



AUSTIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ENGAGE • EMPOWER • INSPIRE

Safe Return to In-Person Learning Plan

Updated 6/10/21

Contents

Guiding Principles.....	3
2021-22 SY Return to work timeline	5
Screening for Staff and Students.....	6
Guidelines for Students and Staff Exhibiting Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19	7
Guidelines for Students and Staff Who Have Potentially Been Exposed to COVID-19.....	7
Notification Procedures for Potential Exposure	7
Data Privacy and the Prohibition of Sharing Private Data	8
Related Leave Coverage	9
Health and Safety Guidance	10
Handwashing	10
Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze	10
Social distancing	10
Gatherings and Visitors	11
Housekeeping – Cleaning and Disinfecting	11
Communications and training	12
Taskforce	12
Appendix.....	13
Vaccination and COVID-19 Testing.....	13
Continuity of Services.....	13
Facility Cleaning Methods and Considerations	13
Health Self Screen Checklist	15

Guiding Principles

Austin Public Schools (APS) is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all our students, staff and the community we serve. To ensure that, we have developed a Safe Return to In-Person Learning Plan.

Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces, and that requires full cooperation among all employees. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our students, staff and the community we serve. Employees are encouraged to continue to report any suggestions or concerns they have related to being at work and COVID-19. Employees may reach out to their building Principal or members of the COVID Task force on page 15.

APS's COVID-19 Safe Return to In-Person Learning Plan, establishes and explains the necessary policies, practices and conditions to meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) requirements for COVID-19 and federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards related to worker exposure to COVID-19 and addresses:

- identification and isolation of sick employees;
- hygiene and respiratory etiquette;
- engineering and administrative controls for social distancing;
- heightened housekeeping, including cleaning, disinfecting and decontamination

To help with understanding the "why," we have provided information behind some of the decisions included in this document.

WHAT IS "CLOSE CONTACT?"

Close contact is defined as being within the 6 foot radius of an infected person for a cumulative time of 15 minutes.

ABOUT FACE COVERINGS

Everyone can do their part to help us respond to this public health threat by following the state of MN guidelines.

When choosing to wear a face covering:

- Remember that face coverings are not intended to keep the mask wearer from getting sick. People can carry and spread the virus without showing symptoms and wearing a mask may help prevent the unknowing spread of germs.
- It is still important to maintain distance and hand washing procedures.
- Cloth face coverings should:
 - Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
 - Be secured with ties or ear loops
 - Include multiple layers of fabric
 - Allow for breathing without restriction
 - Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape
- When removing a face mask, be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. Wash your hands

- immediately after removing the mask and placing it in the laundry.
- The CDC has some resources on their web site for [how to make your own mask](#).
 - Use proper [donning and doffing techniques](#) to put on and take off your mask. Minnesota Public Health has a video that demonstrates how to do this.
 - If you are using a re-usable face covering, remember to clean it often.

A face shield (a clear plastic barrier that covers the face) allows visibility of facial expressions and lip movements for speech perception and may be used as an alternative to a face covering. For optimal protection, the face shield should extend below the chin anteriorly, to the ears laterally, and there should be no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield's headpiece. Disposable face shields should only be worn for a single use. Reusable face shields should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

VISITOR TO THE BUILDING:

To protect our staff and students APS is asking that all visitation to the building be by appointment only. When possible, staff are asked to utilize the virtual meeting space of TEAMS to reduce the need for visitors to the building.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CLEAN, SANITIZE AND DISINFECT

Cleaning removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water to physically remove germs from surfaces. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

Sanitizing lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level, as judged by public health standards or requirements. Generally speaking, sanitizing uses agents that destroy 99.999% of bacteria in 30 seconds.

Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces or objects. Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill and/or destroy germs on surfaces or objects, rather than simply reduce them. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection. Generally speaking, disinfecting is 99.9999% more effective (100,000 times more effective) against bacteria and viruses than sanitizing.

2021-22 SY Return to work timeline

July 1 2021

All employees return to working from the building. All telecommuting established under the Emergency declaration by Governor Waltz ended. Employees in positions that qualify for telecommuting may request an assessment for consideration. The telecommunications Process and Procedures document can be found on the District website under HR – Forms.

Infection control preventions

- Employees are to follow all protocols as identified in the Reopening Preparedness Plan, including daily health self-checking screening.
- Social distancing protocol in place
- Service through protective measures – temporary plastic barriers
- Extra cleaning and disinfecting protocol
- Engineering and administrative social distancing measures in place
- High use cleaning & disinfection after closing
- All State and Federal requirements will be followed.

