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Safe Learning Plans regarding COVID-19

COVID-19 Program Coordinator

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Operational Plan Overview for Learning Models

There are three potential Learning Models. The model that is highlighted is the one we are currently engaged in:

On-site Learning Student learning will occur on-site, following guidelines in both the 2020-2021 Planning Guide for Schools and the Safe Learning Plan for 2020-21, A Localized, Data-Driven Approach. Families may opt for Distance Learning if they do not wish for their children to participate in On-site Learning.

Hybrid Learning Students will be scheduled into two cohorts, one of which will be on-site for learning on “A” days, while the other group will be on-site for learning on “B” days. Both groups will participate in Distance Learning while the alternate group is learning on-site. Families may opt for Distance Learning on both “A” and “B” days if they do not wish for their children to participate in On-site Learning.

Distance Learning All students will participate in Distance Learning. A combination of on-line and hands-on opportunities will be provided for students. All classrooms will have Google Classrooms as a common platform. Learning materials will be delivered to every child’s place of residence daily. Completed materials will also be picked up daily, as needed.

Movement from One Learning Model to Another

NDMA will determine its safe learning model following the five-step process outlined in the Safe Learning Plan for 2020-21, A Localized, Data-Driven Approach: https://mn.gov/covid19/assets/safe-learning-plan_tcm1148-442202.pdf

Step 1 – Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) will use data from counties to determine a base learning model for public schools. NDMA administration will review the *Data for K-12 Schools: 14-day COVID-19 Case Rate by County* every Thursday as a starting point for decision making.

Step 2 – Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) will share county data and the consultative process for public schools to engage with us and public health experts to review their county health data and safe learning plans.

Step 3 – With our *Incident Command Team* (aka Instructional Leadership Team – ILT), we will evaluate our ability to implement required and recommended health best practices.

Step 4 – NDMA Administration, in consultation with MDH and our Regional Support Team to determine a learning model. Administration will report learning model changes through MDE’s Site Verification process.

Administration will communicate the decision with our school community through a written Family Update for all NDMA families.

Step 5 – NDMA and MDH will monitor the community and school-level impact of COVID-19 on a regular basis. Adjustments will be made to the learning model as needed.

How will Safe Distancing be ensured in all areas of the school?

1. COVID-19 Prevention Guidance for Youth and Student Programs
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/socialdistance.pdf>
document provided specific guidance in the development of safe distancing (and other) safe practices for NDMA.
2. Administration used Minnesota Department of Public Safety State Fire Marshal Division’s *School Occupant Loads for COVID-19 Restrictions*
<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/sfm/Documents/School-occupant-loads-COVID.pdf>
to calculate occupancy for all areas of the school. Signs are posted throughout the building to support safe occupancy in all areas.



How will Safe Distancing be ensured in all areas of the school?

(continued)

1. Family drop-off and pick-up routines were modified to eliminate family members or designees from coming in the building. We greet students at their vehicles when they are dropped off and bring them to their vehicles when they are picked up.
2. There are designated entrances and exits to avoid having more than one line of people in a hallway, and to avoid congestion.
3. Safe-grip vinyl adhesive dots displaying NDMA's compass rose logo are displayed on the floor six feet apart throughout the building to designate safe distancing. Students have been taught how to calculate the six-foot rule using ceiling tiles (either 2' by 4' or 2' by 2') or floor tiles (1' by 1') so they can self-check.
4. Staff members will monitor activity throughout the building and property to prevent unsafe congregating.
5. Empty seats are left between students and staff eating in the lunchroom or classroom.
6. Classroom layout and furnishings were inventoried with administration and teachers in July and August with safe distancing in mind. Furnishings and accessories were removed from most learning areas to accommodate safe distancing.
7. Fixtures were reorganized and furnishings moved and removed in common areas, the front office and foyer areas to accommodate safe traffic patterns and safe distancing.
8. Guests are encouraged to call ahead if they need to be on-site for anything.
9. Signage throughout the building offer reminders of safe protocol, including distancing guidelines.

