

# COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Harvest Christian School Sandstone, MN

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## INTRODUCTION

In consideration of opening school for the 2020-21 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic, the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) were considered. The safety of students and staff is paramount, but so is following the mission of Harvest Christian School. This is a living document and guidelines change quickly to respond to the pandemic. Please use the following links to access the recommendations used to develop this COVID-19 plan.

### Minnesota Department of Health

Minnesota Department of Health 2020-21 Planning Guide for Schools dated July 22, 2020

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/k12planguide.pdf>

COVID-19 Prevention Guide for Youth, Student, and Child Care Programs dated July 22, 2020

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/socialdistance.pdf>

Decision Tree for People with COVID-19 Symptoms

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf>

### Minnesota Department of Education

MDE 2020-21 Planning Guidance for Minnesota Public Schools found at:

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/health/covid19/>

### Centers for Disease Control

School Considerations

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

### Mission of Harvest Christian School

Harvest Christian School exists to complement home and church in nurturing, training and equipping young people to grow up in the character of Christ to reach their full potential both spiritually and academically to impact the world for the glory of God.

## **PLANNING FOR FALL: Three Scenarios**

According to MDH, schools may choose to implement strategies that are more restrictive than the scenario established by the state, but may not choose to implement plans for a scenario that is less restrictive. MDE guidance for public and charter schools provides a good framework for decisions in the private school setting.

A description of the three scenarios follows.

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

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to follow the COVID-19 Prevention Guidance for Youth, Student, and Child Care Program (PDF). This scenario may be implemented if state COVID-19 metrics continue to stabilize and/or improve.” (MDH Planning Guide for Schools)

## **Scenario 2: Hybrid learning with strict social distancing and capacity limits**

“In this planning scenario, schools must limit the overall number of people in school facilities and on transportation vehicles 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 or on a transportation vehicle, the number of occupants must be reduced. Schools must also include plans for contactless pick-up and/or delivery of school materials for days that students and staff are not in the school building. 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.” (MDH Planning Guide for Schools)

## **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 other functions.” (MDH Planning Guide for Schools)

## **ACTION PLAN**

The following actions will be taken to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. These actions are based on the health practices that should be implemented within a school. Each scenario is listed with health and safety practices to be implemented.

### **COVID-19 program coordinator**

Scenario 1 and 2: A point of contact for each school building will be identified. This person will communicate concerns and lessons learned related to COVID-19 preventative activities, as needed.

Scenario 3: No large group gatherings in the school.

### **Social distancing and minimizing exposure**

Scenario 1 and 2: Social distancing floor/seating markings will be present in common areas. Each classroom will be reviewed and rearranged with the goal of creating as much space between people as possible, recognizing that it is not always feasible to have 6 feet of social distancing during primary instructional time. Alternative spaces with greater capacity will be considered if available. Staff will facilitate arrival/dismissal to avoid congregating. Nonessential visitors will be restricted and asked to wear face coverings. Lunches will be brought from home and eaten with their cohort; as always, the safety of children with food allergies will be ensured.

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Additional Scenario 2 actions: Limit the number of people in school facilities to 50% maximum occupancy. Families or grades will be on an alternate schedule (two days a week at school) to be determined when Scenario 2 is implemented. School materials pick up and/or delivery will be contactless for days when students are not in the school building.

Scenario 3: School materials pick up and/or delivery will be contactless for days when students are not in the school building.

## **Face coverings and face shields**

Scenario 1 and 2: Wearing cloth face coverings and/or face shield is required. Students in cohorts (groups of less than 9) within their own classroom may remove their face covering. Wearing a cloth face covering and/or face shield is most important when social distancing of 6 feet cannot be maintained. Face shields will be provided for students in kindergarten through second grade and all staff to use at school. Parents will supply their students with cloth face coverings. The proper use of face coverings and face shields will be taught and reinforced. Posters and other tactics to promote face covering expectations will be used in highly visible locations. Those that will be exempt from wearing face coverings for any reason are asked to notify the school office in writing.

Scenario 3: No large group gatherings in the school.

## **Protecting vulnerable populations**

Scenario 1 and 2: Students, family and staff who are high-risk for severe illness will contact the COVID-19 program coordinator to discuss options for alternative learning arrangements or work reassignments. Students with special health care needs will have their current plans (ISP, 504) evaluated. Medically vulnerable enrolled students may request distance learning if they are unwilling to return to school.

Scenario 3: No large group gatherings in the school.

## **Hygiene practices**

Scenario 1 and 2: Appropriate supplies will be available to support healthy hygiene behaviors (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, disinfectant wipes, and tissues), and supplies will be placed in areas where they may be frequently used. A checklist schedule will be used to check and refill supplies at the point of use (e.g., hand sanitizer available near shared equipment, hand sanitizer near school building entrances/exits, etc.). There will be included in the daily school schedule for all students and staff, hand washing and sanitation breaks during or between classroom activities; arrival and dismissal; before, during, and after preparing or eating food; after using the bathroom; after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing; after touching objects with bare hands that have been handled by other people. Students will be taught and reinforced in proper hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. As necessary, student use of hand sanitizer will be supervised. Those with sensitivity or skin reactions to hand sanitizer can use soap and water.

