



BACK-TO-SCHOOL PLAN

2021-22

Safe Return to In-Person Learning and Continuity of Services Plan Based on the Requirements of the U.S. Department of Education

Scheduled Review

December 2021 (In conjunction with December Child Count)

June 2022 (In conjunction with Year End Signoff)

December 2022 (In conjunction with December Child Count)

June 2023 (In conjunction with Year End Signoff)

Last updated: July 22, 2021

**Changes to this plan may occur based on updated guidelines from national, state and local health officials.*

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PLAN REVIEWED AS NEEDED THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR

Continuity of Services Plan

The Meade School District is committed to provide a quality education to all of the students in the district and to provide for a safe environment for the students and staff. Precautions are in place to ensure a safe return to school. This plan outlines procedures used by the staff and students throughout the school year. The plan can and probably will change throughout the year.

Accessibility: The Meade School District will post English and Spanish versions of this document online. Individuals with issues accessing information due to language or disability should contact Superintendent, Mr. Kirkegaard via email at don.kirkegaard@k12.sd.us or phone (605) 347-2523 ext. 1.

Guiding Principles and Considerations

The guidance and considerations outlined in this document are grounded in the following principles:

- Safeguarding the health & safety of students and staff.
- Preparing for students to return to traditional, in-person learning.
- Monitoring the school populations and the community, when necessary, changing operations to appropriately contain COVID-19 spread.
- Emphasizing equity, access, and support to the students who are emerging from COVID-19 pandemic disruption.

Continuity of Services

- The Meade School District is currently planning for traditional, in-person learning in our schools. The central belief is that our students are best served when connected in person with our school's academic programs, activities, and social-emotional supports led in person by our teachers, counselors, coaches, administrators, and mentors.
- Credit recovery; tutoring, both during and after school; summer school; and extended school year will be offered to assist students who may need additional support and help outside the normal classroom setting due to absences as a result of COVID-19.
- In the event of a school closure and the move to remote learning, instructional delivery and academic learning will be accomplished through the remote learning or blended learning.
 - o During a period of remote learning, breakfast and lunch meals will be provided to students via a single pick-up location (TBD).
 - o During a period of remote learning, school counselors will be available to address student social, emotional, and mental health needs.

Operational Phases

The determination to move a school building from one Phase to another (Phases I-IV) will be based upon meeting the threshold for five consecutive school days. Phase operations will be sustained as long as the school building continues to meet the threshold. If for five consecutive school days we do not meet the threshold in a Phase, we will then move the school building to the less restrictive Phase. The superintendent will monitor the metrics and will make the determination to move a building from one Phase to another.

Phase I: Green

Little or no virus activity in the building (less than 1% of students and staff in a building). Masks are optional, precautions are in place. School activities are normal.

Phase II: White

Isolated cases in the school building (1-5% of students and staff in a building). Masks are recommended but not required, precautions are in place.

Phase III: Orange

Active cases in the building (greater than 3% less than 5% of students and staff in a building). Masks are required when social distancing is not an option.

Phase IV: Red

Substantial cases in the building (5% or greater of students and staff in a building). Special board meeting to consider educational delivery options, blended learning as well as virtual learning.

In addition to active COVID-19 case numbers both in the building(s) and in the county, the district will consider other factors including numbers of students and staff needing to be quarantined, the number of COVID-19 cases in a class or grade level and the ability to hold classes based on the number of teachers out of the building. The percentage of COVID-19 related school numbers are guidelines and not hard-fast numbers. The percentages will be used in school buildings with 150 or more students. The decision to move from phase to phase in a building with less than 150 students will be made based on the unique circumstances in the individual building.

Assumption of Risk

COVID-19 is a worldwide pandemic as identified by the World Health Organization (WHO). COVID-19 is extremely contagious and believed to spread mainly from person-to-person contact. Federal, state, and local governments and federal and state health agencies recommend social distancing.

The Meade School District has put in place preventative measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19; however, the district cannot guarantee that individuals will not become infected with COVID-19.

Reporting

To keep you updated on positive COVID-19 cases district-wide within the Meade School District, we will be posting updated cases by building level weekly on the district website located at www.meade.k12.sd.us.

