom will be provided with signage reminding everyone of the need for proper hand hygiene in the appropriate areas. If assisting a student requires close contact, hand washing, or sanitizing must be done before and after contact with students. 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; upon return from the playground/physical education; and following glove removal. Schools will post handwashing posters in the bathrooms, hallways, all common areas.

Requesting Exemptions

SESE understands that there may be a small minority of individuals who have a medical contraindication to using face coverings. Any request for an accommodation to the requirement of wearing a face covering must include a physician's note which documents the medical contraindication for any individual who is not able to wear a face covering. Upon receiving such a request, SESE will initiate the IEP or 504 process (whichever is appropriate) to consider the request and determine if any accommodations can be made. Any accommodations made must fall within the ISBE, IDPH, and CDC requirements for public schools. The IEP or 504 team may also consider if Remote Learning or blended Remote Learning would be more appropriate for the student in light of the student's specific medical needs.

Refusal to Wear Mask / Removing Mask at Inappropriate Times

The requirement to wear face masks in school is designed to keep all students and staff safe. SESE educates students at various ages and various ability levels. In the event that a student removes his or her mask at an inappropriate time, the staff response should be appropriate to the situation. Staff responses could include anything from reminding the student to wear the mask, providing instruction on why wearing a mask is required, to socially distancing the student from others until he or she puts the mask back on. In the event that a student repeatedly removes his or her mask, SESE staff shall contact the classroom supervisor and district coordinator to schedule a meeting to consider changing the student's educational plan to Remote Learning until such time that the student can consistently wear a mask at school.

Training

Each staff member will be required to complete safety training related to SESE's physical distancing, face covering, and hand hygiene procedures. Each program supervisor will provide training to staff that is specific to their unique circumstances. Hand hygiene and physical distancing will be included in the curriculum to help educate students on the importance of proper hand hygiene and personal safety. Employees will also be trained on the proper way to disinfect their individual workstations as needed.

Health Screenings

SESE staff are to complete the electronic Health Screening Verification Google form each working day prior to the start of their day. Employees must self-certify by 8:15 a.m. each working day or by 11:45 a.m. if only working an afternoon half-day. Supervisors will contact employees if daily self-certification is not completed by 8:15 a.m. Employees who utilize a sick or personal day are not required to self-certify for that particular day. Employees may also be required to follow additional district entry procedures.

As stated, SESE serves students from several different school districts. Each of these districts has their own specific plan for certification. Each student must follow their resident district's health screening procedure as well as their serving district's procedure before entering the school building.

Only students and staff who are healthy should report for in-person learning. SESE requires staff and students who are ill to stay home. Absences due to illness shall be excused. Students and staff with any of the following symptoms of COVID-19 must remain home:

- Cough (such as is generally associated with flu-like symptoms)
- Fatigue (such as is generally associated with flu-like symptoms)
- Fever or chills
- Headache (such as is generally associated with flu-like symptoms)
- Known close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19
- Measured temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater

- Nausea or vomiting
- New loss of taste or smell
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat

Any student or staff member who begins to exhibit a high fever associated with COVID-19 like symptoms must report to the designated quarantine area. The classroom supervisor and school nurse shall be informed.

When a Student or Staff Member Becomes Sick

Any individual who tests positive for COVID-19, or who shows any signs or symptoms of illness, should stay home. Families and staff should also report possible cases to the school where the individual attends school or works, to initiate contact tracing. Currently known symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, muscle and body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Attendance personnel shall request specific symptom reporting when absences are reported, along with COVID-19 diagnoses and COVID-19 exposure. Information will be documented and shared with the health staff or other appropriate personnel and the local health department. SESE staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 should not return to work until they have met the criteria.

When interacting with students or staff who may be sick, school nurses and personnel should follow CDC guidance on standard and transmission based precautions. Students should never be left alone and must always be supervised while maintaining necessary precautions. Each school district has identified a quarantine area within each building.