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In addition: Posters and other tactics to promote health etiquette expectations will be used in highly visible locations.

Scenario 3: Those present in the school building will continue to use good hygiene practices.

## **Cleaning and materials handling**

Scenario 1 and 2: High-touch surfaces and shared equipment will be cleaned throughout the day (Fruit Break, Lunch Recess, and at the end of the day) using approved cleaners. These scheduled cleanings will be marked on a checklist. Staff will do all cleaning during the day with student assistance as is prudent. Adequate supplies will be available to minimize sharing of high-touch materials. Materials/equipment that will be shared will be disinfected before use by another cohort. Students' personal items will be labeled with their name and kept in their designated space. Non-disposable dishes will be minimally handled and washed in a dishwasher.

In addition: Using items that are difficult to clean will be discouraged.

Scenario 3: Those present in the school building will continue to use good cleaning and materials handling practices.

## **Monitoring and excluding for illness**

Scenario 1 and 2: Staff and families will be educated through the newsletter about common signs and symptoms of COVID-19, when they should stay home, and when they should return to school. Staff and students should stay home when: they have tested positive for COVID-19, show symptoms of COVID-19, or had close contact with a person with COVID-19. The MDH Decision Tree can help determine when it is safe to return to school. Daily screening for any person physically entering the school building will be conducted. This may include a temperature check and evaluation of possible exposure/symptoms. The screening method and any changes to it will be communicated to staff, students, and families through the newsletter. No student or staff member that fails the screening process will be allowed to continue at school on that day. Students/staff who develop symptoms during the day will be isolated until they can return home. Students/staff who remain at home due to COVID-19 or other illness (or suspected COVID-19 exposure) will continue to do work as they are able.

Scenario 3: Those present in the school building will continue to follow screening process and remain home when necessary.

## **Handling suspected or confirmed positive cases of COVID-19**

Scenario 1 and 2: A sign will be posted at the entrance of each of the school buildings asking that any symptomatic person not enter the building. The school office will be the point of contact for reports of suspected or confirmed positive cases, or close exposure in the last 14 days, of COVID-19. All staff, students, and families are asked to self-report to the school office if they have had a positive COVID-19 test. The MDH Decision Tree can help determine when it is safe to return to school. Students/staff who develop symptoms during the day will be isolated until they can return home. The isolation area will be

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cleaned between uses and as needed. Symptomatic staff/students will be asked to wear a face covering while waiting to go home. Staff, families and students will be notified if there has been an infectious COVID-19 person on the school grounds, as allowed by law. Any student required to be home for displayed symptoms of COVID-19, for failing the screening process, or because of possible exposure to COVID-19 will continue to be engaged in the learning process when they cannot be physically present.

Scenario 3: Those present in the school building will continue to follow screening process and remain home when necessary. No one with confirmed COVID-19, suspected exposure to COVID-19 or displaying symptoms of COVID-19 will be on school grounds.

## **Water and ventilation systems**

Under all scenarios, steps will be taken to ensure the water and ventilation systems of all school buildings are operating properly and are safe to use after a time of disuse.

## **Transportation**

Scenarios 1 and 2: As much space as possible will be given between passengers in vehicles used for school transportation. The vehicles will be cleaned and disinfected between uses with focus on high-touch areas. Doors and windows will be left open as necessary when cleaning and between trips to allow the vehicle to thoroughly air out. Hand sanitizer will be available in all school vehicles.

Additional Scenario 2 Actions: The capacity of vehicles will be reduced by 50% or limited to capacity that can achieve a social distancing of 6 ft.

Scenario 3: No school vehicles will be in use.

## **Supporting mental health and wellness**

Scenarios 1, 2, and 3: Staff, families and students will be provided information on how to access resources for mental health and wellness.

Mental health and wellness resources as listed in the MDH 2020-21 Planning Guide for Schools include:

- Supporting Mental Wellbeing During COVID-19 ([www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/support.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/support.html))
- Mental Health Support ([www.mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/get-help/mental-health.jsp](http://www.mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/get-help/mental-health.jsp))
- Tips and Resources for Children and Parents During COVID-19 ([www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/children](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/mentalhealth/children))
- Helping Children Cope ([www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/for-parents.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/for-parents.html))

## **CONCLUSION**

This living document will be updated as health department requirements change for the school environment. All day-to-day operations will be communicated to staff, students, and families through the normal methods of school communication (newsletter, email, text message). For more details on the academic and scheduling day-to-day business of Harvest Christian School see the “Opening a Healthy School 2020” letter to parents.