

EDEN VALLEY - WATKINS SCHOOL DISTRICT # 463

Safe Return to In-Person Learning Plan for 2021-2022

As stated in the EVW School District's Strategic Plan, our mission is to provide quality learning opportunities in a safe environment that enables students and staff to excel. We're committed to offering our students face-to-face learning in a safe environment during the 2021-2022 school year.

The EVW 2021-2022 Safe Return to Learning Plan was created using the limited number of requirements set forth by the Federal government and State of Minnesota, along with feedback collected from community stakeholders over the summer. This plan has been reviewed and approved by our district COVID Advisory Team, administration and board members. Eden Valley-Watkins Public Schools will return to traditional school operations, schedules and programming in the fall of 2021.

Health and Safety

Eden Valley-Watkins Public Schools will follow these requirements and recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). We will also adjust and modify our protocols to align with local transmission rates and future guidance coming from the CDC, MDH, and MDE.

Supports for K-12 learning

Eden Valley-Watkins Public Schools will provide a variety of learning opportunities and supports for students through the 2021-22 school year. These will include summer programming, after school Targeted Services, regular school year instructional programming and student support services, along with additional staffing to reduce class sizes and address academic needs, and additional mental health support to facilitate the social and emotional learning needs of our students.

Requirements

- The CDC requires face coverings for those on a school bus (a federal requirement).
- MDH requires schools to report positive cases.
- We will keep you updated as CDC, MDH, and MDE requirements and recommendations may change.

Recommendations

- The MDH and CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all individuals regardless of vaccination status if in an area with substantial or high transmission rates. 12-years old and younger may be eligible for vaccination as early as this fall. Until then, masking helps prevent the spread of illness. The school district continues to support, provide, and recommend masking.
- Physical distancing and cohorting will continue to the extent possible.
- Routine cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces will continue.
- Hand sanitizing and hygiene practices will continue.
- Health and temperature screenings from home will continue.
- Isolating individuals who test positive for COVID-19 will continue.
- Contact tracing and notifying individuals who have been exposed will continue.
- Operate the HVAC systems at maximum capacity and monitor air quality.

Health Screening and Quarantining

- Our goal is to provide in-person learning and limit the time out of the classroom
- Nursing best practice includes family notification when a student is in close contact with a COVID positive person
- Families and employees should self-screen for symptoms of illness and stay home if ill • Students and staff that test positive are required to quarantine
- Family close contacts will receive guidance from their family medical provider/MDH • If fully vaccinated, no need to quarantine for family close contact unless symptomatic • School close contacts will be notified, asked to monitor symptoms, and stay home if ill • Must be fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing meds prior to attending school • No need to quarantine if fully vaccinated
- No need to quarantine if practicing social distance and masking
- No need to quarantine with lab confirmed COVID in the past 90 days, monitor symptoms

Distance learning

MDE does not require, and the school district will not offer an individualized distant learning option during the 2021-2022 school year. Students perform best while receiving high quality face-to-face academic instruction, combined with in-person social and emotional support systems tailored to meet individual student needs.

Prioritized mitigation strategies

We encourage families to make masking decisions based upon the best interest of their children and family dynamics. If COVID-19 or a variant begins to spread locally, the district may adjust this procedure at the building or district level as conditions or mandates warrant.

Throughout the summer, 328 community stakeholders responded to the Safe Return to Learn Survey and prioritized the following mitigation strategies. The following prioritized safety measures will be implemented throughout the school district during the 2021-2022 school year.

1. Sanitizing supplies and hand sanitizers readily available for staff and students – 67.4%
2. Classrooms and other gathering places sanitized daily - 66.5%
3. Limit sharing and touching of supplies and equipment – 28%
4. Symptom and temperature check from home for students and staff – 17.4%
5. Social distancing when/where feasible – 16.5%
6. Provide and recommend masks for those that are not vaccinated – 12.2%
7. Transparent sneeze guards where feasible – 7%

Closing statement

In conclusion, we are committed to providing a safe environment for students, staff and community members. We believe it is important to respect the decisions and actions of others in our community while we seek the common goal of face-to-face learning in a safe environment. Mitigation strategies like masking will be made at the local level where we consider the most recent information coming from CDC, MDH, and MDE, along with local transmission rates of infection within our school buildings. Even though our current Safe Return to Learn Plan doesn't require masks, many people may decide to wear a mask based on their personal risk, preference, or other individual circumstances. It's important that all students, school staff, and families follow local requirements, while also respecting and supporting any personal decisions about taking additional safety precautions.

Currently, the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic is vaccination.

Communities with high vaccination rates are likely to remain open for in-person learning, limit the number of quarantines and isolations, and provide uninterrupted schedules for academics, activities and athletic opportunities. We will continue to actively monitor our local COVID data [here](#) , and if warranted, take additional precautions to ensure the safety of our students and staff. Updated CDC guidance can be found [here](#).

Thank you for working with us as we prepare for a safe return to learning in 2021-2022. *Subject to change*

based upon Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Department of Education.