RSU 29 Plan for Safe Return to In Person Instruction & Continuity of Services
2021-2022

This plan has been constructed to provide flexibility in order to allow administration to make changes as the conditions necessitate.

As we begin this school year, we continue to prioritize in-person instruction with universal prevention strategies. It is our expectation that all students and staff will attend school in person. RSU 29 will not be offering a remote instruction option at this time unless medical conditions/circumstances are present.

Universal and Daily Safety Precautions - Layers of Mitigation Strategies:

RSU 29 will consistently implement the following layered mitigation strategies:

- Promote Vaccination - School based vaccination clinics will be held periodically.
- Increased Ventilation
- Face Coverings:
  - Face coverings are required on buses
  - Face coverings are required in all settings within the school until further notice
- Physical Distancing
  - Maximize physical distance to the extent possible between individuals with an ideal goal of at least 3 feet of separation
- Hand washing/sanitizing and covering coughs/sneezes
  - Hand sanitizer dispensers available in all classrooms and throughout the buildings. Additional hand washing stations have been added in some areas.
- Staying home when sick and getting tested
  - CDC recommends isolating and testing unvaccinated individuals with new or unexplained symptoms of viral syndrome (e.g. fever, chills, body or muscle aches), or respiratory viral infection (e.g. sinus congestion, sore throat, runny nose, cough). At this time, we will continue to require a negative COVID test prior to a student returning to school. Without a test, students must remain at home until 10 days from when symptoms began.
- **Pooled Testing**
  - The Maine CDC and Department of Education (DOE) have implemented a pooled PCR testing program. Pooled testing will require parental consent. Individuals participating in the pooled testing program do not need to quarantine if deemed a close contact. Unvaccinated children who participate in pooled testing must quarantine from community activities.

- **Cleaning and disinfection**
  - Our custodial team will clean our facilities on a regular basis using industry-standard COVID-19 cleaning protocols.
  - Disinfection when needed on known illness

### Response Strategies:

RSU 29 response strategies will be specific to the situation and implemented based on school, community, and/or regional COVID risk data as well as guidance from CDC and Maine Department of Education. Strategies included but are not limited to:

- Increase symptom monitoring
- Require face coverings for all staff and students
- Increased social distancing
- Minimize classroom group activities
- Minimize large group gatherings
- Deep cleaning/disinfection
- Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies

### Determining Implementation of Response Strategies:

Viral infections spread easily wherever people gather - in child care centers, schools, office buildings, auditoriums and public transportation. RSU 29’s Universal Safety Precautions are designed to minimize risk. The determination of RSU 29’s Response Strategies requires consideration of multiple factors and implementing layered mitigation strategies against COVID-19.

As school levels of COVID-19 and community transmission increases, more strict implementation of prevention strategies will be determined based on the defined strategies. This will enable the district to prioritize in-person learning and layer responsive mitigation and prevention strategies based on the most local and available data.
The Superintendent will communicate to the school community the implementation of any response strategies.

**Continuity of Services**

The primary structure of the Instructional Continuity Plans developed for the 2020-2021 school year will be in place to ensure continuity of academic services for the 2021-2022 school year.

- Minimal to low transmission of COVID in the community: Instruction is fully in-person.
- Moderate to high transmission of COVID in the community: Local and/or state health officials have determined that the district requires a higher level of health and safety measures. The district will move into a Hybrid Instructional model, with students in one of two cohorts (Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday) for in-person instruction. All students will have remote instruction on Wednesdays.
- High level of transmission of COVID in the community. Local and/or state health officials recommend the district move to a fully remote instructional model in order to reduce spread in the community. All instruction will be remote during this period.

**Protocol for Confirmed COVID case(s) within RSU 29:**

1. Contact tracing, quarantine and isolation
   - People who are diagnosed with COVID-19 must isolate at home until they have met the criteria for discontinuation of isolation
   - Quarantine of an entire classroom will not be conducted at this time
   - Pooled testing does not eliminate the need for contact tracing and isolation

The school administration will send an automated phone call and email message to parents/guardians of the class or grade level involved.

**Other Safety Protocols:**

**Extra Curricular Activities:** It is the intent of RSU 29 to hold typical extracurricular activities such as sports and clubs at this time. If conditions require, we may need to adjust schedules and the offering may need to be modified based on the circumstances at the time.

**Parents, Visitors, Vendors, Volunteers, Contractors:** Access for parents, volunteers and visitors will be restricted until further notice. Vendors and contractors will follow all universal precautions and responsive strategies that are in place at the time.
Facilities Use: Facility use will be limited until further notice.

Food Service: In order to adhere to the six foot distancing between students during lunches, some grade levels will eat in the lunchroom while others will eat in classrooms. Students will wash their hands and sanitize before and after eating. Breakfast will continue to be served. Breakfasts and lunches will continue to be served at no cost to students during the 2021-2022 school year.

Social Emotional Support The social emotional health of students and staff are part of the RSU 29 Instructional Continuity Plan developed in 2020-2021. The guidance and social workers in the district reached out regularly to students and staff to support students using the same support modality as the teachers were using for instruction. This plan would continue with some modifications to strengthen the regularity of the SEL curriculum in hybrid or remote models.

Field Trips and School Events: Field trips and school events will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to ensure they can occur in the safest manner possible.

Meetings: All meetings including, but not limited to IEP and 504 meetings, parent-teacher meetings, activity or athletic meetings can be conducted in person or using an online format such as Zoom or Google Meet.

Cohorts/Student Groupings: Our aim is to provide students with a school experience that is as close to normal as possible while still maintaining our ability to contact trace when needed.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures: Drop off and pick up procedures can be found on the district website and will be sent out to families prior to the start of the school year.

Return to work plan for employees who have tested positive for COVID-19

RSU 29 will comply with CDC recommendations regarding employees’ return to work after testing positive for COVID-19. Under the current CDC guidance, an employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 will NOT be able to return to work until:

- At least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared, AND have no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of a fever reducing medication. AND other symptoms are improved (example cough or shortness of breath)
- If the employee tested positive but did not have symptoms, At least 10 days have passed since the date of your first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test AND you continue to have no symptoms (example: no cough or shortness of breath) since the test.
If an employee has been out of work due to testing positive for COVID-19 and the employee has used personal sick leave, FFCRA or FMLA leave, the employee will need to provide a medical note stating that they are medically cleared to return to work prior to doing so.

**Return to work plan for employees who have been self quarantined due to exposure to COVID-19**

Employees who believe they have been exposed to COVID-19 must STAY HOME, CONTACT THEIR SUPERVISOR, follow CDC Guidelines for quarantine and self isolation, and contact their PCP. Employees who have been tested and the results were negative should communicate those results to their supervisor. Once done, the supervisor may allow the employee to return to work and forward paperwork along to Terry Campbell. Employees who have not been tested but who have exhibited symptoms of COVID-19 may return to work once symptoms begin to improve.

NOTE: Teachers/staff may not enter the buildings to complete lesson plans, etc. until such time as they meet the guidance. It is recommended/encouraged that staff has at least two weeks of lesson plans planned ahead.

**Resources and References:** The RSU 29 School Board of Directors and administration referred to many documents when developing this plan. The following resources helped to provide guidance:

- Maine Center for Disease Control
- MDOE Standard Operating Procedures
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention