

Tri-County Schools

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Small School. Big Opportunities.

Safe Return to In-Person Learning for 2021-2022 School Year

**** September 1, 2021 ****

All planning is fluid and subject to change.

Tri-County Schools will continue to offer In-Person Learning Model to all students as it did during the previous 2020-2021 school year. We will continue our efforts to maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff for the 2021-2022 school year by continuing to follow MN Department of Education (MDE), MN Department of Health (MDH) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) requirements. As these organizations evaluate on-going pandemic data and adjust requirements, Tri-County's plan will be adjusted to align with any new requirements.

Last year, parents and the school community did a phenomenal job of monitoring the health of their children and following the guidelines and requirements of the school safety plan. The school district will continue to seek guidance from local public health officials as we do our very best to keep our children safe and in school this year.

The Safe Return to School Standards and Expectations currently include:

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

- ✓ The school is NOT requiring COVID vaccinations for students, staff, visitors, or volunteers.
- ✓ The School District supports CDC's, MDH's, and Local Public Health's, strong recommendation of vaccinations for individuals ages 12 and older.
- ✓ The district recognizes an individual's personal choice to get vaccinated or not; however, we respectfully ask individuals who are not vaccinated to consider wearing a face covering to protect others, as public health recommends.
- ✓ Students 12 years and older who are fully vaccinated, will not need to quarantine from school if one of their household members tests positive, unless symptoms develop following exposure to their positive household member.
- ✓ The school encourages students and staff who are not vaccinated to get tested routinely as public health recommends.
- ✓ Families interested in information about vaccines or testing (locations, dates, etc.) may contact: Kittson Healthcare (218-843-3612) OR Karlstad Clinic (218-436-2251)

FACE COVERINGS, As of TODAY

- ✓ Face coverings are recommended, but not required, for all students and staff.
- ✓ Per recommendation of public health, it is strongly encouraged that individuals who are not vaccinated wear a mask to protect others.
- ✓ Those who choose to wear face coverings will not be treated any differently than those who do not. The option and choice to wear a face covering will be fully supported by the district.
Mask “shaming” will not be permitted in any form.
- ✓ **ONE EXCEPTION: Mask-Wearing is a REQUIRED when on a School Bus**, for all passengers and drivers, per federal mandate.
- ✓ Tri-County School District will continue to review [CDC](#), [MDH](#), [MDE](#) and [Local Public Health](#) guidance regarding face covering requirements for K-12 Schools; and we may adjust the face covering requirements as guidance changes and or local covid case counts dictate.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- ✓ Although social distancing is no longer required, the school will strive to support social distancing practices as a prevention measure.
- ✓ Instructional plans will be created to limit the sharing of materials, limit shared equipment, and maintain appropriate social distancing.
- ✓ Classrooms, the lunchroom, hallways, and other areas will be arranged to facilitate social distancing practices while maintaining a healthy social and collaborative learning environment.

ISOLATION and QUARANTINE

- ✓ Students and individuals who test positive for Covid-19 must quarantine for 10 days.
- ✓ Household members who ARE NOT Vaccinated MUST quarantine for a minimum of 10 days which STARTS AFTER the infected individual’s isolation period has ended.
- ✓ **Vaccinated household members ARE NOT REQUIRED to quarantine** unless symptoms develop.
- ✓ We encourage Covid-Testing prior to return to school upon completion of the quarantine.
- ✓ **The absolute best way to prevent students 12 years and older from having to quarantine is to have them get vaccinated.**
- ✓ The school will not automatically require entire classes to quarantine because of a positive case connected to a class/classroom. Each positive case related to the school will immediately result in taking additional prevention/mitigation measures specific to the class/classroom.
- ✓ Decisions to quarantine groups of students could be required based on factors such as multiple positive cases and a local increase in positive cases. The school will be in regular contact with local health agencies to monitor, assess, and determine if or when quarantining of students is necessary.

LEARNING OPTIONS

- ✓ School will be 100% in-person Monday-Friday for the start of the 2021-2022 school year.
- ✓ Tri-County School students **will not** have optional distance learning.
- ✓ We anticipate few limitations/restrictions. If a child must quarantine, arrangements can be made with the teacher about how best to facilitate schoolwork/learning during their absence.
- ✓ We will allow and encourage teachers to do what works best to stay in communication with their students and parents during a student's prolonged absence.
- ✓ We will treat students who need to be out due to any covid-related absence as an Excused Absence.

