

West Glacier School board has approved a state of emergency for the 2020-21 school year, effective until further notice.

When school does start, we will be offering both full time in person school as well as 100% remote learning. Families may choose the option that is best for them.

First, West Glacier staff is pushing back the school start date to Monday, September 14th.

West Glacier teaching staff is not contracted to begin working this school year until August 26th. We discussed needing proper time to organize and plan for how school is going to be for this year. We want to be ready for our students with a well laid out plan for both in person learning as well as remote learning.

August 26th- September 3rd will be spent planning for this unusual school year. Teachers will be creating plans, collaborating, and thinking outside of the box for how we can make this school year amazing even with the challenges presented. This will involve strategic scheduling so that each class is able to have instruction outside for at least part of each day. Physical education will be planned to be outside.

During the week of September 8th-10th, each class will be scheduled to come in for a half day orientation in order to experience what school will be like. The classes will be scheduled so that only one grade level will attend at a time. Additionally, there will be an offering of a parent orientation to show parents how school will be held both in the classroom setting as well as the online setting.

Starting September 14th, school will be in session from 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday for in person schooling. We are starting later in order to shorten the amount of exposure time, as well as to give families time in the morning to be sure their children are healthy before going to school. Additionally, the regular day schedule is going to require more teacher to classroom time in order to keep grade levels as individual classes as much as possible. Teachers will have time to prepare for classes from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. Teachers will be required to be in the school building no later than 7:30, and will remain in the school building for the 9 ½ contracted hours.

The bus route will remain the same. Any West Glacier District students needing to ride the bus will still get dropped off at the school at 7:40 and will go to a designated area. Students who are dropped off at school by parents will not be permitted to be on school grounds until 8:30. We will have students enter the school at both main entrances- depending on which classroom they are in. Students/families will be notified of which entrance they are permitted to use before the first day of school.

The 100% remote learning is going to be offered at this time as well for those families who are not comfortable with sending their children to school. Families will be able to switch from in-person to remote learning (or vice versa) if they find the first chosen option does not work. However, we ask that families only make one change within a trimester.

Cub Camp will NOT be offered at this time. Hot lunch will NOT be offered at this time.

During the school day students will be expected to wear a masks- Masks in public schools as of this afternoon are now a mandate by the Governor.

<https://covid19.mt.gov/Portals/223/Documents/2020-8-12%20-%20Masks%20in%20Schools%20FINAL.pdf?ver=2020-08-12-152544-863>

Each grade level will be kept separate as much as possible, and at the times when grade levels will not be kept separate (during specials, ect) students will be in a larger space than the general classroom in order to properly social distance (outside or in the gym).

Additionally, we are putting into place other health safety practices. These include getting desk dividers/plexiglass shields, increasing the hours of a custodian in order to sanitize the school throughout the day (common areas, door handles, ect. Classrooms when they do empty for recess, ect.), students will not share classroom items, and will have individual sanitizer sprayers (Glacier Distilling alcohol sanitizer). Students will be instructed how to properly wash hands and be expected to wash/sanitize regularly.

We are looking at purchasing a fogger machine/disinfectant. Please see handout or disinfectionsupply.com

Lunch will be happening in the classrooms. Students will still have recess three times a day as per usual. We are still figuring out those details.

We will be asking for parent involvement with ensuring that students are only sent to school when their child is healthy- we will be asking parents to monitor temperatures before school and to check for any symptoms of illness. If any symptoms of illness are present, children must not be sent to school. We will not be taking temperatures of students at school drop off on a regular basis.

If the unfortunate event happens that we discover someone at the school tests positive for COVID-19, we will contact the health department immediately for guidance on how to proceed. We are making connections with the health department. If there is a positive test in our immediate West Glacier School community, the health department will connect with the close contacts of that person and follow the guidelines on their website.

If the school is notified of a positive COVID-19 test, we will notify our school community while keeping the identity of the positive test confidential.

It is possible that only that classroom will need to quarantine if it was determined someone at school was a close contact, or it is possible that our whole school will need to quarantine. If a student shows signs of illness during the school day, they will be placed in an isolated area and parents/guardians will be expected to pick up their child immediately.

All of us know that any changes have the potential to cause inconvenience to families and we sympathize/empathize with this. However, we feel this is a good plan, and a good place to start. Like everything we ever do, our thoughts of what is best for our children is what we keep in mind when making our decisions.

With everything changing so rapidly, our plans for how our day to day operations are conducted are subject to change as well if we see it is necessary for the health, education and safety of our children.

We ask that parents let us know no later than September 1st of whether you will be having your child(ren) attend school in-person or remotely so that we can plan accordingly.

Sincerely,

West Glacier School Staff