

**Special School Board Meeting
Tuesday, August 11, 2020, 8:01 PM
Pipestone Area Schools
MS/HS Auditorium
1401 7th St SW
Pipestone, MN 56164**

AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Approval of Agenda**
- 4. Board Action**
 - 1. Start of School Year Plan**
 - 2. Memorandum of Understanding for Extra Curricular Duties**
 - 3. Memorandum of Understanding for Flexible Scheduling with Teachers**
 - 4. Claire Bradley, School Counselor**
 - 5. Marlys Viland, Long Term Teacher Sub**
- 5. Adjournment**

Pipestone Area Schools



2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR
RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN



Pipestone Area Schools 2020-21 School Year Return to School

These pages contain Pipestone Area Schools plans for school during the 2020-21 school year. There are plans for three scenarios that will be implemented. Our hope is that we will operate with all students present, but understand that health conditions in our community and schools may limit attendance. Everyone has a responsibility to each other to keep COVID-19 out of our schools! Each family is responsible to follow the guidelines, procedures, and policies that have been established for the operation of our schools.

As the school year progresses, we may need to move between these scenarios depending on the levels of COVID-19 that are present in our communities. It may also apply to a specific school or grade level if COVID-19 is found. We are prioritizing that Kindergarten through Grade 5 attend school every day. We learned from last spring that Distance Learning is not the most effective for this age group so we look to have them in school as much as possible.

Scenario 1: In-Person Learning

- All students will attend school and we will attempt to social distance as best we can.

Scenario 2: Hybrid Learning

- Our facilities will operate at 50% capacity. To do this, the following grades will attend school every day as follows:
 - Kindergarten will be located at Brown Elementary
 - Grades 1 and 2 will attend Hill Elementary
 - Grades 3 through 5 will attend the Middle/High School
 - Grades 6 through 8 will attend the Middle/High School on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday with Distance Learning on Tuesday and Thursday
 - Grades 9 through 12 will attend the Middle/High School on Tuesday and Thursday and will have Distance Learning Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. There may be a few exceptions for individual courses and the school district reserves the right to alter these schedules if needed.

Scenario 3: Distance Learning

- Students will be required to learn at home. Devices and Internet Connectivity will be provided by the school district as we did last spring.
- Families who are not comfortable sending children to school may choose this option and the school district will make arrangements to provide a quality education.

2020-21 School Year

School will begin on Monday, August 24 and we will follow the school calendar. School Activities will follow their season schedules. The school year will conclude on May 14 to accommodate construction of the new elementary school. Hybrid Learning will be used for Quarter 1 of the school year beginning August 24 through October 23. The decision for how we will deliver instruction following Quarter 1 will be made by October 2.

The State's Safe Learning Plan for 2020-21 (Appendix A) will serve as guide throughout the school year. The superintendent will frequently consult with Pipestone County Health and Human Services and the MN Department of Health to monitor our community and school conditions to determine which learning model we will use to keep all students and staff safe.

Face Coverings

Face Masks/Shields will be required in all schools and during transportation. We will be patient and consistent with our expectations and respect all opinions on the matter, but everyone is expected to comply. The exceptions will be in accordance with Emergency Executive Order 20-81. Facemasks have been provided by the State of MN but students and staff will be allowed to use their own masks or face shields that must comply with School District Dress Code Policy.

General Health and Safety Guidelines

In all stages and all phases of the pandemic response and recovery, our school must comply with Center for Disease Control (CDC), State, and Local guidelines. We must provide reasonable accommodations for staff and students at higher risk for severe illness and promote behaviors that reduce spread, social distancing, frequent hand washing, and face coverings.

- Each building will screen and monitor students, but we do ask that parents follow the guidelines and monitor each child before sending to school. Please, do not send ill children to school.
- Please follow each building's procedures for coming to and leaving school.
- The school district has added extra hand washing stations and water bottle filling stations at Brown and Hill Elementary Schools.
- Hand sanitizer is available in every classroom and at the entrances to each building.
- Each classroom will be disinfected each day and will have sanitizer for any needs during the school day.

Food Service

Procedures have been established at each site. Self-service will not be allowed and strict social distancing during meals will be required. Classrooms, lunchrooms, and gymnasiums will be used for meal service.

Transportation

Social Distancing will be required as well as face coverings. Assigned seating, loading, and unloading procedures will be prescribed. Ludolph Transportation will be connecting with families on regular routes. We would encourage families to transport children if possible and utilize household carpooling when possible.

Special Education

Students who qualify to receive special education services will attend school as prescribed by their individual education plans, unless the school district is required to use Distance Learning. Special Education Case Managers will contact each family regarding services.

Support of Mental Health and Wellness

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing a tremendous amount of stress, fear, and anxiety for many people. It's important that Minnesotans have access to the mental health care resources they need to stay well during this challenging time. Our school can play an important role in helping students and staff cope, access needed resources, and build resilience.

- We will provide staff, families, and students (age-appropriate) with information on how to access resources for mental health and wellness.
- We will increase capacity to offer social support services by increasing the number of professionals on-site.
- We will encourage staff, students, and families to talk with people they trust about their feelings and concerns regarding COVID-19.

Required Health Practices

In a partnership between the MN Dept. of Education and MN Dept. of Health, Regional Support Teams have been established to support school districts for Rapid Response issues and for Health Consultation. If needed, they will coordinate testing, contact tracing, and monitor trends in our community.

Required health practices must be implemented by all Minnesota public schools. These practices are foundational to minimizing the risks of exposure to COVID-19 for students, staff, and families. These practices are considered the minimum level of implementation, and schools may not be less restrictive. Recommended health practices are additional strategies for schools to use to minimize the spread of COVID-19. The following guidance includes addressing these required health practices:

1. **COVID-19 Program Coordinators:** The point of contact for the District will be Superintendent Kevin Enerson. Additionally, each building principal will be the point of contact coordinators for their respective school building. These administrators will communicate concerns, challenges, and lessons learned related to COVID-19 preventive activities as needed with staff, students/families, school and district leadership, and local health officials.
2. **Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure:** Social distancing (also called physical distancing) means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. Social distancing is a critical tool in decreasing the spread of COVID-19. Schools must create as much space between individuals as possible during the day, recognizing that it is not always feasible to have 6 feet of social distancing during primary instructional time in the classroom. Schools must try to incorporate the following procedures:
 - Provide social distancing floor/seating markings in waiting and reception areas.
 - Systematically review and evaluate school transportation capacity with the goal of creating as much space between riders as possible, recognizing that it is not always feasible to have 6 feet of space.
 - Systematically review and evaluate classroom capacity with the goal of creating as much space between people as possible, recognizing that it is not always feasible to have 6 feet of space. Class sizes may be reduced to allow for more physical space between people.
 - Mark 6 feet of spacing in areas to remind students and staff to always stay 6 feet apart if possible.
 - Have staff monitors to curtail congregating and ensure students keep our spacing guidance.
 - Nonessential visitors, volunteers, and all external groups or organizations should be restricted.
 - Limit the number of people in school facility areas and on transportation.
 - Implement contactless pick up and/or delivery of meals and school materials.
 - Develop and keep students and staff in small cohort groups that stay together to limit mixing.
 - Arrange classroom seating so that students are separated from one another by 6 feet.
 - Keep social distancing procedures of 6 feet during meal times and walking to the lunchrooms.
 - Stagger arrival and dismissal times to avoid large group crowding.
 - Use multiple entry points for students to spread out the arrival and dismissal of students.
 - Provide multiple signage, information, and materials to remind students of proper guidance.
 - Whenever possible, hold physical education classes outside. Do not use locker rooms.
 - Arrange large space accommodations for any vocal or band classes.
 - Provide for small playground opportunities for students and continue 6-foot space guidance.
 - Allow staff to use alternate spaces for discretionary preparation time.

3. **Monitoring and Excluding for Illness:** It is proven that regular screening for symptoms and ongoing self-monitoring throughout the school day can help to quickly identify signs of illness and help reduce exposure. Staff and students should be encouraged to self-monitor symptoms throughout the day. Staff or students who develop symptoms during the school day must notify school health services or another identified point of contact in the school building immediately.

