

Midd-West School District

Return to School Plan – Frequently Asked Questions

1. How will IEP provision be provided through the various stages of the Plan?

All IEP provisions are a team decision, so the IEP team will be relied upon to make those changes. In the green phase, the IEP should be able to be implemented as written in almost all cases because all students will be returning to their regular instructional program. In the yellow phase, where some students will be working from home while others are attending in-person instruction, IEP teams will need to decide if a student with an IEP needs more support and therefore attends more frequently. Many IEP teams will need to convene if we move to yellow status. In a red phase, where all instruction is online, almost all IEP teams will need reconvened to ensure that services provided can meet a student's needs.

2. Are students required to wear masks? Will the school provide masks or shields?

The Secretary of Health's Mask Order requires school district's Return to School Plans to require all students and staff to wear a mask unless they meet one of the four areas of exception or if they can maintain a distance of 6ft or more from other individuals. So, yes, students will be required to wear masks at different times throughout the day. Most often this would occur on bus rides to and from school, during class exchanges in the hallway, and during assemblies. However, most of our classrooms are large enough to allow for a class of 22 students to be separated enough where masks may be taken off for periods of time if not the entire class period. During lunches we will need to provide enough space for students to eat without wearing masks. Schedules and space will be reworked to accommodate.

The district is asking all students that have their own masks to use them. Cloth masks are fine for this purpose and can be reused each day after washing. However, the district will also offer students disposable mask each day for use. The student may choose to use the district supplied masks or not. Face shields are also an acceptable alternative to a mask. At this time, the district will not have shield available for all students, and it will be reserving its supply of shields for teachers and students who require their use.

3. Can we move between phases of the plan?

Yes. The tentative plan is to start in the green phase, but the district or an individual building could move into the yellow phase if there is an outbreak with students or staff. Likewise, the district could also move back to green from yellow if conditions warrant such. If there are no active cases in a building or in the district for two weeks or more after going to yellow, it is likely that the district would move back to green.

4. Do students or employees that take vacation after the start of the year need to quarantine for two weeks upon return?

As of the writing of this answer (July 9, 2020), the Governor has indicated the need for two weeks of quarantine for individuals returning from any one of 15 states across the United States and for any foreign travel. Parents should check this link before traveling.

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Travelers.aspx>

If any trips to areas with high COVID 19 incident rates are required, it is recommended that parents inform their child's school so that a plan for a virtual or online experience can be made for the time in quarantine. Quarantine is an excused absence, but in many cases, we can provide classwork that would keep the student up to date on their class activities.

5. What is the difference between cyber school, on-line instruction, virtual instruction, and a mobile learning platform?

This can be confusing because we refer to them at different times and they are very similar and vary by district. On-line instruction would refer to any of these different experiences. Here is how the Midd-West School District identifies each:

Cyber School – *This is a program where the student completes all their work from a packaged curriculum and instructional resources that are provided online. The Midd-West Cyber Academy provides all Midd-West Students the opportunity to participate in a cyber school where they will receive assignments, get feedback, and receive grades from Midd-West teachers. Cyber school can typically be completed on the student's own daily schedule without requiring specific times that the student is logged into the system. For the first-time, Midd-West will have cyber school available for students in grades K-12. If you have interest in attending the Midd-West Cyber Academy, please contact your child's principal or Chris Snyder at csnyder@mwsd.cc.*

Virtual Instruction – Virtual instruction is something that will be relatively new to the school district for this year. We have done it in some instances for individual children who were missing long periods of time due to illness. However, we will attempt to do it to some extent this year at each grade level. In this concept, the student participates in the regular classroom while in session with a live group of students from their home by way of the computer and internet. The student could interact in this classroom and communicate with the teacher or paraprofessional by using the computer as they watched the lesson unfold. Students would need to log into their computer at specific times throughout the day to attend these sessions.

Mobile Learning Platform – This is what the school district referred to as its program in the spring of this year when all teachers had to place all their activities for students to complete online. This is what we would go to again if all schools were forced to be closed due to a local COVID 19 outbreak.

6. Will parent/student events continue to be held in the green phase of the plan?

Yes. These events can be held. They may look different based upon limiting numbers of participants to 250, but events with staggered times or different grade levels of parent attending different nights are entirely possible. Keep checking your building's website and calendar for information on these events.

7. Why isn't the district requiring students to wear masks all the time?

At this time, the district is not requiring students to wear masks all the time because the Secretary of Health Mask Order allows for both students and adults to be able to remove face coverings when they can maintain a distance of 6ft or more from other individuals. It is believed that we can successfully do this in many of our classrooms. Additionally, there will be a percentage of our population that will qualify with an exemption to the Mask Order. Those individuals will not be required to wear a mask or a face shield.

Although the mainstream publications do seem to advise that anyone over 2 should wear a mask, there are organizations expressing concerns about applying that the mask mandate to students under 10 or 12. This is something that our community is deeply concerned about, as evidenced from our survey data. The district is trying to find a balance between health and safety recommendations, state mandates, and community priorities for our Return to School Plan. We plan to meet standards imposed by the state while providing the best, most normal school experience we can for each child.