Restricting Nonessential Visitors, Volunteers, and Activities Involving External Groups or Organizations

NDMA is discouraging visitors, volunteers and activities involving external groups or organizations until further notice. We have shared this information with families through written Administrative Family Updates. Administration has shared this information with community partners and organizations who have shared and/or used our facility in the past. There is signage to inform people at our door.

Food and Beverage Distribution will be Managed to Comply with Safe Practice Requirements

Students and Staff follow floor markings allowing for safe distancing while approaching and waiting in the serving line. Food and cutlery are placed on student and staff trays by food service Staff wearing protective gear. Beverages are placed on student and staff trays by food service Staff wearing protective gear. There are no self-serve options. Drinking fountains are not operational. Students may fill their own water bottles at a designated water filling station throughout the day. NDMA staff disinfect the water filling station frequently throughout the day.

NDMA Explains Face Covering Requirements

Signage at building entrance announces face covering requirements, indicating Governor's Emergency Executive Order 20-82 mandating a safe and effective learning environment for Minnesota's students during the 2020-21 school year. https://mn.gov/governor/assets/EO%2020-82%20Final%20Signed%20and%20Filed_tcm1055-442391.pdf

Signage is posted on a bulletin board prominently placed in the building's main entrance. Staff have been given NDMA's Safe Protocols based on Minnesota Department of Health and CDC guidance. <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html>

NDMA Explains Face Covering Requirements (continued)

Staff model safe face covering practices by wearing face coverings consistently throughout the school day, and by reviewing safe protocol regularly.

Staff will teach Students how to properly wear and handle face coverings. If a Student is not wearing face coverings, Staff will remind them of the protocol. If a Student does not have face covering, Staff will direct them to the supply of face coverings they can select from in our common area. Van and Bus Drivers enforce face covering protocol and have a supply of disposable face masks to use as needed.

Protecting Vulnerable Populations of Staff

Monitoring for illness is included in Staff training and in the published *Safe Protocols* provided for all Staff. In addition, Staff have access to *Center for Disease Control* (CDC) guidance regarding how they can protect themselves and the people they work with <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/direct-service-providers.html> , and they are versed in guidance surrounding *What to Do If You Had Close Contact with a Person with COVID-19*, <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/contact.pdf> *What to Do While you Wait for a COVID-19 Test Result*, <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/waiting.pdf> as well as *Worker Protections Related to COVID-19* https://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/MN_worker_protections_related_to_COVID_19.pdf

For those who prefer to review hard copies, documents offering specific details are centralized in an easy-to-read format in the Staff Workroom.

Protecting Vulnerable Populations of Students & Families

NDMA is following Guidance for Delivering Direct Student Support Services to define and implement protocol to ensure protecting vulnerable populations of students are served.

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

Protecting Vulnerable Populations of Students & Families

(continued)

This includes explicit guidance from the *Center for Disease Control (CDC)*, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/direct-service-providers.html> as well as the *American Academy of Pediatrics*.

<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/>

Parents are given the option to choose Distance Learning regardless of the learning model in place at any given time. Barring exceptional circumstance, we ask that Parents limit their discretion regarding changing to or from Distance Learning to the first of each month.

All Individual Education Plans are reviewed by Teachers, our Special Education Coordinator and our Special Education Director and our Nurse to identify students with special health care needs. There plans are updated to accommodate specific needs.

Students experiencing homelessness will receive priority placement when considering serving students in-person even during *Distance Learning*. They will also have access to internet hotspots and technology devices to access online learning opportunities.

English Language Learners

Currently New Discoveries Montessori Academy does not have any English Language Learners.

New Discoveries Montessori Academy has an interpreter on call for any communications that need to be translated, and to participate in any Parent meetings/conferences that would benefit from having a translator present.

Learning Loss Created by Disruptions in FY20 and FY 21 and Administering Assessments

To address learning loss from last year, NWEA MAP Growth Assessments will be administered at the beginning of the school year. Families of Distance Learners were given appointments to have their children tested individually or in family clusters. We will follow similar protocol for mid-year and end-of-year assessment.

