



Safe Learning Plan for 2020-21

A Localized, Data-Driven Approach

Family Guide to Minnesota's Safe Learning Plan for the 2020-21 School Year

A Localized, Data-Driven Approach

On July 30, 2020 Governor Tim Walz shared Minnesota's Safe Learning Plan that requires all Minnesota public schools to meet public health standards set by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) when selecting or changing their school learning model. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has created three learning models for schools in-person learning, hybrid learning and distance learning. More information about these models is available in [Guidance for Families – Planning for the 2020-21 School](#).

During the 2020-21 school year, school districts and charter schools will work with MDH and MDE to determine which learning model is best for the safety of their students, employees and community.

All school districts and charter schools must offer a 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.

Families must contact their student's school to get information about their school's plan for the 2020-21 school year.

Information below explains the expectations that MDH and MDE have set for schools.

Public Health Guidelines

As school districts and charter schools must meet MDH's health recommendations during the school year. Recommendations include best practices around:

- Social distancing and minimizing exposure
- Face coverings
- Protecting vulnerable populations
- Hygiene practices

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- Cleaning
- Monitoring for illness
- Suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases
- Water and ventilation systems
- Transportation
- Supporting mental health and wellbeing

If a school district or charter school finds they are not able to meet the required health practices for in-person or hybrid learning, they should use distance learning to educate all students.

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 selecting a learning model for school opening, the decision-making process should first center on health information in the surrounding community.

After selecting a learning model for the start of the school year, the decision to change to a different learning model will be made based on the impact of COVID-19 at the school level and in the community. School districts and charter schools considering making a change in their learning model for a school or entire district must do so in the interest of safety for school staff and students.

More information about the learning models schools can select is available in [Guidance for Families – Planning for the 2020-21 School Year](#).

Face Coverings

Face coverings reduce the spread of COVID-19. All students, staff, and other people in school buildings and district offices or riding on school vehicles are required to wear a face covering. School staff may wear a face shield (a clear plastic barrier that covers the face).

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.

The State of Minnesota will provide every K-12 student and school staff member with one cloth face covering. Every school will also receive three disposable facemasks per student and face shields for teachers.

COVID-19 Testing Process

While school communities work to prevent the spread of COVID-19, cases may still occur in school communities. If someone in a school is suspected of having COVID-19 or tests positive for COVID-19, the school will notify the Departments of Health and Education.

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.

Communicating Plans with Students and Families

School districts and charter schools must share their 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. Schools must share this information on their websites.

School districts and charter schools must make all attempts to provide information orally and written in languages spoken in their schools. The plans must explain how schools will communicate with students and families and how students and families can contact schools. Schools must also share how they will be providing instruction, how families can access meals and school-age care and information about technology needs.

School-age Care

A school district or charter school using a hybrid or distance learning model must provide school-aged care for 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.

School districts and charter schools may also continue to provide before and after school care and may charge fees. Schools are not required to provide care during non-school days.

School Meals

School districts and charter schools must continue to provide meals to students during the school day to the extent possible.

Distance Learning Option

All school districts and charter schools must offer a distance learning option to all families who choose not to attend in-person learning due to medical risks or other safety concerns. Families are not required to provide documentation of risks.

Access to Technology

School districts and charter schools that limit in-person instruction are encouraged to allow students to keep 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.