

The Minnetonka Return-to-School Safe Learning Plan

Buses:

All resident students will be offered District-provided transportation to their assigned schools (students within two miles of their school will need to pay the fee set by the Board). Non-resident students who can get to a bus stop within the District may ride District buses. All passengers are being required by the CDC and State of Minnesota to wear masks for the duration of their trips on buses. Normal distancing will be allowed. These expectations include buses for District-sponsored athletics, field trips and group travel for programming. Other requirements on the bus are as follows:

- Students from the same household are encouraged to sit together.
- Students may only ride the buses designated for their transportation to and from school.
- Windows and roof hatches will be opened to the extent weather permits to increase airflow and circulation.
- Buses will be cleaned and disinfected regularly using disinfectant products that are approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for effective use against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
 - The cleaning will focus on frequent cleaning of touched surfaces in the vehicle (e.g., surfaces near the driver's seat, hard seats, door handles, seat belt buckles, doors and windows, grab handles).
- Doors and windows will be open when cleaning the vehicle and between trips to let the vehicles thoroughly air out.

Arrival Into the Building:

- Parents/guardians and/or individuals must complete a home screening before sending their children to school/programming.
- The District will work to minimize interaction of students between drop-off and entrance to school facilities, promoting 3 feet of social distancing as much as possible.
- The District will encourage social distancing in hallways and common areas.
- Students will be encouraged to wash their hands when entering the classroom (if a sink is available in the room) or on the way to the classroom.

Lunchrooms:

The goal is to continue to encourage good hygiene, frequent cleaning, and healthy behaviors in eating areas, including social distancing of three feet as much as possible. Staff will support the cleaning of surfaces between lunches. Students will be encouraged to clean their spaces as they leave the respective area.

Students in Grades 9-12 will be served their lunches in the cafeteria at the High School. Students will continue to be able to eat lunch in the Cafeteria or the South Commons area.

Students who have concerns about eating in the cafeteria will have an option to eat in a designated gym. They will be able to reserve a desk in that gym for a separated eating area that will allow significant spacing. These measures will allow for social distancing of three feet, as much as possible.

Students in middle schools will be served in their cafeterias, and designated cohort groups will be identified for every student. Students will be required to sit with their cohort group. Social distancing of three-feet will be expected, as much as possible. Students will self-select their cohort group for seating at lunch. Each quarter students will have approximately two weeks to select a different group. Students will then remain in their assigned group for the remainder of the quarter. The process will be repeated each quarter. This system will allow staff to more accurately and efficiently do contact tracing, if needed.

Students in Grades K-5 will be served lunches in the lunchrooms and/or classrooms based on social distancing guidelines as well as the space availability in each school. The balance between eating in the cafeteria and classrooms will vary among the schools. Every effort should be made to provide the three-foot distancing in the eating area. Students eating in the lunchrooms should sit with their class.

Passing from Class-to-Class:

Students will occasionally pass from one class to another in the elementary schools, and they should be carefully managed to maintain social distancing both ways in the hallways. Middle school and high school students will be passing after each period and should be managed to ensure proper social distancing to the extent possible. Students should stay to their right as they move through the hallways and enter rooms. Clustering in the hallways should be avoided.

Ventilation and Air Cleaning:

A critical aspect of Minnetonka's efforts to provide a safe environment for all occupants of our school buildings and offices is the high-quality protection provided by the District's ventilation system and the auxiliary system of air purifiers in classrooms and offices throughout the schools. This system assures that appropriate fresh air is introduced to every room frequently and minute particles, including the Coronavirus, are removed before infecting inhabitants. Therefore, the District provides two important layers of protection to inhabitants of all rooms in the District through its high-quality ventilation systems that have been certified by engineers and air purification systems that have been installed in all classrooms and offices. These purifiers provide extraordinary protection by removing germs from the air at a level necessary to extract the COVID virus.

The District had mechanical engineers from ATSR Architects & Engineers review all of our mechanical ventilation systems to verify that they were performing up to fresh air quality standards required by building codes, which are in alignment with fresh air standards for buildings set by the American Society of Heating, Air-Conditioning and

Refrigeration Engineers (ASHRAE). The District received confirmation from them that our ventilation systems were performing as necessary to provide the proper fresh air per occupant. This was very important for the District to know, so that we could be confident in continuing to use District buildings all year long during the first full school year during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Fresh air supply is very important.