Positive COVID-19 Procedures for Meade School District

Staff and students that have been identified with a positive COVID-19 test can return to school and end isolation when the following criteria have been met:

- Ten-days out from the start of symptoms.
- Fever-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.
- Symptoms have improved.
- Or five-days out from the start of symptoms
- Fever-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.
- Symptoms have improved.
- Students and staff members are expected to wear a mask for five days when social distancing is not an option.

Quarantine Procedures for Meade School District

The district will follow the South Dakota Department of Health's (SD DOH) "Recommendations for Temporary Exclusion from a School Setting" and authorize the Superintendent to implement rules, plans and procedures for the application and execution of these recommendations.

- Students and parents will be notified that their student is a potential close contact.
- Any student or staff member that has been identified as a close contact in their household will follow guidelines as identified by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the SD DOH.
 - o Ten-day quarantine from last exposure and no symptoms, is not tested on day five or after and continue to monitor for symptoms.
 - o Five-day quarantine from last exposure and no symptoms and a negative COVID-19 test on day five or later and continue to monitor for symptoms.
 - o Student or staff members that have been fully vaccinated and are showing no symptoms of COVID-19 do not need to quarantine.

Communicating Individual Positive COVID-19 Cases

- The district will communicate with parents to the greatest extent possible the information surrounding a positive case in a school. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) will dictate what type of information we can share with parents.
- The district will provide notification to the parents/guardians of a student that has been identified as a close contact within school to a positive COVID-19 case.
- The district will provide notification to parents of a child that may have been exposed to a positive COVID case within a cohort at school.
- The SD DOH will work with school districts to provide data at a level to inform decision making,

in line with appropriate privacy protections.

- If a staff or a student within a school building tests positive for COVID-19, SD DOH and SD DOE will:
 - o Work with school officials to determine the level of exposure of other students and staff, depending on what level of close contacts the individual would likely have had. This will vary, for example, depending on the age of the student or the number of classes a teacher has.
 - o Recommend appropriate steps to take to accommodate cleaning, quarantine, etc., as necessary, depending on the level of exposure risk to the school community.

Phase I: Green Operations

Traditional face-to-face instruction.

Phase II: White Operations

Phase II will incorporate the following changes:

PPE Strategies

- Use of Face masks is recommended for staff and students.
 - o Proper use of a face mask can be found in Appendix D.
- Staff & students will be expected to have a mask readily available while in school.

Classroom

- Staff and students are expected to exercise of physical distancing, handwashing, and respiratory etiquette.
- Disinfect desks, keyboards, and screens:
 - o The use of disinfecting solutions will be utilized on a more frequent basis.
 - o Custodial procedures and frequency of sanitizing will be increased.
- Space seating/desks at least 3 feet apart when feasible.
 - o Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.
 - o Implement and adhere to seating charts.
- Students and teachers will remain in small cohort groups that stay together as much as possible during the day, and from day to day. Mixing between cohort groups will be limited as much as possible (e.g., during recess, lunch in the cafeteria, elective courses, arrival and dismissal, etc.)
- Limit the use of shared materials and spaces:
 - o Keep student belongings separate.
 - o Avoid sharing supplies.
 - o Avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids.
 - o Avoid sharing of music instruments.
- No sharing of outside food in the classroom unless food item is pre-packaged.
- Students and staff to use personal water bottles and water bottle filling stations vs. hallway/classroom drinking fountains.
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the classroom.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- Integrate good hygiene practices (Appendix E).
- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students and staff.

- If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
- Encourage staff and students to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).

Office Strategies and Other Non-Instructional Spaces

- Maintain 3-6 ft. distance when possible.
- Disinfect surface areas regularly and frequently.
- Hand sanitizer at each workstation.
- Cafeteria – scheduling seating considerations & use of hand sanitizer at start of all serving lines.

Visitors

- Limit visitors to parents and critically important visitors on campus.
- Limit volunteers and external groups or organizations.
- Any visitor or vendor may be subject to temperature and symptom screening.

