

Gayville-Volin Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan 2021-2024

The Gayville-Volin School District in consultation with the South Dakota Department of Education and with the guidance of the South Dakota Department of Health propose the following framework for the return to school in the Fall of 2021. The details of this plan have been an ongoing discussion, but was an agenda item in the July 12, 2021 board meeting and also was discussed and approved at the August 9, 2021 board meeting and it documented in the minutes of those meetings. Updated content was also discussed at the December 13 and January 11 meeting. This document was updated again during the regular meeting on 4/11/2022 and again on 10/12/2023 and 5/14/2023. This document is meant to be a framework for guidance and is not an inclusive document of all policies and procedures that may need to be addressed as the district reopens in the Fall. As community health and guidance changes on a continual basis, so should the framework and decisions that will be discussed within the document. The overarching theme that all stakeholders within the district should understand is that this framework is developed with the understanding that all activity involves risk and the weight of the risk versus the reward is the determining factor. This concept is visualized below.

The district understands the nature of a pandemic and that all stakeholders within the district should have flexibility and support to make the best decisions for each learner. Those decisions should be made in consultation with administration, teachers, staff, and parents. Efforts will be made to make reasonable accommodations to fit the circumstances presented. Noting that accommodations can be made, the district understands and accepts that a vaccine for the COVID-19 virus is readily available to adults and children ages 13 and up.

Questions about this plan or any other specific questions related to the COVID 19 return to school and/or ESSER plan can be directed to Jason Selchert - jason.selchert@k12.sd.us.

School Calendar

The school calendar adopted by the Gayville-Volin Board of Education will be used for the 2021-2022 school year. It is not planned that changes to the calendar will be needed because of the COVID-19 virus, but should any changes be required, the calendar will be followed. The district will be ready and able to support two learning styles and/or any combination at any time within the school year. Parents need to prepare for the same. Given the use of the LMS (Learning Management System) Schoology. Parents can look ahead and plan for future educational expectations in preparation for unforeseen circumstances.

Learning Atmospheres and Risk

There will be two different types of learning environments utilized and preparation will be done to ensure that any of the two and/or a combination can be used with any given notice.

Traditional Learning – The district will start the year utilizing the traditional learning environment where students are transported using district bussing and/or student transportation to the attendance center. The district will use traditional scheduling and accommodations made to support additional measures that need to be in place to reduce the risk of pathogen transfer. As the virus is part of our everyday lives, risk remains for this learning style and it provides the greatest reward for the education of the student. The methods used to reduce risk are discussed later in the document. The district WILL incorporate online learning tools into daily instruction to prepare students and parents for any transition needed. All teachers will spend the first few weeks focused on the tools the district uses to facilitate instruction.

Online Learning – The district will be ready at any point to transition to online learning. Online learning will take place utilizing the SCHOOLGY LMS (Learning Management System). Unlike the Spring of 2020, more preparation was implemented during the 2021 year and students are more capable of utilizing the online tools. All students, parents, teachers, staff, and administration WILL NEED to be able to support this method from Aug. 18 through May 19. These preparations will start immediately to support learning. Materials will be available on Schoology and a pacing chart provided. Some teachers will choose to put due dates within Schoology to focus students on time management, either way that teachers choose to provide the information will be satisfactory.

Learning Community

Accommodations to the learning community are outlined later in the document. It is the recommendation that every effort be made to keep the learning community safe. There remains limited risk to the learning community and some interventions used during the 2021 school year will remain in effect and outlined later in this document.

The district should take measures to ensure that every level of belief and anxiety of this pandemic be realized through communication and discussion and ultimately a found remedy. Unlike the 2021 school year, parents may not opt for 100% online learning due to the pandemic. Families still needing accommodations should discuss options with your school principal and the school counselor. Any decision will not be a parent decision alone. We encourage those families who are considering accommodations to communicate immediately with your learner(s) administrator. Some students did not show success during the Spring of 2020 and also during the 2021 school year and this option should be used as a last resort and online in extreme cases.

Families who choose this option must be prepared to provide and support your learner(s) during this time of online learning. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide the necessary support for your child to be successful online. This will include internet access, time management skills, and the necessary supervision needed to meet with classes. Unlike previous years, an online component must be supported with regular school attendance. History has shown that success for this learning method can only work with regular “check in” points. Those points and other requirements are outlined in a separate document.

