



**WRANGELL  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
DISTRICT OFFICE**

GATEWAY TO THE STIKINE

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August 20, 2021

Greetings to the Parents, Students, and the Members of the Wrangell Public School Community,

The 2021-2022 school year is approaching at a very quick pace and we at the school district have been working very hard to make sure that our students are safe, secure, and most of all able to receive face to face education. This does not come without challenges both in the school as well as in the local community. We have been faced with a pandemic that has placed additional stress and uncertainty on many of our local residents and has made aspects of "normal" seem difficult to achieve.

It had been our hope that we would have been able to start the year with less restrictions but the current COVID-19 variants (Delta especially, which is 97% of the positive cases in Alaska at this time) has expanded our level of caution in Wrangell to a greater level than we once believed would have been needed. This variant has been shown to be spread easier, and between all groups regardless of age or vaccinated status.

The Wrangell Public School District has taken the COVID-19 Mitigation Plan (Smart Start) that was in effect last year through June of 2021, which taught us many things about how to participate and succeed in school during these current difficult times, and condensed the information into a slimmer and more clearly stated "Start Strong" plan when students return to classes.

What your Wrangell Community Schools are doing to prepare for the school year:

**Cleaning and Maintaining our Schools:**

The sanitation and ventilation plan that was put in place last year will continue with classroom materials available, Hand Sanitizer available (when washing with soap and water is not possible), Electrostatic Sprayers using Hypochlorous spray (student safe but virus and germ effective) used daily. Ventilation procedures and filter monitoring will continue with concentration on MERV rating upgrades and maintaining optimal continuous air flow as well as advancing additional air purification in some locations.

**Physical Distancing and Hand Washing:**

In an attempt to allow a more regular school experience to occur (and based on updated CDC Guidance) students will be in regular class groups this year with tables and desks allowing a minimum of 3 feet between students or more whenever possible.

The one-way hallways will return to regular hallway use but staff and students are still encouraged to social distance and lockers will be allotted upon request in a socially distanced manner. Lunch will return to regular lunch times with socially distanced spaces when students are unable to mask while eating. SMS and WHS will return to a single lunch period.

Teachers and Staff will teach and reinforce correct hand washing and respiratory etiquette and the schools will continue to follow the Symptom-Free Schools plan from last year. Including hand washing times when engaging in activities such as shared workspaces or lunch.

Masks will be required for students, staff, and guests while in school or at school events if interacting with people outside of the immediate home. During outdoor school activities masks are required if unable to social distance. If students are diligently wearing masks and are not within 3 feet of another student, staff, or other individual for more than 15-minutes during a 24-hour period they would NOT be considered close contacts under current CDC Guidance. (This would include time that is not in school as well in the 15-minute determination). This might allow less disruption to the classroom if and when an illness occurs.

**Travel Policy:**

Students and Staff returning from a trip (in-state or out-of-state) need to follow any required protocols under the City and Borough of Wrangell's Emergency Ordinances currently in place or updated by the Assembly. Currently children under 10 would follow the same status as their parents or family that traveled.

*Return to Work or School After Travel:*

Vaccinated Students and Staff should test upon return but can return to work, strict social distance, and await test results if negative they may return to normal WPS mitigation plan procedures.

Unvaccinated (or unable to Vaccinate) should test upon return and quarantine. On day 5 retest and if negative and having no symptoms return to school. OR return to school after a full 10-day quarantine if having no symptoms.

Travel for sports teams (Students and Coaches) if following weekly testing and mitigation procedures during travel will be exempt for travel quarantine and can return to school after testing upon return.

We look forward to working together during the school year to not only have a great year but to work with the community and our school community to take care of ourselves and students during the 2021-2022 school year. The Wrangell Public School Teachers, Staff, and Volunteers are excited to see all of our students AUGUST 30<sup>th</sup>!

Sincerely,



Bill Burr  
Superintendent  
Wrangell Public Schools

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