

**Charlo School District 7J**  
**Safe Return to School and Continuity of Services Plan**

Date of Original Adoption: June 15, 2021

Date Plan was Last Revised: Aug. 17, 2021

Next Regularly Scheduled Month for Consideration (At least quarterly): Nov. 16, 2021

Dates Reviewed: Aug. 17, 2021; Sep. 21, 2021; Sep. 28, 2021; Oct. 19, 2021; Nov. 16, 2021

**March 2020 - June 2021**

1. The Charlo School District was ordered to close to in person instruction on March 15, 2020, under an executive order issued by then-Governor Bullock. Districts were provided a two week period of time during which they could remain fully closed to instruction of any kind while developing a plan for remote instruction required by the Governor.
  - a. Although our district was authorized to remain closed, we quickly mobilized and began remote instruction during the timeframe when we were authorized to remain closed. Thereafter, our district continued pursuant to a reopening plan approved by the Governor beginning March 30, 2020.
2. On April 22, 2020, then-Governor Bullock lifted his Stay at Home Order, and Announced a Plan to Begin Phased Reopening of Montana. As part of that plan, effective May 7, 2020, all schools were provided the option to return to in-classroom teaching at the discretion of local school boards.
  - a. Our school district finished the 2020-21 school year through remote instruction. During the 2020-21 school year, our means of operation have included:
    - i. A choice for families between “Onsite Instruction” or “Offsite Instruction”. Families choosing “Onsite” attended school in person Mon-Thu then worked from home on Fridays. Families choosing “Offsite” had the option of attending Fridays to meet with their teachers but could also work remotely through Google Classroom, Emails, Zoom, or weekly paper packets.
3. Our district developed a plan for reopening to in person instruction, with contingencies, and we implemented that plan for the 2020-21 school year. The reopening plan aligned with CDC guidance regarding mitigation strategies to limit exposure to and transmission of COVID-19 in school settings.
4. Our district is finished the 2020-21 school year strong, having provided high quality learning opportunities to the students in our community in safe and effective learning environments.
5. We embraced a fundamental principle of providing extensive transparency to our community throughout the above timeframe. We publicly noticed, held meetings regarding, and provided extensive opportunities for our community to provide us with feedback regarding the School District’s plans and we carefully considered such

feedback in developing and refining the School District's plans throughout the last 14-15 months.

**Safe Return to Schools and Continuity of Services Plan Contents:**

**March 2020-Sep. 2021**

**Part I: Documentation of Meaningful Consultation in Developing and Refining the School District's plan from March 2020 Through June 2021:**

We noticed, held, and invited public comment on our evolving plans for a safe return to school and continuity of services on the following dates since March 2020:

1. Apr. 21, 2020
2. July 21, 2020
3. Aug. 6, 2020
4. Dec. 15, 2020
5. Mar. 16, 2021
6. June 1, 2021
7. June 15, 2021
8. Aug. 17, 2021
9. Sep. 21, 2021
10. Sep. 28, 2021
11. Oct. 19, 2021
12. Nov. 16, 2021

Our invitation for public input included a general opportunity for the public to provide input and was provided to everyone interested, including:

1. Students; families; school and district administrators (including special education administrators); teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions; and
2. Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes; Missoula Area Education Cooperative; stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

**Part II: Contents of The School District's plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services:**

1. A description of how the district will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff:

Following the lifting of the Stay-at-Home Order and subsequent reopening of the state on April 22, 2020, Charlo School District 7J utilized the Montana Public Education Center *Roadmap for Safely Reopening Montana's Public Schools Using Emergency School District Policies* while ensuring the operations of the school district reflected the circumstances in our community.

The policies ensured our Board of Trustees and school leaders honored the following priorities: quality instruction to students; a healthy and safe setting for students, staff, and the community; needed support of teachers and staff; and responsible financial and operational procedures. The policies provided an actionable plan for completing the 2020-2021 school fiscal year in a manner that met these priorities and secured district funding while providing an operational platform for considering long term innovations in the delivery of education services.