Any individual within the school environment who shows symptoms will be immediately separated from the rest of the school population. Classroom supervisors are to be contacted immediately. Individuals who are sick will be sent home. If emergency services are necessary, 911 will be called.

Staff shall close off any areas of the school used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after proper cleaning and disinfection procedures have been completed by the district.

Individuals who did not have close contact with the person who is sick can return to school/work immediately after disinfection. Those who had contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 or is suspected of having COVID-19 infection should contact their supervisor immediately. Close contact means the individual was within six feet of the individual with symptoms for more than 15 minutes.

CDC and IDPH guidelines for students and staff who were suspected of having COVID-19, whether they were tested or not, state that at least 24 hours must elapse from the resolution of fever without fever-reducing medication and 10 days must pass after symptoms first appeared. Students or staff returning from illness related to COVID-19 should call the school prior to returning from quarantine.

Visitors

Visitors are not allowed in SESE classrooms during this time. Consideration may be given to visitors who have a specific educational function, for example, college students who are completing practicum coursework hours.

Instruction

Instructional Day

In-Person Instruction

SESE's plan is that all students receive educational services five days a week. Unless otherwise determined by an IEP team, SESE students shall have at least five (5) clock hours of instruction or school work each day. For students who have In-Person instruction, the five (5) hours of instruction should occur while at school.

Blended Learning

Many of SESE's member school districts are implementing a shortened school day. The combination of In-Person and Remote Learning activities to meet the required five (5) hours of instruction shall be called Blended Learning.

Remote Learning

Students receiving instruction via Remote Learning shall have at least five (5) clock hours of instruction or school work each day, with 2.5 of those hours as synchronous learning. Required daily instruction will be less for students in Early Childhood Education. There are several options for how Remote Learning may be delivered. SESE is continuing to revise our Remote Learning Plan and will provide more information as it becomes available.

Decisions Regarding In-Person/Remote/Blended Learning

The default educational environment shall be In-Person Instruction. All SESE member districts have made Remote Learning available to students. Students may elect an option of Remote Learning instead of In-Person Instruction.

Remote Learning Plans

While most students will not select the option of Remote Learning in favor of In-Person Instruction, all students with IEPs should have an up-to-date Individualized Remote Learning Plan included in their IEP. SESE requires staff to update each student's remote learning plan as soon as possible to reflect a five (5) hour remote instruction plan. This is required even if the student does not select Remote Learning at the beginning of the school year. In the event that the school needs to have an emergency closure, or the state declares state-wide Remote Learning, this will ensure the quickest transition possible to Remote Learning.

Grading

Teachers will assess student progress and work and report progress at traditional reporting periods.

Attendance

Only students and staff who are healthy should report for in-person learning. SESE requires staff and students who are ill to stay home. Absences due to illness shall be excused. Students and staff with any of the following symptoms of COVID-19 must remain home:

- Cough (such as is generally associated with flu-like symptoms)
- Fatigue (such as is generally associated with flu-like symptoms)
- Fever or chills
- Headache (such as is generally associated with flu-like symptoms)
- Known close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19
- Measured temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater

- Nausea or vomiting
- New loss of taste or smell
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat

Attendance shall be recorded by being present in the school or by participating in Remote Learning.

Safety Education for Students

Students will be receiving instruction and guidance for proper physical distancing, proper use of PPE, and proper hand hygiene during the first two (2) weeks of school.

Students Who are Medically Fragile or at Higher Risk

The classroom supervisors will work closely with classroom staff, district coordinators and parents, as well as the student's medical provider, to determine safe alternatives to In-Person Instruction. SESE encourages IEP teams to meet and consider the needs of medically fragile students, students at a higher risk of severe illness, and students who live with individuals at higher risk of severe illness for the duration of Phase 4.

Appropriate consents must be obtained for communication with outside providers. IEPs, 504 Plans, asthma action plans, or Individualized Health Plans should be reviewed to determine if these plans will need to be amended or modified.