School Transportation

- CDC guidelines cannot be achieved during our route bussing. If at all possible, parents should consider transporting their children rather than sending them to and from school on the bus.
- Anyone who is experiencing symptoms like those listed in Appendix A & B or has had close contact to a person with COVID-19 cannot use the bus and should stay home.
- Recommend face mask use by driver and all passengers.
- Use of hand sanitizer upon entry to the bus.
- If possible, students should sit with cohort (same students sit together each day – preferably with a family member or classmate).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth while on the bus.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow. Wash or sanitize hands immediately afterwards.
- Limit touching frequently touched surfaces such as hand railings, buttons, and other seats when possible. If you must touch them, use hand sanitizer or wash your hands as soon as you can.
- Open windows if weather allows.
- Seating will be assigned by household by filling the bus from back to front.
- Bus will be unloaded from the front to back.

Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Events

- **Activities** - In order to support the whole child and develop a student’s passions and interests, the district will maintain extra-curricular activities during the various reopening plans, as much as possible. Activities and events will follow the same guidance as the regular school day. All requirements and recommendations will still apply.

- **Transportation** – a bus/vehicle will be provided to transport student athletes to competitions taking place at another school. Parents will be allowed to transport their child to and from the event as long as the arrival time at the other school is in conjunction with the team transport. They may only transport their child or children.

Phase III: Orange Operations

Phase III will incorporate the following changes:

***Use of cloth face masks are required of students and staff under the following conditions:**

- Students/staff are seated less than 3 feet apart while riding a bus or in school transportation.
- Students/staff are less than 3 feet apart while entering/exiting school.
- Students/staff are seated less than 3 feet apart in the classroom or are engaging in learning stations or circle time that require close contact.
- Students/staff are less than 3 feet apart while transitioning between classes or to other activities during the school day.
- Students/staff participating in an assembly or event that requires close contact.
- Student is receiving one-on-one services or instruction.
- Students will be provided breaks and allowed to remove their face covering when outside or in space that can accommodate physical distancing.
- Will accommodate students/staff on the required use of face mask when use may exacerbate a physical or mental health condition, lead to a medical emergency, or introduce significant safety concerns.

Visitors

- No nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations.

Gatherings

- Activities that involve bringing together large groups of people or activities that do not allow for social distancing, including assemblies, performances, in-person field trips, etc., will be suspended.

Phase IV: Red Operations

Phase IV Operations include the potential closure of schools. A special school board meeting will be held to determine the education delivery method for the school. If it is determined that an initial school closure is necessary, the length of the closure will also be determined. A school closure may impact the scheduled activities for that school or schools. The district will consider recommendations from the SD DOH, SD DOE, number of active COVID-19 cases in a building or district-wide, community spread, number of teachers/staffs that are out due to a positive case or close contact quarantines and the availability of substitute teachers.

Remote Learning

Remote Learning includes the closure of a school and the move to remote learning. The decision to move to remote learning will be based on the ability to maintain an effective in-person learning environment. Activities may be suspended during the period of remote learning. Staff will be working with students the first weeks of school to prepare them should we have to move to remote learning.

SD Virtual School Learning

The Meade School District will allow students to access online learning opportunities when it is determined to be in the best educational interest of the student or is necessitated due to a medical condition. The district's preferred provider for virtual learning is the Black Hills Online Learning Community (SD Virtual Learning). If you have questions, please consult the online information available at <http://bholc.org>. However, other approved virtual learning options may be available for remediation or credit recovery for students in grades 6-12.

Virtual learning is a unique opportunity that is not guaranteed for everyone. The criteria below outline the circumstances for a student to be considered for virtual learning. A team from each respective building will make a recommendation to the superintendent. The superintendent will make the final decision.

To be eligible:

- The student must be enrolled in the Meade School District. Students must meet and maintain all pertinent enrollment requirements of the district.
- A student who has an immune compromised system or is living with a family member with an immune compromised system could be considered. A physician's recommendation that explicitly states the student should not attend school in-person must be provided; or it is determined that it is in the best educational interest of the student to participate in virtual learning.
- Prior administrative approval is required for all online learning options.
- Acceptance into virtual learning for students with an IEP or 504 will primarily be based upon the decision of the IEP/504 team as they determine the best educational placement for the individual student.