Charlo School District 7J reviewed, considered, and addressed numerous areas of operation in our reopening process. On the topic of school district policy and procedures, the district considered emergency policies and procedures, adoption and amendment of policies, suspension of policies, and administrative procedures. To support students' academic, mental, social and emotional success, the district considered alternative grading, counseling, extended school year, student instruction proficiency determinations and declarations, support for particularly vulnerable students, transportation services, access to internet for students, food preparation and service, summer school and additional student instruction resources. To ensure the health and safety of students, teachers, and staff, the district considered cleaning and disinfection, community use of facilities, county board of health orders, diagnosis and confidentiality, hand washing and related hygiene protocols, telework, school closure orders, stay at home orders, symptom monitoring and isolation, travel quarantines, visitors, volunteers, vulnerable individuals, masks and personal protective equipment, and physical distancing.

Charlo School District 7J has remained in compliance with guidance and best practices provided by federal, state, or local health officials. Our school district has continued to adapt and adjust our policies as new and updated guidance and best practices have become available.

Further, the policies provide options for consideration through input from our board of trustees, administrative team, employees, parents, students health officials, and community as collaborative partners as we have worked our way through ever evolving changes due to the pandemic. By considering all possible perspectives and factors when making the decisions to adopt or adjust a policy, or to implement a policy, we focused on the health and safety of our students, staff, and community for delivery of learning and services to our students. The policies have enabled us to adjust our procedures and practices during different phases in compliance with guidance and best practices provided by federal, state, and local agencies.

Charlo School District 7J will continue to follow their COVID 19 Plan as well as school policy. School officials will be engaging in at least quarterly reevaluation process to continue to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of our students, teachers, staff, and community through 2024.

The extent to which the district has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC:

### **COVID 19 Plan Beginning Aug. 2021**

**School will meet on site with face to face instruction following the school calendar.**

#### **Safety Measures:**

Regardless of the Phase the state is under, safety of students and staff is paramount. Students/staff not feeling well or running a temperature must stay home. Standard health protocols will be followed:

- Face coverings will be optional on campus and inside buildings unless a directive is issued by county or state officials
- At athletic events inside the gyms fans will be asked to physical distance and wear face coverings especially if they are not vaccinated
- Face coverings are required on school buses
- Frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizer
- Extra Handwashing Stations installed
- Cough in elbow
- Sneeze in tissue and toss it into garbage
- Social distancing as much as possible
- Elbow bumps instead of handshakes
- Avoid touching face, nose, eyes, or mouth
- Intensive sanitizing of occupied spaces
- Temperatures of students/staff if there is suspicion of a fever. Students who arrive at school and are found with a temp 100 or higher will be isolated, parents/guardians contacted, and sent home.
- Isolated students will be given a mask to wear
- Breakfast will be served in classrooms rather than the cafeteria to reduce numbers
- Lunch will be served in a staggered fashion and in other areas to allow distancing

#### **Health Precautions for all:**

- ❖ Teach and reinforce washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes among children and staff.
- ❖ Additional key times to wash hands include:
  - After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - After using the restroom.
  - Before eating or preparing food.
  - After contact with animals or pets.
  - Before and after providing routine care for another person who needs assistance (e.g., a child).
- ❖ Practice social distancing; 3 ft separation between individuals.

- ❖ Hand sanitizer is provided in each classroom, at every entrance, and should be used frequently when hand washing cannot occur.
- ❖ Box of gloves for each classroom
- ❖ Sani-wipes or disinfecting spray and wipes for each classroom
- ❖ First Aid Kits for each classroom
- ❖ Face coverings for each classroom, department, and school bus
- ❖ The Nurse will come to the classroom; a sick student will not be sent to the office until the student has been evaluated by the nurse or administration

### **Cleaning:**

Cleaning will be done with CDC approved cleaning materials or a bleach solution. Under all phases, sanitizing will occur daily:

#### Classrooms:

- ❖ Commonly touched surfaces disinfected frequently throughout the day
- ❖ Desktops and table tops disinfected daily.
- ❖ Rooms aired out daily weather permitting or if a Covid case is found in the class.
- ❖ Windows will be open as much as possible.
- ❖ Assigned seats made available to the School Nurse for contact tracing if necessary
- ❖ Lockers will be assigned in pods according to family when possible

#### Buses:

- ❖ Face coverings required for students and staff
- ❖ Seats sanitized daily
- ❖ Sanitize commonly touched areas (handrails, seat backs, etc.) sanitized daily.
- ❖ Windows opened to air out the bus.
- ❖ Students will be assigned every other seat with siblings when possible.