The CDC does not currently recommend universal testing to inform admitting students or staff into school. Viral testing only determines infection at the point in time the test occurs, and may miss cases in the early stages of infection. It is not known whether previous infection and recovery from COVID-19 illness protects people from reinfection. The School District will use the following procedures to monitor and exclude for illness:

- Educate staff, students, and families about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and when they/their children should stay home and when they can return to school.
 - Require that staff and students stay home if they have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 symptoms, until they meet criteria of the MDH Decision Tree (Appendix B) for return.
 - Require that staff and students stay home if they have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19, until they meet criteria for return. (Appendix C)
 - The District will follow the MDH Decision Tree for People with COVID-19 Symptoms in Youth, Student, and Child Care Programs to determine who must stay home and when staff or students may return to school.
 - A Health Screening Checklist is posted at entrances for any person entering the school building. Any employee or visitor physically entering the school building shall abide by this checklist. (Appendix D)
 - Establish and enforce sick policies to prevent the spread of disease, including enforcing staff staying home if sick.
 - Establish liberal use of sick days for students.
4. **Handling Suspected or Confirmed Positive Cases of COVID-19:** Our School Nurse will be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns and will help coordinate with local health authorities regarding positive COVID-19 cases.
- Our District will allow staff and families to self-report to the school if they or their student have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or had a close exposure to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days in a manner that is consistent with applicable law and privacy policies, including with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
 - Our District will post signage at main entrance(s) requesting that people who have been symptomatic not enter the building.
 - Our District will follow the MDH Decision Tree for People with COVID-19 Symptoms in Youth, Student, and Child Care Programs to determine when a student or staff member may return to school following illness or COVID-19 testing.
 - We will establish a dedicated space for symptomatic individuals who are waiting to go home. Distinguish this space from areas where student health services will be delivered to those who are well and need routine types of care (e.g., medication administration or first aid). This designated space will accommodate social distancing of at least 6 feet for multiple individuals if needed.
 - We will implement cleaning processes for the dedicated space between uses and as needed.
 - We will immediately isolate symptomatic individuals in the designated space at school and send them home.

- We will ensure that symptomatic students who are waiting to be picked up remain under the visual supervision of a staff member who is at least 6 feet away. Both the symptomatic student and the supervising adults should wear a cloth face covering and a mask.
- We will not place cloth face coverings or surgical masks on anyone who is unconscious or has trouble breathing, anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance, or anyone who cannot tolerate a cloth face covering due to developmental, medical, or behavioral health needs.
- We will implement cleaning and disinfecting procedures following the [COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance for Schools and Child Care](#).
- We will coordinate with Regional Support Teams and Pipestone County Health for notifying staff, families, and the public as needed if a person with COVID-19 was on the school premises while infectious in coordination with local health officials while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with FERPA and all other state and federal laws.

Future Guidance and Flexibility

This document offers broad guidance to support our ideas for our District and School scenario-based planning. Supplemental guidance and tools will be released periodically on many topics as the need appears. MDH and MDE will update strategies and guidance for our District as we learn more from experiences in Minnesota, as the COVID-19 virus changes, and as directed by the CDC.

Pipestone Area Elementary School Procedures

Morning and Afternoon Drop-Off/Pick-Up Procedures

- Morning:
 - Hill
 - Buses will drop off on the East side (6th Ave. SW).
 - Parents will drop off on the West side of Hill (7th Ave. SW).
 - Students will take backpacks and coats and go directly into the building to their classrooms upon arrival.
 - Brown
 - Buses will drop off students on the north side (original loop).
 - Parents will drop off on the south side by Brown addition (8th St. SE).
 - Students will take backpacks and coats and go directly into the building to their classrooms upon arrival.
 - MS
 - Buses will drop off on the MS West side.
 - Students will enter door S and go directly up the stairs to their rooms.
 - Parents will drop off by the library and students will enter door R and go up the stairs directly to their classrooms.
- Afternoon
 - Hill
 - Students who ride the bus will be dismissed by classroom and picked up on the East side (6th Ave. SW).
 - Parents will pick up on the West side (7th Ave. SW).
 - There will be designated signage for students to stay with their class in a specified area at parent pick up.
 - Walkers will be dismissed when buses leave and exit the East doors (6th Ave. SW).
 - Brown
 - Students will be dismissed by classroom and students that ride the bus will be picked up on the North entrance (original loop).
 - Parents will pick up students on the south side by Brown addition (8th St. SE).
 - Walkers will be dismissed from the North entrance when buses exit.
 - Middle School
 - Students who ride the bus will be dismissed by classroom and exit door S.
 - Parent pick up will be door R at the library.
 - Walkers will be dismissed after parent pick up and buses.
 - Preschool: entrance and exit as normal, except for the class at Brown School will follow Brown school procedures.

Locker Procedures

- Teachers will divide students into two groups (A/B) and use the A/B split in their classroom so that students will go out to lockers in shifts.

Recess and Physical Education Procedures

- There will be scheduled recess for each classroom throughout the day.
- Each classroom will have their own bins of equipment to use for recess and PE that will also be sanitized each night, and PE teachers will adjust bins according to teaching plans for that week.
- Physical Education at the Middle School will be held at the same time. Each class will have a Physical Education teacher and will be assigned to one of three gyms.

Music Procedures

- (Hill and Brown) Classrooms will have an A/B schedule.
- (MS) Music at the Middle School will be held at the same time. Each class will have a Music teacher and will be assigned to one of three music rooms.

Procedures of isolation if there is suspicion that a student has COVID in the at school:

- Staff will notify the nurse designee to let them know they are bringing/sending a student to them.
- The nurse designee will bring the student to the sick room and monitor them.
- The parent will be called to pick up the student immediately.
- The school will follow MDH guidelines on determining when a student be allowed to return to school.
- If the nurse designee is unavailable, the principal/school counselor/or administrative assistant will take care of the students by retrieving them and getting them to the sick room.
- Close contacts will be identified and MDH guidelines will be followed to determine who will need to quarantine for 14 days.
- Brown Sick room is the room across from the PT/OT room.
- Hill Sick room is the room next to the library.

Food Service

- Meals will be served in classrooms.

Pipestone Area Middle/High School Procedures

Coming to and from School: Parent drop off occurs in the new southeast parking and visitor drop off lane (old Circle Drive). Bus drop off continues on the west side of the building. Upon drop off, students entering the building will move to their designated areas as directed by staff members, either in the gym or the commons. At 7:45 am students will be allowed to go to the academic area for their grade level. They will be expected to move in a manner that maintains social distancing and that is guided by hallway supervisors. At 8:10 am students will be in their 1st period classroom. Movement will continue to be structured throughout the school day. At the end of the school day, students will be released in a staggered approach to allow them to move to their pick-up zones, either in the parent pick-up lane or the bus loading zone.

Hybrid Daily Schedule: The 5th grade students will meet every day and grades 6 through 8 will attend in-person on Monday-Wednesday-Friday while doing Distance Learning on Tuesday-Thursday. High school students attend in-person on Tuesday-Thursday while doing Distance Learning on Monday-Wednesday-Friday. Teachers will work with students to develop consistency in learning on this model. Students still access all the learning opportunities and resources they normally receive. Furthermore, the daily class schedules for both middle and high school have been designed to reduce movement during the school day and maximize learning opportunities on a hybrid model.

Food Service: While we will not have a before school breakfast option, students will have the opportunity to purchase a breakfast item that will be delivered to their room around 9 am. Each teacher will take a count of students who indicate they want breakfast and/or lunch. Remember, if your student indicates they want breakfast, they will be charged for it. The lunch menu will have some options for students. Lunch will be provided in the commons using a staggered time approach for all grade levels to help move students efficiently through the lunch line and maintain distancing. Tables will be set up in the commons area to promote social distancing. Middle school students will use the gym and some outdoor space for recess and movement opportunities after lunch as directed by lunch supervisors.

Lockers: Students will have access to lockers. High school students may request a locker but will be allowed to have their backpack with them. Teachers may direct where students will place their backpacks during the class period. Middle school students will be assigned lockers and not allowed to bring bookbags or backpacks to their classrooms.

Health Procedures: First of all, students who have symptoms as identified by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) should not come to school. Second, the school nurse will respond to suspected cases in accordance with MDH procedures. The nurse also maintains communication with students and families if cases are suspected or confirmed. This includes working through isolation and quarantine timeframes.

Safe Learning Plan for 2020-21

A Localized, Data-Driven Approach

Introduction

Spring 2020 brought unprecedented changes to society and our education system. Following two months of statewide distance learning, Minnesota public schools have spent summer 2020 developing contingency plans for the 2020-21 school year, based on [guidance from the Minnesota Department of Education](#) (MDE) and [public health guidelines](#) from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). During this time, MDE has made significant [public engagement efforts](#) to understand how we can better serve all Minnesota students and families, while protecting the health and safety of our school communities.

This document explains the Safe Learning Plan for the 2020-21 School Year and outlines resources and supports that are available to school districts and charter schools for the upcoming school year.

While reopening school buildings for in-person instruction is what we want for our students, the main priority must continue to be the health, safety, and wellness of our students, staff, and community.

Vision

Minnesota is the best state in the country for children to grow up in – those of all races, ethnicities, religions, economic statuses, gender identities, sexual orientations, (dis)abilities, and ZIP codes.

Purpose

Ensure that every student in the state of Minnesota receives an equitable education and has equal access to learning and instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Safe Learning Plan Goals

1. Prioritize the safety of students and staff
2. Prioritize in-person learning, especially for younger learners
3. Consider infectiousness and transmission risk among different ages
4. Support planning, while permitting flexibility for districts
5. Take into account disease prevalence at a local level

Overview: Localized, Data-driven Approach to the 2020-21 School Year

Governor Walz's [Executive Order 20-82](#) states that all Minnesota public schools must adhere to parameters determined by MDH in implementing or shifting between the three learning models laid out in the 2020-21 school year planning guidance: in-person learning, hybrid learning and distance learning.

