

ASHLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL COVID-19 RETURN TO SCHOOL GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS & FAMILIES



Addendum to the Student Handbook

The Ashland District School Board approved this document originally in public session on August 10, 2020. There have been two other versions of the document that have been updated and approved since that time to account for changes in procedures and policies. The School Board recognizes the unprecedented and rapidly changing landscape in which schools now operate, and therefore, the Superintendent is authorized to make changes to this document based on emerging legal or health guidance. This latest version was authorized by the school board on January 31, 2022.

MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT

MSAD #32 Administrators, Teachers, and Staff have been busy for the past several months preparing for Ashland District School to reopen for in-person learning to begin the 2021-2022 school year. We are continuing to monitor the number of cases in our community, county, and state in making the decision as to how to best open our school in a way that keeps our students and staff safe. **MSAD #32 is planning to continue in-person learning when school resumes on Tuesday, September 7, 2021 as scheduled.**

The rationale behind continuing with in-person instruction is based on the fact that currently, there are very few active cases of coronavirus in Aroostook County with no hospitalizations, and the State of Maine continues to see a downward trend in coronavirus in recent weeks. We will continue to monitor the number of cases and utilize this information to determine the safest option for educating our students.

MSAD #32 currently has on 3 plans for educating our students, depending on the level of the spread of the coronavirus and the best interests of safety for our students and staff. **We plan to begin with the (green) plan which involves full day in-person learning for all students.**

GREEN – In-person learning for students that incorporates social distancing, face coverings, and cleaning measures in our building. Remote learning will be available for students with medical conditions or with other personal circumstances. This plan will remain in place provided that we continue to have low coronavirus case counts in our communities and county.

YELLOW – A combination of in-person and remote learning. This phase would be used as a temporary transition period between remote learning and in-person learning and not a long-term solution.

RED – In a similar fashion to last Spring's remote at home learning plan, learning will be conducted with learning materials for all students online. We would put this plan into place if we saw a significant increase in cases in our communities and county.

MSAD #32 created the original reopening plan based on guidance from the National Center for Disease Control (CDC) and guidelines provided by the Maine Department of Education. Our opening plan contains a number of priorities that may look different depending on the age and educational level of our students.

Sincerely,



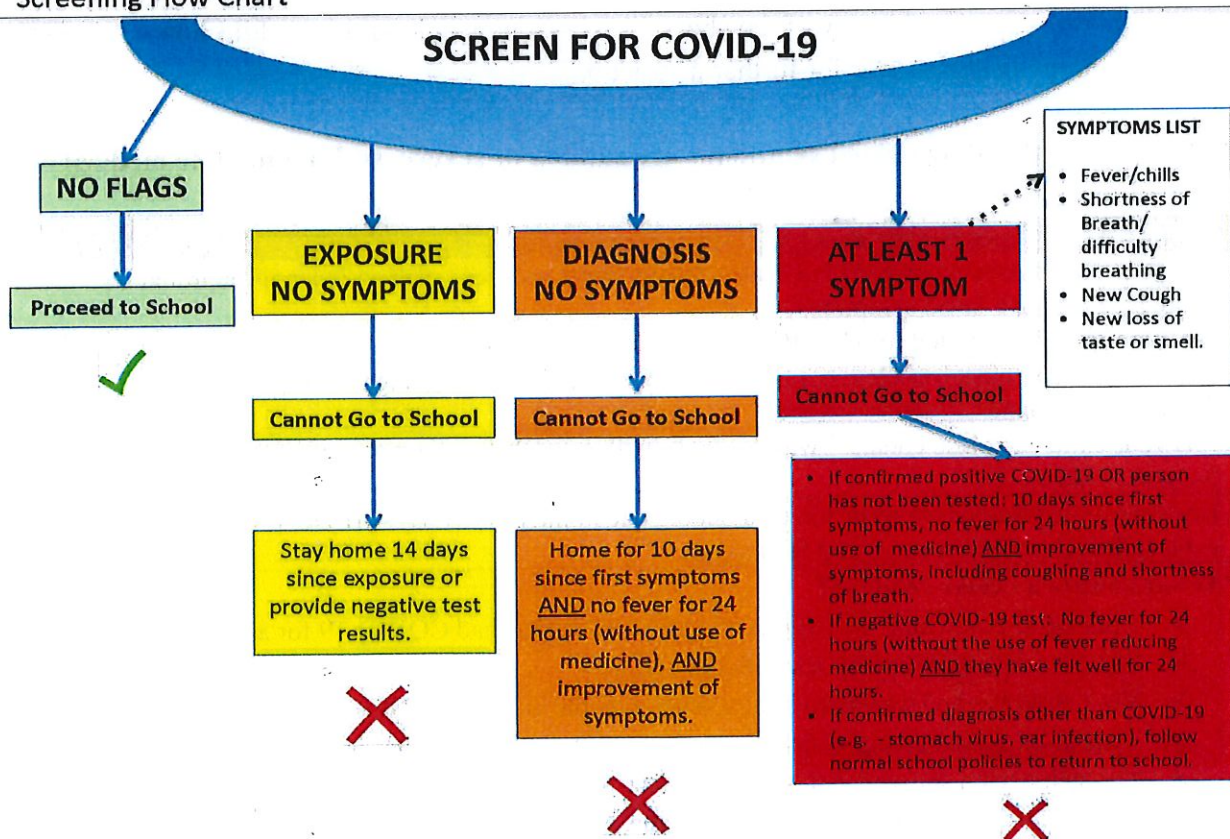
Gehrig Johnson, Superintendent of Schools

