

Safe Return to School Plan

Albert Lea Public Schools



Updated September 30, 2021

Albert Lea Area Schools is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all of our students, employees, and the public we serve. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the following Preparedness Plan was developed to provide guidance to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces and communities. We require full cooperation among our administration, employees, students and families, and members of the public. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our students, employees, and the community we serve.

Daily Check-Ins and Temperature Checks

Every student and staff member will have their temperature checked through an automated scanning system when they enter the building. In addition, every student and staff member will be asked screening questions related to COVID-19 on a daily basis. Employees or students who experience flu-like symptoms, should not report to work or school.

Buildings will be cleaned throughout the day. We also have updated HVAC systems at Halverson, Hawthorne, Lakeview, Brookside, Southwest, and Sibley in the past six years.

PreK Students

Handled on a case by case basis. Early childhood and PreK students will not wear masks at this time unless in an on-site quarantine.

Elementary students (K-5)

Masks

All elementary students in Albert Lea Area Schools **will wear a mask** during the school day until further notice. Students may remove the masks for lunch/snack times.

Positive Cases & Exposures

- Students who test positive will be quarantined out of school for 10 days.
- If a positive case is identified in school, students who are considered a close contact to a classmate when masks were off (for lunch or snack) will be sent home with an

option of a [7-day \(with testing at day 5 and no symptoms\) or 10 day quarantine \(with no testing and no symptoms\)](#).

- Contact tracing will be done for lunch and snack times while students have masks off. We will use 6 feet or closer for 15 minutes or longer as criteria to exclude unmasked close contacts for the shortened quarantine options.
- Students who are **not** identified as “unmasked” close contacts may remain in school.

Parents may choose to keep their students at home. Students who quarantine at home will receive homework from their teachers for the duration of the quarantine.

Transportation

Students will be required to wear masks if required by CDC or MDH guidelines. Buses will be disinfected between routes.

Secondary Students (Grades 6-12)

Masks

All secondary students in Albert Lea Area Schools **will wear a mask** during the school day through the end of first quarter (Wednesday, October 20). Students may remove the masks for lunch. This decision will be revisited in mid-October.

Transportation

Students will be required to wear masks if required by CDC or MDH guidelines. Buses will be disinfected between routes.

Staff

We are strongly recommending that staff who are working with masked students lead by example, and mask up for their students. Vaccinated staff with no symptoms are not subject to quarantine.

Cleaning & Sanitizing

Our district will provide disinfecting spray and paper towels in each classroom. The custodians will be disinfecting high-touch areas multiple times throughout the day. Hand sanitizer and portable hand sanitizer stations will be distributed throughout the district. Most elementary classrooms have handwashing sinks. Handwashing signs will be posted.

Transportation

Students will be required to wear masks if required by CDC or MDH guidelines. Buses will be disinfected between routes.

Food Service

Students in lunchrooms will be physically distanced to the extent possible. The district will participate in the Seamless Summer program so all students will eat without cost.

Coordination with Nurses & Health Departments

The superintendent and covid coordinator will meet virtually with our nurses as necessary to get updates, plan, and talk about contact tracing. The covid coordinator will work closely with Freeborn County Public Health. The [MDH Decision Tree for Schools](#) will continue to be used in the district as recommended by MDE/MDH. Recommendations for [handling a confirmed case can be found here](#).

Mental Health & Well Being

Social workers, counselors, and other mental health providers will provide support to address student mental and emotional wellness. This may occur face-to-face, distance, or a combination of both.

Covid Testing

[Testing options in our community are available on our website](#)

Vaccinations

[Vaccinations are available to staff and students throughout the community](#). Vaccination for those 12 and older is the best tool we have to fight COVID-19. All three of the available vaccines are safe, free and highly effective. The vaccines have gone through the same safety steps and studies as the other vaccines our children routinely get. While a fully vaccinated person may be able to pass the disease to others, the vaccinated person is much less likely to become infected and if they do, the illness will likely be mild.