To begin the 2020-21 school year, MDH has developed parameters using county public health data to support the determination of learning models for each school district and charter school. These parameters are detailed in the [Safe Learning Model Guidance](#) section of this document. In order to be responsive to the ever-changing public health situation throughout the state, MDH will update this plan as needed.

If a school district or charter school chooses to dial back to a more restrictive learning model than what is required by the Safe Learning Model Guidance, it must notify the education commissioner through the Learning Model Portal within 24 hours of beginning the new learning model. This portal is in development.

If a school district or charter school is considering dialing forward to a less restrictive learning model than what is required under the Safe Learning Model Guidance, it must consult with local public health officials, MDH and MDE through the [Regional Support Teams](#).

Pursuant to [Minnesota Statutes, section 12.21, subdivision 3\(11\)](#), the education commissioner is authorized to order a school district or charter school to dial back to a more restrictive learning model if the commissioner, in consultation with MDH and the school district or charter school, determines the learning model being utilized by the district or charter school is no longer safe. More restrictive models of instruction may be necessary for individual classrooms within a school based on household exposure.

As explained in [MDE's 2020-21 School Year Planning Guidance](#), regardless of learning model, all school districts and charter schools must offer an equitable distance learning option to all families who choose not to attend in-person learning due to medical risks or any other safety concerns. Families are not required to provide documentation of risks.

Public Health Guidelines

As school districts and charter schools implement in-person learning, hybrid learning and distance learning throughout the 2020-21 school year, they must continue to ensure they are adhering to the requirements and recommendations outlined in [MDH's 2020-21 Planning Guide for Schools](#), which provides guidance in the following areas:

- Social distancing and minimizing exposure
- Face coverings
- Protecting vulnerable populations
- Hygiene practices
- Cleaning and materials handling
- Monitoring for illness
- Handling suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases
- Water and ventilation systems
- Transportation guidance
- Supporting mental health and wellbeing

Safe Learning Model Guidance

This section outlines localized determinations of the safest learning models for the start of the 2020-21 school year, as well as some of the critical questions and factors that school districts and charter schools, in consultation with local public health officials, MDH, and MDE, must consider when making the decision to select or transition to another learning model based on the impact of COVID-19 in their community. [See Appendix A for a list of key terms.](#)

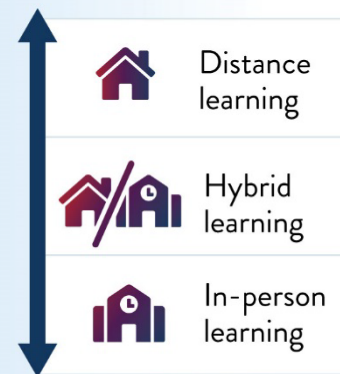
Determining a Safe Learning Model at the Start of the School Year

Communities across Minnesota are experiencing the impact of COVID-19 in different ways. While some areas of the state have seen significant outbreaks, other communities have experienced steady or relatively low numbers of new cases. While there are many factors to take into consideration when determining an appropriate learning model for school opening, the decision-making process should first center on local data indicating the level of viral activity in the surrounding community. School districts and charter schools are encouraged to use the following process in assessing and determining an appropriate learning model for school opening:

How do schools determine their safe learning model?

- STEP 1** Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) will use data from counties to determine a base learning model for public schools.
- STEP 2** Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) will share county data and the consultative process for public schools to engage with education and public health experts to review their county health data and safe learning plans.
- STEP 3** Public schools, with their incident command team, will evaluate their ability to implement required and recommended health best practices.
- STEP 4** Public schools, in consultation with public health, will determine a learning model to begin the school year and communicate that decision with their school community.*
- STEP 5** Public schools and MDH will monitor the community and school-level impact of COVID-19 on a regular basis. Adjustments will be made to the learning model if needed.

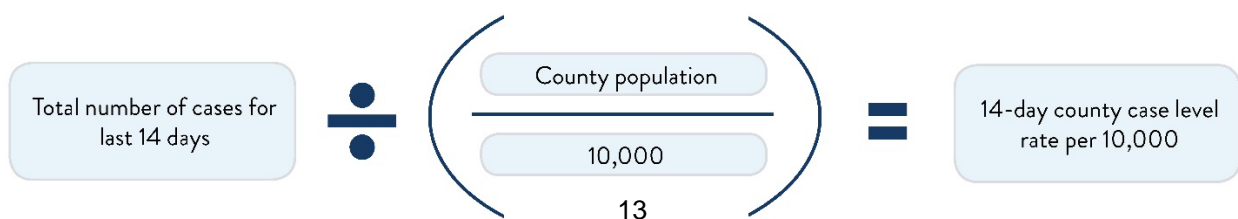
Safe learning models:



* Regardless of learning model, all public schools must offer an equitable distance learning option to all families.

1. Consult the MDH learning model selection parameters as indicated by county-level data to determine the base learning model.

In order to determine the base learning model, school districts and charter schools will be advised of the [bi-weekly case rate \(over 14 days\) by county of residence](#). These data are the number of cases by county of residence in Minnesota over 14 days per 10,000 people by date of specimen collection (when a person was tested). While any increase in case incidence represents greater potential risk, schools may consider a bi-weekly case rate of 10 or more cases per 10,000 to be an elevated risk of disease transmission within the local community, especially when the level of cases per week is sustained or increasing over time.



Learning Model Parameters

Number of cases per 10,000 over 14 days, by county of residence	Learning Model
0-9	In-person learning for all students
10-19	In-person learning for elementary students; hybrid learning for secondary students
20-29	Hybrid learning for all students
30-49	Hybrid learning for elementary students; distance learning for secondary students
50+	Distance learning for all students

A school district or charter school whose enrollment includes a large proportion of students from an adjacent county should use data from the county with the highest bi-weekly case rate to inform the recommended learning model. It is also important to take into account any notable increases or decreases in county-level case data to inform decision-making. For example, a school district or charter school whose most recent bi-weekly county-level data is 28 cases per 10,000 over 14 days would be recommended to operate a hybrid learning model for all students; however, if the case count has increased each week for the last month, a school may consider whether it is more appropriate to operate using a model which has fewer students learning in-person.

The learning model determination may not be the same for all grades. The research has shown much more limited transmission of COVID-19 in younger children. This combined with understanding that distance learning is more difficult with younger learners and creates a more significant burden on families, should lead districts and schools to always consider ways to keep elementary students in-person where it is safe and possible.

Note: Districts and charters may have already decided to be more restrictive in their learning model prior to the consultative process and may choose to engage with a consultant to confirm or modify their plan.

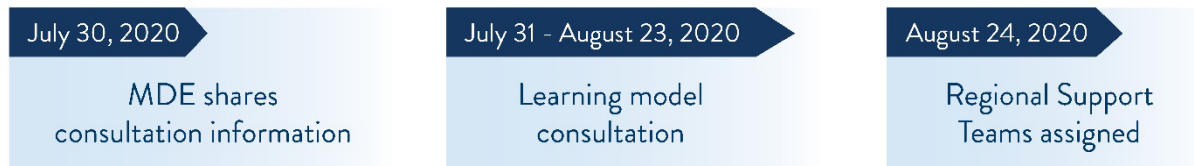
2. Consult with health officials as needed to examine the local epidemiology behind county-level data to assess whether increases or higher numbers of cases are likely the result of isolated outbreaks or whether they may be indicative of more widespread community transmission.

Local information about outbreaks, community spread, and the groups of people becoming ill at the highest rate are also useful components in understanding how COVID-19 is impacting the community. In some cases, high county-level case rates may be the result of a known, isolated outbreak in a specific local employer or workplace that may be unlikely to impact the school setting. However, the high county-level case rates may also be indicative of more widespread community transmission as the result of larger exposures. It is important for school districts and charter schools, particularly those who would like to discuss operating a different learning model than the model determined based on the defined parameters to consult with health officials when they have questions about the local epidemiology of COVID-19 in their community.

Note: Districts and charters may have already decided to be more restrictive in their learning model prior to the consultative process and may choose to engage with a consultant to confirm or modify their plan.

On July 30, 2020, superintendents and charter leaders will receive an email from MDE with contact information and directions about how to schedule a consultation to support their learning model determination.

Superintendents and charter school leaders may also choose to consult with local public health officials regarding their learning model determinations.



Beginning August 24, school districts and charter schools will work with their [Regional Support Teams](#) to support implementation and ongoing evaluation of their learning model.

3. Evaluate the ability to implement required and recommended health best practices to inform decision-making at the school or district level.

It is important for school districts and charter schools to account for their level of preparedness and capacity to implement the required and recommended mitigation strategies outlined in MDH’s [2020-21 Planning Guide for Schools](#). All schools must implement the required health practices, which are considered the minimum level of implementation from which schools may not be less restrictive. As part of the learning model determination process, school districts and charter schools should carefully assess their preparations to ensure all required health practices are addressed to confirm they are prepared to operate with students learning in-person, regardless of whether they plan to operate a full in-person or hybrid learning model.