HEALTH & SAFETY

DAILY SELF-ASSESSMENT:

- Prior to boarding the bus or drop-off, Parents/Guardians will need to complete a self-screening assessment daily for their child to check for symptoms of COVID-19. Certain responses will require that a child remain home. In this event, Parents/Guardians should contact the School Nurse. The self-screening will be available in paper form or via email.
- *Daily self-assessment questions:*
 - Have I been out of the state in the last 14 days?
 - Do I or have I been living with anyone who is sick or quarantined?
 - Do I or have I been around anyone exhibiting these symptoms within the last 14 days:
 - Do I or have I had a loss of taste or smell?
 - Do I or have I had shortness of breath?
 - Do I have a fever or feel feverish?
 - Do I have a cough or sore throat?
 - Do I feel unwell today?
- Parents/guardians should follow the flow chart if ANY COVID-19 symptoms are identified:

Screening Flow Chart



At Home Health Screening Tool for Students and Parents

Parents/Guardians: Please review this screening tool **before** school **every morning** for each of your school-aged children. This tool is for your reference only and should be used daily, **do not** send it to school.

Is your child experiencing any of the following symptoms?

- Feeling Unwell
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever-like symptoms such as body aches, body chills and/or sweating
- Temperature over 100.4 degrees F or 38.0 degrees C
- Muscle Pain
- Headache
- Chills or repeated shaking from chills
- Runny nose/congestion
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

If your child is experiencing any of the above listed symptoms, **keep your child home from school** and contact your medical provider for further instructions.

****If any of the above-listed symptoms are sudden or severe, seek immediate medical attention.****

Please indicate yes or no next to the following statements:	Yes	No
Has your child taken cough/cold medication and/or fever reducers such as Tylenol/Ibuprofen today for the above listed symptoms?		
Has your child been tested for COVID-19 in the last two weeks?		
Has your child student had close contact* with someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days?		
Has your child had close contact* with someone with a suspected diagnosis of COVID-19 in the past 14 days?		
Has your child traveled by air or traveled out of state in the past 14 days? If yes, please contact the school before returning to campus.		

***What counts as close contact?**

- Your child was within six (6) feet of someone who has had COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes
- Someone in your home is sick with COVID-19
- Your child has had direct physical contact with the sick person (touched, hugged, etc.)
- Your child shared eating or drinking utensils with the sick person
- The sick person sneezed, coughed or somehow got respiratory droplets on your child

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, keep your child home from school. Contact your medical provider for further instructions.

