



Faribault Public Schools

Faribault Public Schools provides a high-quality and equitable education that nurtures, inspires, challenges, and empowers all students to engage and grow as learners and citizens.

Dear Faribault Public Schools families,

Thank you for your cooperation and support as we've navigated the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Over the last two months, your willingness to adapt and embrace our new safety protocols allowed students to return to school and begin to build valuable in-person relationships with our staff.

Unfortunately, since you last heard from me on Saturday, public health data has continued to worsen, and we have seen an increase in positive cases and COVID-like symptoms among our students and staff. Because of this, we will shift all students to distance learning beginning next Thursday, Nov. 19. The final day of in-person learning will be Friday, Nov. 13. There will be no school Monday, Nov. 16 or Tuesday, Nov. 17, as we will use those as pivot days for staff to plan for the transition to distance learning. Next Wednesday, Nov. 18, will operate as it did under the previous hybrid model.

At this time, the distance learning period is planned to go through the end of winter break. Based on guidance from Rice County Public Health and the Minnesota Department of Education's direction, all high school and middle school athletics and activities will be suspended beginning Nov. 19.

Our district Incident Command Center team made these decisions after consultation with Rice County Public Health and the Minnesota Department of Health Regional Support Team. The ICC team, which includes health officials, administrators, teachers, paras, secretaries, and school nurses, considered the following data:

- We currently have 11 confirmed positive cases among Faribault Public Schools students and staff. We have had 40 confirmed cases since the start of the school year.
- There were 334 new cases in Rice County from Nov. 2 through Nov. 8. The latest preliminary Rice County two-week case rate per 10,000 residents is 77.39 and expected to rise in the coming days.
- We've faced increased staff shortages in November due to more staff absent because of illness and/or in quarantine, and fewer available substitute teachers.
- The MDH is predicting a continued increase in cases in Rice County and the state in the coming weeks as people spend more time indoors.

Our goal is for students to return to in-person or hybrid learning after winter break. Our ICC team will continue to track several data points, including the county case rate, additional cases reported among our school population, and other local conditions, to determine when it's safe for in-person learning to resume.

Food service

We are committed to ensuring all children in the district receive a nutritious breakfast and lunch. To that end, we have designed two options for meal service to support the needs of our students. As we pivot next week, there will be no daily meal service available on Monday (Nov. 16) or Tuesday (Nov. 17). The following food service options will begin on Wednesday (Nov. 18):

- **Daily:** Jefferson Elementary will serve hot lunches accompanied by a cold breakfast from Door 2 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday, during distance learning days.

- **Weekly:** Faribault High School will serve 7-day meal packs from 1-6 p.m. Wednesdays from Door 9 (next to the weight room). The 7-day meal pack contains both a breakfast and lunch meal. Instructions for preparing and storing these meals are provided in the pack.

Please contact the Food Service office at 507-333-6773 with any questions you may have.

Child care

The district will offer child care for Tier I essential workers during distance learning beginning next Wednesday, Nov. 18, at Roosevelt Elementary. There will be a fee for any time before or after regular school hours. Care during school hours will be free to eligible Tier I families. To qualify, both parents need to be considered Tier I essential workers and be scheduled to work during regular school hours. Additional information will be provided soon about registration for this program. Non-Tier I families that want care will be charged the regular Kids World fee and placed on a waiting list.

Special services

The district will prioritize providing in-person instruction and services to students with disabilities whose individualized education program calls for intensive services that cannot be provided in a distance learning model. Our resource rooms will continue with in-person learning from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. We will contact eligible families who may receive in-person services during distance learning.

McKinley Early Childhood Center

Early Childhood programs and services will move to a hybrid model with PreKindergarten classes shifting to distance learning on Wednesdays, starting on Nov. 18. Prekindergarten classes will continue to meet in person Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 16 and Nov. 17, will be pivot days for McKinley staff, so there will be no classes delivered those two days. All other early childhood programs and services will continue.

Important Days to Know

Friday, Nov. 13: Last day of current learning models (in-person hybrid K-5, A-B hybrid 6-12)

Monday, Nov. 16: No school; Pivot day for staff to prepare for distance learning

Tuesday, Nov. 17: No school; Pivot day for staff to prepare for distance learning

Wednesday, Nov. 18: School day under previous hybrid schedule

Thursday, Nov. 19: All students begin under new distance learning model

Going back to March 2020, this pandemic has disrupted many aspects of our lives, but it's made an especially large impact on education. We have made, and will continue to make, plenty of adjustments, but the good news is we're ready. Our staff has had time to prepare for another round of distance learning and students have gained valuable experience with online learning platforms and other tools like video conferencing.

Over the next few days, you will receive additional building-specific information from your school administrator, as well as a document outlining student and parent expectations for distance learning.

In the meantime, we ask that you continue to practice social distancing and wear your mask when you're in public to help limit the spread of COVID-19. The faster we can contain the virus, the sooner we will be able to safely return to school. Once again, thank you for your support, patience and understanding during this unprecedented time.

Todd Sesker
Superintendent, Faribault Public Schools