Phase 2 – 7/26/2021 – 45/15 Students and staff return to Woodson and Sumner

Phase 3 – 8/23/2021 – All staff return for the 21-22 school year under guidance provided by the State of Minnesota and the plan developed for schools by APS.

Screening for Staff and Students

Staff and students have been informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Primary symptoms are currently identified as: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. Some people have other symptoms that include chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, diarrhea or loss of taste or smell. Please note: additional symptoms may be identified by the MDH, CDC or other medical professionals.

The following procedures are being implemented to assess an individual's health status prior to entering the school or workplace. Additional procedures are included for employees to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms.

- **Individuals are expected to assess their health condition prior to leaving their home for work EACH DAY and before taking any temperature reducing drug.** See separate health screening checklist an employee should review each day before coming to work. If symptomatic, employees are encouraged to call the Mayo Clinic Nurse line (507-293-9525) to determine the need for testing. **Student:** If symptomatic, the student will notify their building to report their absence.
- **If symptoms appear during the work day, an employee should immediately notify their supervisor.**
- **Students** - Families are encouraged to self-monitor their child for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Students exhibiting any of the symptoms of COVID-19 are to stay home from school. Families should contact their respective school/program administrator to report the student's illness and/or positive COVID-19 test results and keep APS informed if the condition worsens. APS encourages families to contact their medical provider to determine the need for testing.

Guidelines for Students and Staff Exhibiting Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19

APS will provide the [MDH recommended decision tree to Staff and Students](#). The following procedures are guidelines and may be implemented when an individual becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms.

Guidelines for Students and Staff Who Have Potentially Been Exposed to COVID-19

When a student or staff has potentially come into contact with someone who has or could have COVID-19, they should consult the Recommended MDH Decision Tree. For the purposes of this section, the Minnesota Department of Health defines “close contact” as being less than 6 feet from someone for 15 minutes or more throughout a 24-hour period.

Notification Procedures for Potential Exposure

The following procedures are being implemented for informing workers if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at their workplace.

1. Following the notification of a positive COVID-19 case within the district, the Human Resources department will collect information regarding the circumstances of the positive case including but not limited to: proximity and duration of contact with others, physical space and social distancing considerations, and any hygiene related concerns.
2. Depending on the level of exposure, employees will be contacted in the following ways:
 1. **Potential Exposure** : If no “close contact” is suspected, employees will receive a notification by email notifying the employee of the positive test result along with the steps that have and will be taken by the district to mitigate the risk of transmission as well as steps employees can take to safeguard their own health. This notification may be district-wide, specific to a building, or specific to individuals who may have potentially been in contact or close proximity to the positive case.
 2. **Confirmed Exposure**: If a true “close contact” exposure is suspected, employees will be notified by phone of the exposure and will be asked to stay home from work for up to 14 days from the date of “close contact” exposure. This close contact does qualify for the shortened quarantine option provided by the district. The employee will also likely be contacted by the Minnesota Department of Health for further follow up.

Data Privacy and the Prohibition of Sharing Private Data

APS is subject to and complies with the laws and regulations associated with the privacy of medical information. To ensure compliance with these laws and regulations, administrators, supervisors, and other employees are prohibited from revealing the name or any other private information about the individual who has reported COVID-19 symptoms or who has been tested for COVID-19, regardless of the result, with anyone besides those who absolutely need to know (i.e. Human Resources). Only the individual may share information about themselves, if they so choose. Administrators, supervisors, and other employees are prohibited from sharing any private information, under any circumstance, regardless of whether the information is widely known.

1
EARLY ENGAGEMENT
Contact tracing begins with identifying and engaging employees who have been identified with COVID-19 symptoms or those who have tested positive for the virus.

2
IDENTIFICATION
Contacts of the suspected or positive-tested employee are identified and listed. This includes those who have had meaningful exposure to the diagnosed employee during the period of potential transmission, which may begin before or during the onset of symptoms.

3
NOTIFICATION
Contacts are notified of their status and informed of implications and next steps, such as how to find care. Depending on local public health guidance, quarantine or isolation could be required for high-risk contacts.

4
MONITORING
Contacts are monitored regularly for symptoms and tested for infection. Results of monitoring help determine the most appropriate intervention, including quarantine.