FACE COVERINGS/MASKS:

- All students are required to wear a face covering/mask that covers their nose and mouth when in the presence of others with the list of exceptions below. [See CDC guidance on social distancing](#). Maintaining three (3) feet of distance is acceptable between and among students when combined with the other measures outlined in this list of safety requirements.
- Face coverings must be worn when entering or exiting buildings, while traveling in hallways, and generally when moving about the school. Exceptions may include, but are not limited to:
 - While eating
 - While on the playground, if social distancing allows
 - While participating in music practice, if permitted
 - When the student's face cannot safely be covered due to a medical condition in which case a doctor's note must be provided and the student would wear a face shield.
- Face coverings must be worn by all students utilizing transportation by bus or van.
- Students should bring their own face masks. The school has masks and shields available for those students that are unable to bring one, damage or lose one throughout the school day. Face coverings are subject to meeting current dress code standards in regards to the appropriateness of language/images, etc.
- Face shields may be an alternative for those students with a medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear masks/face coverings. Face shields worn in place of a face covering must extend below the chin and back to the ears.
- Additional Safety measures and PPE will be used for staff who are in close proximity of students.

PREVENTION MEASURES:

- All students must practice [proper handwashing guidelines](#) and use hand sanitizer upon entering the school, their classroom, before and after donning or removing a face covering, and throughout the day. Hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when visibly soiled, before and after eating, and after coughing/sneezing and using the restroom.
- All students must practice proper [CDC infection control measures](#):
 - If coughing or sneezing, students must cover their mouth and nose with a tissue, or the inside of their elbow, and immediately discard the tissue.
 - Avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth.
 - Avoid touching any surfaces unnecessarily.
 - Refrain from physical contact, including hugs and hand-shakes.
- Restroom procedures will be established to limit the number of students in the hallway and restrooms at one time.
- Students should only bring to school what is absolutely essential for each day. Any items brought to school should fit into a single backpack.
- Classrooms will be reconfigured to allow physical distance with students facing one direction, wherever possible.

- Middle School and High School students will be assigned lockers. There will be a recommendation to reduce the time at lockers as much as possible. Students will be allowed to carry a backpack with them.
- Sharing of items (electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids) will be discouraged and restricted.
- Each child's belongings will be separated from others' and in individually labeled pencil boxes provided by ADS. (Pencils, Glue sticks, Scissors, Erasers, Crayons, Markers, etc.) This is to reduce the sharing of community items.
- Field trips, assemblies, and other large gatherings will not be allowed.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION/MEALS:

- Students will maintain six (6) feet of physical distance while eating breakfast and lunch as students will be unable to wear face coverings during these times.
- Students are encouraged to bring a full water bottle each day as water fountains will be closed. Bottles may be refilled using our filling station. Water filling stations will be sanitized along with all other "common touch" surfaces.
- Shared food is prohibited. Parents are asked only to send food for their child and not class consumption (i.e. birthdays; holiday celebrations).
- Students will be required to practice [proper handwashing](#)/sanitizing prior to eating.
- Guidelines for lining up to receive meals and be dismissed will be created to minimize numbers lining up or gathering in large groups.

PLAYGROUND USE (ELEMENTARY):

- Use of designated playground equipment and supplies will be allowed under close monitoring.
- Use of face coverings/shields will NOT be required during this time as long as physical distancing is maintained.
- Limits will be placed on the number of students on equipment at one time.
- No more than 50 students may congregate in one section of a play area at a time.
- If needed, at least three (3) areas of each playground will be established and student groups will be assigned to remain in each area each day. These areas will rotate so that students are able to use the entire playground over the course of several days.
- Students will wash their hands/use sanitizer before and after using playground equipment.
- Playground equipment (e.g. swings, slides, etc.) will be sanitized after each recess period before the next group uses them. Playground supplies (e.g. balls, jump ropes, hula hoops, etc.) will be stored in special bins that are labeled specifically for each group's use. These supplies will be sanitized after each use.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

