

2021-22 Return to School Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will masks be required for all students during the 2021-22 school year?

Currently, there is no mask mandate requiring masks in the Midd-West School District. There is a motion on the August 9th School Board Agenda to make masks “voluntary” for staff and students regardless of vaccination status unless orders from the Governor or PA Department of Health require everyone to wear masks.

2. Is virtual instruction possible for individuals or families with concerns?

This year, virtual instruction (where a student logs in and participates in a live classroom from home) will only be used for cases involving student quarantine. This will not be a choice for parents or students that have health and safety concerns. The Midd-West Cyber School will be the only alternative opportunity provided to those families. Students that may be quarantined because of an active case or because of identification as a close contact will still have the opportunity to participate in virtual programming. Virtual, however, will not be available for day-to-day absences.

3. Will vaccinations be required by the Midd-West School District for students return to school?

No. This is not the role of the school district to determine. Current regulations for vaccinations are controlled by the state. The Midd-West follows these state regulations. The Midd-West School District would only require vaccinations should state law require those vaccinations to be given.

4. What changes will be made to school lunches for the 2021-22 school year?

The goal would be for lunches to be as normal as possible given the circumstances. Elementary students will once again return to the cafeteria for their lunch. There will be no barriers in place in the middle school and in the high school. The main strategy that will be implemented will be assigning seats at lunch so that contact tracing may be done more effectively should there be a case occur in the school setting.

5. How will important school meetings be held this year?

The Mid-West School District values their parents as partners in the educational process. Therefore, we will be providing parents a choice for their style of meeting. We will hold most meetings in person at the school building, but a parent can request for meetings to occur through the district's digital platforms of TEAMS or Zoom.

6. Are masks required on busses to and from school?

Currently, state law is requiring that masks be worn on all forms of public transportation. School busses are considered a form of public transportation, so currently state law not the Mid-West School District is requiring that masks or face coverings are worn on busses. Because much of the funding from our busses comes from state subsidy, the district would not want to risk the losing of such funds by ignoring such mandates.

7. Do parents/students need to complete health screenings or surveys prior to the start of the school day?

Parents will not have to complete surveys prior to sending their children to school. We do ask that you do monitor your children for symptoms and keep them home if they possess multiple or significant symptoms of COVID-19. While at school, middle school and high school students will complete surveys. Those students reporting symptoms will then be screened by the school nurse. At the elementary level, temperature checks will be done each morning and students with an elevated temperature will be checked by the school nurse.

8. If I keep my child home with COVID like symptoms, will that count against my child as far attendance?

Such an excuse would count as an excused absence. Like last year, all COVID related excuses will be accepted regardless of the number of absences previously accrued without additional penalty or the need to provide a doctor's note. We want parents to keep students at home if there is a concern with COVID. However, providing these excuses to the school still must follow all procedures found in Mid-West School District Policy.

9. If my child is displaying COVID like symptoms while in school, what will be the school's response?

We will contact the parents immediately, and we will ask that the parent takes the child home and quarantine them. The parents may take the student for a Covid-19 rapid test. A negative test result would allow the student to return to school. If no test is performed or no physician's statement returning alternative diagnosis, the student may return to school after a ten-day period of quarantine provided the symptoms have subsided.

10. Will athletics and other extra-curricular activities be held in the Mid-West School District.

Yes. The plan at the current moment is to hold all activities as normal during the 2021-22 school year. This could change as the result of state mandates or the spread of variant strains of the virus. However, those changes will be communicated to the public should that occur.

11. How will parent pick-up and drop off be changing in the Mid-West School District?

Parents with concerns about their child's health and safety are still encouraged to provide individual transportation for their student should they have the ability to do so. Because these procedures are specific to building, we encourage parents with questions to contact their building principal to discuss any changes to dismissal or drop-off.

12. Is there the possibility of remote instruction occurring this school year?

The answer to this is yes. No one knows for sure how things will develop with the pandemic in 2021-22. If conditions suggest and state mandates follow that require such, the Mid-West School District is prepared to offer remote instruction to all students. Because of our experiences in the last 18 months, we feel prepared for such a challenge. However, we hope it is not necessary knowing that in-person instruction is the best way to educate our students. Last year, all buildings had 90% or higher rates of offering in-person instruction, and we hope our levels to be even higher in 2021-22.

13. Will students in the Midd-West School District be receiving free school lunches again this year?

Yes. To begin the year, all student lunches will be free. There are still federal funds remaining from the Cares Act which provides for student lunches in K-12. At some point, those funds may run out and then our Middle School and High School Students would need to return to paying for lunches. However, all students at the elementary level will enjoy free lunches for the entire year. Our percentage of students qualifying for free lunches in those buildings puts them in a category where all students are eligible to receive the free meals.