Required for In-Person and Hybrid Learning	Required for Hybrid Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Masking Policy<input type="checkbox"/> PPE for direct support student services<input type="checkbox"/> Build routines of hygiene education & practices<input type="checkbox"/> Daily cleaning and frequent cleaning of high touch surfaces throughout the day<input type="checkbox"/> Building level COVID-19 program coordinator, with optional student counterpart<input type="checkbox"/> Limiting nonessential visitors/volunteers/external groups<input type="checkbox"/> Discontinue large gatherings/activities that do not allow for social distancing<input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring and excluding for illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Social distancing of 6 feet at all times in school buildings<input type="checkbox"/> School facilities at 50% capacity<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation at 50% capacity<input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient staffing levels to meet the requirements of the model

If a school district or charter school determines they are not able to successfully implement the required health practices for in-person or hybrid learning, they should implement distance learning for all students.

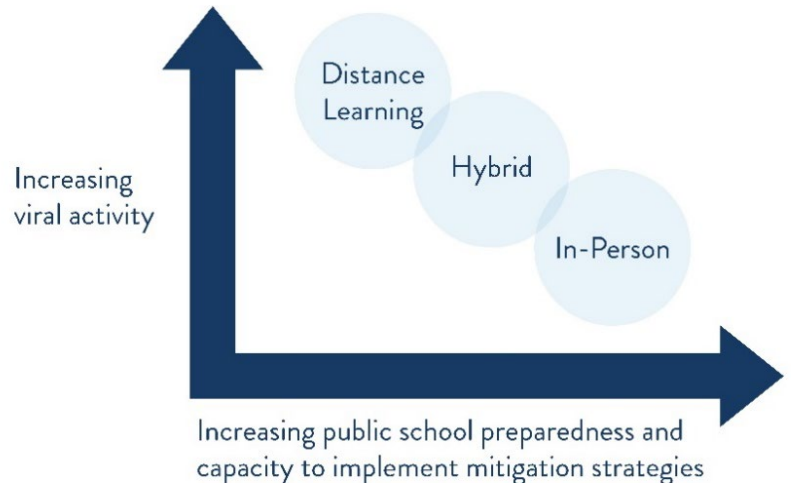
4. Determine the learning model to begin the school year.

After completing a thorough review of the base learning model in the context of the local epidemiology of COVID-19 and assessing preparedness to implement all required health practices, school districts and charter schools must make a determination of the learning model to begin the school year for each school. In making this determination, school districts and charter schools should use their current incident command team or advisory council consisting of school board members, bargaining units, staff, students and families. The learning model must be reported to MDE before implementation. The model and plan must be posted on the school district or charter school website, along with contingency plans for the other learning model scenarios. See the [Communicating Plans with Students and Families](#) section of this document.

Note: All school districts and charter schools must offer an equitable distance learning model to all families who choose not to attend in-person learning (whether as part of an in-person learning model or hybrid learning model) due to medical risks or other safety concerns. Families are not required to provide documentation of risks.

5. Monitor the community and school-level impact of COVID-19 on a regular basis in consultation with public health to determine if adjustments are needed.

After the initial selection of a learning model for school opening, the decision to shift to an alternative learning model should center on the impact of COVID-19 at the school level, while maintaining awareness of changes in viral activity in the community through continued review of the bi-weekly county-level case data ([described under #1 above](#)). School districts and charter schools considering making a change in their learning model for a school or entire district must do so first and foremost in the interest of safety for school staff and students. It is also important to respect the impact a shift in learning model will have on the school community; making a change requires significant coordination and communication even when well thought-out plans are in place, and therefore any recommendation or decision to change learning models should not be taken lightly. With this in mind, school districts and charter schools may consider the general framework below to guide their decision-making.



As viral activity increases within a community or school (e.g., when there are increasing numbers of cases over a short period of time or clusters of cases are identified), the need to adjust to a learning model that reduces the number of people in a school building and requires more stringent mitigation strategies also increases. By contrast, schools utilizing a distance or hybrid learning model that experience a declining level of viral activity in the school and/or surrounding community as indicated by county-level case data may consider cautiously shifting their learning models to increase the number of students learning in-person.

If a school district or charter school chooses to dial back to a more restrictive learning model than what is required by the Safe Learning Model Guidance, it must notify the education commissioner through the Learning Model Portal within 24 hours of beginning the new learning model.

If a school district or charter school is considering dialing forward to a less restrictive learning model than what is required under the Safe Learning Model Guidance, it must consult with local public health officials, MDH and MDE through the [Regional Support Teams](#).

In making these determinations, school districts and charter schools should use their current incident command team or advisory council consisting of school board members, bargaining units, staff, students and families. If the learning model changes, this must be updated on the school district or charter school website, along with contingency plans for the other learning model scenarios. See [Communicating Plans with Students and Families](#) section of this document.

The education commissioner retains statutory authority to order the transition from in-person instruction to a distance learning model if it is determined—after consultation with MDH—that in-person instruction is no longer safe due to concerns related to COVID-19.

Planning Scenarios for Moving Between Learning Models

It is not possible to account for every scenario that schools may encounter over the course of a school year. The scope and duration of transitions between learning models will depend on many factors and will be made using the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the specific cases in the community during the consultative process. Included below are brief narrative descriptions of the general assumptions that would support each learning model, including the impact on the school community, staffing, the ability to trace and isolate close contacts, testing capacity, extracurricular activities, and staffing levels. The narratives are accompanied by planning scenarios, which can help inform a decision to shift between learning models.

These learning models apply to each individual school and recommendations based on health parameters vary by grade. This is because the risk of COVID-19 transmission is lower for younger students and public health strategies like consistent groupings or cohorting commonly practiced in elementary schools are demonstrated to mitigate and prevent transmission. Further, in-person learning is more critical at younger ages due to child development.

Scenario 1: In-person learning for all students

Previously issued planning requirements and recommendations for Scenario 1 assume that minimal to moderate community spread is occurring, but the impact on the school community in terms of confirmed cases among students and staff is relatively small. Sporadic cases may be occurring, but in general each confirmed case can be traced to a likely source of exposure and where all or most close contacts can be identified and excluded in the school setting. Staffing is assumed to be sufficient to continue in-person instruction. This planning scenario also assumes that contact tracing can be completed quickly and that all or most close contacts can be notified and excluded within 24 hours of being notified of the confirmed case. Most extracurricular activities may be held, provided they follow current public health guidance.

What situations under Scenario 1 may not necessitate a transition to a hybrid or distance learning model?

- Single, standalone cases are confirmed but close contacts in the school setting can be quickly identified and are limited to individual classrooms or areas in the school. In this case, temporary distance learning could be implemented for the affected classroom(s) and space(s) rather than shifting the learning model for the entire school or school community.
- Multiple cases are identified, but can be linked to a specific classroom or individual activity with minimal impact or exposures to other classrooms/activities in the school setting. All close contacts can be quickly identified and are limited to individual classrooms and/or activities. In this case, temporary distance learning could be implemented for the affected classrooms rather than shifting the learning model for the entire school or school community.

- Multiple cases are identified, but are linked to a clear alternative exposure that is unrelated to the school setting and unlikely to be a source of exposure for the larger school community.
 - For example, social or household clusters where multiple people who attend the same school have become ill as a result of the social or household exposure.

Scenario 2: Hybrid model with strict social distancing and capacity limits

Previously issued planning requirements and recommendations outlined for Scenario 2 assume that moderate to substantial community spread is occurring, and there may be a higher degree of impact on the school community with multiple confirmed cases among students and staff. There may be higher numbers of confirmed cases over shorter periods of time, and/or clusters of cases identified within classrooms or the school community generally, however all or most close contacts can still be identified and excluded in the school setting. Staffing is assumed to be sufficient to continue in-person instruction, but measures including overall capacity limits are needed to allow for strict social distancing that further mitigates the risk of transmission. Testing capacity is generally assumed to be high enough that symptomatic individuals can access testing as needed from local clinics and asymptomatic school staff and educators who are close contacts are prioritized in state testing guidance. Coursework and extracurricular activities with higher risk for transmission are modified to reduce risk or discontinued.

What situations may necessitate a transition to a hybrid learning model?

- The number of students and school staff who are absent or who are sent home with influenza or COVID-19-like illness reaches approximately 5% of the total number of students and staff in a school within a single week.
- A significant community outbreak is occurring or has recently occurred (e.g., large community event or large local employer) that has the potential to impact staff, students, and families served by the school community but has not yet resulted in increased cases within the school setting.
 - Outbreaks in the community occurring in a setting that does not have a strong connection to the school (e.g., long-term care facility, local religious institution or correctional facility) are unlikely to result in a recommendation to shift to a hybrid learning model.

