



BACK TO SCHOOL PLAN

2020-21

Meade School District

UPDATED AUGUST 31, 2020

Back to School Plan

Meade School District Pandemic Operations

For academic, social-emotional, and economic reasons, we are compelled to start school with an in-person learning model on Tuesday, September 8th. But we also cannot ignore that the threat of this virus remains, and we must take prudent steps to keep our schools from becoming the method by which it spreads in our community. This plan will likely change over time as the collective knowledge of COVID-19 increases and publicized. We must also anticipate that there will be outbreaks, creating cycles through which we move from in-person to remote learning for some time. With that in mind, we will:

- Offer students a high-quality, comprehensive educational experience five days a week, whether in-person or online
- Respect the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the SD Department of Health (SD DOH) guidelines and adopt practices we can control
- Be creative, flexible and sustainable in our instruction, school operations and problem-solving
- Ensure every student has a meaningful connection to a responsible and caring adult
- Provide the social and emotional services necessary for our students and staff to be successful
- Consider input and feedback from students, staff, families and patrons with respect and compassion.
- Provide our parents, students and staff with the training and tools needed to adapt to an ever-evolving educational environment
- Provide sincere and timely communication

Highlights of Back to School Plan 2020-21

- This plan represents the work and feedback from parents, teachers, classified staff, administrators, state and local health officials, food service representatives, bussing representatives, and custodial staff.
- Provide Monday through Friday in-person learning at all Meade Schools beginning the start of the 2020-21 school year on September 8th, 2020.
- Provide an option for students to enroll in an online learning program when parents are not comfortable having their child(ren) attend school for in-person classroom instruction. Registration for the online learning option will open August 3rd through August 17th, 2020. Further information is provided in this document under SD VIRTUAL SCHOOL.

School Specific Pandemic Operation Plans

Circumstances will likely vary from school to school and program to program, each with unique challenges and solutions. Specific school details will be communicated to you directly by the administration of the school your child attends.

Pandemic Operation Phases

The determination to move from Phase I to Phase II or III will not be made in isolation. The SD Department of Health, the SD Department of Education, and local health officials will aid the school district with guidance and a recommendation regarding what Phase we operate and for what duration of time. They will also provide guidance to the school district should they believe there is a need to close a school and for what duration of time. However, the final decision will rest with the school district.

Below are the three Operational Phases and their description as they relate to cases in a school building. *Please note that individual school buildings could change phases or every school building in the district could change phases depending upon the situation.

***The following information is designed to be guidelines for the three different phases for the Back to School Plan. The criteria are truly meant to be guidelines used to help make decisions and are not meant to be hard, rigid numbers.**

Phase I	No cases in school building
Phase II	Isolated cases in school building
Phase III	Substantial cases in school building

Phase I Green – Zero to low COVID cases in the school building(s). No confirmed COVID cases up to a maximum of 1% of students and staff. In addition to building cases, the district will use active cases in Meade County based on the COVID19.sd.gov website. Risk factors of none, minimal and moderate will be considered Phase I. We know that we have students living in Lawrence and Pennington County, but the majority of our students reside in Meade County. The basis of our community spread data will be active COVID cases in Meade County.

Phase II Orange – Active cases in the building between 1%-3% of building enrollment including students and staff. Active cases in Meade County based on the COVID-19.sd.gov website risk factor of substantial.

Phase III Red – Active cases in the building greater than 3% of enrollments including students and staff and active cases in Meade County based on the COVID19.sd.gov website risk factor of substantial.

In addition to active COVID 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 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 related school numbers are to 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.

If the district/school building is required to stay at Phase III (distance learning) for more than two consecutive weeks a special school board meeting will be held to reaffirm the decision.

A Message from the American Academy of Pediatrics

The AAP strongly advocates that all planning and policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school. The importance of in-person learning is well- documented, and there is already evidence of the negative impacts on children because of school closures in the spring of 2020. Lengthy time away from school and associated interruption of supportive services often results in social isolation, making it difficult for schools to identify and address important learning deficits as well as child and adolescent physical or sexual abuse, substance use, depression, and suicidal ideation. This, in turn, places children and adolescents at considerable risk of morbidity and, in some cases, mortality. Beyond the educational impact and social impact of school closures, there has been substantial impact on food security and physical activity for children and families.