#### Restrooms:

- ❖ Sanitized frequently throughout the day
- ❖ Attention to commonly touched surfaces (handles, knobs, dispensers, switches, etc.)

### **Protocol for Suspected Illness**

When a student reports they are sick or an employee feels a student is sick the following will happen:

- 1) The student will put their mask on or be given a mask to wear.
- 2) The student will be moved to wait by the door.
- 3) The school nurse ext 214 will be called first if no answer then the school secretary ext 229. If no answer then dial ext 275.

- 4) The nurse or person that is reached will come to the classroom and get the student. The student will be escorted to the isolation room.
- 5) Parents will be notified to come pick up their student.
- 6) Parents can come to the office window or call from their car that they have arrived.
- 7) The student will be sent outside to meet his/her parent or guardian.

**COVID 19 Exposure:**

The first line of defense to prevent the spread of disease is to stay home when you are feeling ill or have a temperature over 100.

If a Covid case is found in the school, the following steps will be taken in consultation with the Lake County Health Department:

- ❖ A person who tests positive for COVID 19 will work with their health care provider and will be quarantined for 10-14 days before returning to school.
- ❖ Students or staff who are possible exposures of a positive case of COVID 19 will be asked to wear a face covering while indoors on school campus for 14 consecutive days **OR** to stay home and off campus for 14 consecutive days.
- ❖ A “close-contact” is defined as a person who has been within 6 ft of a COVID 19 Positive person for longer than 15 minutes.
- ❖ The room, or building wing depending on exposure in other areas, may be shut down for 24 to 48 hours. Parents called to pick up their student(s). Staff will be notified of the exposure.

**In the event of directives from the Governor’s Office, Lake County Health, and/or Charlo School District 7J Board of Trustees: the Charlo Administration and Staff will respond in phases based upon those directives from County Health, and/or State DPHHS:**

- ❖ Phase 3 means.... Near full capacity and full operations but with continued vigilance in health and safety best practices. Per the Governor’s orders, gatherings of larger than normal class size are allowed. Begin discussions on restructuring and resuming extra-curricular activities and afterschool programs and sports events. All staff are encouraged to continue monitoring for re-emergence of COVID-19 symptoms and be in contact with the local health department for continued updates on community re-emergence indicators. Continue to monitor attendance for increases in absenteeism.
- ❖ All students will come back to campus and resume normal instruction. Frequent handwashing, disinfecting of surfaces and commonly touched areas, and distancing as much as possible will be maintained.
- ❖ Any student/staff with a fever of 100 or higher or displaying COVID 19 symptoms must stay home.
- ❖ Hot meals will be provided in the cafeteria as normal without Salad Bar for at least the first month.

- ❖ Co-curricular activities such as BPA, HOSA, Skills USA, FFA, may continue with social distancing observed as much as possible.
- ❖ Sports will be determined by MHSAs rules and recommendations.
- ❖ Students who become ill during the day will be isolated in a designated room until parents can pick them up. Students will be given a face covering to wear while in isolation. The designated room will be sanitized immediately after the student is picked up by parents/guardians.
- ❖ Face coverings are optional.
- ❖ Visitors may be allowed entrance to buildings after checking in at the main office. Facilities will be available for renting as well community groups to use such as 4H, Youth Groups, etc.
- ❖ Field Trips will be allowed.
  
- ❖ Recess will be returned to normal scheduling.
  
- ❖ Elementary specials classes will be held in their normal buildings.
- ❖ Teachers will be prepared for instruction for students who contract the virus and are quarantined for extended lengths of time as with any other student who must miss school due to illness. This instruction can be delivered online or packets could also be sent home.
  
- ❖ Phase 2 means....Full capacity but limiting number of activities to allow for continued social distancing. Per the Governors Order: Non-congregate group size has increased from 10 to 50 people and recommend gatherings of groups of normal class size in shifts (recess, cafeteria and hallway passing). Larger school events that draw in-person crowds are discouraged (sports, assemblies, dances etc.) All staff are encouraged to continue monitoring for re-emergence of COVID-19 symptoms and be in contact with local health departments and local hospitals/health providers for continued updates on community re-emergence indicators. Continue to monitor attendance for increases in absenteeism. Recommend a daily assessment if relaxed restrictions are resulting in a new wave of infections. If schools at any point the answer is yes, as per the Governor's orders, schools may need to take a step back. Continue to work in collaboration with local health officials who can help determine any level of transmission in the community.
  