Should a Child Become Sick

There is continued monitoring of a child’s health throughout a traditional school day. Although temperatures are not checked regularly, a child with a temperature of 100.4 or above will be removed from the classroom. Further dealings with that child may include the appropriate PPE from staff members. The child’s parents will be notified, and the parent may be required to pick up the child depending on a child’s status. The child may not return to school until they are free from fever without medication.

It is the responsibility of parents to limit the exposure of a potentially sick child to the general population of the school. It is the responsibility of the school district to monitor and to take appropriate precautions to limit exposure. Even with precautions, this remains a very contagious virus and the risk cannot be removed unless there is total isolation. Should a student show a positive result for COVID 19, they will be asked to follow the current SDDOH (South Dakota Department of Health) guidelines before returning to school. As of December 1, 2021, notification will no longer be made using the district COVID dashboard as that dashboard that was in use has been retired.. To the extent possible, personal notification will be made to parents of students in which the infected student has come into contact. Unfortunately, it becomes the responsibility of the family as notification timetables are often insufficient once the school is notified. Oftentimes, the school is not notified of exposures.

Should a Teacher Become Sick

Teachers and staff will follow the same guidelines as students. A teacher with a temperature of 100.4 or above will be removed from his/her duties until the temperature has subsided without medications.

Should a teacher show a positive result for COVID 19, they will be asked to follow the current SDDOH (South Dakota Department of Health) guidelines before returning to work. Notification will no longer be made using the district COVID dashboard, effective December 1, 2021. To the extent possible, personal notification will be made to parents of all students in which the infected student has come into contact. As noted during board action on 9/14/2020 - Staff of the Gayville-Volin School District have been deemed essential to the operation of the school. Therefore, any staff member who has encountered a COVID positive person, will not automatically be required to quarantine, but may elect to continue in their capacity if symptom free. They will be required to monitor symptoms for the current incubation period, as outlined by the CDC and/or the SDDOH.

Close Contacts

Close contacts will be asked to monitor symptoms, the district will follow all SDDOH requirements and will attempt to not exclude students who show no symptoms.

When Will a Class, School, Group of Students, Team or District Close

It will be at the discretion of the administration at which point a class, school, group of students, team, or the entire district either closes or switches the method of instruction. This decision will be made with the best information possible. It will be done in close consultation with the SDDOH, SDDOE, and the Gayville-Volin Board of Education.

It may be possible that for a short period of time, the school may need to “Deep Clean” due to a suspected outbreak or in deterrence of an outbreak. In that case, notification will be made to parents and proper alterations made to the instructional schedule. These days would not require the changing of the school calendar, as staff and administration would be used to clean the building.

Should the Governor of the State of South Dakota mandate or recommend that the school close for a period, the district will switch to online instruction and the approved calendar will be followed.

It would be the assumption that the SDDOE would provide access to the internet for families in need. The district would work with families, providers, and the state to provide access for online instruction. The timing of this decision would necessitate an understanding between parents and the school district of the expectations during this lapse.

Managing Student and Staff Health

The most important aspect of the education of a child is to make sure that the environment is safe for all the stakeholders. The following recommendations are provided to those stakeholders. **Personal responsibility is at the forefront of the recommendations of student and staff health.**

- Parents need to keep sick students at home. If they have a fever, keep them home until the fever is gone for three days without medications. *This district understands the burden put upon families who don't have appropriate childcare or supervision available. Not adhering to this most basic standard puts everyone at risk.*
- Ensure students have been screened for fever and other symptoms each day before dropping them off at the bus stop and/or school building.
- A temperature above 100.4 degrees will indicate a need to not be at school.