Policy makers must also consider the mounting evidence regarding COVID-19 in children and adolescents, including the role they may play in transmission of the infection. SARS-CoV-2 (*the virus that causes COVID-19*) appears to behave differently in children and adolescents than other common respiratory viruses, such as influenza, on which much of the current guidance regarding school closures is based. Although children and adolescents play a major role in amplifying influenza outbreaks, to date, this does not appear to be the case with SARS-CoV-2. Although many questions remain, the preponderance of evidence indicates that children and adolescents are less likely to be symptomatic and less likely to have severe disease resulting from SARS-CoV-2 infection. In addition, children may be less likely to become infected and to spread infection. Policies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 within schools must be balanced with the known harms to children, adolescents, families, and the community by keeping children at home.

Finally, policy makers should acknowledge that COVID-19 policies are intended to mitigate, not eliminate, risk. No single action or set of actions will eliminate the risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission, but implementation of several coordinated interventions can greatly reduce that risk.

Source: <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

Back to School Pandemic Operation Phases

Phase I Operations - School is open

Educational Delivery

- Traditional in person face-to-face instruction
- Distant South Dakota Virtual School learning option (semester commitment)

Health/Safety Protocols

- Daily health screening at home
- Face coverings recommended when social distancing is not an option
- Isolation room for students showing COVID-19 symptoms until parent/guardian can pick up
- All students should have two clean face coverings available no matter what phase

Social Distancing

- Reconfigure rooms to promote social distancing
- Control movement as much as possible
- Limited assemblies and large group gatherings
- Promote proper hygiene
- Stagger lunches, recess and hallway passing's
- Table partitions where possible

Access to Buildings

- No visitors past entry point
- Scheduled visitor access by appointment
- Visitors required to wear face covering until social distancing is obtained
- Late arrival/early pickup parents bring students to and pick up from the lobby
- Face coverings are optional for students and staff but highly recommended when social distancing is not possible
- Any person exhibiting mild symptoms must wear a face covering until leaving campus
- Establish and maintain hand hygiene stations at key locations in the buildings
- Students and staff use handwashing and sanitation stations located around the building
- Use of sneeze guards at appropriate locations
- Follow the plan for when a student, staff member, or visitor becomes sick
- Identify an isolation/screening area in the school

Transportation

- **FACE COVERINGS ARE REQUIRED**
- ***CDC guidelines cannot be achieved during bus routes. If possible, parents should consider transporting their child(ren) rather than sending them to and from school on the bus.***
- If you or your family members have any COVID-19 symptoms or have been exposed, do not ride the bus and stay home.
- Buses will be sanitized before/after each use (two times/day)
- Hand sanitizer upon entering and exiting the school bus
- Assigned seating as possible
- One family per seat when possible
- Encourage parents to drop off/pick up students if possible, instead of riding the bus
- For activities, allow parents/guardians to opt out of bussing and transport their child(ren)
- Face coverings will be worn by bus drivers
- Seat behind bus driver will not be used
- Windows will be opened a little when temperature allows for better air flow

Food Service

- Face covering and gloves will be worn by all food service staff
- Food service staff and lunch supervisors will sanitize tables with foggers in between groups

- Student will have touchless scanner cards
- Hand sanitizers will be in place for students prior to entering/leaving the food service area
- Decals on floors for directions – no touch lines
- No outside visitors/guests allowed in food service area
- Social distance as much as possible
- Lunchrooms/eating areas will be expanded to elementary gymnasiums, middle and high school to lobby/corridors
- Timeframes will be adjusted
- Some meals may be prepackaged
- No self-service salad bars
- No condiment containers (condiments will be served by food service staff or prepackaged)
- Elementary's will have one hot entre option
- MS/HS will have two hot entre options and two cold entre options and grab and go prepackages.
- All food service meals move back to previous requirements of free, reduced or full pay

Classroom and Cleaning Protocol

- Staff and students educated in the areas of social distancing, handwashing, respiratory etiquette and mask use to mitigate exposure
- Hand sanitizer stations and disinfectant wipes in every classroom
- Disinfect desks, keyboards and screens
- Schedule desk sanitation during school day at appropriate transitions
- Custodial staff routinely clean highly touched surfaces
- Desks – rearrange to account for social distancing when possible
- Promote good hygiene practices into instruction and classroom expectations
- Limit the use of shared materials and spaces
- Keep student belongings separate
- Avoid sharing supplies, electronic devices, toys, books, other games or learning aids and musical instruments
- No sharing of outside food/beverages in the classroom
- Encourage students and staff to use personal water bottles and water bottle filling stations

Office Strategies and Other Non-Instructional Spaces

- Maintain 6 ft. distance when possible
- Sneeze guards placed at counters where the public or guests to the school may stand or approach
- Disinfect surface areas regularly and frequently
- Hand sanitizer at each workstation
- Employee break room and/or work room – social distancing seating, custodians routinely disinfect surface areas, restrooms, locker rooms, etc.