- ❖ Group sizes are limited to 50 with social distancing being observed.
- ❖ The daily schedule will be observed with teachers on campus to deliver instruction.
- ❖ Meals may be either grab-n-go/hot with students eating in a designated area such as a classroom, picnic table, or gymnasium. Initially we will start with cold lunches then stagger the number of hot lunches served by grade level.
- ❖ No field trips.
- ❖ Recess will monitored and scheduled to minimize interaction among different age levels.

- ❖ Elementary specials classes will be held in the elementary building with Specials teachers coming to the students' classroom.
- ❖ Extra-Curricular Activities – We will follow MHSA recommendations and guidelines for athletes as well as coaches. We will have livestreaming available through the NFHS and PixaLot. We have consulted with Lake County Health to implement the following for Home Events and Spectators:
  - ❖ **OUTDOOR EVENTS:** Charlo athletes will be allowed 4 spectators per Senior player and 2 spectators for all other grade level players. Visiting Team Rosters will be used to admit players, coaches, and administrative staff. The Visiting Team will be sent enough tickets so that each Visiting Senior Player is allowed 4 spectators and all other players are allowed 2 spectators. No entrance will be allowed without a ticket. Masks are required at all Outdoor Activities with more than 50 people. Physical Distancing will be observed. Spectators must physical distance in designated areas on the field by city and family. Concessions will be limited to prepackaged items only, no meals will be served. There will be no admission fees to games but a donation of \$5 per person is suggested to help with game administrations costs such as officials, book keepers, clock, etc.
  - ❖ **INDOOR EVENTS:** Charlo athletes will be allowed 4 spectators per Senior player and 2 spectators for all other grade level players. Visiting Team Rosters will be used to admit their players, coaches, and administrative staff limited to equaling the amount of Charlo's Roster and Staffing. The Visiting Team will be given enough tickets so that each Visiting Senior Player is allowed 4 spectators and all other players are allowed 2 spectators. It will be up to the Visiting Team to distribute tickets to their fans. No entrance will be allowed without a ticket. Masks are required for all indoor events. Spectators must physical distance in designated areas in the gym by city and family. Concessions will be limited to prepackaged items only, no meals will be served. There will be no admission fees to games but a donation of \$5 per person is suggested to help with game administrations costs such as officials, book keepers, clock, etc. Total capacity is 150 people at indoor events.
- ❖ Co-curricular activities – BPA, HOSA, FFA, may continue with social distancing observed and no more than 50 participating at a time.
- ❖ Staff will be vigilant in monitoring student health. Staff and students not feeling well should stay home. Temperatures will be taken when a teacher suspects a student may have a fever.
- ❖ Students who become ill during the day will be isolated in the small room off the library hall until parents can pick them up.
- ❖ Facilities will not be available for use by community groups and will not be available for rent.
- ❖ **Phase 2 Instruction Delivery**

- ❖ **ON-SITE LEARNING:** “On-site” learning will be 4 days per week Monday thru Thursday 7:50 AM-4:00 PM with students in attendance face to face with their teachers. All K-12 students, school employees, and visitors must have a face covering on their person at all times. Face coverings could be required. (This is subject to Lake County Health, DPHHS, CDC, and any Federal or State directives.)
- ❖ Any student wanting to wear a face coverings will be allowed to do so at any time they wish.
- ❖ Phase 1 means....Limiting the number of students present in school building. Per the Governor’s orders schools should establish an estimated school re-opening timeline and share with staff, parents, and the Montana Office of Public Instruction. Gatherings of groups larger than normal class size are recommended being cancelled (e.g. assemblies, recess).
- ❖ Delivery Instruction
- ❖ Off-site learning will occur Monday through Thursday with possibility that designated students might be scheduled for workshops throughout the week at designated times. Students will use hand sanitizer or wash their hands upon entering or leaving the building. Face coverings will be required for workshops.
- ❖ Teachers will teach from their classrooms and socially distant themselves from colleagues.
- ❖ Meals will be grab-n-go for pick-up and delivery (if allowable).
- ❖ Co-curricular activities will be cancelled.
- ❖ Sports will be cancelled.
- ❖ School buildings will be open to school personnel and students only. The buildings will not be available community groups or available for rent.
- ❖ **School Closure means....Either by Governor’s or County Health’s directive the school buildings are to be closed. In that event the Charlo School District 7J Plan of Action for School Closure due to COVID 19 will be updated and implemented per School Board Approval.**

