

Greetings MMW Families and Students,

I hope this note finds you and your families well and gearing up for another new school year. One thing we know for certain is that this year will be unlike any other. Undoubtedly, we are all charting brand-new waters. I share both your apprehension and your excitement as we prepare to see friends, meet teachers, and jump into new learning – in both hybrid and e-learning environments.

Throughout the past several weeks, I have fielded many questions and concerns related to the start of school. First, I apologize that I could not be more concise and specific in my responses. I understand the difficulty of not knowing what school would look like and being asked to make important decisions based on limited information. As you are aware, we have been planning, re-planning, and working hard to develop a hybrid plan and an e-learning plan that will be safe, functional and robust for students and staff. Until these revised plans were fully approved by the School Board, I was not able to share details. I am happy to say that the Board has approved these plans, and we are ready to move forward, full steam ahead! Thank you for your patience and support during this time.

The following are more details regarding the return to school and the Hybrid and E-learning MMW learning models. **This note contains a lot of information, be sure to scroll down to the end for important back to school details.**

Hybrid-Block Schedule Overview

- Students will spend two days physically in school (Either Monday/Tuesday (Team Tonka) or Thursday/Friday (Team Skippers))
- The students will be split by alphabet into 50/50 groups
- Last names starting with A-Li will be Mon/Tues, and they will be called Team Tonka. Last names starting with Lo-Z will be Thurs/Fri, and they will be called Team Skippers. We will share specific assignments for you students in the coming week.
- Due to strict space limitations set forth by the state, we are unable to accommodate requests for changing teams at this time.
- All classes will be at 50% capacity or less.
- Wednesday is an e-learning day for all.
- On weeks where we have Monday or Friday off, we will follow the 2-day in person/online rotation. We will not have Wednesday e-learning during these weeks.
- The block schedule will have three classes each day + lunch/advisory. Each class will be approximately 99 minutes.
- On two of the e-learning days (Mon/Tues for Team Skippers and Thurs/Fri for Team Tonka), students will receive a combination of comprehensive streamed or online specific instruction; specific online content will vary by course.
- The schoolwide e-learning day (Wednesday) will have a “skinny schedule.” All classes will meet briefly, followed by MAST/office hours/or other intervention time. The student day will end at 2 p.m. on Wednesdays.
- Students have advisory three days per week (in-person days and Wednesday online whole class)

- The building opens for the school day at 8:45 a.m. There will not be access to the building prior to 8:45 unless pre-arranged with a staff member
- We are developing a structured before-school supervision program (reduced capacity). More details will be shared soon.
- After-school Activities will be available on in-person days.

Hybrid Safety Details and Protocols

Our first priority is that school be as safe as possible for students and staff. In addition to districtwide health and safety guidelines, MMW's specific protocols will include the following:

- Masks need to be worn at all times, unless removed for instruction purposes (specific music or phy ed. activities, or other mask-free exemptions as directed by the MDH and MDE). MMW will follow the District [Face Covering Policy](#) in all cases of non-compliance with the mask expectations.
- Staggered start and end time of the school day
 - Students will enter the building at assigned entry points
 - Supervisory staff will confirm temperature checks and ensure that students enter the building and go directly to their first hour class.
 - We will have a staggered exit. Students who walk, get picked up by private vehicle or ride the bus will exit at announced, periodic intervals.
- Passing time and other unstructured times
 - 5-minute staggered passing time
 - Students will leave the classroom when their group is released/announced. Entrance into the hallway will be split into three groups.
 - All hallways are marked with six foot social distancing stickers. Staff will ensure that students move continuously in the hall, avoid congregating with peers and head to their next class destination.
 - Students may have backpacks to carry materials from class to class. Access to lockers will be limited to the beginning and end of day or if needed for instructional purposes. Lockers will be assigned in mid-September.
 - During passing time, restrooms will be monitored to ensure appropriate capacity.
- Desks will be surface disinfected at the beginning and the end of class.
- Individual students will eat lunch in the cafeteria (or outside, weather permitting) six feet apart.
- Students will have opportunities to be outside throughout the day.

*Please see the District's [Back to School 2020-21](#) website for additional information, including health protocols and safety measures in place.

Full E-Learning

Students selecting the full e-learning option will follow the same schedule as hybrid students (with some at-home variations). Students will have access to their full course registrations. Most courses will be fully online sections, with a dedicated online teacher and all students participating in full e-learning. Some e-learning courses may also be combined with MME

students and teachers. A limited number of specialized courses may be streamed with hybrid courses and online support.

More information on the e-learning model is below and on an [e-learning section](#) on the District website.

