

Updated: 7-12-23



Dear Elmwood-Murdock Families,

The start of the 2023-2024 school year is just around the corner. This letter is to inform you of the district's approach to Covid-19 related protocols at Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools as we start a new school year. With the increase in vaccinations, a better understanding of the Coronavirus and a decrease in active cases in the state of Nebraska and in our school district, E-M will maintain the approach to social distancing and other protocols when possible, however, the use of masks will not be required. Those wishing to wear a mask or face covering will be allowed to do so at all times.

As we progress through the next school year, E-M will continue to maintain our relationship and stay in contact with the Sarpy/Cass Health Department. As related to Covid-19, in the event of required, or necessary updates, or changes, the district will communicate those actions as quickly as possible to our families.

In formulating our approach for the next school year, E-M intends to follow recommended health guidelines and has moved to the aspect that the maintenance of Covid-19 is the personal responsibility of our families and staff. With that said, although not required, we would encourage our families to consider being vaccinated and if at any time, your individual students are experiencing symptoms related to Covid-19, please notify the district and follow all protocols outlined by the local health department and CDC.

The chart below outlines Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools approach to Covid-19 for the 2023-2024 school year. Please keep in mind that based on recommendations from SCHD, these protocols may change at any time. The district's Continuity of Learning Plan can be located on the school website at www.emknights.org.

If you have any questions, concerns or would like to provide feedback in regards to this plan, please email Ryan Knippelmeyer at rknippelmeyer@emknights.org

Disclaimer: *The Elmwood-Murdock Board of Education understands that there may be a need to adjust this Return to School Plan based on current health conditions and guidance from the Sarpy/Cass Health Department, Nebraska Department of Education, and/or Governor, and gives the Superintendent the authority to make these adjustments as necessary.*

<i>Attendance/ Capacity</i>	Participation in academic experiences and activities/athletics will be at full capacity.
<i>Working Collaboratively with Sarpy/Cass Health Department</i>	<p>The school district will continue to work closely with the Sarpy/Cass Health Department, Nebraska Department of Education, and the NSAA when implementing our Return to School Plan. Adjustments to this plan will be made based on the current health conditions in our district and through collaboration with the health department.</p> <p>For example, if the district moves from the “Green” protocol to the “Yellow” or “Orange” protocol and possibly implement additional restrictions, those decisions will be made collaboratively with the Sarpy/Cass Health Department and state of Nebraska.</p> <p>Any changes to this plan will be communicated with families through email and/or phone calls through our school messaging system.</p>
<i>Masking / Face Coverings</i>	<p>Masking is not required for outside activities, however, students and staff wishing to engage in masking will be allowed to do so.</p> <p>For academic experiences and activities scheduled inside the building, masking is not required by our school district.</p> <p>Keep in mind, the effective use of a mask or face covering entails the covering of the nose and mouth by the wearer.</p>
<i>Screening for Covid - 19 and other Illnesses</i>	<p>Students and/or parents should check for Covid-19 related symptoms and other illnesses at home, prior to arrival at school.</p> <p>Parents should follow all CDC guidelines and keep students at home if any of the following symptoms are experienced: * Fever or chills * Cough * Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing * Fatigue * Muscle or body aches * Headache * New loss of taste or smell * Sore throat * Congestion or runny nose* Nausea or vomiting * Diarrhea</p> <p>If at school, students exhibiting symptoms related to Covid - 19, or other significant illness, will be screened by health/office personnel and may be sent home.</p>
<i>Exposure and Covid Diagnosis</i>	<p>Students and Staff need to stay home when sick.</p> <p>Individuals diagnosed with, or have been exposed to, Covid-19 should contact the school and follow all protocols outlined for recovery by the health department and CDC.</p> <p>Following current CDC and health department guidelines, contracting , or exposure to Covid-19 could include contact tracing, isolation and possible quarantine.</p>
<i>Vaccinations</i>	<p>Covid-19 vaccinations are not required for students and/or staff to attend school. However, keep in mind that individuals can assist our school in mitigating Covid-19 outbreaks by getting vaccinated.</p> <p>As we have learned, an outbreak that affects an entire classroom, grade level, or our teaching staff, may affect the district’s ability to continue school in our current protocol.</p>