Visitors

- Post COVID-10 information signs at entry points to school and in highly visible areas

- Very limited outside access to the facility
- Any visitor or vendor must wear a face covering before entering any buildings
- Doors locked during school hours
- Follow the parent pick-up & drop-off procedure

Gatherings/Assemblies

- Implement strategies that discourage gathering for areas such as the bus lane, restrooms, recess, hallways, lunch, before and after school
- Large gatherings/assemblies are allowed only if social distancing can be achieved
- Avoid personal contact such as touching, hugs, high fives, etc.

Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities

- Activities in session
- Follow established District, SDHSAA, CDC, & DOH guidelines
- Spectators encouraged to social distance and wear face coverings
- Transportation – a bus/vehicle will be provided to transport student athletes to competitions taking place at another school. The driver and all passengers will be required to wear a face covering during transit. Parents will be allowed to transport their child to and from the event if the arrival time at the other school is in conjunction with the team transport. Pre-approval is required.
- Do not ride the bus if you or a family member is showing any COVID-19 symptoms or have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Buses will be sanitized after each route
- Hand sanitizers will be placed on buses for students as they enter/exit the bus

Communication Strategies to Students, Staff and Parents

- Educate staff and families about good hygiene, social distancing, symptoms of Covid-19 and when to stay home due to illness
- It is imperative that the school district have accurate and up-to-date contact information for the parents/guardians of every student. This includes physical address, phone number, and email address. Parents can update their contact information by logging into their *Parent Portal* account in *Infinite Campus*.
- Regular communication with parents, students, and staff
- 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. We are currently seeking clarification from the SD Department of Health on how specific of information we can share with parents and/or the community.
- District will provide software, and on-line support from the provider and the district
- District will work with parents to make sure student has the hardware(computer) necessary for the instruction

Immunizations

- Existing school immunization requirements will be maintained and not deferred because of the current pandemic
- It is vital that all children receive recommended 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

Special Services Department

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 social distancing guidelines should meet the needs of the individual child and may require creative solutions, often on a case-by-case basis.

SD Virtual School

No child or adolescents will be excluded from school unless required in order to adhere to local public health mandates or because of unique medical needs. However, the district will work with students/parents who wish to receive home-based instruction. Please note, this is different than remote instruction that will be provided to students should we move to Phase 3 or should a student need to quarantine or self-isolate. The following are the procedures for students/parents to apply for acceptance into SD Virtual School:

- Complete SD Virtual School registration form (available online at www.bholc.org)
- Return registration form to the Business Office at 1230 Douglas Street, Sturgis, SD 57785 or via email to tanya.ludwick@k12.sd.us by August 17th, 2020
- Students will not be able to switch back and forth between in-school instruction and home-based instruction via SD Virtual School. The student is required to commit to semester at a time
- Current software vendor for all home-based instruction is SD Virtual School. If that vendor were to change, the district will continue to provide an option with high expectations.
- Parents need to have internet accessibility
- Parents need to provide a home-based support system for on-line instruction

Phase II Operations – School is open - Individual classes or departments may be closed if needed

Phase II Operations incorporate all facets of Phase 1 operations with the following changes: PPE

Educational Delivery

- Delivery will be adjusted to accommodate classes or departments that may be temporarily closed
- SD Virtual School option does not change regarding phases

Health/Safety Protocol

- Face coverings required for students K-12 and staff when social distancing is not an option
- Health screening at home and in school temperature checks as needed

Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities

- Spectator attendance may change, to be determined
- Possible limited access to parents only
- No spectators with “live streaming” only
- Limited access to a specific number when social distancing is not an option

PPE Strategies

- Face coverings required for staff when in the presence of students when social distancing is not an option
- Face coverings required by students in grades K-12 when social distancing is not an option

*** Regardless of grade level, please include two cloth face coverings in your child’s back-to-school supplies.*

Visitors

- No visitors past administrative areas
- Limited number of visitors allowed in the administrative areas

Assemblies/Gatherings

- Cancel field trips, assemblies, and other large gatherings if social distancing cannot be achieved

Phase III Operations – Remote Learning

- Phase III Operations includes the closure of schools & no activities for a minimum of 10 days and a move to remote learning for all students until threat of large-scale school transmission has been reduced and cases within the school have subsided. 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 option does not change regardless of phase