Data from assessments (Gold, FAST, NWEA MAP) will be used to determine learning needs for individual students and provide specific instruction to mitigate learning loss in each core subject area. Our online learning curriculum is enhanced, supported by professional development over the summer, and by adopting specific platforms and learning protocol across all classrooms.

NDMA's Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) will provide guidance for Teachers to support appropriate efforts to address learning loss created by disruptions in FY21. NDMA's Teacher Leaders will provide leadership at the Professional Learning Community (PLC) level to support critical planning to address learning loss.

NDMA will continue to include Social Emotional Learning in our curriculum to support student's social-emotional needs. Staff and Students will learn and hone coping skills to help them navigate this difficult season.

NDMA will also continue to host mental health practitioners who provide 1:1 support through skills work and therapy, either in-person or online. We have a wide network of support in this regard, with seven local clinics providing care in this area. Depending on the learning model, we have a suite of offices on-site dedicated for this service year-round.

Plan for Grading

Following the principles in MDE’s Assessing Learning Guidance for the 2020-2021 School Year,

(https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=MDE033549&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary)

NDMA’s Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) has provided guidance for all Teachers regarding grading. NDMA is operating under the principle of “do no harm” to avoid damage to both students’ future education opportunities and struggles that students and families will experience during this time beyond their control. Grades will include evidence of mastery at the end of a unit or course and that evidence will be collected in a variety of manners to allow students to demonstrate their understanding. Progress Reports at all levels have been updated accordingly.

Plan for Monitoring and Excluding Students (and Staff) for Illness

NDMA Administration provides regular communication to families through *Family Updates* (newsletters/news alerts). For example, a previous *Update* included the following guidance regarding the plan for monitoring Students (and Staff) for COVID-19:

Please note the following details regarding the process we will implement should your child display symptoms of COVID-19 at school (new onset cough or shortness of breath, fever of 100.4 or higher, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, fatigue, congestion, loss of sense of smell or taste, or gastrointestinal symptoms of diarrhea, vomiting, or nausea):

- Our Health Office will contact you to request that you pick up your child. If your child has siblings participating in on-site learning at NDMA, they, too will be sent home.
- You will be encouraged to contact your health care provider to determine if a COVID-19 test is warranted.
- If a test is warranted, your child will need to remain at home until test results are made available.
- If the test results are positive, separate child from others in the family until all the following are true:
 - Your child’s symptoms are no longer present
 - It has been 10 days since your child first felt sick, and
 - Your child has had no fever for the last three days without using medicine to lower the fever
- If the test results are negative, or If your health care provider says a test is not warranted, your child should remain home until fever-free for 24 hours. If this is the case, we will need documentation from your health care provider that your child has been cleared to return to school.

As mentioned in previous communications, it is profoundly important that families follow safe protocols in your homes and when you and your family are out in the community. Practicing good hygiene, safe distancing, and wearing face coverings when outside of your family unit are critical. As a reminder, please make time for a temperature check every day before your child leaves for school. Also, please remember to contact us if a family member is in quarantine and/or isolation.

Process for Acquiring Appropriate Supplies of Cleaning & Sanitizing Products

NDMA's Maintenance Supervisor, in collaboration with NDMA Administration, utilizes *2020-2021 Planning Guide for Schools* and MDH's COVID-19 Cleaning & Disinfecting Guidance for Schools and Childcare Programs <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/k12planguide.pdf>

to guide our appropriation of antimicrobial Cleaning & Sanitizing products. NDMA Staff are versed in the following safe cleaning and disinfecting practices:

- Establish a daily schedule for routine environmental cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces (e.g., classroom work counters, individual desks, recently used toys, shared equipment) in classrooms and common spaces.

