



MARTIN COUNTY WEST PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Independent School District No. 2448
105 East 5th Street, Sherburn, MN 56171
martin.k12.mn.us | 507-764-2330

August 24, 2021

Dear Martin County West Families,

I have been so impressed with the warm welcome my family and I have received by our MCW community over the last 6 weeks. As much as I love summer, I am really excited to get the school year started so we can meet more of our new neighbors and do all the fun school and community activities that a new year brings.

I was really hoping COVID-19 would be a memory for us by the time we got to the 2021-22 school year. Unfortunately, it is very much still a part of our current reality. I know many families are waiting to see what MCW will do to mitigate the risks of COVID transmission so I want to share our plans so far with the caution that things could change rapidly. Note that our plans are based on "[Best Practice Recommendations for COVID-19 Prevention in School for the 2021-22 School Year](#)" published by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

Our top priorities for this school year are to keep students and staff safe physically, emotionally, and mentally, and maximize in-person learning. Here are the components of the Martin County West Schools approach to achieve those priorities (click on each for more details):

- [Requirements](#) from state and federal agencies we will **enforce** Updated 2/28/22
- [Recommendations](#) from state and federal agencies we will **implement**
- [Strategies](#) we will **deploy as needed**
- [Plans](#) we are **still developing** Updated 2/28/22
- [Individual choices](#) we will **respect**

I hope you and your family will join us for the upcoming events to kick off this new school year. Please watch the MCW website (martin.k12.mn.us) and social media for information on registration and conferences coming up in the next few weeks.

We will soon begin using a new communication system to send you important information such as weather announcements and COVID updates. To do so, we will need to have your email address in your children's file. Be sure to fill out and return the Email Address Form on <https://www.martin.k12.mn.us/Page/79> at registration so you receive these messages. For questions or assistance, please contact the school offices.

In partnership for our children's education,

Cori Reynolds
Superintendent

Existing Requirements

Martin County West Schools will require all people to follow [the order](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to wear face coverings while riding school buses and vehicles. Drivers will carry extra face coverings for those boarding without them. For information on wearing masks in school buildings, please see [the section](#) below. Updated 2/28/22 The CDC has updated the order regarding face masks on public school transportation to end their enforcement. As of 2/25/22, masks are no longer required on MCW Schools buses and vehicles.

Additionally, suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 amongst students and staff will be reported to the Minnesota Department of Health according to the [Communicable Disease Reporting Rule](#). Cases of COVID-19 must be reported to School Nurse, Megan Morgan at 507-764-2330 or meganmorgan@mcwmavericks.org. For additional information on how we are planning to handle confirmed cases of COVID-19, please see [the section](#) below.

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Strategies to be Implemented

Martin County West Schools will implement the following mitigation strategies to reduce the transmission of COVID-19:

- Distancing and Cohorting: A distance of 3 feet between students and 6 feet between staff and students will be maintained in school buildings to the extent possible.
- Ventilation: The air exchange systems in school buildings will run at an increased rate to bring fresh air into the buildings. Filters will also be changed more frequently.
- Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette: We will offer education on proper handwashing and safe sneezing and coughing techniques through instruction by the school nurse and signage throughout the buildings.
- Staying home when sick and encouraging testing: As always, we will ask families to keep students home when sick and will request students who become sick during the school day to be picked up immediately. We will encourage the families of students exhibiting symptoms associated with COVID-19 to seek testing.
- Cleaning and disinfection: Surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected as needed and at least daily.
- Updated 1/19/22 Handling Lab-Confirmed Positive COVID Tests and Exposure: Please see the memo [here](#) describing how this will be handled.

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Strategies to Deploy as Needed

At this time, Martin County West Schools is planning to offer only in-person enrollment and would only switch to a distance learning format in the event of widespread transmission in a classroom, school building, or community. Please contact your child's case manager or school principal by August 27, 2021 to inquire about alternatives.

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Plans Still in Development

Leaders at Martin County West are still working to develop plans for how - or if - to offer optional COVID-19 testing at school for staff and students. Further information will be provided when we know more.

Updated 2/28/22 Students and staff experiencing symptoms or those who have been a close contact of someone with COVID now have testing options provided by the school. We now have [Cue](#) nasal swab tests that can be administered in the Health Office at each school. Parent/guardian permission will be obtained for students under 18 years old seeking testing. Students must have an email account in order to access test results. Additionally, [BD Veritor](#) At-Home tests can be sent home with students for families to administer. MCW Schools must report the results of any tests administered at school. ([Back to Top](#))

Individual Choices

The consistent and correct use of masks is encouraged for all people in school buildings by the CDC and MDH. The Martin County West School board has passed a resolution asking all staff, students, and visitors to MCW buildings to respect the individual choices made about the use of masks in school buildings. Mask shaming of any kind - of those who do and of those who do not choose to wear masks - will not be tolerated. Any instances will be reported to the school principal for immediate follow up.

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