



2021-2022 Milaca Public School Opening Plan (Updated March 2022)

Dear Milaca Families and Communities,

Here is an update for the 2021-2022 school year. Please note this plan can change and will be continually monitored throughout the school year.

Milaca Public Schools continues its plan to take steps in providing normalcy for students and families this school year. Our day-to-day will look more “normal” while layering mitigation strategies. As a school district we will start with certain mitigation strategies in place, and then monitor, assess, and adjust these strategies as needed. I have confidence in our community and our school district, we will all have to work together to ensure we have a great school year.

At this time, Milaca Public Schools will not require face coverings at school or during extracurriculars. However, universal masking is recommended for all people ages two years of age and older. Due to a recent federal requirement change, face coverings are **not** required to be worn on school transportation.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Minnesota Department of Health have multiple recommendations to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. These include universal masking indoors for all people two years and older, all people ages twelve and older should get vaccinated in an effort to protect themselves and others, individuals not fully vaccinated should be tested regularly, and members of the school community should stay home when they are feeling sick.

Below you will find multiple topics and mitigation strategies that will be utilized and monitored by the school district for changes throughout the school year.

We are excited that we were able to expand our online learning program to grades K-12. This is a great option for students that are in need of alternative learning options.

As a school district, community, and state we still face upcoming challenges. The School District’s priority is to keep students in school. I believe in the Milaca Communities, that we will continue to stay together to ensure our students stay in school. Milaca Public Schools will continue to be diligent in our efforts, monitor the health and safety of staff and students, while providing a great education.

The School Day

Milaca Public Schools will be returning to five days of in-person learning, students will be having lunch in the cafeteria, there will not be a block schedule in the high school.

Face Coverings

School and Extracurriculars

At this time universal indoor masking is recommended for all people in the school setting (ages two years and older). The Milaca School District will recommend, but not require masking in our public school building.

Transportation

Due to changes to the federal requirement face coverings are **not** required to be worn on school transportation. This was communicated to families on March 2, 2022.

Addressing Bullying and Harassment

If a situation arises regarding “mask shaming” these claims will be taken seriously and will be addressed in following the school district’s discipline policies and procedures.

Vaccinations and COVID-19 Testing

Vaccinations

Vaccinations aren’t required but are strongly encouraged by the Minnesota Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control for all eligible staff and students. For individuals and families that are interested in being vaccinated, below you will find local locations and links for vaccination opportunities.

Mille Lacs Health System: Onamia: <https://www.mlhealth.org/>

Thrifty White: Milaca: <https://www.thriftywhite.com/store/127-second-avenue-sw-milaca-mn>

Vaccine Finder: <https://www.thriftywhite.com/store/127-second-avenue-sw-milaca-mn>

Testing

If you need assistance or are having difficulty getting access to a COVID-19 test, please contact the school district’s health office. The tests at school are not be required and will only be available as a resource for families upon request.

Accessibility and availability to testing in our area has been identified as a concern by our community and identified by the Minnesota Department of Health as an issue.

At this time a limited amount of [BinaxNow At-Home](#) tests are available for students experiencing symptoms and upon parent request. These tests are administered by the parent at home and the results are reported to Nurse Kim.

At this time [CUE](#) tests are available for qualifying staff upon request. To request an appointment for a CUE test the staff member must contact [Mr. Wedin](#) and [Nurse Kim](#).

Please refer to the quarantine Contact Tracing and Quarantine heading for additional information.

COVID-19 Positive Cases

Staff members or students that test positive for COVID-19 will need to stay home for a minimum of ten days from the onset of symptoms or the time of their positive test. If the staff member or student is symptom-free after ten days, they can return to school.

Reporting of Positive Cases

The School District is asking families to follow the same protocol as last year and have families contact the school health office of any positive cases within your household. Milaca Public Schools is required to report positive cases of staff and students to the Minnesota Department of Health.

Continued Mitigation Strategies

Health Screenings are still encouraged for families and staff to complete a [self-health assessment](#) prior to coming to school each day. If staff members or students are ill they must stay home. Our Health Office will continue to be available to support these questions during the school year.

Handwashing breaks and an emphasis will still take place throughout the day while students are in the building.

Cleaning and Sanitizing routines will continue while utilizing strategies that were put in place last school year to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

Visitors will still be limited in Milaca Public Schools while students are present. This will include dropping students off or picking them up from classrooms, lunch, and other non-essential visits. If there is a need to meet with any Milaca Staff members you will need to schedule an appointment. Also, please continue to limit to only essential items being dropped off for your student(s) during the school day.