- Ashland District School will plan for special education students, including students with disabilities and English Learners, to ensure they receive necessary services and accommodations.
- Determination of additional PPE requirements will be made by the Special Education Director based upon the unique needs of each student/situation. Additional PPE may be provided for staff working with young children, students with IEPs or student's with specialized health plans such as, but not limited to:
 - Clear face coverings and/or
 - Face shields
 - Gloves
 - Gowns

TRANSPORTATION

- Parents/Guardians are **strongly encouraged** to transport their child to and from school, if able.
- Students are required to wear a face covering at all times while on the bus/van, including upon entry/exit.
- Students **should not arrive at school prior to 7:30am** each day.
- A fifth bus run will be added to alleviate congestion on the buses.
- Students will be seated one student per seat unless from the same household, where two can sit together and distanced according to guidelines with the seat directly behind the driver remaining open. Prohibited seats will be marked with tape.
- Students will be assigned seats and must sit in the seats assigned to them.
- Seats in the back of the bus must be loaded first and then move forward. The bus should be emptied from the front and then the back.
- Students will need to practice social distancing when exiting the bus.
- Several windows should be slightly opened to improve air ventilation if weather permits.
- Bus drivers will clean and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces between uses as much as possible. High-touch areas in buses such as seat backs, handrails, stability poles, bars, windows and window ledges and the possibility of spraying busses between runs.
- **Parents picking up their children will not be allowed into the lobby areas to congregate.** Parents will need to remain in their vehicles in the designated pickup loop. Students will walk to the vehicles after dismissal.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS/VOLUNTEERS

- Parents/Guardians will minimize face-to-face meetings by utilizing alternative methods to receive updates (i.e. email, conference call, phone call, web-based meetings).
- Any Parent/Guardian needing to enter the building for an IEP meeting or other important business will need to be screened and access to areas other than the front lobby will be extremely limited.
- Parents/Guardians will be asked the same screening questions as students prior to entry to any school building. If any response is “yes”, the parent/guardian will not be allowed into the building. If allowed into the building, parents/guardians:
 - Must wear a face covering while in the buildings.
 - Must use the sanitizing station upon entry, maintain a social distance of six (6) feet.
 - Must attend to their specific business and leave immediately following.

TECHNOLOGY

- In a hybrid or remote instruction model, 1:1 devices will be provided to each grade 2-12 student. These devices will be transported by the student between school and home.
- Parents/Guardians agree to return the borrowed devices at the end of the school year, unless otherwise determined, to be cleaned and disinfected.
- Sharing of devices between students will be discouraged. If it is required devices will be sanitized after each shared use.
- A waiver must be signed by the parent and child for damages and guarantee of return.
- Hot Spots are limited, but available to those families that may need them to provide access in the case of remote learning. Please contact the main office 435-3481 as soon as possible to request these devices.

CLASSROOM SETTING

- Classroom seating will be configured with maximum allowable space between students. Pre-K - 5 schedules will be developed in a way that will limit student movement and/or interactions between student groups throughout the day. Art, Music and Library services will continue in the regular classroom whenever possible.
- Employees will modify instructional plans to reduce student contact, sharing of materials or equipment and maintain appropriate physical distancing to the greatest extent possible.
- Common touch surfaces will be sanitized throughout the day.

WHEN SOMEONE IS SICK

- Parents/Guardians will avoid exposing others by ensuring their child remains home if they experience any [signs or symptoms of Respiratory Illness](#) or a fever of 100.4°F or higher. *Please refer to the reporting student illness flow chart above.*
- Students will not be penalized for missing school when required to stay home under these guidelines. The School Nurse will ask about symptoms when absences are reported.
- If a student develops a fever during school hours, a medical isolation room has been designated for students to wait for their parents to pick up their child immediately.
- Students should not return to school unless they are fever free for 24 hours (1 day) without fever-reducing medication and symptom-free for 24 hours.
- Any area used by a sick person will be closed until proper disinfection has been completed.