#### **Board Policies**

**BP 3417:** In all proceedings related to this policy, the District will respect a student’s right to privacy. Although the District is required to provide educational services to all school-age children who reside within its boundaries, it may deny attendance at school to any child diagnosed as having a communicable disease that could make a child’s attendance harmful to the welfare of other students. The District will rely on advice of the public health and medical communities in assessing the risk of transmission of various communicable diseases to determine how best to protect the health of both students and staff. The District will manage common communicable diseases in accordance with Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services guidelines and communicable diseases control rules. The District may temporarily exclude from school attendance a student who exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease that is readily transmitted in a school setting. The District may notify parents of other children attending a school that their children have been exposed to a communicable disease without identifying the particular student who has the disease.

**BP 3413:** Please note that House Bill 702 passed the 2021 Legislature and was signed into law effective May 14, 2021. New Section 1 of that law provides that it is an unlawful discriminatory practice for a governmental entity to refuse, withhold from, or deny to a person any local or state services, goods, facilities, advantages, privileges, licensing, educational opportunities, health care access, or employment opportunities based on the person's vaccination status. The law also provides it is unlawful for an employer to refuse employment to a person, to bar a person from employment, or to discriminate against a person in compensation or in a term, condition, or privilege of employment based on the person's vaccination status. Finally, House Bill 702 provides it is unlawful for a public accommodation to exclude, limit, segregate, refuse to serve, or otherwise discriminate against a person based on the person's vaccination status.

**BP 2162:** It is the intent of the District to ensure that students who are disabled within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are identified, evaluated, and provided with appropriate educational services. For those students who need or are believed to need special instruction and/or related services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the District shall establish and implement a system of procedural safeguards.

**BP 2162P:** If the parent or legal guardian of a student who qualifies under Section 504 for special instruction or related services disagrees with a decision of the District with respect to: (1) the identification of the child as qualifying for Section 504; (2) the District's evaluation of the child; and/or (3) the educational placement of the child, the parents of the student are entitled to certain procedural safeguards. The student shall remain in his/her current placement until the matter has been resolved through the process set in the policy.

## **June 2021**

### **Part III – Updated Compliance for the District's Previously Adopted Plan for the Safe Return to In-person Instruction and Continuity of Services:**

Section 2001(i)(3) of the ARP Act states that a school district that developed a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services prior to the date of enactment of the ARP Act will be deemed to have met the requirement to develop a plan under section 2001(i)(1) as long as the plan meets the statutory requirements (*i.e.*, is publicly available on the LEA's website and was developed after the LEA sought and took into account public comment).

The School District's plan meets the requirements of Section 2001(i)(1) and (i)(2) of the ARP Act. The School District's plan is available on our website and, as noted above, was developed through a process that included extensive public comment. Further, we have, as part of the organization of the School District's plan for purposes of the ARP Act, revised the School District's plan at a meeting held on June 15, 2021 that included not just a notice of opportunity for public input but which specifically invited meaningful consultation with and input from:

1. Students; families; school and district administrators (including special education administrators); teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions; and
2. Tribes; civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

We have considered the input of all affected parties and have carefully deliberated regarding the best possible means by which our district can provide safe effective learning environments for each of our students.

### **June 2021 - September 30, 2024**

#### **Part IV – Schedule for Future Review and Updates:**

Consideration of this Safe Return to Schools and Continuity of Services Plan shall be added as a standing agenda item on each regular and special meeting of the board of trustees throughout the 2021-24 school years. The agenda item shall, at a minimum, include notice of any changes to the plan recommended by the administration with an invitation for input, notice of opportunity for public input, and consultation with:

1. Students; families; school and district administrators (including special education administrators); teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions; and
2. Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes; Missoula Area Education Cooperative; stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.