Student Procedures and Protocols for Addressing COVID-19

Procedures and Protocols

Student/Parent Self-Screening Procedures

All students/families, shall ask themselves the following questions daily before allowing their student to attend school:

- Since your last day of school have you had any of these symptoms that are not attributable to another condition?
 - Fever or Chills
 - Students who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to notify their school and stay home until they are free of fever and any other symptoms for at least 72 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). A fever is considered having a temperature of 100.4° F or greater using a thermometer.
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Congestion or Runny Nose
 - Nausea, Vomiting or Diarrhea
 - Muscle or Body Aches
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - New loss of taste or smell
- Are you ill, or caring for someone who is ill?
 - Students who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should stay home.
 - In the two weeks before you felt sick, did you:
 - Have contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19?
 - Live in or visit a place where COVID-19 is spreading?
- If the answer is YES to any of these questions:
 - Do not attend school.
 - Contact your school to notify them of your student's need to be absent.
 - Contact your healthcare provider.
 - If you can manage your student's symptoms at home, your student may return to school when the following are true:
 - Your medical provider has determined a different illness than COVID-19 and cleared your student to return, **or**
 - At least 10 days from first clinical diagnosis symptom **and** at least 72 hours fever free without fever-reducing medication **and** when symptoms are improving.

Student/Family Responsibilities

- If you have tested positive or have been confirmed to have COVID-19 or are living

in a home with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19:

- Do not attend school
- Notify your school of the positive test and your student's need to be absent
- Students who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have not been tested but were directed to stay home from school may return to school under the following conditions (per CDC guidance):
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
 - Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and,**
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared

Principal Responsibilities

- Administration will assist SD DOH with contact tracing and investigation to determine if the student contracted COVID-19 at school as needed.
- Communicate to staff and parents of the possible exposure to COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).

District Responsibilities

- The district will work in collaboration with building principals, parents and staff to assist SD DOH with contact tracing and investigation to determine if the student contracted COVID-19 in the school as needed.

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.

In preparation for this school year, please know that our school nurses & med aide techs are required to follow the SD Department of Education K12 screening tool when screening for symptoms of COVID. If a student meets the criteria, a mask will be placed on the student & they will be escorted to a designated & supervised isolation room until they can be picked up. A copy of this screening tool can be found on our Meade School District website & Facebook page. The K12 screening tool can also be found on the SD Department of Education website, as well as other educational resources.

If a student presents with COVID-19 symptom(s) while in school, a 10-day quarantine will likely be initiated based on the mandated SD Department of Education instructions. Positive COVID cases & Close Contact cases will be guided by the SD Department of Health.

Please send (2) masks for your student in individual ziplock bags. A lanyard will be provided by the school district. If masks become a requirement, the lanyard will be attached to the mask, with teacher instruction, & will remain on the student throughout the day for convenience & cleanliness. It is recommended that facemasks be washed daily. To avoid recontamination, we suggest that you use a new ziplock bag to store the facemask after each cleaning.

Parents, please note that the nurses are **REQUIRED** to follow the Department of Education Screening tool for symptoms of COVID-19. Please review screening tool & assess your students before school every day. Please keep home if symptomatic. The next page is a short checklist for you to review.

Screening K12 Students/Staff for Symptoms of COVID-19



Students or Staff: Please complete this short check each morning before leaving for school. Students or staff who are sick should not attend school in-person.

Please check for the following Symptoms:

- Temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Sore throat
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

Please also check for any Exposure:

- Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with a person infected with COVID-19*, or
- Live in or traveled to a county where the SD-DOH is reporting **substantial spread** of COVID-19 cases
 - Visit the SD-DOH website at: <https://doh.sd.gov/news/Coronavirus.aspx#SD>
 - Check the level of community spread in the county where you live or plan to travel:
 - Use your cursor to hover over the county, or
 - Click on *Tables* to see the county list

ORANGE Symptom

Alone = Exclusion for COVID-19 not necessary. Follow existing school policy.

BLUE Exposure* + ORANGE Symptom =

- Any individual with both symptom(s) AND exposure should contact their medical provider to discuss testing.
- Exclude individual while awaiting test result.
- If untested, exclude until 10 days after symptom onset AND 24 hours without fever AND 24 hours after symptoms improved.
- When exclusion occurs due to living in or traveling to a county with substantial spread: a student or staff may return to school with a medical doctor's note if symptom(s) are due to an illness other than COVID-19.

*Close Contacts that become symptomatic must still meet the 14-day quarantine period and cannot be released early with testing or note from a medical provider.

Updated 09/08/20