



HUMAN RESOURCES

COVID-19 Employee Frequently Asked Questions: School Reopening

1. Are there steps being taken to increase the number of available substitutes? Particularly considering the potential for increased staff absences due to COVID-19?

Yes, the District is actively recruiting substitutes for the coming school year and is making changes to how substitutes will be deployed in the fall. Substitutes will be assigned to a specific school and only eligible to work at their assigned school with some limited exceptions. The number of substitutes assigned to that school will be determined based on the number of substitutes needed on average over the last two years, while taking into account increased needs for this fall. In addition to limiting the opportunity of spread by not allowing substitutes to work at multiple locations, this will improve effectiveness by allowing substitute teachers to focus on learning the routines, curriculum, and expectations for a single school location.

2. Will masks be provided to all employees and will they be required?

At this time, masks are not required in the Mat-Su; however, one mask will be provided to all employees. It is highly encouraged that staff and students wear a mask to help minimize the spread of COVID-19. For more information, you can see the MSBSD Employee Guidelines for COVID-19.

3. Will plastic face shields be provided to employees?

The District will have a large supply of plastic face shields on hand and will distribute them to staff who would like one depending on job responsibilities and work setting. According to the CDC face shields are not a substitute for cloth face coverings, so we will be recommending that individuals who wear a shield also wear a mask underneath.

4. Will teachers or support staff be asked to take temperatures of students?

At this time, MSBSD will not be taking temperatures of staff and students as they enter school buildings. Parents are being asked to monitor their child's health daily and if they have a fever or other symptoms to stay home. If staff observe symptoms in students, they should be referred to the nurse for additional evaluation.

5. If there is a positive case in a household will the students and or staff in the home still be permitted to come to school/work?

No, individuals who are in close contact (within 6 feet) for a prolonged period of time (15 min or more) of a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 are required to quarantine for 14 calendar days. The District will be asking families and staff to self-report both positive cases and close contact and to follow any state mandated quarantine. There will be a process to evaluate situations in which allegations are made regarding an individual's unconfirmed diagnosis or close contact.

6. What increased disinfecting/sanitizing will be occurring in schools?

Classrooms, common areas, and high touch areas will be disinfected at least daily in schools by custodial staff through re-prioritization of established cleaning schedules. Supplies will be available in all classrooms and throughout the building to support disinfecting during the school day. Additional supplementary custodial staff have been added to ensure sufficient replacement staff are available in the event of custodial absences.

7. What is the primary disinfectant/sanitizer that will be used in schools and classrooms?

The District will have J-512 available in all classrooms. J-512 is a general sanitizer that has been used in schools for several years. It has been approved by the EPA as effective against SARS-COV-2(COVID-19) and does not require a second rinse. The diluted product is also safe to use on food contact surfaces and does not require any additional personal protective equipment to use.

8. Can teachers require all students in their class to wear a mask? Can teachers require any adult visitors/volunteers to their classroom wear a mask?

No, teachers and administrators can encourage that students, staff and visitors/volunteers wear masks but cannot require them.

9. Will visitors/volunteers continue to be allowed in schools at all risk levels?

Schools will be encouraged to limit visitors/volunteers even in a low risk category. Visitors/Volunteers, if in schools, will be asked to monitor their own health prior to reporting to the school building and will be encouraged to wear a mask. If the risk level increases, the District may discontinue allowing visitors/volunteers to be present in schools and/or may consider other mitigation strategies.

10. Are there any changes or improvements to building ventilation systems planned?

The CDC issued Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to COVID-19 in May, which is based on the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) Guidance for Building



Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Facilities Department is following this guidance which includes increasing outdoor air ventilation, managing outdoor air dampers to reduce or eliminate recirculation where possible, maintaining central air filtration to the MERV-13 or the highest compatible with the filter rack, keeping building systems running longer hours to enhance air exchange in building spaces, and checking filters to ensure they are within service life and appropriately installed.

11. Will there be enough computers for each student if we move to At-Home learning? How will those computers be distributed?

Additional student devices have been procured for the 2020-2021 school year and will be delivered to schools for the fall. Schools will determine how and when those devices will be available to students for At-School or At-Home learning as part of their individual school planning efforts.

12. Will I be expected to teach At-Home learning and At-School learning at the same time?

In most cases no, schools will develop individual plans for which teachers will support At-Home learning, teachers will not be required to do both simultaneously. This will depend largely on the number of students who elect At-Home learning at each school. For example, schools might identify specific staff members to serve as full-time At-Home learning teachers. At the secondary levels, schools can free up periods and assign certain staff members to support At-Home learning students. Per the negotiated agreement teachers who choose to teach during their contract day and support At-Home learning students will receive an iTech Virtual stipend.

13. Will I be required to use a specific learning management system (LMS)?

All staff will be expected to establish an LMS for the 2020-2021 school year to more seamlessly transition to At-Home learning. Staff will be required to use either Google Classroom or Synergy's learning management systems. These are the two systems for which technical support and professional development will be available. The transition to an adopted LMS will improve consistency for parents and students during At-Home learning.

14. Will school schedules or passing periods be changing to support social distancing?

Each school, as part of their specific mitigation plan, will determine how to best structure school routines which support mitigation strategies like hand washing, social distancing, and sanitizing.

15. Are athletic and co-curricular activities going to be occurring during the fall?



Extra-curricular activities will be offered to students to the maximum extent possible while adhering to mandates and recommendations from local and state public health officials and the Alaska Schools Activities Association (ASAA). District wide practice and event mitigation plans will be communicated by each school's administration. More information regarding fall activities will be forthcoming.

16. Will there be any requirements or expectations for classroom configurations or learning spaces?

The District is encouraging schools and teachers to identify the best use existing resources in consideration of social distancing in classrooms. All staff will be asked to have assigned seating to support contact tracing. Schools will determine, based on their learning environment and curricular needs, if any additional school wide expectations will be implemented. It will be recommended that schools take advantage of open flex space and outside areas, as weather allows, to encourage social distancing to the maximum extent possible.

17. Will teachers be required to use digital on-line curriculum?

Secondary core teachers, teaching required classes (i.e., math, ELA, social studies, and science teachers) will use Apex Learning as their digital on-line curriculum. During At-School learning, teachers can use the entire Apex platform as their primary curriculum. Teachers can also use Apex in conjunction with their traditional curriculum resources. However, when schools are required to transition to At-Home learning—all core subject area teachers will be using Apex Learning as their digital on-line curriculum. Elementary teachers will use digital tools from our District programs (i.e. Journeys and GoMath), as well as other District-supported online tools such as MobyMax, Lexia, and ALEKS. Most students who select At-Home learning will use the Alaska Statewide Virtual School curriculum, depending on the school's plan to support At-Home learning.

18. Will there be changes to the District's grading practices to facilitate At-Home learning?

Unlike the exemptions for grading practices that occurred during remote learning in the spring during the extended school closure, staff will be expected to follow Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 5121 for both At-School and At-Home learning.

