

# 2020-2021

## COVID-19 Contingency Planning Purpose and Guiding Principles



**Background:** On June 18, 2020, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) released the [2020-21 Planning Guidance for Minnesota Public Schools](#) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) published the [2020-21 Planning Guidance for Schools](#). The guidance instructs schools to prepare contingency plans for three scenarios to operate schools during the 2020-21 school year:

1. In-person learning for all students
2. Hybrid learning with strict social distancing and capacity limits
3. Distance learning

**Purpose Statement:** The purpose of the 2020-2021 Northfield Public Schools COVID-19 contingency plan is to support staff in developing a seamless system of instruction and services that meets the needs of every learner regardless of the scenario.

**Pandemic Planning Principles:** The guiding principles are intended to provide a vision for the instructional framework developed by schools. These are intended to be used in constructing the framework and to inform decisions that will be made when the inevitable unanticipated situations arise. The guiding principles are:

1. **Relationships first.** Model empathy for the wide diversity of situations for our students and staff, and create ways to connect with them to support their academic, physical, mental health, and social-emotional needs.
2. **Equitable Access.** Plans will support the academic, social/emotional, and co-curricular needs of all students. Students must have access to technology and internet service to fully participate in all of the scenarios.
3. **High-quality instruction.** We will endeavor to provide the highest quality instruction practicable within each scenario.
4. **Relentless Support.** We will be relentless in our attention to engaging and connecting with *every* learner and staff member.
5. **Monitor and adjust.** This is not business as usual. We will be flexible and make timely adjustments as needed based on feedback in our pursuit of continuous improvement.
6. **Reasonable consistency.** Students, staff, and families need a certain level of predictability. We will make every effort to provide reasonable consistency in instructional and operational practices while still maintaining flexibility.
7. **Give ourselves grace.** This experience is historic. Even with the best planning, mistakes will be made. We will monitor, adjust, and continuously improve.
8. **Stewardship.** We will carefully consider the immediate benefit of our decision-making with the long-term financial impact.
9. **Accept that schools play a role in child care.** While Northfield Public Schools is often recognized as a leader in high-quality education, we must accept that public schools play a critical role in caring for children during the traditional workday.