

# Maquoketa Valley Return to Learn Plan Fall 2020

Revised 7.29.20



This is the current Return To Learn Plan for the Maquoketa Valley School District. We continue to receive guidance from the Department of Education, the Governor's Office, Delaware County Health and Keystone AEA. This plan will continue to evolve as we get more guidance and respond to community questions. At this time, we are preparing to bring students back to school for in-person learning in the fall. We will also offer an online educational option as well for those students will not be attending in person.

Our priority is to keep students and staff safe so that we may continue to offer in-person learning at Maquoketa Valley. The following strategies will be in place to give us the best chance at keeping our school open and for students to participate in extracurricular activities. We appreciate your support and will need everyone to do their part to help our entire school community safe. We will continue to update this document with more information as it becomes available.

## **Face Coverings**

All of the local, state, and federal health agencies agree that face coverings are effective in reducing the transmission of the Covid-19 virus. We will try to socially distance students as much as possible throughout the day. We will also try to create opportunities where students are not near each other and can remove their face coverings.

- It is the district's expectation that staff and students must wear face coverings when they are not able to socially distance themselves from others. This will apply to students in all grades. We recognize that there will be some exceptions and considerations that will need to be reviewed on a case by case basis.
- It is best for students and staff if they can provide their own face covering to ensure appropriate fit and comfort.
- The district will provide face masks to staff and students who do not bring one to school.

## **Socially Distancing Efforts**

We will be implementing many efforts to socially distance our students as much as possible and as often as possible.

Our efforts will include but are not limited to:

- Alternating classroom seating arrangements to create as much space as possible between students
- Desks all facing the same direction
- Items will be removed from classrooms that can not be easily sanitized
- Students will only use their own school supplies, manipulatives, and other school resources/materials
- Teachers will change rooms in the elementary setting as much as possible so students can stay in one room
- Adjusted lunch procedures so students will either eat in classrooms or other areas of the building where social distancing is possible
- Adjusted recess schedules so classes can be spread out among play areas
- Adjusted before and after school routines to limit the number of students in common areas
- Eliminating large group student assemblies until further notice
- Limiting non-essential visitors, volunteers, and outside groups entrance into the buildings
- If your child needs to be picked up during the school day parents will need to call the school upon arrival, wait outside, and their child will be brought to them.
- Expecting parents to reinforce these expectations with their students

## **Recess**

Our efforts will include but not be limited to the following:

- Only one grade level at recess at a time
- Students taught activities for social distancing
- Sanitizing of equipment after each use
- Sanitizing hands going out and coming in

## **School Library Access**

Our efforts will include but not be limited to the following:

- Books will be quarantined for 3 days between when students return them and when they are handled by staff
- Books will be sanitized with disinfectant between checkouts
- Shared materials, such as headphones, will be removed from the library space
- The number of students in the library at one time will be limited to maintain social distancing as much as possible
- Students working at tables in the library will be limited to 2 students per table
- Tables, chairs, door knobs, shelves, etc. will be sanitized daily
- Markers will be used to identify appropriate social distancing in the check-out line, etc.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided at each door for exit and entry and spread out on shelves
- Literacy materials will be made available to students online and digital access to the library catalog will be given to minimize library traffic (search for materials, check availability, place holds on books, etc.)

## **Cleaning and Sanitizing**

Our efforts will include but not be limited to the following:

- Desks in the middle and high school will be cleaned between classes as often as possible.
- Desks in the elementary are only used by one student during the day so they would be cleaned each night.
- We will have hand sanitizer in each classroom, spread throughout the building in heavy traffic areas and at all building entrances
- Classroom doors will be left open as much as possible to reduce the number of hand touches on the doors.
- Implementing schedules where students and staff will be washing their hands throughout the day
- Plexiglass sneeze guards will be available in conjunction with shields for small group instruction

- Only water bottle fill stations will be turned on in the buildings. Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottle. If they do not have one, one will be provided by the school.
- Frequent teaching and instruction for students on healthy practices, this includes updated Wildcat Way expectations.

### **Transportation**

It is not an option for us to add additional busses or routes to accommodate for social distancing on our busses. The following guidelines will include but not be limited to the following:

- All students and the bus driver must wear a face covering while on the bus.
- It will be important for students to sit in the same area of the bus each day and/or have an assigned seat. This will be necessary in the event that the information on where students were sitting becomes necessary. This is not a punishment but a step to reduce the number of students that come in contact with each other over the course of several days. It will be important for parents to help students understand this important point.
- We encourage parents to arrange transportation to and from school, if possible, to reduce the number of students riding the bus. Please communicate any bussing changes with your building secretaries.
- Busses will be sanitized after each bus route.

### **Health Considerations**

It is important for parents to screen their children before they come to school and keep them home if they are displaying symptoms. The Maquoketa Valley staff will screen themselves and stay home if they are ill. The staff will also be observing students for symptoms while they are at school. Signs and symptoms to be aware of are:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath/trouble breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
- Sudden loss of taste or smell

Additional health efforts will include but not be limited to the following:

- The nurse will have two offices. One office will be used to treat bumps and scrapes and deliver medication. A separate office will be used to treat students who are ill.
- School staff will assist students who are being picked up so that the parent does not need to enter the school
- For any positive case of Covid-19, we will work with Delaware County Community Health and follow their guidance regarding any needed quarantines and protocols.
- Please contact: if you have any questions or concerns with quarantines and symptoms.