EXPECTATIONS IF TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19:

- Parents/Guardians will notify the School Nurse if their child, or anyone in their household, has been confirmed to have COVID-19. As a response to protect the health and safety of our students and staff, areas will be sanitized and CDC guidelines followed to notify all families and employees that have come in contact with and/or have been exposed to the student in the most confidential manner possible.
- Under the current Maine CDC guidance, a student who has tested positive for COVID-19 will NOT be able to return to school until:
 - the student has gone 24 hours (1 day) without exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, and at least ten days have passed since the student's symptoms first appeared; **AND**
 - Documentation of medical clearance from the Maine CDC will be required to return to school and must be submitted to the School Nurse; **AND**
 - Improvement in symptoms has occurred.

- Students who have had close contact with someone who tests positive for, or is diagnosed with, COVID-19 must isolate at home and monitor symptoms for 14 days. Close contact is defined as “any individual who has been closer than six (6) feet for more than 15 minutes.”
- Students returning from illness related to COVID-19 will be required to check in with the School Nurse and school administrator.
- The school will work closely with Maine CDC on all contact tracing and other related protocols.
- During the time students are out of school, arrangements will be made to ensure they do not fall behind in their learning (i.e. remote instruction or make-up work following a healthy return).

EXPECTATIONS IF REQUIRED TO QUARANTINE:

- If an individual student is required to quarantine, they will be provided the option to transition into remote instruction and, if they participate, those days will not be counted as absences.
- If a classroom or multiple classrooms are required to quarantine due to a positive test, impacted students will transition to remote instruction during the quarantine period. If a student participates, those days will not be counted as absences.
- Students who have traveled out of state to those states not listed in the most up-to-date Governor’s orders must isolate at home and monitor for symptoms for 14 days before being able to return to school. If students participate in remote learning during the quarantine, those days will not be counted as absences. Please communicate with the school regarding travel and re-entry plans as soon as possible.

3-TIERED HEALTH ADVISORY SYSTEM

- Updated bi-weekly beginning July 31
- Used to inform district planning.
- Access <https://www.maine.gov/portal/education/> for bi-weekly risk level updates across the state.

RED

Suggests the county has a high risk of COVID-19 spread and that in-person instruction should not be conducted.

YELLOW

Suggests that the county has an elevated risk of COVID-19 spread and that hybrid instruction should be adopted.

GREEN

Suggests that the county has a relatively low COVID-19 risk and that in-person instruction can be adopted.

ASHLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL GUIDELINES PER RISK LEVEL

GREEN

- ADS will designate Green ONLY when the Department of Education/State of Maine deems Aroostook County is at a Green Risk Level.
- Students will be distanced no less than three (3) feet apart during instruction time.
- Students/Staff will wear masks at all appropriate times.
- Masks will not be required during breakfast/Lunch/Mask Break times. Six (6) feet of distancing will be required during those times.
- Increased transitions between classes.
- Transportation: 1 household per bus seat, all masked.
- Full attendance is expected.

YELLOW

- ADS will designate Yellow ONLY when the Department of Education/State of Maine deems Aroostook County is at a Green or Yellow Risk Level.
- ADS will be structured to accommodate six (6) feet distance between all students during instruction.
- Masks mandatory for all students/staff.
- Masks not required for breakfast/lunch times.
- Limited transitions between classes.
- Transportation: 1 household per seat, all masked.
- Schools will be structured to accommodate the full student body.
- Families will have the option of remote learning.
- Full attendance in live online classroom (if applicable), completion of work, etc. required.
- If families choose remote learning, they must contact the Principal ASAP after a designation of Yellow.
- Students learning remotely will be expected to sign the Remote Learning Agreement and to participate in classes at the designated times required.