Related Leave Coverage

APS has several policies in place that promote workers staying at home when they or a member of their family are sick. All of these policies are regular and outlined in master agreements and personnel policies. Please note: Employees may be required to provide medical documentation for use of paid or unpaid leave. Medical documentation requested may need to outline specific accommodations as it relates to the leave reason and restrictions of the employee.

APS Human Resources is 507-460-1910
 Mayo Clinic Austin number is 507-433-7351
 Mayo Clinic COVID-19 Nurse line is 507-293-9525

Reason (as listed above)	Options
Ill or Showing Symptoms of COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request the use of medical leave according to your master agreement or personnel policy. •
Close contact with individuals who have been diagnosed with COVID-19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request the use of medical leave according to your master agreement or personnel policy. •
Living with family members who are ill or showing symptoms of COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request the use of family medical leave according to your master agreement or personnel policy. •
Other Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to work, maintain social distancing and proper hygiene and use PPE if appropriate. • Request the use of personal leave/vacation leave according to your master agreement or personnel policy.

Health and Safety Guidance

Handwashing

Basic infection prevention measures are ongoing at our workplaces at all times. Employees are instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their day, prior to any mealtimes and after using the bathroom. Hand-sanitizer, as available, will be located in departments for employee use when employees are not able to wash their hands. Employees should avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

If it becomes necessary for a visitor to enter a building. The visitor should use hand sanitizer prior to or immediately upon entering the facility. All buildings will have public hand-sanitizer dispensers.

In the event there is a sanitizer shortage, hand washing will be used in its place.

Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

Employees and visitors are instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing to avoid touching their face, in particular their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. They should dispose of tissues in the trash and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on posters and supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available to all workers and visitors. Signs will be displayed throughout buildings.

Social distancing

Social distancing has been implemented, as applicable, in the workplace through the following engineering and administrative controls:

- Use of remote meeting technology while at work
- Flexible, split and staggered shifts (Based upon our open conditions)
- Any others

The continuation of the measures outlined above will be reviewed on an on-going basis per department and per position. Positions whose job duties necessitate that they have student or co-worker collaborative work, may be required to be on-site.

Employees should maintain six feet of social distancing. Masks and/or gloves are available to employees who come into close contact with the public as part of their work duties or while working with a co-worker and not able to maintain social distance. Initially, APS will be using temporary barriers to reduce exposure to respiratory droplets.

Employees should try to adhere to a one-person per vehicle/equipment when possible. If this is not possible, employees should wear a mask.

Social distancing signage will be posted for employees and visitors including floor signs, where appropriate, to ensure social distancing is easy and visible. Retractable stanchions, portable guards, portable panels, where appropriate, will also be utilized to support enforcement of social distancing.

Gatherings and Visitors

To comply with current public health orders, APS will be limiting building visitors. It is also encouraged that student drop-off and pick-up occur outside the building, rather than inside.

Housekeeping – Cleaning and Disinfecting

Custodial practices are currently in place, including enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of general areas in the work environment, including restrooms, break rooms, meeting rooms, door handles, elevator panels, railings, etc. Employees should also frequently clean and disinfect high-touch areas, such as phones, keyboards, touch screens, copy/postage machines, etc. and where appropriate equipment, tools and machinery should also be disinfected.

Employees are asked to wipe/disinfect their personal workspaces and electronics at least once each day. These areas can be cleaned using the provided disinfectant spray or alcohol-based wipes (as available).

Employees using vehicles and equipment are expected to wipe/disinfect door handles (inside/outside, steering wheel, seat, gear shift, radio/climate control/other knobs, glove box entry, etc.).

Employees should avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.

Communications and training

This Reopening Plan will be communicated via postings in the work places, emailed to employees and shared by supervisors to those without email. Additional communication will be ongoing via email, and supervisor updates to employees. Posters addressing proper hand washing, covering cough/sneeze and other reminders related to COVID-19 will be placed throughout the buildings.

Human Resources will monitor how effective the plan is by requesting feedback and concerns from employees as well as personal observation. Modifications will be made as necessary.

Although building specific protocols may vary slightly between departments, all of the above guidelines should be utilized.

While these are guidelines in place for employees while at work, it is also important that employees continue to follow recommended guidelines and continued enhanced sanitary practices while away from work as well, for the safety of themselves and their co-workers.