- Students will be assigned to an e-learning section with a dedicated teacher and other students who have selected that option whenever possible. Depending on course enrollment, some courses may be live streamed to provide online students access to all courses.
- E-learning follows the same scope/sequence/calendar as in-person learning. Students can transition from online to hybrid at the end of any quarter.
- E-learning days are regular school days for students and teachers.
- Students will receive the full grade level curriculum, this will include specialist classes.
- Students will be provided with a regular schedule for instruction. Instruction will be a blend of synchronous (live streaming) and asynchronous learning activities and will include digital and non-digital learning activities, such as reading a book, writing a response, or completing a project.
- Students will use a variety of technology tools and will be provided text and materials needed to support their learning.
- Relationships are essential to learning. Great effort will be made to develop relationships between students and teachers, teachers and parents and student to student.
- Parents are an essential part of student success. Specific supports and ongoing parent and teacher communication will include back to school events, such as orientation to class set up and communication tools, regular contact and class meetings with the teacher, and opportunities for one to one meetings with the teacher.
- All programs will be provided including Immersion, high potential, accelerated, and advanced classes. Depending on course enrollment, some programs may be provided using live streaming to provide online students access. Supplemental and pull-out programming will be provided in both synchronous and asynchronous formats.
- The District will honor IEPs and 504s and provide additional support for our students who receive special education services and for other students who need a higher level of support.

Activities

Extracurricular activities are especially important for us during this time. To ensure that students can safely participate in extracurricular activities, coaches and advisors are continually planning how to adjust their activities to be safe and engaging. Each activity will look a little different and have a maximum capacity per session, but we will have most of our regular activities this fall except volleyball, which is postponed until later in the year. Activities for later in the year will be announced later.

A few details:

- Registration for sports will be open starting the week of Monday, August 24th.
- Each activity will be divided into Tonka (Mondays and Tuesdays) and Skippers (Thursdays and Fridays). Families will need to register for the activity that corresponds to their student's in-person schedule.
- For students who are doing e-learning, private school, or homeschool, they will need to sign up for the days they would have been at school.
- Cross Country Running registrations that are already completed will be manually adjusted to the appropriate days—families do not need to re-register.
- Registration for Quarter 1 Brightwatch will be open starting August 24th and will be based on days of the week. This means you will need to sign up separately for the day or days of the week your student would attend Brightwatch. The fee for this activity has been prorated for each day. We will have limited space for Brightwatch to observe social distancing.

Please stay tuned for additional activity registrations to open after school begins in the fall and as the school year progresses. Announcements for activities will be made in school to students and via the parent newsletter. Please visit the MMW Activities Page for more information on individual activities: <https://www.minnetonkaschools.org/activities/middle/mmw>.

Back to School information

We are absolutely thrilled to soon see students once again at MMW – whether it be on a screen or in the physical classroom. Here are details on some important upcoming Back to School events:

- **Meet the Teacher Night**
 - Meet the Teacher Night will be virtual this year. Watch for an email during the week of August 31 with a link to your teachers' introduction and basic information needed prior to the start of school.
- **6th Grade and New Student Orientation**
 - We are excited to invite 6th graders and new students into the building on Thursday, September 3 from 4-7:30 p.m.
 - Students will be assigned to one of six 30-minute sessions. During this time, students will get their schedule, tour the building, find their classrooms and have their school picture taken.
 - Due to space limitations, students may attend with ONE parent or guardian.
 - After the tour, new students are invited to attend their iPad orientation session in the MMW Media Center.
 - Watch for more information about times and details next week.
- **School Pictures**
 - School pictures will take place for 6th grade students and new students on Thurs., September 3.

- o All other students may have their picture taken on Friday, September 4. Pictures will be taken in the cafeteria. There will be no access to the rest of the building on this day.
- o We will have another make-up session after the start of the school year.
- o Please see the [attached flyer](#) for more details and ordering information.
- **Gym Uniforms**
 - o We are currently waiting on MDH guidance on whether we will use locker rooms to change for Physical Education classes. Until we have specific guidance, we are pausing on sharing information regarding purchasing a gym uniform for your student. Stay tuned for more information.
- **Schedules**
 - o With the approval of the block schedule and the confirmed lists of those selecting hybrid vs. online, we have jumped into the process of building schedules, classes, room assignments that will work for all.
 - o Our goal is to share these to 6th grade on September 3 and for all students by September 4.
 - o For your reference, we will post to the website and send home the final version of the Hybrid and E-learning block schedules.

Even with all of these details laid out, I know that many unanswered questions remain and a lot of work still needs to be done. Please refer to the website for more health and safety information, as well as other specifics not addressed here. I will also be sharing new updates as they come forward. Additionally, learning these new routines and habits will require repeated practice, adjustments and time. In the midst of this transition, I invite you to join me in exercising grace and understanding towards our students, staff and each other.

Again, I am truly grateful for your partnership, trust, and support as we navigate these changes together. I speak for the entire MMW staff when I promise that we will do our very best to ensure your child's safety, well-being, and phenomenal growth during the 2020-21 school year.

Don't hesitate to reach out with questions.

Take care and see you soon!

Freya Schirmacher
Principal, MMW