

# COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Duluth Edison Charter Schools

Duluth Public Schools Academy, doing business as Duluth Edison Charter School (DECS) is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and students. To ensure we have a safe and healthy workplace, DECS has developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff, caregivers and students are all responsible for helping to implement this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our school and that requires full cooperation among all in our school community. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of all persons in our schools.

The COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is administered by Bonnie Jorgenson, Head of School, who maintains the overall authority and responsibility for the plan. However, all staff are equally responsible for supporting, implementing, complying with and providing recommendations to further improve all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan.

Our staff and students are our most important assets. DECS is serious about safety and health and protecting our staff and students. The involvement of staff is essential in developing and implementing a successful COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. We have involved our staff in this process by: providing the individual plan for review and comment to all staff via email, review of the input by the management team working on the plan, and then further follow up as needed.

DECS COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows the guidance developed by the state of Minnesota, which is based upon Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines for COVID-19, Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MNOSHA) statutes, rules and standards, and Minnesota's relevant and current executive orders. It addresses:

- ensuring sick staff and students stay home and prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- appropriate social distancing in classrooms, offices and all parts of our buildings as relates to MDE and MDH "Safe Learning Plan" guidance (7/30/20)
- staff and student hygiene and source controls;
- workplace building and ventilation protocol;
- workplace cleaning and disinfection protocol;
- drop-off, pick-up and delivery practices and protocol; and
- communications and training practices and protocol.

DECS has reviewed and incorporated the July 30, 2020 guidance provided by the Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Department of Education for schools. This guidance suggests that schools plan for distance learning, hybrid learning and in person learning for all students in accordance with MDH parameters as indicated by county-level data as a starting point. We will continue to monitor guidance from the CDC, MDH and MDE and adjust our plan to ensure we are following that protocol.

Staff will ensure they follow MDH guidelines for social distancing for all needed in person meetings and are strongly encouraged to utilize technology for meetings as much as possible. Large group in person meetings of staff are strongly discouraged.

- **additional protections and protocols for personal protective equipment (PPE);** Our school nurse and special education coordinator will work with our director of business services to procure needed PPE for the health office staff and specialized needs of staff working with high needs students.
- **additional protections and protocol for access and assignment;** Our Head of School and HR Generalist will review access and assignment requests related to COVID concerns and follow all legal guidance in responding to them.
- **additional protections and protocol for distancing and barriers;** All classrooms and offices will be set up following required CDC guidance. Bathrooms will have plexiglass dividers between sinks and offices will have the same protection for staff's desks. Our Head of School and Facilities Manager will monitor all needs in this area.
- **additional protections and protocols for managing occupancy;** Per MDH guidance as of July 22, 2020 --
- **Scenario 1: In-person learning for all students.** In this planning scenario, schools should create as much space between students and teachers as is feasible during the day, but will not be held strictly to enforcing 6 feet of social distancing during primary instructional time in the classroom. Activities and extracurricular programming should continue to follow the COVID-19 Prevention Guidance for Youth, Student, and Child Care Programs (PDF) ([www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/socialdistance.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/socialdistance.pdf)). This scenario may be implemented if state COVID-19 metrics continue to stabilize and/or improve. All requirements in this guidance apply to scenario 1.
- **Scenario 2: Hybrid model with strict social distancing and capacity limits.** In this planning scenario, schools must limit the overall number of people in school facilities to 50% maximum occupancy. Sufficient social distancing with at least 6 feet between people must occur at all times. If distancing cannot be achieved in a space, the number of occupants must be reduced. Schools must also limit the overall number of people on transportation vehicles to 50% maximum occupancy. Schools must include plans for contactless pick-up and/or delivery of meals and school materials for days that students and staff are not in the school building, as well as implementation of a school-age care program for critical workers. This scenario may be implemented if COVID-19 metrics worsen at the local, regional, or statewide level. Scenario 2 may also be implemented within a school if they experience clusters of cases within a classroom or the school. All requirements in this guidance apply to scenario 2, with additional requirements noted in the Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure section noted for scenario 2 only.
- **Scenario 3: Distance learning only.** This scenario may be implemented if local, regional, or statewide COVID-19 metrics worsen significantly enough to require the suspension of in-person learning. The requirements in this guidance regarding in-person protections would not apply to the general school community, as students and staff would be utilizing distance learning and would not be gathering in groups on school grounds. However, schools may be open to provide emergency child care or other functions.