Considerations:

- Student performance will be reviewed each trimester/semester. Learners not making adequate progress, not demonstrating proficiency, or are failing may be removed from the program at subsequent trimesters/semesters.
- Students will be allowed to participate in athletics and extra-curricular activities.
- Students are required to take state assessments administered by the district regardless of whether the course for which the examination is required was taken virtually or in the traditional classroom. Failure to take the state assessments may result in denial to continue with virtual learning.
- Students taking courses virtually are subject to district policies, procedures and rules applicable to students enrolled in traditional courses including, but not limited to, the district's discipline code and prohibitions on academic dishonesty, discrimination, harassment, bullying and cyberbullying.

Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Services

- Students – each student will have access to a qualified school counselor in their respective grade level building. The school district will also utilize community mental health providers to address gaps in mental health services. In addition, the school district has hired a school/community liaison to connect students and families with school and community resources.
- Staff - each staff member will have access to a qualified school counselor in their respective grade level building. The school district will also utilize community mental health providers to address gaps in mental health services. In addition, the school district provides district insurance that allows for up to 6 counseling sessions per year.

Special Education

Every child and adolescent with a disability is entitled to a free and appropriate education and is entitled to special education services based on their individualized education program (IEP). Students receiving special education services may be more negatively affected by distance-learning and may be disproportionately impacted by interruptions in regular education. It may not be feasible, depending on the needs of the individual child and adolescent, to adhere both to distancing guidelines and the criteria outlined in a specific IEP. Attempts to meet physical distancing guidelines should meet the needs of the individual child and may require creative solutions, often on a case-by-case basis.

Continuance of Education Services

- When a student is not able to attend school for the duration of time indicated above because they tested positive to COVID-19, displayed the symptoms, or have to quarantine due to contact tracing – the school will continue with educational services for the student(s) via remote learning.
- While regular school attendance is important in the educational process, the school district recognizes that during the time of pandemic operations that students will be asked/required to stay home. COVID-19 related absences will not be held against the student and will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Health Protocols and Procedures

COVID-19 Vaccination

- It is recommended that eligible students and staff receive a COVID-19 vaccination.

Immunizations

- Existing school immunization requirements will be maintained and not deferred because of the current pandemic.
- It is vital that all children receive the required vaccinations on time and get caught up if they are behind as a result of the pandemic.
- In addition, although influenza vaccination is not required for school attendance, in the coming academic year, it is highly encouraged for all students.
- The school district highly encourages the influenza vaccination for all staff members.

Health Protocols

- Teach and reinforce proper hygiene measures such as hand washing and respiratory etiquette.

- Staff and students will wash hands and/or use hand sanitizer regularly.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom and throughout buildings.
- Inform/train staff on all safety protocols.
- Post signs in highly visible locations that promote everyday protective measures and how to stop the spread of germs.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Create distance between students and staff when possible.
- Personal school supplies will not be shared.
- Encourage students and staff to use personal water bottles and water bottle filling stations vs hallway/classroom drinking fountains.

Staying Home When Appropriate

- Employees and students who are sick or who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID- 19 should stay home.
- Staff and students should stay home if they have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Staff and students who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 should also stay home and monitor their health.
- In addition, students and staff should be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and show symptom improvement before returning to school. This precautionary measure applies to any student or staff member with a fever regardless of whether or not they had a positive COVID-19 test result.
- Please use Appendix A for COVID-19 Screening Questions.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Clean

- Wear disposable gloves to clean and disinfect.
- Clean surfaces using soap and water, then use disinfectant.
- Cleaning with soap and water reduces number of germs, dirt and impurities on the surface. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces.
- Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces.
 - o More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be required based on level of use.
- High touch surfaces include:
 - o Tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.

Disinfect

- Recommend use of EPA-registered household disinfectant. Follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product.

Many products recommend:

- o Keeping surface wet for a period of time (see product label).
- o Precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Cleaning and Disinfecting a Building or Facility if Someone is Sick

- Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
 - o Do not necessarily need to close operations if you can close off affected areas.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Wait 24 hours before you clean or disinfect. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, and keyboards.
- Vacuum the space if needed. Use a vacuum equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, if available.
- Once area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be opened for use.
 - o Students and staff without close contact with the person who is sick can return to areas immediately after disinfection.
- If more than 7 days since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.
 - o Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

Student Meals

- Follow safe food handling procedures when handling, preparing, or serving food.
- Clean cafeterias and high-touch surfaces throughout the school day.
- Encourage social distance among students in serving and dining areas.
- When able, implement alternative seating arrangements and/or locations to decrease the number of students dining together during each serving session.
- Provide hand sanitizer station set up in service line for student to sanitize before and after meals.