The District was also interested in providing another level of safe air in each building and it was able to locate a unit built by Medify Air (www.medifyair.com) that filters at HEPA13 level, which is commonly referred to as medical grade, and filters down to 0.100 micron. This is very important because the COVID-19 virus is 0.125 microns in diameter, and it was necessary to have filtering down to that level to be able to trap it. There were many other air purification systems available that would filter to 0.200 or 0.300 microns, which would not trap the COVID-19 virus. At that time, this was the only one that the District could find on the market that would filter down to 0.100 micron. The District purchased 1,159 of those units so that we could equip every classroom, specialist room, media center, music room, office and place of work in the District with at least one, and we put several in larger spaces.

The District purchased MA-40 units, which can filter all the air in a classroom every approximately 30 minutes. The important thing about these units, in addition to trapping the virus in the filter, is that they set up an air flow that pulls air down and away from noses and mouths of room occupants. So, if a person is talking, or sneezing, or coughing, any microscopic droplets that they may eject are entrained in the air flow (viruses cannot "swim upstream") and are drawn down and away from noses and mouths.

Temperature-Taking Expectations:

Temperature-taking will be available to all students and staff at the beginning of the day.

Promoting Good Hygiene and Health Behaviors:

- The virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly spread by respiratory droplets, and all efforts will be focused on preventing the spread of these droplets and the virus contained therein.
- HEPA filters will remain in all instructional spaces and buildings.
- Regular cleaning and disinfection of our learning spaces and vehicles will continue and they will be cleaned and disinfected regularly using disinfectant products that are approved and effective against the COVID-19 virus.
- Students and staff should wash their hands often throughout the day with soap and water.
- If soap and water are not readily available, one should use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Appropriate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, disinfectant) will be available and strategically placed in areas where they can be/are frequently used.

- Schools will build routines of hand hygiene into the daily school schedule for all students and staff, including handwashing and sanitation breaks during or between classroom activities.
- The District will clean and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces and/or shared items and limit shared items.
- **Students who are ill should stay home.**
- **Staff who are ill should stay home.**
- Anyone who has interacted with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 should stay home and contact their health care provider
- **Anyone who has COVID-like symptoms and is awaiting test results should stay home, along with all household members.**
- Students and staff should stay home if they have a fever (100°F or higher), or other symptoms of COVID-19 are present
 - Additional symptoms of COVID-19 include:
 - New onset cough or a cough that gets worse
 - Difficulty/hard time breathing
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - OR at least 2 of the following:
 - chills
 - muscle pain
 - sore throat
 - extreme fatigue/feeling very tired
 - new severe/very bad headache
 - new nasal congestion/stuffy or runny nose
 - gastrointestinal symptoms of diarrhea, vomiting, or nausea

Masks:

Requirements on masks have changed from last year for many students and staff. For the 2021-22 school year:

The Board has determined that all students and staff in Grades K-8 and visitors in the elementary and middle school buildings will be required to wear masks inside the buildings. There will be a process for exceptions for medical reasons only. If you have questions about medical exemptions, please contact the District's health services director Annie Lumbar Bendson at annie.lumbarbendson@minnetonkaschools.org

It is strongly recommended that students and staff in Grades 9-12 and visitors to the High School wear masks. By federal requirement, all students on buses will need to wear masks.

N95 and KN95 masks, which provides more protection for the wearer of the mask and others than other face coverings, will be available to students and staff. The District has more than 300,000 of these masks in different sizes. They will be provided to students and staff, as requested, once we get closer to the start of school. Your school principal will communicate with you about how the masks will be made available in the coming week or so. N95 and KN95 masks cannot be washed, so they will need to be replaced frequently, if you choose to use them. While we encourage parents to purchase a good supply of N95 or KN95 masks for their students to use after the initial few distributions at the schools, other masks are, of course, allowed.

Quarantine and Isolation Guidelines:

- All COVID-positive school community members are required to report their positive test results to their building and/or program supervisor.
- For individuals who test positive for COVID, they will be required to isolate until all three of these things are true:
 - It has been at least 10 days since they first felt sick or tested positive (if asymptomatic); and,
 - They feel better. Their cough, shortness of breath or other symptoms are better; and,
 - They have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Minnetonka Schools will require a quarantine period for those identified as a close contact of a COVID positive case AND who do not qualify for an exemption from quarantine due to vaccine status or a previous COVID infection within the last 90 days.

EXPOSURE AT SCHOOL/SCHOOL SPONSORED ACTIVITY

After exposure at school or in a school sponsored activity, the standard quarantine is a 10-day period.

A shortened quarantine (5-day period) may be requested by completing the appropriate form. This requires a molecular/PCR test to be completed after a full 5 days of quarantine. Testing is required on or after day five and a negative test result needs to be shown before returning to school or activities.