### **Online Learning Opportunity**

We believe the best educational opportunity exists when students attend school in-person. We recognize that this will not be the case for all students. Online learning, with instruction from their classroom teachers utilizing the Google Classroom platform, will be available to support these students.

The following are the guidelines for online learning:

- Students must attend regularly and be in contact with their teachers.
- Students must complete work and assignments which will be counted toward their overall grade.
- Parents must complete an “Online Learning Request Form” and submit to the building principal before school starts.
- It is important for students to either be in school or in the online learning format and not switch back and forth. Students participating in an online environment should plan to do so until at least the end of the first quarter. If they wish to transfer from one learning environment to another, parents must contact the building principal.
- MS & HS students are expected to log in to their courses at the assigned time and attend the courses online via Google Meets in order to receive the live instruction from the classroom. Attendance will be taken for students who attend online and entered in PowerSchool.
- If parents choose to have their child attend school online, they must complete this “[Online Request Form](#)” by August 7th so we can effectively plan.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Can the Superintendent or the school board decide to close schools?**

Based on the Governor's proclamation the answer is no. Iowa public schools have been ordered to open for the fall with in-person learning. Going forward, the State must approve any district's request to close their doors based upon Covid-19 concerns.

### **Will schools close if a student tests positive?**

These situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis. All decisions will be made in conjunction with our county health department and the Iowa Department of Education.

### **What will happen if it is determined our school district must close?**

If our schools must close then the state of Iowa will require that we move to a continuous learning model where students learn in an online format. Teachers will be prepared to teach students in the event this happens. Unlike last spring, this will be mandatory learning for students and attendance and grades will be required.

### **Will my student have to wear a mask?**

Students will be required to wear masks during the school day. We will practice social distancing when we are able. The reality is that our classrooms will not allow students to be 6 feet apart at all times- there just isn't room. Every student is asked to have a mask with them every day. If students do not have one, one will be provided to them. They will be required to wear them while riding the bus, during passing times for MS/HS students and when in common areas and in classrooms. We will find as many opportunities as possible to distance students from each other and allow them to take off masks but when they are not able to physically distance themselves they must wear a mask. We recognize that there will be some exceptions and considerations that will need to be reviewed on a case by case basis.

### **What option do I have if I don't feel comfortable sending my student to school?**

We will have online learning available for students this year. The goal of the online learning will be that the students stay on pace with the students who are in school in person. Each class may be a bit different, however the teachers will work to put together the best scenario for allowing students to have access to the material being taught in the classroom. There will likely be recorded sessions of instruction as well as tasks to complete at home then send in to the teachers and get feedback.

Choosing online learning does not mean that the tasks and activities are optional- they are all required just as if the student were in person at school. It will take dedication and a lot of effort on the part of all students, parents and teachers to ensure students are completing the learning required so that students do not fall behind. Attendance, participation and grades are taken during online learning.

**How do I let the school know that I want to do online learning?**

We will be sending out an official form that will need to be filled out by any family who would like to do online learning. Once that form is available, we will also link it here. [Online Request Form](#)

**What if my student needs to stay home for just a short period of time (ex-quarantine for two weeks)?**

Students will be able to switch to online learning if they have to be home for various reasons. That is one reason that we will have online learning available, as we expect that the situation will be fluid this school year.

**Will the kids practice social distancing?**

We will practice social distancing when we are able. The reality is that our classrooms will not allow students to be 6 feet apart at all times- there just isn't room. We plan to spread students out as much as we possibly can within the classroom. Students will not be sharing items. We will try to keep students in the same groups and same seating areas within the rooms as much as we can so that they are not in close proximity to all students, only those who are seated near them.

**How will exposure be limited on the bus?**

Students on the bus will have assigned seats and will be seated with family members or students that they already have interaction with whenever possible. Seats will stay the same so that we can limit possible exposure to other grade

levels or groups of students. We will also ask that students wear masks when riding the bus.

**Will teachers be required to wear a mask?**

Teachers will be required to wear a mask or shield when they are in close proximity to students. If teachers are far enough away from students (over 6 feet), they can be without their mask or face shield, but only at that time.

**What about water bottles?**

Students will be asked to bring their own water bottles that they can fill up at the drinking stations. We will not be using the regular drinking fountains at this time.

**How will I know if I have to quarantine or if my child has been exposed?**

There have been many questions about when or if students or teachers will have to quarantine. The reality is that we won't know until it happens. When we have a positive case or if there is a parent or sibling with a positive case, we will contact our public health office and will be directed from there. We are hoping that it will make it easier to do some contact tracing by working hard to limit the number of students everyone interacts with.

**Will we be told and how will we be told if someone is positive or if our student has been exposed?**

We don't know how that will work. The Iowa Department of Education has indicated more guidance in this area will come out in early August. We will follow whatever guidelines are set out by health officials at the time. We will give as much information as is allowed.

**Will students have their temperatures taken before entering the building each morning?**

We are asking all parents to take their students' temperature before school each day. Students with a fever or other Covid-19 symptoms should not come to school. If there are questions, parents should contact Mary Ries, our school nurse at Delhi 563-922-9411 or Jill Hoeger, our school nurse at Earlville 563-923-3225 and Johnston 563-926-2701.

**Can parents or other visitors come to school this year?**



We know that parents like to visit, eat lunch with their students, etc. To limit exposure, we will not be allowing visitors at this time. We will revisit this policy as conditions with Covid-19 might change.