



| 411 5<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE SOUTH, VIRGINIA, MN 55792 | 218.742.3900 | FAX: 218.741.8522 | [WWW.RRPS.ORG](http://WWW.RRPS.ORG) |

Monday, December 7, 2020

Dear Rock Ridge Staff & Families,

**Straight-to-the-point: COVID-19 rates continue to be too high and the Rock Ridge School District will continue with all distance learning in the high schools and all elementary schools.**

**The data continue to indicate the COVID-19 infection rates in the greater community make it impossible to offer school to students on an everyday basis. Even though we do not have in-person schooling, we continue losing both students and staff to COVID-19 and quarantine.**

**IMPORTANT:** Please continue to let us know of positive COVID-19 test cases. Inform us via the attendance line or by contacting your child's school nurse directly if your child tests positive for COVID-19. When you do this, make sure to:

- Inform the school of your child's POSITIVE TEST DATE (the date the test was taken, not the date you received the results.) Nursing staff will document your child's positive test date. Your child will not be quarantined because of contact with someone testing positive for COVID-19 for 90 days from their positive test date.
- We continue to have small numbers of students/staff in our buildings and will need to contact trace when needed due to COVID-19 exposures that occur in our buildings and on school transportation

We continue to work with the Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Education, and St. Louis County Public Health to ensure your child/children have a safe and healthy 2020-2021 school year. The Minnesota Department of Health and St. Louis County Public Health have been supporting us in the implementation of our Safe Learning Plan along with providing local data, monitoring trends and providing consultation to assist in our decision-making process. They have also provided infection control recommendations and connected us to additional resources.

*In general, individuals are getting COVID-19 from public birthday parties, family gatherings, meetings with individuals from out-of-town, athletic gatherings, holiday gatherings, and similar engagements where people are not wearing masks and practicing social distance.*

I do not foresee any short-term conditions which will cause us to switch out of distance learning back into hybrid or all day schooling. Our students could be in distance learning mode for months if the community COVID-19 rates do not drop. If they do not drop, it will cause even more infections. This is the reality of our current situation.

When in public or with other parents and kids, wear the mask and observe social distancing to get our students back to school. If the local community infection rates can stabilize and drop, there is a chance we could bring back some elementary students in mid-to-late January. The younger elementary school students will be the first students we bring back to school. These potentially include students at Parkview and Franklin elementary. The Rock Ridge COVID Response Team will meet before the upcoming holidays to discuss our feasible options. Consequently, shortly before the holidays, you will receive another update from me.



## **Additional Information**

### **Sports**

All sporting events (varsity, junior varsity, and junior high) continue to be closed down, until further notice.

### **Buses**

For elementary students and high school students who have been specifically invited by their classroom teachers, daily school bus routes will continue to operate.

### **Child Care for Tier I Critical Workers**

If you have a school-age child with day care needs, up to the age of 12, and you are classified as a Tier I Critical Worker, we will continue to have day care available for you. You should have received information from your elementary school. Note: The school-age care for children of critical workers is intended for extreme circumstances in which no parent or guardian is at home, as all of the parents or legal guardians in the child's household are Tier I critical workers. Tier I workers include: Healthcare, law enforcement, public safety and first responders, judicial branch, national guard, educators, school staff providing instruction, and child care and school-age care providers.

### **Lunches**

All students have access to free breakfast and lunch. You do not need to call and reserve a meal. We will continue to have lunches available to be picked up at two locations: Virginia High School (Door #6 at VHS between 7:30-8:15 AM or 10:50-11:20 AM daily) or Franklin Elementary School (Door #9A at Franklin Elementary between 8:00-8:30 AM or 10:30-11:00 AM daily.) Students should be sure not to miss their scheduled classes. There are currently no delivery options available.

### **Wear the mask and practice social distancing**

We will continue to work closely with St. Louis County Public Health and Minnesota Department of Health to monitor the transmission of COVID-19 throughout the year to keep our students, their families, and communities safe. Our school board and COVID planning team will work to change learning models if at any point we feel it is in the best interest of our faculty and students.

We know these are difficult times and there is no perfect solution to the problems being caused by COVID-19. But we will get through this. And things will eventually get better.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for everything you are doing to ensure the success of the 2020-2021 school year and to remind you of the key role you play in helping slow the spread of COVID-19. Please continue to:

- Wear your face coverings and masks when in public.
- Maintain social distancing even in social settings, e.g. sporting events, family functions, birthday parties, or social gatherings.
- Avoid contact with people from other states and other distant cities, especially if individuals are not wearing masks.
- Avoid crowds, especially if individuals are not wearing masks.
- Wash your hands thoroughly.
- Stay home if not feeling well.
- Quarantine your household if you or any member of your family is home with a COVID-19 test result pending.
- Clean and sanitize school items such as backpacks and lunchboxes as they return home from school.





- Wash reusable masks and throw away disposable masks.
- Inform your child's school nurse if your child has symptoms of COVID.
- If your student is cleared from COVID Quarantine due to a negative COVID test result, you must notify your student's school nurse before they can return to school.

#### **Important info from the Minnesota Department of Health**

- If you or any member of your household is being tested for COVID-19 because symptoms of the COVID-19 infection are present, each member of your family must stay home until the test results are known. This includes children of the household staying home from school and extracurricular activities.
- If someone in the household is being tested for COVID-19, but does not have symptoms of the COVID-19 infection, children may return to school before the test results are known. Examples of this include: healthcare workers who are being tested through their employer as a precaution given their job requirements or someone being tested for an upcoming procedure as a precaution.
- We want to again thank you all for your continued support as we work to make this unforgettable year as safe and fun as possible.

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

#### **Track local Rock Ridge data**

For those who are interested, here is a new link, which will be updated on a weekly basis, for you to follow the COVID-19 cases, as far as location, and the numbers of individuals who are quarantined. Expect the number of individuals quarantined to always be significantly higher than the number of individuals who actually have COVID-19. Immediately quarantining individuals is an effective way to stop the spread of COVID-19. <https://rrps.org/rrps-covid19-dashboard/>

We understand parents and families have questions and concerns as we have entered a school year filled with uncertainty. We want to make sure your questions are addressed; Health.covid19@state.mn.us is an email parents can use for questions they have related to COVID-19 as they arise throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

For up to date local information, you can visit the St. Louis County Dashboard at: [Story Map Series](#).

Sincerely,



Dr. Noel Schmidt