Teams should consider the following:

- Whether the student's medical condition is conducive to in-person attendance or if needs would best be met remotely.
- The student's behavior and capacities, including ability to control secretions, cover mouth/nose when sneezing and coughing, ability to maintain distance from other classmates, ability to tolerate wearing a face covering, ability to wash hands with/without assistance, and ability/safety of use of hand sanitizer.
- Consult with individual student health care providers, if applicable, and IEP teams to determine the best modality to meet the student's needs on an individualized basis.

For staff working with students who are present for in person learning, SESE will provide appropriate PPE for continuous wear and during procedures such as feeding (e.g., gowns, gloves, N95 masks and face shields). Maintaining strict social distancing will not likely be feasible due to the personal nature of common care and services, including feeding, toileting, suctioning, position changes, diaper changing, hand-over-hand assistance, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. Appropriate PPE should be used in conjunction with appropriate hand hygiene.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

SEL curricula and additional supplementary services will continue to be provided for students and staff. Teachers will continue to implement the SEL curriculum with supplementary resources with an intentional focus on the emotional health of students who may have been or continue to be impacted by COVID-19. Students may also have continued support from social workers or counselors at school or via telecommunication in the event of Remote Learning.

Other

Related Services

The number of therapists in the classrooms will be limited, if on-site visits are needed, then alternative space for movement will be considered. Face coverings must be worn and social distance must be maintained, when possible. Visual markers on the floor should be added to aid in social distancing. Materials (e.g., Lycra tunnel or other porous materials, sensory swing, carpet squares, foam items) must be cleaned and sanitized between uses with enough time to let the material properly dry.

Meetings

Districts are planning to hold discipline meetings, IEP and 504 meetings, and other meetings between staff and visitors/families, remotely, to the greatest extent possible. However, if parents/guardians are unable to engage in a required meeting remotely, socially distanced in-person meetings may be held.

Physical Education, Gymnasiums, and Playgrounds

Physical activity can support students' overall health and help reduce stress and anxiety. Whenever feasible and weather permitting, schools should select outdoor activities that allow physical distancing.

SESE classrooms and staff will follow the each buildings' guidelines and procedures for physical education and playground use.

Field Trips

Field trips are not allowed until state and local health officials have determined that it is safe to resume them. The CDC recommends pursuing virtual activities and events in lieu of field trips. When safe to resume, minimal interaction of different groups of students will be allowed. IDPH requirements for social distancing, capacity limits, hand hygiene, and PPE both at the field trip destination and during travel to and from the location, will be ensured.

Food Services

Breakfast and lunch will be offered every day. Students will follow each buildings' procedures regarding breakfast and lunch.

SESE Staff Providing Services In District Buildings

The majority of this document addresses students attending programs in SESE classrooms. SESE also employs several staff who provide services to students in our member districts. The following information addresses SESE staff providing services to students in the district.

Requirements

While in member district buildings SESE staff shall be required to wear PPE as specified in this plan or according to the district's plan, provided that the district's plan is more restrictive than SESE's. It will be necessary that districts provide a safe space for in-person services while maintaining social-distancing.

Services

The types and amounts of services provided to our students is determined by the student's IEP. Because many of our member school districts are utilizing a shortened school day, the types and amounts of services each student needs may change. These decisions shall be made by the student's IEP team. and for collaboration between the district, itinerant, and family to determine which services can be done remotely versus in person.

Certification

SESE Itinerant staff shall self-certify prior to reporting to the school district. Itinerant staff shall also follow any certification requirements of the district upon arriving at the school.

PPE

SESE recognizes that the nature of the services provided by many of our itinerant staff make social distancing difficult. However, SESE recommends that social distancing be practiced during therapy sessions to the greatest extent possible. The level of PPE will be enhanced if social distancing is not possible. Each itinerant will be provided with a PPE travel kit that will be restocked as needed.

Contact Information

South Eastern Special Education

Kim Kessler, Director

kkessler@sese.org

618-455-3396 ext. 228