

Nevis Public School Families

The Minnesota Department of Education released an update to Safe Learning Plan on February 17, 2021. Many of the updates are related to schools not presently back in a Hybrid or In-Person learning model. I have highlighted below the updates which directly impact the learning environment at Nevis Public School.

[UPDATED 02/17/21]:

1. Continuing to Prioritize In-Person Learning Based on Minnesota's evolving knowledge and understanding of the virus, the Safe Learning Plan has been updated so that schools reduce the use of county data as a singular determining point when considering their learning models, and mitigation strategies are increased to help get students back in classrooms while keeping students, families, educators and staff safe.
2. Based on CDC guidance, if a school is currently in an in-person or hybrid model, the county-level data alone does not impact the need to transition to a more restrictive model. Instead, schools should rely on school-level COVID-19 transmission data and staff capacities when making the decision to transition learning models.
3. If a school is operating in an in-person or hybrid learning model and 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, schools should reach out to their Regional Support Team and are strongly encouraged to discuss whether a transition to a more restrictive learning model is necessary.
4. A rolling start is no longer required for any schools – elementary, middle, or high school – to safely transition to an in-person or hybrid learning model.
5. School leaders are directed to strongly recommend to their students and families that are learning in-person or in a hybrid learning model to receive a COVID-19 test every two weeks. Families can find locations for free COVID-19 testing on MDH's website.
6. For early learning and elementary schools only: Three feet of physical distancing or more between students is strongly recommended. Develop and keep students and staff in small cohort groups that stay together as much as possible throughout the day and from day to day. Limit mixing between cohort groups as much as possible (e.g., during lunch, bathroom breaks, arrival and dismissal, free periods, recess).
7. For middle and high schools only: Students must maintain six feet of physical distance from one another throughout the school day whenever feasible; when six feet of distancing cannot be met, a minimum of three feet of physical distance between students must be maintained.

8. When county-level data declines to a level that indicates full in-person learning for all students (equivalent range is 0 to less than 10 cases as a 14-day case rate per 10,000 people), schools will not be required to meet any specific minimum amount of physical distance between students in the classroom setting. However, schools must continue to create and encourage as much distancing as feasible between students during the day.
9. Strongly recommended: Six feet of distance should be maintained between students during mealtimes whenever possible. When six feet of physical distance cannot be maintained, schools must create as much space as possible between students. Strongly recommended: Cohorting smaller groups of students for mealtimes with six feet of distance.
10. Any school that is implementing in-person learning or hybrid learning must continue offering an equitable distance learning options for families, per Executive Order 20-82.
11. Indoor events and entertainment are allowed to open when: Occupancy capacity is limited to no more than 25%; up to a maximum of 250 patrons (previously 150 patrons) in each area of the venue with social distance of 6 feet maintained. Max 1,250 (previously 750).

I anticipate the Safe Learning Plan will continue to go through revisions as the department of education continues to evolve based upon the impact of COVID-19 on the learning environment. The good news for our school community is that our students, staff and community have implemented the necessary mitigation efforts to keep our kids in school. Keep up the good work everyone.

Superintendent Parks