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Friday, March 12, 2021

Topic: All students return to school on Wednesdays

Dear Rock Ridge Staff & Families,

Straight-to-the-point: On Wednesday, April 7, all K-12, in-person school students, will return to school for all Wednesdays. Consequently, all students, unless they are distance learning, will attend school Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, beginning April 7. Look for additional information from your building principal.

However, strains of COVID which are more aggressive in spreading have reached Minnesota. These new strains appear to be spreading especially when kids are mingling with other kids from around the state and nation. This appears to be particularly happening in youth sports, travelling sports teams, and any other activity, including high school sports, which involves the mingling of kids from different parts of the state.

It is critical to keep wearing masks and practicing social distancing anytime staff, students and their families are out in public or participating in sports. These simple precautions are the most effective ways to keep our students in school. Be smart and prevent COVID-19 from spreading throughout our communities by wearing the mask and practicing social distance.

Here are the last available reported COVID-19 infection rates per 10,000 people. The Rock Ridge School District is considered to be in Central St. Louis County. For our area the infection rate per 10,000 people (everyone--including school children, staff, parents, community members) is 17.94.

	AllSchools	DuluthArea	GreaterSLC	CentralSLC	NorthernSLC
2/14 - 2/27	12.79	11.07		17.94	5.57

All students who have signed up for only distance learning will continue with their normal distance learning schedule.

It bears repeating that students who are in-person learning cannot decide, on a whim, to distance learning on a day they are expected to be in-person, in the classroom. If students have complications with their schedule, they should start first by talking to their classroom teacher. Otherwise, these can be considered unexcused absences.

COVID-19 test cases: 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 or someone in your household tests positive for COVID-19. When you do this, make sure to:

- Inform the school of your child's or family member'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. If your child at some point tests positive for COVID-19, he/she will not be quarantined because of contact with someone testing positive for COVID-19 for 90 days from the child's positive test date.



Additional Information

International travel

Until further notice, all students or staff who travel outside the United States and return to school will be required to quarantine for 14 days.

Buses

All buses will operate at their regularly scheduled time. However, we recommend that any high school student who can drive safely to school should do that--drive and not take the bus. We are also recommending that any parent who can drive their children to school should do that--drive them to school. This will help reduce the number of students we are transporting on the buses.

Sports

On days students are not physically attending school, and if they are participating in a practice or a game, they will need to figure out their own transportation to the practice field or the official team bus that is going to an away game. Parents may transport their child to away games, providing they have filled out the transportation form which is available in the athletic office or online. Students cannot drive themselves to away games.

Child Care for Tier I Critical Workers

If you have a school-age child with daycare needs, up to the age of 12, and you are classified as a Tier I Critical Worker, we will continue to have daycare 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, the judicial branch, national guard, educators, school staff providing instruction, and child care and school-age care providers

COVID-19 has not disappeared.

We will continue to quarantine all students and staff for 14 days. By using this recommended standard, even though I understand it does cause problems for parents and families and staff, we will be more effective in stopping the spread of COVID-19 and preventing even more students and staff from missing school or becoming sick.

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/district/health-and-wellness/covid-19/>

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