Appendix A

BEFORE SCHOOL!

Parents, please complete the following health screening before sending their child to school.

(Parent(s) do not need to send the questionnaire to school)

COVID-19 SCREENING QUESTIONS

Has your child had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days?

_____Yes_____No

Does your child have new or worsening shortness of breath?

_____Yes_____No

Does your child have new or worsening cough?

_____Yes_____No

Does your child have a fever of 100.4 or greater?

_____Yes_____No

Does your child have chills?

_____Yes_____No

Does your child have diarrhea?

_____Yes_____No

Does your child have unexplained muscle pain?

_____Yes_____No

Does your child have a headache (unrelated to a known health condition (i.e. migraines)?

_____Yes_____No

Does your child have a sore throat?

_____Yes_____No

Does your child have a new loss of taste or smell?

_____Yes_____No

If YES to ANY of these questions, **STOP!**

Do not send your child to school.

Contact your healthcare provider. Contact your school to inform them of your child's symptoms. You may also contact the SD Department of Health with any COVID-19 questions 1-800-997-2880.

If you are able to answer NO to ALL questions, **GO** to school.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Know the symptoms of COVID-19, which can include the following:



Symptoms can range from mild to severe illness, and appear 2–14 days after you are exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Seek medical care immediately if someone has Emergency Warning Signs of COVID-19

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your healthcare provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.



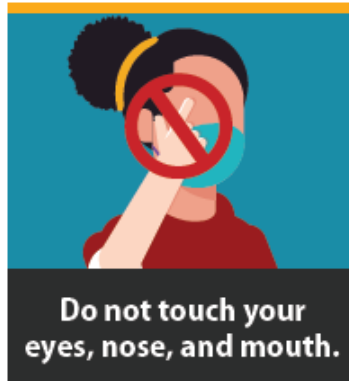
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases

[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

CS-317142-A

Stop the Spread of Germs

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.



cdc.gov/coronavirus

3/6/20 11:00 AM

How to Wear and Take Off Your Mask

Accessible link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

How to Put On and Wear Your Mask Correctly

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before putting on your mask
- Put it over your face and mouth
- Be sure your mask fits snugly against the sides of your face and under your chin
- Make sure you can breathe easily



Wear a Mask to Protect Yourself and Others

- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth to help prevent getting and spreading COVID-19
- Wear a mask in public settings, especially when you cannot stay six feet apart from people who don't live with you

How to Take Off Your Mask



Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops



Handle only by the ear loops or ties



Fold outside corners together



Wash hands immediately after removing

Other Ways to Protect Yourself

- Stay at least 6 feet away from others
- Avoid crowds and places with poor ventilation
- Wash your hands often
- Get a vaccine when it is offered



CS 523487-A 04/01/2021

cdc.gov/coronavirus

Students: Let's work together to stop the spread of COVID-19

DID YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?

stop



think



wash hands



ASK YOURSELF:

Did I just go to the bathroom?

Am I about to eat?

Did I just eat?

Did I cough or sneeze?

*Did I touch supplies or objects
that other people have touched?*

Did I touch garbage?

Did I touch my cloth face cover?

*If you can't wash your hands,
ask your teacher or another
adult for hand sanitizer.*

Item 9i – Back-to-School Plan Update

(ITEM 9i 2.0)

- 100% of all students and staff have had the opportunity to get vaccinated.
- 100% of all staff and a majority of students have had the opportunity to get a booster.
- 100% of all students and staff have the opportunity to wear a mask or protective covering if they choose to do so.
- There are very few places outside of schools including activities that have a mask requirement. It is next to impossible to stop the spread of COVID if the schools are the only area requiring masks.
- The State has all but eliminated contact tracing.
- CDC and the Department of Health are saying that if a mask is effective, it should be a well fitted medical grade mask.
- We have not required masks in any school since last December and it will be extremely difficult for Principals to enforce the requirement.