Scenario 3: Distance learning only

Previously issued planning requirements and recommendations outlined for Scenario 3 assume that substantial, uncontrolled community spread is occurring and/or there is a significant degree of impact on the school community with multiple confirmed cases or large scale outbreaks occurring among students and staff. This planning scenario also accounts for situations where staffing may be impacted to the degree that a school is not able to offer in-person instruction. Extracurricular activities are discontinued. In general, implementation of a distance learning model should occur for a minimum of one incubation period (two weeks) when there is evidence of substantial, uncontrolled community transmission or significant levels of illness in the school setting.

What situations may necessitate a transition to a distance learning only model?

- A distance learning only model could be considered for short periods of time if confirmed cases are identified but contact tracing and notification of close contacts in the school setting cannot be completed within 24 to 36 hours. This short-term use of distance learning may allow schools to coordinate with local and state health officials to complete contact tracing and develop a clearer picture of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school while supporting continuity in learning.
- Multiple cases are identified within a short time period (e.g., several cases in one week or within a 14-day time period) that occur across multiple classrooms or activities and a clear connection between cases or to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 cannot be easily identified.

- A significant community outbreak is occurring or has recently occurred (e.g., large event or large local employer) and is impacting multiple staff, students, and families served by the school community.
- Substantial, uncontrolled community transmission is occurring at the county-, regional-, or state level, and there are multiple confirmed cases of COVID-19 among students and/or staff.

Considerations for moving back to hybrid or in-person learning after a distance learning period

- After implementing a distance learning model due to high levels of viral transmission in the school or local geographic community, districts or schools should wait a minimum of two to three weeks before bringing any students back for in-person or hybrid learning. This timeframe is sufficient that most people in the school community who will develop symptoms of illness could be identified and self-quarantine, as appropriate.
- During the period of distance learning, a school district or charter school should consult with local public health officials, MDH and MDE if it is considering dialing forward to hybrid or in-person learning. This process will ensure that districts and schools are working with health officials to assess the level of viral activity occurring within the local community, as well as the impact on the school community in order to determine whether the situation has improved to the point that hybrid or in-person learning may be appropriate.
- A school may consider using a hybrid learning model after a distance learning period was required due to high levels of viral transmission in the school or local geographic community. The hybrid model could be used as a bridge to safely move back toward the model of in-person learning for all students. For example, a school could operate using a hybrid learning model for 2 incubation periods (28 days) and carefully monitor for any additional clusters of confirmed cases of COVID-19 before transitioning back to a full in-person learning model.

Regional Support Teams

The Regional Support Teams are a partnership between MDE, MDH, regional service cooperatives and local public health to support school districts and charter schools in navigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the 2020-21 school year.

Beginning August 24, school districts and charter schools will work with Regional Support Teams to consult regarding implementation and ongoing evaluation of their learning model.

In the interim, on July 30, 2020, superintendents and charter leaders will receive an email from MDE with contact information and directions about how to schedule a consultation to support their learning model determination.

Superintendents and charter school leaders may also choose to consult with local public health officials regarding their learning model determinations.

Team Structure

Regional Support Teams are structured in a way that allows efficient communication from the school and district level to the state level in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a school building.

As shown in the graphic on this page, the first step in this process is for a superintendent or charter school leader to contact their assigned service cooperative lead. The lead will then contact MDH and/or local public health officials to begin the response process, who will notify the Regional Support Team regarding appropriate next steps.

The Regional Support Teams are made up of rapid response staff, health consultants and testing event planners.



Rapid Response

- State lead to direct and oversee response to districts and schools:
 - Coordination across state supports and regional service cooperatives.
 - Works with State Testing Workgroup, oversees school testing event team.
 - 3-4 school testing staff who help execute events when local communities need support.
- Leads from regional service cooperatives (9):
 - Main point of contact for school districts and charter schools in region.
 - Shares updates and information between school districts/charter schools and MDH, MDE, local public health and other state partners.
 - Supports schools in completing contact tracing surveys.
 - Facilitates connections with local public health, MDH, MDE, and other state partners as needed.

Health Consultant

- MDH epidemiologists, assigned by region and paired with regional service cooperatives and local public health
- Connect with regional supports to help respond to health and epidemiology questions
- Supports state reporting and trends on COVID-19 and implications for schools
- Supports local and state health officials in tracking cases, testing events, and school closures

Distribution of Face Coverings

All students, staff, and other people present in school buildings and district offices or riding on school transportation vehicles are required to wear a face covering. Face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer does not know they are infected. 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 in certain situations.

Face coverings should not be placed on anyone under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance, or anyone who cannot tolerate a face covering due to a developmental, medical, or behavioral health condition.

Ideally, face coverings should be worn in combination with other infection control measures, including social distancing, but face coverings are especially important in settings where social distancing is difficult to maintain. As the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has explained, face coverings are most effective when they are worn by all individuals in public settings when around others outside of their households because many people infected with COVID-19 do not show symptoms. Consistent with this guidance, Minnesota has strongly recommended widespread use of face coverings since April. On July 22, Governor Walz signed [Executive Order 20-81](#) requiring face coverings in all indoor public spaces in Minnesota, including K-12 school buildings.

Because this is such an important mitigation strategy, we are ensuring all public school students and staff have the face coverings they need for in-person and hybrid learning. The State of Minnesota will provide the following supplies to all public schools:

- Every K-12 student will receive one cloth face covering.
- Every school staff member will receive one cloth face covering.
- Every school will receive three disposable face masks per student.
- Every school will receive face shields for all licensed teachers and 50% of non-licensed staff.

Responding to Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

When a confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified in a school community, it is important for school districts and charter schools to work closely with local public health and MDH officials through the Regional Support Teams to identify whether the person who is ill was present on school grounds while infectious and whether that resulted in any close contact exposures among students or staff. Because of the potential for asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission of COVID-19, it is important that close contacts of students or staff with COVID-19 are quickly identified, informed of the need to quarantine at home, and encouraged to seek testing even if they are not showing any symptoms. In general, testing of close contacts should not occur until either a person becomes symptomatic OR at least 5 to 7 days have passed since their last exposure to the confirmed case to guard against a false negative test result, which can occur when a person is tested too early in the incubation period. Even if a close contact tests negative, they must remain in quarantine for a full 14 days as some people develop infection at the end of their incubation period. The CDC does not recommend universal testing of all students and staff.

In addition to the identification and notification of close contacts, school districts and charter schools should consider the questions outlined below in consultation with health officials to determine whether additional mitigation strategies are needed to protect the school community.

- **How many cases are there, and are they close in time together, or spread out over several weeks?** Sporadic, single confirmed cases are not necessarily worrisome on their own, especially if students or staff did not attend school while infectious or the potential exposures in the school setting are limited (e.g., few classrooms or activities are impacted). Multiple cases that are identified closer together in time (e.g., within one week) could indicate that a significant unidentified exposure occurred and/or that a higher level of transmission is occurring.
- **Are new cases traceable to the school community or are they likely the result of a different exposure (e.g., household exposure, travel)?** It is concerning to see cases that can be clearly traced back to an exposure within the school setting, as it may be an indication that transmission is occurring between members of the school community. Cases that can be traced back to a different exposure such as a cluster of cases within a household or a likely exposure to a positive case while traveling indicate that attendance in school was not the likely source of illness.
- **Where are the cases occurring, and do they have any common themes?** If cases seem to be concentrated based on a common trait such as a physical location (e.g., confined to one building within a school) or to a specific group within the school (e.g., a cluster of cases among food service workers), it may be possible to narrow down the exposure source and take more specific actions that do not necessarily require a change in the learning model used for the school or school system as a whole. Finding common themes among cases may also aid a school's efforts to modify practices to help prevent similar future exposures.
- **How many close contacts does each case have?** Cases that have limited numbers of close contacts in the school setting (e.g., few classrooms or activities are impacted) are less likely to result in a needed shift between learning models for the whole school. Cases that have many close contacts across multiple classrooms and activities, or potential exposures in common areas or at larger school based gatherings/events where close contacts are not readily identifiable may complicate the ability to identify all or most close contacts, and may have a larger impact on the school community as a whole.
- **Are students, parents, and staff forthcoming about close contacts?** When people are unwilling or unable to disclose their close contacts, it may be difficult to ensure that contact tracing can be effectively completed. When contact tracing cannot be fully completed, it is possible that exposed persons may not exclude for the recommended quarantine period of 14 days and could go on to develop symptoms of illness while in the school setting, thereby resulting in additional exposures.
- **Is there other significant COVID-19 transmission in the surrounding community (e.g., a cluster of cases at a large local employer) that will likely impact families and staff?** For example, in communities that are currently experiencing or have very recently (within the last 14 days) experienced an outbreak in a large local employer or

other setting where the families of many students and/or spouses of many staff work or visit, the nature of the community outbreak may increase the potential for community transmission in the school setting.

- **Are you able to maintain your current learning model based on staffing?** Staffing is a critical component of school operations. When adequate staffing to support an in-person or hybrid learning model cannot be achieved, it may be necessary for schools to transition to an alternative learning model.