<u>Remote Learning / School Absence</u>	<p>Full-time remote learning will not be an option for the 2023-2024 school year.</p> <p>Individual remote learning possibilities will be considered due to changes in the pandemic plan, with the district shifting from green to yellow, orange or red. Considerations may include, but are not limited to; an increase in confirmed positive Covid-19 cases, changes to the state's directed health measure, along with accommodations for students on 504 and IEP plans that have an exposure to, or have tested positive for Covid-19.</p> <p>Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools believes that the maintenance of Covid-19 is the personal responsibility of our families and staff. Covid-19 cases will be treated like the "flu", or any other communicable disease. Families should connect with both their building office and classroom teacher in the event of any illness, or missed school and follow the guidance provided by your family doctor and the local health department.</p>
<u>Academic Recovery</u>	<p>Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools acknowledges that some students experienced a loss of learning due to the pandemic and its effect on the academic environment. The district recognizes that students were affected by remote learning in the spring of 2020, as well as absences related to Covid - 19. Our school district will continue to utilize all academic practices in place prior to the pandemic, as well as additional instructional strategies to support student learning.</p> <p>Strategies utilized may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensuring Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) academic, behavioral, and social emotional processes and guidelines are provided to all students ● Universal Screener - Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) ● Universal Screener (K-6) - Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills (DIBELS) ● Nebraska Student Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) for grades 3rd-8th ● Formative and summative classroom assessments ● Benchmarking of individual student skill levels ● Implementation and maintenance of newly identified 504 and IEPs as related to Covid - 19.
<u>Social Distancing</u>	<p>All students and staff should maintain suggested social distancing when possible.</p>
<u>Good Hygiene</u>	<p>Regular use of hand sanitizer and soap and water, as well as promoting respiratory etiquette (coughing, sneezing into sleeves, etc).</p> <p>The district will provide opportunities and encourage good hygiene, etiquette and work to reduce the spread of illness.</p> <p>To assist the district, parents should encourage students to maintain good hygiene at all times.</p>
<u>Food / Water</u>	<p>Students should not share food and/or water.</p> <p>Individual water bottles and prepackaged food should be utilized by students and staff. Water bottle filling stations are available to students at both buildings.</p>
<u>Cohorts</u>	<p>Students engaged in all academic experiences and activities <u>may</u> be cohorted with an individual group if needed.</p> <p>This action could include academic experiences, lunchtime and all activities.</p>

Commented [1]: Remote learners question - Addison Shannon and Paxton Wiles both have IEPs and were full time remote learners last year. It is not in their IEP that they learn remotely; however they could fight for it as it is a medical concern. The Shannons were planning for Addison to get the vaccine when available to children.

Commented [2]: I think based on this plan, full-time remote learning is not an option. If there's exposure or a positive case involving them, then there could be a remote learning option for a set amount of time, but then they'd be expected to return to school. This is based on us being in "green". If we had to shift back to yellow or orange, then we would need to look at this again. With both being sped, they could choose to home school and ask us for special education services based on that. If Paxton were to home school, he would need to receive services through Waverly.

<u>Cleaning</u>	To reduce the spread of Covid - 19 and other viruses, the district will engage in continued, increased cleaning practices.
<u>Bussing / Transportation</u>	Busses will be cleaned regularly. Students will be assigned seats. Masking is not required, however, students and staff wishing to wear a mask on the bus and/or van may do so.
<u>Cafeteria / Lunch</u>	All cafeteria procedures will resume as normal. Wash / Sanitize hands before entering the cafeteria line. Cleaning between lunch groups. All students will return to eating in the cafeteria space. Designated seats will be marked at the JH/SH. If needed, students will eat lunch with a cohort and social distancing will be implemented to the greatest extent possible..
<u>Extra Curricular Activities</u>	The district will follow all guidelines provided by the NSAA and NDE.
<u>Visitors</u>	All school visitors need to check in the office before moving throughout the building.
<u>Playground and Outdoor Activities</u>	Normal use of playground equipment will be allowed. Outdoor activities will be allowed as normal.
<u>Use of school by Outside Groups</u>	While in the current protocol, the school may be used by outside groups as normal and must follow the district's facility use agreement.
<u>Ventilation and Facility Care</u>	GPS Bipolar technology was installed on over 60 air handler units in both the elementary and high school buildings in August 2020. Regular filter changing will continue to take place to assist in providing a clean learning environment for all students and staff. The district will continue to look at other opportunities to improve the air flow and ventilation in the school facility.
<u>Attendance at School Activities</u>	Attendance at school activities will be at full capacity. Masks and/or face coverings for indoor activities are not required. Those in attendance wishing to wear a mask or face covering may do so.
<u>Social Emotional Approach</u>	In regards to social-emotional mental health and related needs, Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools will continue to provide necessary guidance to parents and students to assist in possible trauma resulting from the pandemic or any other emergencies. Please contact the building counselor for further information.

Commented [3]: If visitors are allowed, then I would assume parents would be allowed to eat with students for lunch. I'm a little hesitant about this mostly because there is not a lot of room for separation for parents with students.

Commented [4]: We could put something in there that states due to the size of our cafeteria, parents are not allowed to come and eat with their children. Or...could we utilize a white table somewhere in the cafeteria for parents to eat with their child?

<i>Nutritional Needs</i>	Student concerns of nutritional needs will be addressed on an individual student basis. Please contact the building principal for further information.
<i>Arrival / Dismissal from School</i>	Facilities will open at 7:45 a.m. Early arrivals will report outside to designated areas. Parents/Guardians are allowed in the school and need to check in at the office upon arrival.

Commented [5]: Microwaves? I know this was a concern for a few parents that we removed these - thoughts on them? Will we need them sanitized between usage?

Commented [6]: I'd say use them. The lunch staff can wipe off the outside when they clean tables. I'm pretty sure microwaves were available in Murdock towards the end of the school year.