EXPOSURE WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD

If a member of a household tests positive for COVID, all members of that household are subject to a quarantine period.

The standard quarantine is a 14-day period for those students living in the same household as a COVID positive member.

A shortened quarantine (10-day period) may be requested by completing the appropriate form. This requires a molecular/PCR test to be completed after a full 10 days of quarantine. Testing is required on or after day ten and a negative test result needs to be shown before returning to school or activities.

Exemptions from Quarantine:

There will be no quarantining of close contacts in the elementary and middle schools because of the mask requirement. The Safe Learning Plan allows this exception that excludes students in an indoor classroom from quarantining when both the case and close contact were wearing well-fitting masks.

There are certain other circumstances where students and staff may be exempt from quarantine:

If someone has completed COVID-19 vaccination (two doses in a two-dose series or one dose in a one-dose series) and is exposed, they do not need to quarantine if ALL of the following are true:

- The COVID-19 exposure was at least 14 days after their vaccination series was fully completed.
- They do not currently have any symptoms of COVID-19.
- They have provided documentation of their vaccination series to the school health office and/or Director of Health Services that clearly indicates their name, date(s) of vaccination, and vaccine brand.

If a student or staff member does not want to provide their vaccine information and/or testing results, then they will be subject to the quarantine.

If someone has previously been infected with COVID-19 and is subsequently identified as a close contact, they do not need to quarantine if ALL of the following are true:

- Their COVID-19 illness was laboratory confirmed and exposure was within 90 days of their positive test.
- They do not currently have any symptoms of COVID-19.
- They have provided documentation of their COVID positive results to the school health office and/or Director of Health Services that clearly indicates their name, source of testing, date of testing, and positive test results.

If a student or staff member does not want to provide documentation around their positive test results, then they will be subject to a quarantine.

Additionally, it is up to the health office staff and/or Director of Health Services to determine if ALL of the criteria were met for exemption from quarantine with the final determination made by the school district using the guidelines outlined above.

Social Distancing Expectations:

- The District will expect students to be distanced, at least, three feet apart, to the extent possible, as often as possible, and teachers should strive to achieve a six-foot distance when possible. The District will strive to create as much space between people as possible during the day, recognizing that it is not always feasible to have three feet of social distancing during primary instructional time in the classroom.
- The District will provide frequent reminders for students and staff to stay at least three feet apart from one another when feasible.

- Teachers should arrange classroom seating so that students are separated from one another by three feet, and they are expected to separate unmasked students even farther apart at the High School. If it is not possible to arrange seating this way, teachers should consider turning all desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other).
- Principals should develop and keep students and staff in small cohort groups that stay together as much as possible throughout the day and from day-to-day.
- The District will limit mixing between cohort groups as much as possible (e.g., during lunch, in the cafeteria, bathroom breaks, arrival and dismissal, free periods, recess, etc.).
- Teachers will provide sufficient spacing in each room between students who are not masked in order to separate unmasked students from each other and to increase the safety of those students and other students in the classroom.
- Elementary and middle school principals should keep detailed records when groups are exposed to each other during the day to facilitate contact tracing.

Encouragement to be Vaccinated:

Staff and students who are eligible but have not been vaccinated are encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as possible. The vaccine will help control the infection of the recipients and help protect others from getting the virus.

Expectations for Testing for COVID:

Regular testing for COVID will be an important aspect of the District's effort to control any spread of COVID. All students and staff will have optional testing available to them once a week. Positive results on these tests will require the positive person to quarantine. Additional expectations are as follows:

- The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recommends that all staff and students who intend to participate in school in person get tested for COVID-19 regularly. This is in addition to anyone with symptoms or anyone who was exposed to someone who tested positive. Testing will be optional and for students will only happen with parent consent. Active testing by students and staff will protect our progress and mitigate the spread of the virus.
- The District will continue on-site testing for staff, and it will offer it every week. We anticipate the State will expand opportunities for testing for students, and we will provide updates as more information becomes available. Also, the District is contracting with a private testing company to assure more frequent testing is available.
- Please be advised that the District accepts only laboratory-confirmed tests as valid results. These results must clearly state the person's name, source of testing, date of testing, and test results. While there are rapid test-at-home options now available on the market (that do not require samples to be sent into a lab), the District cannot accept these as valid results.

- Minnesota has an extensive statewide testing operation. Residents have several ways in which they can access no-barrier testing, including community testing sites, a mail-order at-home test program, and clinics and hospitals across the state. Tests remain no-cost to the individual, but it would be advisable to provide insurance information so the state can seek reimbursement from insurance companies.
 - A no-barrier community testing site will be provided in addition to state sites.
 - Testing sites based on specific search criteria will be provided.
 - Test kit to use at home can be picked up at the school.