HEALTH SCREENING

- ✓ **Staying home when sick:** This is an EXTREMELY IMPORTANT SAFETY MEASURE. It is important that if your child is not feeling well or is showing signs/symptoms of the onset of a possible illness you keep them home until 24 hours after their symptoms have improved. This includes being fever free without the use of medication, no vomiting or diarrhea, improvement of cough, congestion, or runny nose, etc. for a minimum of 24 hours.
- ✓ All students and staff are to conduct a daily health self-screen and stay home if necessary (when sick). This is a good general health practice and is instrumental in slowing and preventing the spread of colds, flu, and COVID.

Self-Screening Questions

Please evaluate prior to entering any school facilities or transportation. If you answer yes to one or more of the following questions, please stay home until symptoms subside.

1. Do you have a fever? (Temperature of 100.4F or greater)
2. Are you experiencing a new onset cough?
3. Are you having difficulty breathing?
4. Do you have a sore throat?
5. Are you experiencing muscle aches? or body aches?
6. Are you experiencing unusual fatigue?
7. Are you experiencing loss of taste or smell?

→ Schools continue to be mandated to report positive COVID test cases to local public health and MDH. This is not a local decision: *Minnesota Rule 4605.7070 Handling a confirmed case of COVID-19 requires any person in charge of any institution, school, childcare facility, or camp to report cases of COVID-19 to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Reportable Disease Rule* www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/reportable/rule/index.html

HYGIENE PRACTICES

- ✓ The school will ensure the availability of appropriate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors and place supplies in areas where they may be frequently used.

Handwashing

The school will teach, model, and provide time for handwashing and/or hand-sanitizing routines in the daily schedule. Staff and students are instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially when working with shared items, prior to meals or snack time, or using the restroom.

Respiratory Etiquette

Staff and students are instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing to avoid touching their face, in particular their nose, mouth, or eyes with their hands. Tissues should be disposed of, and individuals should sanitize or wash their hands afterwards.

CLEANING, DISINFECTING, SANITIZING FACILITY

- ✓ Cleaning routine protocols will continue to support mitigation of COVID using approved disinfecting cleaning products and used in accordance with product label instructions.
- ✓ Drinking fountains will only be used in the bottle-filling mode; therefore, students and staff are encouraged to bring their own labeled water bottle.

DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION

- ✓ All passengers and drivers are required to wear a face covering while in school vehicles. ***This is not a local decision; it is a federal mandate.*** A driver does not need to wear a face covering if they are the only person on the bus. Students will be expected to wear a mask upon entry of the bus and throughout the duration while riding.
- ✓ We encourage all bus riders to have their own masks. If a child does not have one upon entering the bus, a disposable mask will be provided to them.

FOOD SERVICE

- ✓ All meals will be served through the school kitchens and eaten in the cafeteria this year.
- ✓ Specific cafeteria safety practices will be in place, which may include assigned tables/seating, spacing of tables, and traffic flow patterns.
- ✓ All meals will be free for the 2021-2022 school year to all students. **We do still need families to complete free-reduced lunch forms as a large portion of revenue is generated to help with support services based on our free-reduced lunch percentage.**
- ✓ **\$\$ Extra Milk & Juice Box:** Reminder:
 - Students who ask for an extra milk/juice with their meal will be charged for the milk/juice.
 - Students who take just a milk or juice, WITHOUT the meal are charged for the milk/juice.

VISITOR GUIDELINES

- ✓ At this point, our visitor's policy will return to what we did prior to the 2020-2021 school year.
 - Visitor should NOT come to the school if they are experiencing any signs or symptoms of an illness or if anyone from their household has tested positive for covid or showing symptoms of possible illness.
 - The school STRONGLY and RESPECTFULLY REQUESTS Visitors who ARE NOT Vaccinated to Wear a face covering when visiting the school.
 - All visitors must report to the main office upon entrance to the buildings.
 - All visitors should enter the school only using the main entrances (Door 1).

QUESTIONS/INPUT: Parents, please feel free to contact the school to talk to Superintendent Gadbois if you have any questions or concerns. (218-436-2261)

PLEASE KNOW: Tri-County School District is committed to providing a safe environment for students, staff and community members. We believe it is important that we must all remember to respect the decisions and actions of others in our community while we seek the common goal of a safe school environment while adhering to all COVID-19 school requirements. The District will continue to actively monitor our federal, state and local COVID information to determine the strategies necessary to provide for the HEALTH and SAFETY of our entire Learning Community