

03.12.20 MDE Guidance on Distance Learning

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has received a number of questions about distance learning amid the COVID-19/coronavirus outbreak. Below is MDE's guidance for schools and districts as they plan around school closure and individual student absences.

Closure for a district, a school within a district, or a charter school

- *With MDH Recommendation for Closure:* If the Governor should authorize the Commissioner of Education to close a district, a school within a district, or a charter school for public health reasons, and the number of days closed would leave the school or district unable to provide the statutorily-mandated instructional days per school year, the superintendent or charter school leader should submit an application to MDE to treat the closed days as instructional days. The [district or school application](#) is available on the Minnesota Department of Education's (MDE) website.
- *Without MDH Recommendation for Closure:* If MDH does not recommend closing a district, a school within a district, or a charter school, but the superintendent or charter school leader would still like to do so, districts may use any accumulated instructional days over the statutorily-mandated instructional days per school year for such closure, including any unused snow days. If a district or school chooses to close without a recommendation from MDH, and the closure would result in the school or district providing less than the statutorily-mandated number of annual instructional days, then the school or district is expected to extend its school year to make up those instructional days. MDE expects that students who participate in distance learning interact daily with their teacher(s) and have full access to appropriate educational materials.

Absence for an individual student

- *With MDH Recommendation for Absence:* If MDH recommends that an individual student miss school due to self-quarantine as a result of travel or contact with COVID-19, and the student is well enough to receive education, MDE expects districts, schools, and charter schools to utilize a distance learning model to provide instruction for that individual student. Students participating in distance learning would be considered enrolled for daily membership hours. If MDH recommends that an individual student miss school due to self-quarantine as a result of travel or contact with COVID-19, and the student is not well enough to receive education for more than 15 consecutive school days, there is an application the district can submit to the commissioner of education to still be considered enrolled for daily membership hours. The [individual student application](#) is available on the Minnesota Department of Education's (MDE) website.
- *Without MDH Recommendation for Absence:* All other students should follow individual district, school, or charter school policies and guidelines for excused absences.