Taskforce

APS has formed a taskforce to work on the modifications needed for the upcoming school year. The taskforce includes the District Response team, members of the health and safety committee and the following people:

Name	Title/Building
John Alberts	Executive Director of Organization Development
Brian Beasley	Director of B&G
Jessica Cabeen	Principal
Kelly Pryor	Secretary
Tina Janning	Paraeducator
Tom Compton	AEA
Jeff Dudycha	Custodian
Mary Weikum	Director of Food Service
Teri Uher	Food service
Shaylie Meyer	Licensed School Nurse
Allison Gunderson	COVID Coordinator

Executive Director of Organization Development and COVID Coordinator Allison Gunderson serve as the point of contact for all COVID-19 related matters in the district. This person is also responsible for coordinating with local health authorities regarding positive COVID-19 cases.

Building Principals will serve as the COVID-19 Program Coordinator for each building. This person will communicate concerns, challenges, and lessons learned related to COVID-19 preventive activities as needed with staff, students and their families, school and district leadership, and local health officials. Their contact information can be found on the district website listed with each building.

Appendix

Vaccination and COVID-19 Testing

APS will continue to work with MDH, MDE, Mayo Medical and Mower County Health to provide opportunities for staff and students to participate in vaccination and testing events. Please monitor district and community communications for announcements.

Continuity of Services

APS in collaboration with other local agencies and providers will continue to provide continuity of services to address student academic needs. This will be accomplished through a combination of face to face and virtual as needed as well as following our multi-tiered systems of support plan. APS in collaboration with other local agencies and providers will continue to provide continuity of services to address students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs. This will be accomplished through face to face and virtual consultations as needed with our district student support professional team, through the employee assistance program, and contacted therapy services through Gerard. Student health continuity of services will be accomplished through onsite nursing staff. Continuity of food distribution will occur onsite food service with a grab and go option. Remote food distribution within the community may be an option as it was an option in the summer of 2020.

Facility Cleaning Methods and Considerations

Cleaning Considerations

APS has prepared in-depth cleaning practices to prevent the exposure of COVID-19. Key elements include:

- Staff will utilize “Number 19”, which is an approved disinfectant on Material Safety Data Sheet(MSDS).
- The dwell time of product is 10 minutes.
- The MSDS states that that no PPE is required.
 - Gloves will be made available for any employees that may experience irritation or drying of skin. Please ask the building custodian for gloves.
- The MSDS is available to staff in Schoology – Course title.
- The containers are pre-labeled with GHS compliant labels.
- Staff have received training on good cleaning practices and Employee Right-to-Know. Records are located in Schoology – Course title.
- See building custodian for refill.

When technology items are needing to be cleaned, spray “Number 19” on micro fiber cloth and wipe down to prevent damage to the equipment.

The following are EPA lists effective against COVID-19:

- ***EPA List - <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>***
- ***Center for Biocide Chemistries List - <https://www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronavirus-Fighting-Products-List.pdf>***
- ***Alcohol solutions greater than 70% alcohol***

Ventilation

Efforts will be made to run ventilation in all buildings at the highest level available for current systems.

Policy

Austin Public Schools [Health and Safety Policy #807](#) has been consulted and is reflected in the decisions outlined within this plan. Members of the Health and Safety Team have been consulted and played an integral role in developing this plan.



AUSTIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Health Self Screen Checklist

YOUR CHILD MUST STAY HOME IF THEY HAVE AT LEAST ONE SYMPTOM FROM THIS LIST:

Fever of 100.4 F or higher

Difficulty or trouble breathing

A new cough, or cough gets worse

New loss of taste or smell

YOUR CHILD MUST STAY HOME IF THEY HAVE AT LEAST TWO SYMPTOMS FROM THIS LIST, EVEN IF THEY DO NOT HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS FROM THE LIST ABOVE:

Sore throat

Muscle pain

Nausea

Excessive fatigue (being very tired)

Vomiting

New or severe headache

Diarrhea

New nasal congestion or runny nose

Chills

SAFETY FIRST

If a child must stay home because they have symptoms, the other children living in the house need to stay home from school or child care, too (quarantine). This means they must not take part in activities outside of the home for at least 14 days, unless a COVID-19 test, a doctor, or some other health care provider finds that the child does not have COVID-19.

For more information, please visit
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/attendance.pdf>.

MAYO CLINIC
507-433-7351

MAYO CLINIC LANGUAGE SERVICES
507-434-1396