COVID-19 Testing Process

While school communities execute significant strategies to prevent transmission of COVID-19, as long as the virus continues to circulate in our communities, we must be diligent in monitoring and testing. This section is intended to provide an overview for pre-K and K-12 educational institutions to prepare for and execute needed COVID-19 testing for student, staff and other populations associated with their school.

Any school that may need to implement a COVID-19 testing strategy will work directly with their Regional Support Teams, following the process outlined in the [Team Structure](#) section above. This testing strategy provides a framework for schools and the state but can vary based on the setting, number of close contacts, and circumstances. Each situation may look slightly different, and the Regional Support Team will guide school and district leaders through the necessary processes.

Routine universal testing is not recommended in schools. Testing should not be used as an entry or enrollment tool for programs for staff, students, or families.

State Partnership and Strategy

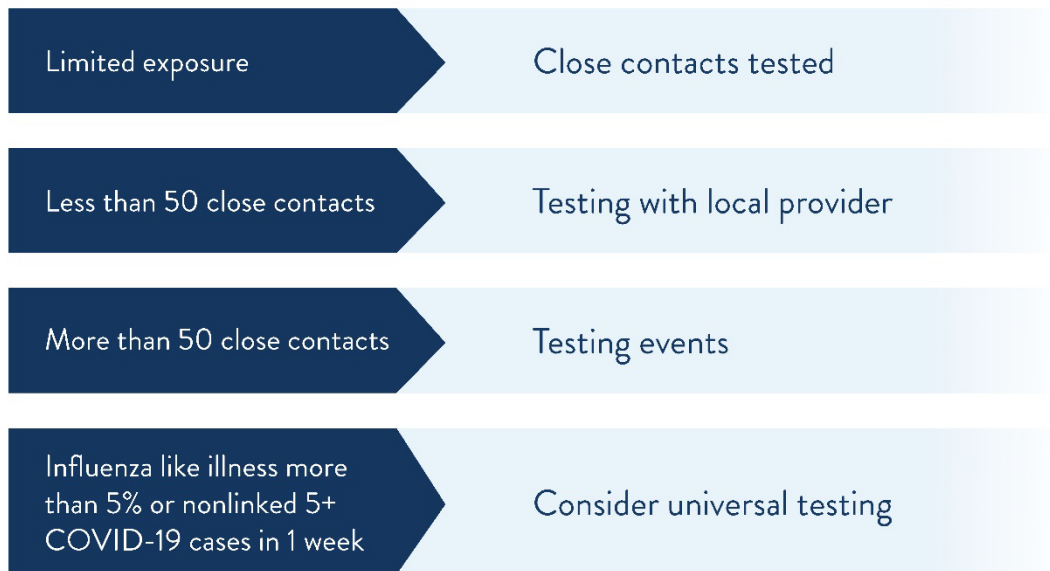
Access to testing and a community's ability to mitigate transmission and respond to COVID-19 exposure is a critical factor in a school or district's ability to provide in-person instruction. As such the state has outlined a series of strategies that will support you.

- **Testing educators and school staff:** The state has a contract with a national saliva testing lab and will work with all insurers to ensure that all educators have access to a COVID-19 test from day one. This is a test that can be conducted at home and utilizes a courier for transport. This ensures that in the case where an educator has close contact with a confirmed case and experiences any challenges getting tested in their community, there is a back-up option.
- **Comprehensive testing strategies:** The Regional Support Teams have a framework and strategy for how to plan for and respond to a potential COVID-19 exposure in our school communities. In all cases, the state has a structure and partnership with districts and charter schools to ensure that there is regular communication and consultation with public health experts. The comprehensive testing strategy includes:
 - State ensures school and settings are prioritized for COVID-19 testing when close contacts have been identified.
 - Regional support teams work with schools to ensure close contacts of an exposure are tested by local providers.
 - Testing events are used when 50+ close contacts and when local communities cannot execute their own testing events, the state Testing Workgroup steps in to execute.
 - School staff and students are prioritized in other available community testing events.

Testing Scenarios and Thresholds

If a known exposure occurs in a classroom (from staff or students), close contacts will be quarantined at home for 14 days. **Close contacts** are defined as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the patient is isolated testing is recommended for all close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases.

Potential scenarios include:



- **Testing is recommended for close contacts** (by regional Support Team):
 - Symptomatic students, children and staff
 - Asymptomatic close contacts - children and staff who are asymptomatic no sooner than 5 to 7 days after known exposure to confirmed case.
- **Testing with local providers:** In classrooms or programs with **less than 50 close contacts** (including children, students and staff) identified, the school community will notify families and they will seek out testing individually through an appointment with their clinic or access a testing site. Educators, school staff, and asymptomatic individuals who have been identified as close contacts of a positive case in schools are a prioritized group in state testing guidance to health care providers. The liaison with MDE and MDH will remain partners with you and want to be notified if these close contacts are not being tested.
 - Here is draft language to use in communication with families: *Please contact your health care provider to see about getting them tested or visit the [Find Testing Locations](#) webpage to find a testing site near you. MDH recommends waiting to be tested until 5 to 7 days after known exposure, which is the optimal time period for the virus to be detected by a test.*
- **Testing event:** Based on the number of close contacts identified, a testing event should be considered if **more than 50 close contacts** (including staff, children, and family community) are identified. Partnering with their regional support team, districts will work with local health providers to execute these events first and bring in other state partners as needed. If local resources are limited and/or state-coordinated response is necessary, the state Testing Workgroup and school testing teams will plan with local communities to execute. If a testing event is indicated, it will not occur until at least 5-7 days after a known exposure.
- **Universal testing:** A universal testing event could be recommended when substantial or ongoing transmission among students and staff is suspected to be occurring. Substantial transmission is defined as a threshold of 5% of total attendees (students and staff) have influenza-like illness or there are 5 or more non-linked laboratory confirmed cases in a single week. Non-linked cases are those that cannot be linked to another case at the school and do not have a clear link to a confirmed case outside of the school. Linked cases include people who are present in the same setting during the same time period (e.g. same classroom, school event, school-based extracurricular activity, or school transportation). As with testing events, if local communities are not able to execute such an event, the state will support the execution.

Meeting the Needs of Students and Families

Communicating Plans with Students and Families

School districts and charter schools must electronically post and communicate their contingency in-person learning, hybrid learning, and distance learning plans to students and their families no later than one week before the beginning of their respective 2020-21 school year. School districts and charter schools must make all attempts to provide such communications orally and written in languages spoken in their respective school district or charter school. The contingency plans must address, but not be limited to, communication pathways with students and families, community input on student and family needs, and other outreach opportunities. This is in addition to addressing core instruction, supports for all student groups, nutrition, school-age care, technology needs, and effective delivery of educational models to students in a distance learning or hybrid model setting.

The education commissioner may review whether a school district or charter school's plan adequately addresses technological disparities in access and learning. The commissioner may recommend changes and provide technical assistance to school district and charter school programming to address any such disparities, to assist in meeting the needs of their students, staff, and communities.

For more information, see the "Communication with Students, Families and Staff" section of [MDE's 2020-21 School Year Planning Guidance](#).

School-age Care

Equitable and affordable school-age child care programs are essential to support working families and provide enrichment and care for students. Over 100,000 students across the state rely on school-based child care programs as their trusted child care provider.

Care for school-aged children, especially those children of workers in critical sectors, will continue to be crucial for frontline workers to continue to confront the pandemic. The state will continue to work with child care providers, school-age programs, schools, and all other child care settings to prioritize this need.

[Executive Order 20-82](#) indicates that a school district or charter school that operates a hybrid or distance learning model "must provide school-aged care for Eligible Children at no cost during the time those children are not receiving instruction in the school building during regular school hours."

This school-age care must be provided for school-age children age 12 and under who are children of critical workers in Tier I of the state critical worker list. Children of Tier I workers only will be cared for at no cost during the typical school hours. For more information about providing school-age care, including the list of Tier I workers, see the "School-age Care Programs in Schools" section of [MDE's 2020-21 School Year Planning Guidance](#).

Equitable Distance Learning Option

[Executive Order 20-82](#) states that all school districts and charter schools must offer an equitable distance learning model to all families who choose not to attend in-person learning (whether as part of an in-person learning model or hybrid learning model) due to medical risks or other safety concerns. Families are not required to provide documentation of risks.

For more information about ensuring this is available to families, see the "Meeting the Distance Learning Needs of Students" section on page 19 of [MDE's 2020-21 School Year Planning Guidance](#).

