

COVID-19 UPDATE ON GUIDANCE CHANGES

We want to remind all parents and students but particularly students in grades 7-12 that in some situations you may not have much choice in being quarantined based on the situation you are in. However, there are also many situations that are avoidable based on general behavior. Older students, unlike younger elementary students do have more unstructured time and freedoms where personal choice can play into increasing your risk of illness or quarantine. Please remind your children that free time before school, at lunch, and after school can pose an increased risk if proper distancing is not taking place. It does not mean a student cannot be with their friends. They can simply physically distance during conversation. Staff can give reminders to students, but those who continue to not distance increase their own risk of quarantine or illness.

Notes from Nurse Tiffany January 8, 2021

I hope you had a wonderful holiday break. We are excited to have all our students back in Hybrid at ZM schools. I wanted to send you the COVID-19 updates that have occurred since break.

Updates in School COVID-19 Planning Guidance:

Face coverings:

- Consistent with Executive Order 20-103, face coverings must be worn at all times during indoor physical activity (e.g., when exercising in a gym, fitness center, or during recess), regardless of the level of physical exertion. Previous guidance allowing face coverings to be removed during high exertion activities is no longer applicable.
- Medical exemptions are still allowed.

Social Distancing:

Lunch for elementary students (K-6). The updates state that student mealtimes should be held in the classroom if 6 feet of physical distancing between students cannot be accommodated in the cafeteria and cohorts cannot be clearly separated within the cafeteria.

- We are doing both some eating in the cafeteria (6 feet apart) and in the classrooms as well due to spacing.

Transportation:

Updates were made to the transportation guidance which will help us to not have to quarantine an entire bus route if it is over 30 minutes. With the new guidelines if we have a positive person who rides a bus we would need to quarantine the two seats in front, behind and possibly the 2 seats across as well who were there for more than 15 minutes cumulative.

- All persons driving or riding in a school transportation vehicle must wear a face covering.
- Driver will be spaced 6 feet from the riders.
- We are working on assigned seating for routes and shuttle buses.

Updates to the COVID-19 Decision Tree:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf>

The Decision Tree was updated to align with the shortened quarantine options.

- They added that even if you shorten quarantine you should be watching for symptoms for the full 14 days. During your 14 days if you have even 1 symptom “less common” or “more common” you will need to stay home, be evaluated by an MD and/or have a negative COVID test before returning to school. Siblings will be sent home/must stay home if quarantined student has 1 symptom during this time period.
- The close contact section was also updated. If you are a household member you are not able to shorten quarantine.

MDH has updated the Parent Attendance Guide and the Home Screening Tool for families to align with the shortened quarantine guidelines.

Parent Attendance Guide: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/attendance.pdf>

Home Screening Tool:

We ask that you continue to answer these screening questions each time you are going to send a child to school, childcare, or to youth programs. If you answer “yes” to any question, the child should stay home <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/homescreen.pdf>

Staff Saliva Testing every two weeks.

The state of Minnesota has required that all public schools offer Saliva testing to any staff member who works directly with students. This testing is optional for staff. We had our first testing date on 1/6/2021 and will continue to offer this to staff every 2 weeks.

Youth Sports:

In alignment with the governor’s executive orders. We are starting to resume youth sports practices here at ZM following all the new guidelines. Including the following face covering requirements: The temporary removal of face coverings during sports or physical exertion is no longer. There are exemptions for certain sports. <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sportsguide.pdf>
High School Winter Sports practices also resumed on 1/4/2021.

Thanks again for all your support and cooperation during this challenging COVID time. Please let me know if you have questions or concerns.

Take care,

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