RED

- ADS will designate RED when the Department of Education/State of Maine deems Aroostook County is at a Red Risk Level.
- *or*
- ADS has a positive case of COVID-19 among students or staff.
- Full District Remote Learning will be implemented.
- All on-site activities will temporarily be suspended until Aroostook County is deemed Yellow or Green.
- If ADS moves to Red due to a school outbreak (not state designation), Administration, with the guidance of health officials and the Department of Education, will determine time/manner of re-entry.
- ADS will facilitate the delivery of meals to all students if we are in Red Risk Level Status.

COMMUNICATION

- In the event of a Risk Level change, ADS will implement “Alert Now” to inform families of changes. If you are not enrolled in the “Alert Now” system, please contact the school to be added or have contact information update.
- Updates to the risk level will be regularly put on the district website (www.sad32.org) and FaceBook as well as through email. Please contact the school to update your information if necessary.
- Access <https://www.maine.gov/portal/education/> for bi-weekly risk level updates across the state.

ASHLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL RISK LEVEL AT RE-ENTRY

Barring any major changes in trends or recommendations from the department of Education or the State of Maine, ADS will re-enter school with the status of GREEN.

This will be implemented as long as Aroostook County remains GREEN on September 8.

Please contact the school no later than August 31 if your child needs to make arrangements to learn remotely due to a diagnosed and documented medical condition.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If I drop my child off at school, can they ride the bus home, or vice versa?

Yes, ADS will accommodate students who only need transportation once a day. Please inform the school if this is the case so we can properly plan seating spacing and bus runs.

Will there be a bus monitor to ensure students are maintaining appropriate distancing?

No, at this time (other than face masks), bussing rules will remain the same as always and will not require a monitor.

Will my child have their temperature taken on the bus or upon their arrival at school?

No, families are expected to read through the daily health screening provided and take the child's temperature if there is a concern. Temperature will be taken by the School Nurse if there is a health concern throughout the day.

How do we plan to handle students with allergies or a common cold? Will they be assumed to have COVID-19 and therefore be isolated?

The School Nurse has documentation on all allergies. The School Nurse will take every precaution to ensure the health of safety of all students. This may mean isolation for a period and a doctor's note explaining the symptoms.

If a member of the household travels outside of Maine, what are the expectations for school attendance?

Students should plan on quarantining until household member is tested negative or has quarantined 14 days if the student or a household member has traveled outside of the states that are determined to be safe by the State of Maine. Please contact the school as soon as possible if your family is planning on such travel.

If my child has an IEP, will they continue to receive services across the various risk levels?

Yes, the special education services will continue regardless of the form of instruction. Please feel free to contact the Special Education Director for any specific questions about your child's IEP.

If my child needs a mask, will the school provide one?

We encourage students to provide their own masks. In the event that a mask is lost or broken, the school will provide a disposable mask for the day. If you need to make arrangements regarding face masks, please contact the school.

What if my child refuses to wear a mask?

The wearing of face covering is a mandate from the State of Maine. If a student refuses to wear a mask, they will be sent home and expected to participate in their instruction remotely until such time that they are compliant with the face mask rule.

If I choose to have my student participate remotely (during Yellow), can they participate in extracurricular activities?

Yes, students may participate in extracurricular activities even if they are participating in remote instruction. However, it is important to know that all extracurricular activities are considered part of ADS's educational programming, and when the district and/or state applies a risk level to the district, it applies to ALL of its educational programming. School policies for extracurricular activities will still be in effect regarding grading and attendance requirements.

What is the difference between home-schooling and remote learning?

In remote learning, similar to the Spring of 2020, the school would provide some materials and guidance through email and potentially a virtual meeting time depending upon availability and age level. The Remote Learning Agreement would have to be signed and the student and parent would be required to fulfill requirements set forth by the classroom teachers in order to receive credit and advance grade level. Attendance will be required and the student would be subject to all school policies and procedures as if they were present in the building. Home schooling requires that the parent file a plan with the state, write a letter to the Superintendent informing him of your intent to homeschool and find or create and accepted curriculum to deliver for your student.