Ensuring Access to Services and Resources

[Executive Order 20-82](#) outlines several areas that must consistently be addressed, even as schools transition through learning models:

- Regardless of learning model, the school district or charter school must continue to provide meals to students during the school day to the extent possible, utilizing all waivers and flexibilities provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- School districts and charter schools that dial back in-person instruction, in cooperation with state agencies, are directed to support communities disproportionately impacted by distance learning and hybrid learning, including but not limited to, historically under-represented families and families experiencing homelessness. Where appropriate, school districts and charter schools should prioritize providing in-person instruction and services to students from the aforementioned groups. MDE will continue to provide additional guidance to school districts and charter schools about this.
- When providing in-person learning, a school district or charter school will continue to run its early childhood programs pursuant to [MDH public health guidelines](#), including community education programs, and may charge fees on its normal sliding fee scale. A school district and charter school may also continue to provide before and after school care and may charge fees on its normal sliding fee scale. Schools are not required to provide this care during previously scheduled breaks reflected on a school-board approved calendar.
- A school district or charter school that dial back in-person instruction must allow 2020-21 graduating seniors to complete any testing required to attain a state bilingual or multilingual seal under [Minnesota Statutes, section 120.022\(b\), subdivision 1b](#).
- If a school district is providing instruction through a distance learning model, the education commissioner has the authority to expand in-school provision of necessary activities and programming that can be operationalized in compliance with requirements and recommendations outlined in [MDH's 2020-21 Planning Guide for Schools](#). This expansion of in-school activities must be where those services cannot be provided through a distance learning model and those services are needed to access that student's distance learning instruction, provide supports or services schools can safely offer, and create opportunities for meaningful connections between students and teachers.
- MDE, in consultation with MDH, will establish a protocol to allow for home visits by school staff to build and preserve relationships with students and their families for when a school district or charter school is providing instruction through a distance learning model. This should not be interpreted as a requirement or be used to replace services provided by counties or social services.
- School districts and charter schools that dial back in-person instruction are encouraged to allow students to retain any technology provided to them through the remainder of the 2020-21 school year. School districts and charter schools should also continue to provide maintenance for this technology.

Tribal Consultation

Consistent with Tribal considerations, guidance from MDE, and the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), all consultations, collaborations, and partnerships with Tribal Nations, American Indian Parent Committees, and Indigenous Education staff must continue. American Indian Education Aid Program Plans should be considered when creating contingency distance learning and hybrid learning plans.

For more information about Tribal Consultation and serving American Indian students, see [MDE's 2020-21 School Year Planning Guidance](#).

Funding Supports

Education is a fundamental determinant of health because it cultivates life skills, knowledge and reasoning, social-emotional awareness and control, and community engagement, which serve people well over the course of a lifetime. Schools themselves function as tools and resources for public health intervention by addressing core needs of the safety, health and wellness of students, families and communities.

Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF)

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act requires that the payments from the Coronavirus Relief Fund only be used to cover expenses that—

1. are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19;
2. were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020 (the date of enactment of the CARES Act) for the state or government; and,
3. were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020, and ends on December 30, 2020.

Funding would be allocated to public schools as follows:

- 60% allocated to schools by ADM (average daily membership)
- 40% allocated to schools by:
 - 40% by ADM
 - 60% by the number of historically underserved students each school supports

MDE will be requesting funding to be allocated to school districts and charter schools in order to:

- Address the **necessary operating costs** associated with bringing children back into the classroom this fall including but not limited to:
 - Daily cleaning supplies and disinfectant sprayers.
 - Screening supplies including no-touch thermometers.
 - Personal protective equipment (PPE) including face coverings.
 - Increased costs for transporting students at limited capacity.
 - Mental health supports.
- Support related **student, family, and educator needs**, including, but not limited to:
 - Digital navigators: training for educators, students, or families on use of technology/digital literacy.
 - Technology devices and internet access.
 - Tutors or mentors to address learning loss: supporting whole school, small group, and individual needs.
 - Translation services.
 - School-age care.
 - Professional development focused on: Academic Response to Intervention (RtI); Social Emotional Learning; competency-based learning; diversity, equity, and inclusion; anti-bias practices.

Funding under this request will be available for eligible expenditures from July 1, 2020 to December 30, 2020.

Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund

GEER provides emergency support through grants to K-12 schools significantly impacted by COVID-19. These grants support the ability of schools to continue to meet the needs of students.

Minnesota received a \$43 million award, and dedicated \$38 million to K-12 support. Based on feedback from the range of communities across the state, we identified two key priorities for which these funds can be used:

- Expanding **technology capacity** to meet student learning needs, with particular attention to increasing broadband access, establishing wireless hotspots and purchasing devices such as laptops or tablets for students.
- Improving student-to-teacher ratios for **summer school programming** to at most six students per teacher.
- Grants to education-related entities providing **wrap-around services for children ages 0-8**.

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) fund

The core purpose of ESSER is to provide direct money to school districts to support areas impacted by the disruption from COVID-19, which includes both: 1) Continuing to provide educational services while schools are closed, such as remote learning; and 2) Developing and implementing plans for the return to normal operations.

- ESSER funds are divided into two streams: a formula-based allocation and state-directed grants. Districts and charter schools were notified of their eligibility for one or both funding streams.
- The formula-based allocation to districts and charter schools is based on their allocations under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). These funds can be used for a wide range of expenses to meet local needs.
- The state-directed grants are used for summer school programming and to support schools that did not receive funding under the Title I allocation model, such as cooperatives.

References

- [CDC: Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html)
- [CDC: Interim Considerations for K-12 School Administrators for SARS-CoV-2 Testing \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-testing.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-testing.html)
- [Resolve to Save Lives Weekly Science Report: Reopening schools during the COVID-19 pandemic \(preventepidemics.org/covid19/science/weekly-science-review/june-20-26-2020/\)](http://preventepidemics.org/covid19/science/weekly-science-review/june-20-26-2020/)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Reopening \(services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/\)](http://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/)

Appendix A: Key terms

Close contact/close contact exposure: Close contact means someone you were within 6 feet of for more than 15 minutes. In the context of COVID-19, a close contact exposure means that an individual either lives with or was within 6 feet or more of a person with lab-confirmed COVID-19 for 15 minutes or longer while the ill person was infectious.

Community spread: Community spread means people have been infected with the virus within a local community, including some people who are not sure how or where they became infected.

Incubation period: The time from close contact exposure to development of symptoms. For COVID-19, the incubation period ranges from 2-14 days.

Isolation: When someone who is infected (tested positive) with COVID-19 stays away from others, even in their own home. For COVID-19, the minimum isolation period is 10 days.

Outbreak: Two or more people with COVID-19 infection are discovered to be linked (e.g., they work in the same office space or attend the same classroom).

Quarantine: When someone who was in close contact with someone who has or is suspected to have COVID-19 stays away from others during the viral incubation period.

Transmission: When an illness spreads between people.

No to minimal community transmission: Individual cases or limited community spread; no evidence of exposure in large communal settings (e.g., schools, workplaces).

Minimal to moderate community transmission: Sustained transmission in the community with likelihood of exposure within communal settings (e.g., schools, workplaces) and potential for rapid increase in cases.

Substantial, controlled community transmission: High rate of cases that are associated with ongoing community transmission, including communal settings (e.g., schools, workplaces).

Substantial, uncontrolled community transmission = Large scale, uncontrolled transmission in the community, including communal settings (e.g., schools, workplaces).

Decision Tree for People with COVID-19 Symptoms in Youth, Student, and Child Care Programs

For people (e.g., children, care providers, or staff) who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, send home or deny entry and reference the exclusion criteria in this document to determine when they may return.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

new onset cough or shortness of breath by themselves OR at least 2 of the following: fever (100.4°F or higher), chills, muscle pain, sore throat, fatigue, congestion, loss of sense of smell or taste, or gastrointestinal symptoms of diarrhea, vomiting, or nausea.

If a person has a new symptom (for example, new loss of smell only) with no other diagnosis to explain it, they should stay home and talk to their health care provider about testing for COVID-19, even if it is the only symptom they are experiencing.

For people who received a laboratory test for COVID-19

What to do if you're waiting for COVID-19 test results (PDF) (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/waiting.pdf)

Positive test result: Stay home at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND until no fever for at least 24 hours without medication AND improvement of other symptoms.

Siblings and household members also stay home for 14 days.

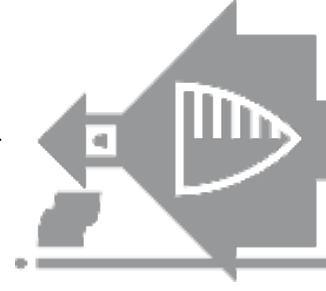
Negative test result but symptoms with no other diagnosis: Stay home at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND until no fever for at least 24 hours without medication AND improvement of other symptoms.

Siblings and household members also stay home for 14 days.

For people with a COVID-19 diagnosis *without* a lab test OR people with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 *without* a medical evaluation (e.g., monitoring symptoms at home)

Stay home at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND until no fever for at least 24 hours without medication AND improvement of other symptoms.

Siblings and household members also stay home for 14 days.



For people with other diagnoses (e.g., norovirus, strep throat) that explain the symptoms, or when a health care provider says symptoms are connected to a pre-existing condition

Stay home until symptoms have improved. Follow specific return guidance from the health care provider or follow the [Infectious Diseases in Childcare Settings and Schools Manual \(www.hennepin.us/daycaremanual\)](http://www.hennepin.us/daycaremanual).

If symptoms related to a pre-existing condition change or worsen, talk to a health care provider to determine next steps.