Excluding for Illness:

- The Minnetonka District will use the Minnesota Department of Health’s exclusion decision tree for students and staff with COVID-19 positive results.
- The nurse in each building will be the identified point-of-contact (COVID-19 Program Coordinator) in the school building for COVID concerns.
- The program coordinator, program lead, coach, or support staff will be the identified point of contact for programming outside of the regular school day/year.
- Staff and students should be encouraged to self-monitor symptoms throughout the day and immediately report any symptoms to the Health Office or program staff.
- If a student becomes injured or ill during the school day, staff will notify the Health Office.
 - Health office staff will assist the child and/or determine if they need to go home.
 - Students who are ill will be kept isolated from well students as much as possible until a parent can pick them up.
 - If a student is symptomatic at school, the school will notify a parent/guardian for the student to be picked up and the student will be required to wear a mask while waiting.
- If a student becomes injured or ill during programming outside of the regular school day/year, the program coordinator will follow the protocols established by the District.

Contact Tracing:

Contact tracing will be done in the case of any staff or student who tests positive for COVID to determine close contacts. Families and staff will be notified to inform them of a potential exposure, even if they or their child are not required to quarantine due to universal masking, vaccination status, or a previous infection with the 90 days preceding the exposure. The student or staff member who tests positive for COVID will be required to isolate until all three of these things are true:

- It has been at least 10 days since they first felt sick or tested positive (if asymptomatic); and,

- They feel better. Their cough, shortness of breath or other symptoms are better; and,
- They have been fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.

Process When Informed of a Lab-confirmed COVID Positive Case:

If a student or staff member is notified of a positive COVID case during the regular school year, the following process should occur:

- If any staff (building or district) are made aware of a lab-confirmed COVID positive case, they will notify the school nurse at their site immediately.
 - If they are not at a building, they will notify Annie Lumbar Bendson (Director of Health Services) at 952.401.5992 or annie.lumbarbendson@minnetonkaschools.org (*preferred*)
- The school nurse will conduct contact tracing to determine close contacts and will notify parents of the student's exposure.
- The school nurse will determine if notification notices need to be sent out and if so, to whom. The administrative team will help to determine and support the notifications being sent out.
- If a student or staff member has been notified of a positive COVID case outside of the regular school year, the following process should occur:
 - If a supervisor, coach, coordinator, Principal, Athletic Director, etc. is made aware of a lab confirmed COVID positive case, they will notify Annie Lumbar Bendson (Director of Health Services) immediately at 952.401.5992 or annie.lumbarbendson@minnetonkaschools.org (*preferred*).
- The District is required to report all COVID positive results to the Minnesota Department of Health.

Maintaining a Safe Environment:

- The District will provide appropriate supplies in our schools and buildings to support healthy hygiene behaviors (such as soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, disinfectant wipes, tissues)
- The District discourages sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect.
- The District will work to separate students' belongings (in individually labeled containers, cubbies, lockers, etc.).
- The District will provide adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student their own art supplies, equipment)
- The District will ask students to avoid sharing high touch items, such as electronic devices.
- Students should not share food or beverages. Each student should bring their own water bottle. Water-filling stations are available.
- Plexiglass barriers are available to place between students in classrooms.

- The District will reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol by staff and older students.
- The District will reinforce hand washing during key times, such as:
 - arrival and dismissal
 - before, during, and after preparing or eating food
 - after using the bathroom
 - after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing
 - after touching objects with bare hands that have been handled by other people

Athletic and Other Activities:

Within the limitations ordered by the MSHSL (Minnesota State High School League), the District will conduct athletic practices and games, as well as other activities, with only social distancing required when participants are not actively engaged in the specific events or practices. Specifically, athletes who are sitting or standing on the sidelines of a practice or game, should strive to achieve a three-foot distance between athletes. Coaches/supervisors should encourage participants to ride to and from events with parents, if at all possible, in order to avoid large numbers of event participants clustering together.

Mental Health Support:

Mental health support will be available to all students during the school year, and specific information regarding the support will be provided.

Academic Support:

Added academic support will be available to all students struggling with the instruction provided virtual or in-person. Specific information regarding the available support will be provided.

Regular Cleaning of Surfaces:

As the District has done during 2020-21, surfaces will be cleaned with sanitizing solutions regularly.

Parent Volunteers

Parent volunteers will be allowed in the schools this year, and they will need to follow the expectations for students and staff in the respective buildings.