

## Safe Return to School Plan Albert Lea Public Schools

*Updated February 16, 2022*



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, we continue to modify and adjust the following Preparedness Plan to provide guidance to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our schools. If a dramatic change in the public health situation were to occur, we will consider reactivating district wide safety protocols.

Significant changes will begin on Monday, February 21, 2022. The reasons for the changes are as follows and for the following reasons:

- As in other districts, our district's illness rates have begun to decrease after the increase in cases due to the Omicron variant.
- Vaccinations for children ages 5 and older have been widely available since early November. People have had ample opportunity to be up to date on all recommended Covid-19 vaccines, including any booster dose(s) when eligible.
- Students and families may seek individual protection that was not widely available until recently. These methods include higher-quality masks that can offer better individual protection in a mixed-mask environment and continued access to COVID-19 testing.

### **The following changes will take place February 21, 2022:**

- Daily Check-ins sent to staff and students will stop.
- Face coverings will be strongly recommended while in the school buildings.
- Face coverings will still be required on school transportation per federal rules
- All contact tracing will cease at the end of the school day on February 18. The district will no longer provide general exposure notifications. Quarantine will no longer be required for K-12 students or staff who would have been identified as close contacts with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Elementary students and families will be notified if their child was exposed at school. It will be the parent/guardian's decision to send their child back to school once notified of a close contact. Tests will continue to be provided to staff and families if interested.
- Secondary students and families will be notified of lunch close contacts at school. It will be the parent/guardian's decision to send their child back to school once notified of a close contact. Tests will continue to be provided to staff and families if interested.
- Staff will be notified if they are a close contact, but will not be required to quarantine as a close contact.

- The Covid19 Dashboard of district cases will stop being updated.

### **Early Childhood and PreK Students**

- Early childhood and PreK students' families **will still receive notification** when there is a positive case in their student's environment. Parents/guardians will make their own decision about sending their child back to school. Tests will be provided to staff and families if interested.

### **Area Learning Center**

- ALC students and staff will continue to mask per Riverland protocols.

### **The following safety practices will continue:**

Students and staff who exhibit COVID-19-like symptoms should get tested. Rapid antigen test kits will continue to be available at each school office.

- Students or staff who test positive for COVID-19 will be required to isolate for five days from the date of the positive test result, or first day of symptoms if any. Students or staff can return to school after Day 5 with a negative rapid antigen test. The maximum isolation period is 10 days. Negative results can continue to be uploaded via our Covid19 page.
- Students and staff should continue to follow good hygiene practices, like washing their hands, covering their coughs, and staying home when sick.

**NOTE:** If you are currently in quarantine as a close contact, you may return to school on Tuesday, February 22, 2022, as long as you have no symptoms of Covid19.

### **Ongoing Protocols**

#### Covid Testing

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

#### Vaccinations

[Vaccinations are available to staff and students throughout the community.](#)

#### Cleaning & Sanitizing

Our district will provide disinfecting spray and paper towels in each classroom. Hand sanitizer and portable hand sanitizer stations will be distributed throughout the district. Most elementary classrooms have handwashing sinks. Handwashing signs will be posted.

#### Coordination with Nurses & Health Departments

The superintendent and covid coordinator will meet virtually with our nurses as necessary. Positive cases will continue to be reported to MDH as required. The covid coordinator will work with Freeborn County Public Health through monthly partner calls.

#### 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.

#### 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.