- **additional protocols to limit face-to-face interaction;** In a classroom, all students will face the same direction. . As much as is possible students will stay with the same teacher and students for the bulk of the day in the same space(s).

## **Ensure sick staff and students stay home and prompt identification and isolation of sick persons**

Staff will be informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. We will follow CDC and MDH protocol for both self screening guidance and any in school screenings. Such procedures will be shared with families and staff.

DECS has implemented procedures that promote staff staying at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. Accommodations for staff with underlying medical conditions or who have household members with underlying health conditions will be implemented on a case by case basis in accordance with federal and state law. DECS will provide to all staff prior to the start of the school year a COVID 19 Staff Handbook supplemental with further information about this.

DECS has also implemented a procedure for informing staff if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at their workplace and requiring them to quarantine for the required amount of time. Such a plan will be implemented under the advice of the Minnesota Department of Health.

In addition, DPSA Board policy 400-20 has been implemented to protect the privacy of workers' health status and health information.

## **Social distancing – determined by model**

See Occupancy section page 2 above for details of classroom social distancing.

Our transportation provider will follow all required CDC and MDH guidance for social distancing on buses.

In this COVID time, families and visitors will be discouraged from entering the building unless there is an urgent need.

Staff who have shared offices will be encouraged to work at home as much as possible and develop rotating schedules with colleagues. We are working to identify additional space for staff to work in the buildings when needed. .

## Face coverings

All students, staff, and other people present in school buildings and district offices or riding on school transportation vehicles are required to wear a face covering per Governor Walz's executive order effective July 25, 2020. The school will provide masks and/or face shields to students and staff who need them.

Face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer does not know they are infected.

Types of allowable face coverings include:

Paper or disposable mask

Cloth face mask

Scarf

Bandanna

Religious face covering

The covering should cover the nose and mouth completely, should not be overly tight or restrictive, and should feel comfortable to wear. A face covering is not meant to substitute for social distancing, but is especially important in situations when maintaining a 6-foot distance is not possible.

Face coverings should not be placed on anyone under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance, or anyone who cannot tolerate a face covering due to a developmental, medical, or behavioral health condition.

A face shield (a clear plastic barrier that covers the face) allows visibility of facial expressions and lip movements for speech perception and may be used as an alternative to a face covering in the following situations:

Among students in Kindergarten through grade 8, when wearing a face covering is problematic.

By teachers (all grades), when wearing a face covering may impede the educational process.

For staff, students, or visitors who cannot tolerate a face covering due to a developmental, medical, or behavioral health condition.

For staff providing direct support student services, when a face covering impedes the service being provided.

For optimal protection, the face shield should extend below the chin anteriorly, to the ears laterally, and there should be no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield's headpiece.

Staff, students, and other people present in the school building or in district offices may temporarily remove their face covering or face shield in the following situations:

Face coverings may be temporarily removed when engaging in indoor physical activity (e.g., during recess, after school sports, or when exercising in a gym) where the level of exertion makes wearing a face covering difficult, and during classes or activities held outdoors. People participating in these activities should maintain 6 feet of distance while doing so to the extent feasible.

Face coverings may be temporarily removed to eat or drink, but care should be taken to maintain as much space as possible between people, recognizing it is not always feasible to maintain 6 feet of distance from others.

During indoor practices or performances involving singing, acting, public speaking, or playing musical instruments where a face covering cannot be used while playing the instrument. Performers should maintain 6 feet or greater of physical distance from others while participating in the activity to the extent possible, and should replace their face covering as soon as the activity is completed.

People who are entering the school building during the day may be required by school staff to briefly remove their face covering for the purposes of checking identification.

Staff working alone in their offices, classrooms, vehicles, or other job locations who do not have any person-to-person interaction.

Staff working in communal spaces (e.g., at desks or in cubicles) that have barriers such as plexiglass or cubicle walls between employees that are above face level.

When communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing or has a disability, medical condition, or mental health condition that makes communication with a face covering difficult, provided that social distancing is maintained to the extent possible.

## **Staff and student hygiene and source controls**

Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at our school at all times.

Hand hygiene is a term used to cover both hand washing using soap and water, and cleaning hands with waterless or alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

Staff and students will be asked to perform hand hygiene frequently throughout the day, including but not limited to the following

- After arriving at school. Before being dismissed from school.
- After coughing or sneezing into a tissue or on your hands. (Preference is to cough/sneeze into your sleeve.)
- After blowing your nose.
- Before and after eating lunch.
- After using the bathroom.
- Before and after using playground equipment.

