



Evergreen Academy
McHenry County Regional Safe School Program
3917 Mercy Dr., McHenry, IL 60050
815-239-0001

Return to School Plan

Evergreen Academy is planning for full in-person learning for the 2020-2021 school year. We are excited to welcome all students back to school in August. We continue to await further guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education on any changes to health and safety guidelines for re-opening.

Significant resources are being allocated to ensure residual impediments toward the progression of students from entry into the program, successful transition back to their respective districts, and successful transition to postsecondary opportunities are minimized. Evergreen's Return to School Plan is intended to be a living document that outlines efforts to support all students and evolves to meet the needs of those whose educational progress is most in jeopardy as a result of the negative impact of the pandemic. This plan sets a course of action in motion founded in best practices, that addresses both the academic and social-emotional needs of students.

Evergreen Academy has implemented and will continue to follow local, state and federal requirements to comply with the provisions of the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021. Evergreen Academy will be following all Illinois Department of Public Health and Illinois State Board of Education guidelines. Health and safety initiatives include:

Modifying facilities to allow for and support physical distancing;

- Labeling throughout buildings denoting space requirements
- Lunch in cafeterias and alternate spaces when available to maintain social distancing opportunities as much as possible. Students will be assigned a seat for breakfast and lunch.
 - Lunch will be provided for students at no charge. Lunch will be packaged in individual containers in order to minimize contamination points
 - 3-foot minimum distance in classrooms, to the extent practicable and still maintain in-person learning
 - Maintenance and supervision of separate health stations for individuals who are symptomatic in the schools



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Handwashing and respiratory etiquette;

- Mask mandate maintained in the schools during regular school day, at school activities, and on transportation; students provided masks if needed
- Proper mask use and mask removal process is posted throughout the building and demonstrated when students need redirection.
- Sanitizing posters and stations provided throughout school including classrooms, cafeteria, and gymnasium.
- Proper handwashing posters and recommendations posted in restrooms and throughout the building.
- Installation of touchless air dryers in facilities.

Cleaning and maintenance of healthy facilities, including improving ventilation;

- Increased air circulation in classrooms, cafeteria, and gymnasium.
- Sanitization of classrooms; Desk and tables sanitized after each class period, heightened cleaning and disinfection of areas where individuals with COVID symptoms or who tested positive were present

Evergreen Academy is implementing a heightened standard. Health and safety initiatives include:

Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the local health department;

- Conduct contact tracing – including tracking and notification of positive cases to MCDH, consultation with public health authorities regarding possible outbreaks and need for partial or full school closures
- Provide remote learning opportunities for students unable to be vaccinated and required to quarantine/isolate to continue access to learning during the period of absence
- Ensure appropriate PPE for staff providing health services or supervising health stations

Diagnostic and screening testing; efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities;

- Follow McHenry County Health Department student/teacher testing protocol.
- Coordinate with parents regarding McHenry County testing times and procedures
- Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and coordination with local health officials.



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Staff vaccination clinics:

In March 2021, Evergreen Academy partnered with the McHenry County Health Department and the McHenry County Superintendents' Association to run vaccination clinics at Huntley High School and Woodstock High School for educators.

Balance social-emotional health with academic progress by guaranteeing access to a study hall, lunch and support resources.

Since March 2020, students have had to contend with remote instruction, hybrid instruction to now face the reality of returning back to school in-person in August 2020. Remote instruction proved beneficial to some students but for most it proved challenging despite efforts to sustain a positive and effective learning experience. Many students found it difficult to remain motivated, to stay connected with instructors, to connect with peers and to complete assigned tasks on time and to standard.

Strategies Implemented

- Provide access to instruction while bound to home or healthcare facility and facilitate return to the classroom.
 - Schedule to accommodate a 21st Century learning environment.
- Provide access to social/emotional services during instructional time (i.e., pull-out/push-in)
- Provide supplemental academic services
- Provide expanded access to professional development activities that facilitate best practice instructional strategies on scheduling.
- Reach out to students to discuss scheduling options.
 - Provide students in all grade levels with opportunities for physical activity, brain breaks and communication with one another face to face to support social emotional needs.

Expand Mental Health Supports

Students who re-enter our schools in August 2020 may be very different from those who left in March 2020. The same is true for teachers, staff and families.

As we move to fully reopen, our first inclination may be to focus on the learning gaps that students have developed during the pandemic, but the psychological and emotional well-being of all members of a school community must also remain in the forefront of our minds. Establishing school as a space that is both physically and emotionally safe is essential.



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All students and teachers have experienced unprecedented disruption to normal patterns of interaction, and many have had to cope with uncertainty or substantial hardship. They will need support as they transition back into a full-time academic environment. In addition, many students will be managing grief, anxiety or other emotional responses to recent events that will require long-term monitoring and ongoing response.

Strategies

- **Triage:** Perform formal or informal triage to identify what students need to support their learning and ensure that the existing referral system continues to connect students with school, contracted and community based mental health resources.
- **Trauma informed practices:** Expect students to have difficulty with the transition back into classrooms. Establish generalized supports that can benefit all students, specifically trauma-informed relational practices, and a framework for social and emotional learning that promotes emotional well-being and social connectedness
- **Targeted Intervention:** Monitor for behaviors that indicate a need for targeted intervention. Support school-based mental health professionals in implementing an evidence based mental health program or individual support for students who have experienced significant trauma or who have been diagnosed with serious mood, anxiety or other behavior disorders.
- **Faculty support:** Attend to the mental health needs of staff by providing appropriate resources, developing a culture of emotional openness and vulnerability, participating in a social emotional book study, building structures to support social engagement and helping individuals develop their self-care practices.

Progress Monitoring to Identify Students in need of supports to attain/maintain progress

Students that are not on track, as identified during periodic review of academic progress or by teacher or administrative recommendation, will receive individualized support.

Students identified as having high absenteeism, behavior concerns or grades that fall below a 2.0 or “C” average are typically indicators that additional supports are needed for the student to be successful academically. In some instances, these students may be disengaged in the learning process and have many contributing factors that results in these concerns.

Evergreen Academy defines academic success as “ensuring achievement for every student.” To reach this goal, we will continually evaluate teaching effectiveness in order to make more informed instructional decisions. Students will benefit from targeted



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assessments to determine competencies, engage in regular check-ins and have access to additional supports.

Strategies

- Procure supplemental materials and employ supplemental instruction with an accelerated competency-based approach
- Embedded professional development for teachers, social worker, and others associated with programming
- Data-driven team meetings
- Increased home visits or contacts