Physical Distancing is recommended by the CDC and a distance of at least 3 feet will be maintained between students within classrooms whenever feasible. The school district will distance to the extent possible and a continued effort will be made to distance students to the best of our ability.

Reporting Positive Cases is still a requirement by the Minnesota Department of Health that Milaca School District will have to continue to follow. It is critical that families that have positive cases contact the School District's Health Office.

Contact Tracing and Quarantine

1. In the event of a positive COVID-19 case, the district will conduct contact tracing. We will seek assistance from Mille Lacs County Public Health and the Minnesota Department of Health when needed. The person with a positive case will be required to quarantine for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms or positive test, along with improved symptoms and no fever for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine.
2. All identified close contacts and their families will be notified as soon as possible.

3. Each close contact case will be evaluated to identify if quarantine is required or recommended. Multiple factors will be considered when evaluating close contacts, masking, vaccination status, distancing, and household cases. Unlike last year, being identified as a close contact may lead to a recommended quarantine, but will only be required in household cases and other unique scenarios at this time.

4. Close contacts of an infected person, when both parties were wearing masks, will not be required to quarantine **unless they are showing symptoms**. However, they may self-quarantine if they choose.

5. Staff and students who are fully vaccinated and identified as a close contact will not be required to quarantine **unless they are showing symptoms**.

6. If students and staff are showing COVID-19 symptoms they cannot attend school and should reach out to Milaca's Health Office for more information. Utilize the [health screener](#) to assist in the determination.

7. Staff and students that have a positive case within their household will have to quarantine unless they are fully vaccinated or have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days. The length of quarantine will be determined from a variety of factors including the last point of contact with the positive individual, vaccination status, prior COVID-19 cases within the household, and other unique factors to each case.

8. If a quarantined individual does not have symptoms, in most circumstances, a student or staff member may follow a seven-day quarantine with a negative PCR test (not an antigen test or antibody/blood test), if the test occurred on day five after exposure or later. The student or staff member could then return to school on day 8 after their COVID-19 exposure. If a quarantined individual chooses not to test they can return after ten days from their COVID-19 exposure as long as they aren't showing symptoms.

9. Additional circumstances may warrant required quarantines.

These rules will be monitored and adjusted based on local data throughout the school year.

Transportation will require students to mask due to federal requirements for public transportation.

Ventilation will be monitored at Milaca Public Schools. We will continue to monitor the ventilation systems throughout the school district to ensure systems are operating effectively.

Health Consultations with Mille Lacs County Public Health, Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Education, area school districts, and monitoring our school community data will continue during the 2021-2022 school year. This will be done in an effort to monitor if any additional mitigation layers need to be put in place or adjusted.

As a school district, we closely monitor the number of positive cases and significant symptoms within our school community. Data will be utilized to identify if changes need to be made in any specific grade

levels, activities, classrooms, events, or buildings. When changes are going to be made or an increase of cases is identified in the school, impacted families will be notified as soon as possible.

If we reach 2.5% of students within either of our school buildings that have active COVID-19 cases / significant symptoms the school district will evaluate the need to increase planning efforts, review daily mitigation practices, and prepare for potential changes. These mitigation decisions will be based on analyzing positive COVID-19 cases / significant symptoms. This will include evaluating the need to increase collaboration with health agencies.

If we reach 5.0% of members within either of our school buildings that have active COVID-19 cases / significant symptoms the school district will evaluate the need to review and implement any enhanced mitigation efforts to support continuing in-person learning. These mitigation decisions will be based on analyzing positive COVID-19 cases / significant symptoms. This will include evaluating the need to increase collaboration with health agencies.

These data rates will continue to be evaluated and will be based on the number of active (current) cases within our school community. Active cases are considered ten days from a positive individual's symptoms or positive test date. As a school district and community, we will need to be ready for any sudden changes to our mitigation efforts if needed.

Milaca K-12 Online was approved to expand to grades K-5. As a school district, we now offer a local K-12 online learning option for any family that makes the decision that online learning is the best option for their student(s).

Changes, Modifications, and Adjustments to the Reopening Plan

Due to the fluid situation of COVID-19 many time-sensitive decisions need to be made, the Superintendent is hereby authorized, after consultation with the School Board Chair and notification to the School Board, to modify and implement mitigation efforts necessary, and that constraints of time and public health considerations render it impractical to hold a School Board meeting to approve the implementation if applicable.

The Superintendent will provide regular updates to the School Board regarding the School District's efforts to implement COVID-19 related educational and public health guidance issued by the MDE and the MDH, respectively.

Please note, this is a live document and that will have additions and edits as it will be continually reviewed, evaluated, and monitored.