- After touching objects that have been handled by other people.

All visitors to the school are required to wash or sanitize their hands prior to or immediately upon entering the facility. Hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) are at entrances and locations in the school, including each classroom, so they can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled

Staff and students are being instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and to avoid touching their face, particularly their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. Clean masks will be available for staff and students who may sneeze or cough during the school day. Staff and students are expected to dispose of tissues in provided trash receptacles and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on posters and supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available to all workers and other persons entering the workplace.

**Technology and Classroom Materials** : All students and staff members will be assigned their own device. Protocol is for individuals to use only their device and materials and not to share.

## Workplace building and ventilation protocol

In light of COVID concerns we are increasing the air flow by 50 percent in both of our buildings. Our facilities staff works closely with the company UHL to monitor air flow and ventilation on a daily basis. We are also looking into other best practices in this area.

## Workplace cleaning and disinfection protocol

Regular practices of cleaning and disinfecting have been implemented in our buildings by our custodial staff. Staff will use gloves, masks, and when necessary goggles while cleaning. They will maintain social distancing. Practices include:

**Deep cleaning-** Wiping down tables, chairs, doors and other handles, light switches, phones, keyboards, railings and all other items frequently touched with recommended cleaning products. Disinfecting fogger will be used nightly in rooms that have been used.

**Classrooms** - Wiping down tables, chairs, door and other handles, all other items frequently touched with recommended cleaning products. Disinfecting fogger will be used nightly in rooms that have been used. Sweep and mop

**Offices of Deans, Social Workers, Counselor, Principals and Health Office** - Wiping down tables, chairs, door and other handles, all other items frequently touched with recommended cleaning products. Disinfecting fogger will be used nightly in rooms that have been used. Sweep and mop

**Cafeteria** - tables will be cleaned and disinfected after each use. Floors will be swept and scrubbed daily. Note: We anticipate breakfast and lunch being eaten in classrooms not the cafeteria.

**Bathrooms:** Restrooms are wiped down with recommended cleaning products, floor to all reachable areas every 2 hours to include all toilets and sinks. Sweep and mop restroom floors with sanitizer cleaner soap and disinfected each night

***Gym*** - Wipe down walls as high as can be reached with recommended cleaning products daily, spray equipment with sanitizing spray after each class, sweep and scrub the floor daily.

***Kitchen*** - wipe down all surfaces with recommended cleaning products, sweep and mop floors daily, wash floor mats and spray with disinfectant

***Playgrounds***.- Wipe down all touchable surfaces with recommended cleaning products daily. Spray sanitizer on areas hard to wipe down after frequent use (chains small grab hold etc..)

Appropriate and effective cleaning and disinfecting supplies have been purchased and are available for use in accordance with product labels, safety data sheets and manufacturer specifications, and are being used with required personal protective equipment for the product.

## **Drop-off, pick-up and delivery practices and protocol**

In a model that has students in the school building, we will have a wider window of time for dropping off and picking up students as well as bus arrival and departure. Specifics of this protocol will be developed by building principals.

## **Communications and training practices and protocol**

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan was communicated in draft form to all staff July 20-27, 2020 for comment, questions and feedback. After approval by the DPSA Board, all staff will be trained in the plan in the first week of school. Training will be provided to all staff who did not receive the initial training and prior to initial assignment or reassignment..

Instructions will be communicated to all staff and families, about protections and protocols, including: 1) social distancing protocols and practices; 2) drop-off, pick-up, and delivery of items to the school and general delivery of materials 3) practices for hygiene and respiratory etiquette; 4) recommendations or requirements regarding the use of masks, face-coverings and/or face-shields by staff and students. All staff and students will also be advised not to enter the workplace if they are experiencing symptoms or have contracted COVID-19.

### **Monitoring the Plan**

The all school lead team is expected to monitor how effectively the plan is being implemented. This will include periodic in house observations of expected protocol, surveys to staff, students and families, and open communication with the Head of School and other members of the lead team. All staff are to take an active role and collaborate in carrying out the various aspects of this plan, and update the protections, protocols, work-practices and training as necessary.

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan was reviewed by the Duluth Public Schools Academy Board on August 6, 2020 and the plan was posted through email for staff review. It will be updated as necessary by Bonnie Jorgenson, Head of Schools or her designee.