Siblings and household members **do not** need to stay home.



What To Do if You Have Had Close Contact With a Person With COVID-19

To protect yourself, your family, and your community, you must separate yourself from others, get tested and watch yourself for symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell. Follow these instructions for at least 14 days after the last day you were in close contact with the person who has COVID-19.

Separate yourself from others



Stay home. If you need medical care, it is important that you follow the instructions below. Do not go to work, school, or any other place outside the home.



Stay away from people who may be at high-risk for getting very sick from COVID-19, including older adults, those living in long-term care facilities, and people with health conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, liver disease, severe obesity, and those who have weakened immune systems.



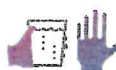
If you become sick, separate yourself from other people in your home. As much as possible, stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Use a separate bathroom, if available.



Do not use public transportation, ride-sharing (such as Uber or Lyft), or taxis.



Wear a facemask if you need to be around other people, and cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Wash hands thoroughly.



Avoid sharing personal household items. Do not share food, dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people in your home. After using these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.

Get tested



Contact your health care provider or visit the [Minnesota COVID-19 Response website \(https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/testing-locations/index.jsp\)](https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/testing-locations/index.jsp) to find testing times and locations near you. Get tested even if you do not have symptoms. If your test results are positive, follow recommendations for cases of COVID-19. You may need to remain at home for longer than 14 days. Even if your results are negative, you need to stay home for 14 days. If you develop symptoms after testing negative, get tested again.

Monitor your symptoms



If you develop symptoms, separate yourself from others and follow public health recommendations for staying at home when symptomatic.

VISITOR AND EMPLOYEE HEALTH SCREENING CHECKLIST



CONDUCT HEALTH SCREENING EACH TIME EMPLOYEES OR VISITORS ENTER THE FACILITY.

You may also opt to conduct temperature screening if it can be done with proper social distancing, protection, and hygiene protocols. However, temperature screening is not required.

If a worker or visitor answers “Yes” to any of the screening questions, they should be advised to go home, stay away from other people, and contact their health care provider.

Have you had any of the following symptoms since your last day at work or the last time you were here that you cannot attribute to another health condition?

Please answer “Yes” or “No” to each question. Do you have:

- Fever or feeling feverish?
- Chills?
- A new cough?
- Shortness of breath?
- A new sore throat?
- New muscle aches?
- New headache?
- New loss of smell or taste?

Adopted: _____

PAS Policy 808
Orig. 2020

Revised: _____

808 COVID-19 FACE COVERING POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish requirements for employees, students, and other persons (including visitors, guests, contractors, etc.) present on school property to wear face coverings in classrooms, preschool, child care settings and other indoor areas, as well as outdoor areas where a physical distance of 6 feet cannot be maintained between persons, in order to minimize exposure to COVID-19.

II. GENERAL OF STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. The policy of the school district is to comply with Executive Order 20-81, Executive Order 20-82, and applicable face covering requirements from the Minnesota Department of Health and the Minnesota Department of Education.
- B. Face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer does not know they are infected.
- C. Unless an exception described in Part IV below applies, all students, staff, and other people present indoors in school buildings and district offices or riding on school transportation vehicles are required to wear a face covering.
- D. A violation of this policy occurs when any student, staff, or other person present in a school building, in the school district office, or on a school transportation vehicle fails to wear a face covering, unless an enumerated exception applies.

III. DEFINITION OF FACE COVERING

- A. A face covering must be worn to cover the nose and mouth completely, should not be overly tight or restrictive, and should feel comfortable to wear. The following are included in the definition of face covering:
 - 1. Paper or disposable mask;
 - 2. Cloth face mask;
 - 3. Scarf;
 - 4. Neck gaiter;

5. Bandana;
 6. Religious face covering; and
 7. Medical-grade masks and respirators
- B. A face shield is a clear plastic barrier that covers the face and allows visibility of facial expressions and lip movements for speech perception. A face shield should extend below the chin anteriorly, to the cheeks laterally, and there should be no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield's headpiece.
- C. Masks that incorporate a valve designed to facilitate easy exhaling, mesh masks, or masks with openings, holes, visible gaps in the design or material, or vents are not sufficient face coverings because they allow exhaled droplets to be released into the air.

IV. EXCEPTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES; TEMPORARY REMOVAL OF FACE COVERING

- A. Face coverings should not be placed on anyone under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance, or anyone who cannot tolerate a face covering due to a developmental, medical, or behavioral health condition.
- B. A face shield may be used as an alternative to a face covering in the following situations:
1. A student in grades kindergarten through eighth grade may wear a face shield when wearing a face covering is problematic.
 2. A teacher of any grade level may wear a face shield when wearing a face covering may impede the educational process.
 3. Staff, students, or visitors who cannot tolerate a face covering due to a developmental, medical, or behavioral health condition may wear a face shield instead of a face covering.
 4. Staff providing direct support student services may wear a face shield instead of a face covering when a face covering would impede the service being provided.
- C. Staff, students, and other people present in school buildings or in district offices may temporarily remove their face covering or face shield in the following situations:

1. When engaging in classes or activities conducted outdoors, though people participating in these activities should maintain six feet of distance to the extent possible;
2. When engaging in indoor physical activity where the level of exertion makes wearing a face covering difficult, though people participating in these activities should maintain six feet of distance to the extent possible;
3. During activities, such as swimming or showering, where the face covering will get wet;
4. While receiving a service, including nursing, medical, or personal care services, that cannot be performed or is difficult to perform when the individual receiving the service is wearing a face covering;
5. Pre-kindergarten students age 5 years and younger participating in programming in a school building or district office;
6. When the wearer needs to remove their face covering to eat or drink, though care should be taken to maintain as much space as possible between people while doing so;
7. During indoor practices or performances involving singing, acting, public speaking, or playing musical instruments where a face covering cannot be used while playing the instrument, though people participating in these activities should maintain six feet of distance to the extent possible;
8. When required by school staff for the purposes of identification;
9. Staff working alone in their offices, classrooms, vehicles, or job locations that have no person-to-person interaction;
10. Staff working in communal spaces that have barriers such as Plexiglas or cubicle walls between employees that are above face level; or
11. When communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing or has a disability, medical condition, or mental health condition that makes communication with a face covering difficult, provided that social distancing is maintained to the extent possible.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

- A. This policy will be conspicuously posted in each school building and administrative office and communicated to students, staff, families, and potential visitors to the school building.

- B. The school district will provide face coverings and/or face shields to employees and students. Employees and students may choose to wear their own face covering as long as it covers the nose and mouth. To the extent practicable, the school district will maintain an extra supply of face coverings for people who forget to bring their face covering.
- C. The school district will teach and reinforce the use of face coverings and/or face shields for students and staff throughout the school day, including on transportation vehicles, inside school buildings, and generally when on school grounds.
- D. Individuals who cannot tolerate a face covering due to a medical condition or disability related condition may be permitted to utilize alternative options such as a face shield or other reasonable accommodation. The Superintendent or designee shall have discretion to determine whether an employee, parent, or community member qualifies for a reasonable accommodation and the accommodation to be provided. For a student with a medical condition or disability, the student's education team (i.e. IEP team, Section 504 team, health plan team) will determine whether the student qualifies for a reasonable accommodation and the accommodation to be provided. As a condition to granting a reasonable accommodation, the school district may require an individual to provide a physician's note and/or other relevant information or with respect to the condition or circumstance. Requests for reasonable accommodations from the face covering requirement shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with applicable federal and state law.
- E. All face coverings shall meet the requirements of applicable dress code policies and/or codes of conduct. To the extent the face covering requirements of this policy conflict with MSBA Model Policy 504 – Student Dress and Appearance, this Policy shall control.
- F. The school district will make available distance learning to its enrolled students who may be medically vulnerable or otherwise unwilling to return to in-person or hybrid learning.

VI. ENFORCEMENT; CONSEQUENCES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

- A. In order to promote the health and safety of employees, students and members of the community, and make available a safe environment that is conducive to learning, compliance with this policy is necessary.
- B. Employees who fail or refuse to comply with this policy may be subject to discipline, as appropriate, up to and including the termination of employment.
- C. Students who fail or refuse to comply with this policy may be subject to discipline or removal from school property. Students unwilling to participate in in-person or hybrid learning in compliance with this policy will be offered distance learning.

D. The school district may, in its discretion, report violators of this policy to law enforcement. Any individual who willfully violates Emergency Executive Order 20-81 or 20-82 is guilty of a petty misdemeanor and upon conviction must be punished by a fine not to exceed \$100. (NOTE: This does not apply to: (1) children younger than 14 years old; or (2) students 14 years old and older who are enrolled in a school identified in Paragraph 12 of Emergency Executive Order 20-81, and who are on the premises of the school for educational purposes).

Legal References: Emergency Executive Order 20-81
Emergency Executive Order 20-82
Minn. Stat. § 12.45 (Governor's Orders and Rules, Effect)
Minn. Stat. § 12.45 (Violations; Penalties)