Process for Acquiring Appropriate Supplies of Cleaning & Sanitizing Products (continued)

- Schedule routine environmental cleaning when students and teachers are not occupying the space.
- Evaluate the need to increase the frequency of disinfection in common spaces or classrooms when used by different groups of people or types of activities.
- Encourage users of registered disinfectants and other cleaning products to read, understand, and follow all product label directions and precautions appearing on (or included with) the containers always carefully. Statements such as "Keep out of reach of children" means that students should not use the product and should not participate in cleaning or disinfecting routines. Securely store products away from students.
- Ensure there is adequate ventilation when using these products by opening windows and doors to provide air flow.

Cleaning & Sanitizing Products will be Strategically Placed in Frequently Used Areas

Signage will orient staff to location and appropriate protocol for using cleaning and sanitizing products. For example, there is signage in the Workroom regarding approved spray bottle, disinfectant, and rags to clean/disinfect surfaces after each use. The signage also indicates how many people can be in the space at the same time. Maintenance staff replace rags



Cleaning & Sanitizing Products will be Strategically Placed in Frequently Used Areas (continued)

regularly and refills spray bottles regularly. Frequently used surfaces are disinfected regularly. Restrooms are cleaned often.

Hygiene Practices are Clearly Articulated and Followed

Staff and Students are well-versed in safe hygiene practices, specifically as it relates to COVID-19. Protocols are posted and reviewed regularly.

Daily Screening

Staff, Students, and Visitors are temperature screened daily via temperature scanning. Screeners are located at stations where Staff, Students and Visitors enter the building. If someone registers in the high temperature range, they are accompanied to an isolation area adjacent to our Health Office where they receive a more accurate temperature check. As mentioned previously in this document, there is specific protocol in place regarding next steps if someone's temperature is 100.4 or higher.

Cleaning & Disinfecting Transportation Vehicles

Even though NDMA contracts for transportation services, Administration collaborates with the transportation provider to ensure safe protocol is in place for all vans and buses transporting NDMA students, which are clearly outlined in the 2020-2021 Planning Guide for Schools.

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/k12planguide.pdf>

Mental Health & Wellness

NDMA partners with seven local clinics that provide on-site and remote support for students with mental health concerns. The clinics and NDMA Administration and School Psychologist help families connect with providers as needed.



Mental Health & Wellness (continued)

NDMA's School Psychologist provides social emotional professional development and resources for Staff, and social emotional learning opportunities for all students, whether they are on-site or learning remotely.

Administration provides regular *Family Updates* and *Staff Updates* that include information that will assist families in being aware of and accessing supportive opportunities.

How Does the Hybrid Model Achieve Reduced Capacity Requirements?

Having half as many students on campus at one time provides greater flexibility regarding safe distancing. This will impact utilization of space and a simplification of routines (i.e. retrieving items from lockers, moving from one location in the building to another, etc.).

How is Instruction Altered Based on the Various Learning Models?

- Movement and instruction will be accomplished based on keeping cohorts of students intact, regardless of Learning Model.
- There will be students engaged in *Distance Learning* regardless of the Learning Model. When in-person for all is in place, or when in-person for half (hybrid) is in place, Teachers will have a laptop and camera on a portable workstation that will be available for Distance Learners to engage in lessons, class meetings and other activities. Lessons, meetings, and other activities will be recorded so families can access them at their convenience.
- NDMA has a published *Distance Learning Expectations* posted on our webpage for all families to access.

Equitable Opportunities for Distance Learners

NDMA Administration and Teachers conference with every family who chooses *Distance Learning* when *On-site* and *Hybrid* are in place. An example of a consideration we offer for families opting for *Distance Learning* include



Equitable Opportunities for Distance Learners (continued)

scheduling on-site appointments with minimal contact to facilitate assessment. We can/will also schedule the appointments in their homes if they wish. Either way, strict safety protocol will be honored to ensure safe interaction between school staff, students, and their families.

Attendance/Truancy

NDMA's Attendance Policy is enforced regardless of the learning model. The policy is available on our webpage (www.newdiscoveries.org). Distance Learners are required to be present for learning activities every day. Parents of Distance Learners are expected to report absences regardless of whether their child is On-site or Distance Learning.