- Students who exhibit a temperature and/or other signs to include, but not limited to; cough, sore throat, body aches, and trouble breathing will be isolated, provided a mask and sent home until those symptoms subside. *The district understands that these symptoms are not relegated to just a COVID diagnosis, but for safety of all, precautions should be taken until these symptoms subside.*
- Students and/or staff who exhibit symptoms should remain home. Students and/or staff who can still participate in learning should do so using procedures outlined in this document.
- Students who need increased accommodations due to their individual disability will be served through the I.E.P. process. Stakeholders should be aware of the ability to address and discuss additional accommodations with an I.E.P. meeting.
- School personnel are not doctors or nurses, please don't require the district to fulfill those needs. Stakeholders who are concerned about symptoms should be screened by their primary physician.
- Social and emotional health is at the forefront of concern during this time. Additional counseling services and segregation of duties have been added during this time. Increased opportunities for both individual and group counseling have been added and these opportunities disseminated using all forms of school communication. Staff opportunities have been discussed and services through local agencies have been secured and brought into the school utilizing a electronic distance format.

Maintaining Health and Hygiene

- Students and staff should wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the bathroom, after blowing their nose, after coughing or sneezing, after touching high-touch surfaces, and before eating.
- The school will provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers only when soap and water may not be readily available. It is everyone's responsibility to educate young children on how much to use. *We encourage parents to send these supplies with their sons/daughters. As it is not a requirement, it is personal responsibility to maintain health and hygiene.*
- Breaks will be scheduled in the day for hand washing/sanitizing and/or sanitizing desks, workstations, computers and supplies. *The district will require staff and students to maintain and clean their personal educational spaces. This does not include communal spaces.*
- Periodic communications will be provided to students and parents on guidance and recommendations as they become available. *Schoology is the primary provider of information. It is the responsibility of the parents and students to become knowledgeable on the communication platforms in the district.*
- Community areas will be cleaned between lunch shifts and sharing of space. For the lowest risk of infections and the passing of pathogens, personal responsibility is needed to help curb the spread in community areas.

Cafeteria Use

- Normal cafeteria operation will be utilized during the 2021-2022 schoolyear, should a change be needed, communication will be done utilizing all methods outlined in district policy.
- Seating distance will be utilized when possible.
- Reusable materials will be fully sanitized meeting all federal and state specifications.
- Bringing a personal lunch is the safest and most effective way to reduce transmissions.

Clean, Sanitize, and Ventilate

- Thoroughly clean and disinfect classrooms and other areas using appropriate disinfectants. Use extra care when disinfecting high-touch areas such as floors, doorknobs, tables, handles, etc.
- Sanitize all chairs and tables used in common classrooms or areas in between uses.
- Limit exposure to cross grade levels.
- The district is 100% HVAC controlled. Utilize these systems when at all possible.
- Use outdoor areas as much as possible during days that weather allows.
- Students should bring their own water bottle. Water fountains increase the risk of contamination and cannot be cleaned after every use. Students who continue to utilize a water fountain and other communal areas do so with increased risk. Personal responsibility needs to be used to clean and/or sanitize before and after use.

Limit Sharing

- Avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids. Personal responsibility needs to be used to eliminate risk when using shared supplies. Use every effort to clean and sanitize.
- Keep students' belongings separate in individually labeled areas when possible.

Bussing

- One of the highest risk areas in a traditional teaching model.
- Student temperatures will not be checked and is the responsibility of the parent. We ask that students who have a temperature of 100.4 or higher will not ride district transportation. We recommend parents take the temperature of the student before dropping them off at the bus stop to avoid the necessity to return for pick-up.
- Students will be asked to sit in seats with family members when possible.
- Transportation will be sanitized between uses, but can only reduce exposure, this cannot eliminate the risk.

- **Masks as a Requirement**
 - **Masks are not required within the district.**
 - **Student and/or staff who wish to wear a mask will be supported for their decision. Each individual must make medical choices that best fit their lifestyle.**

Parental Decision to Not Attend

During the 2021-2022 School year, a decision to not attend school is not an option and is a direct violation of state law until a child becomes 18 years of age. Fill out an exemption of school attendance (HOME SCHOOL) application to exempt your child(ren) from instruction..

School Activities

There is an even higher risk of exposure in school sponsored activities. The district has adopted the guidelines as outlined by the SDHSAA and will continue to follow those guidelines at all levels. The district's administration and board will continue to monitor the risk versus reward for offering these activities. It is also imperative that infection rates and school infection rates be used to determine the likelihood of community spread by attending activities in other communities.