

**Reopening Plan**

**Hamlin School District 28-3  
2023-2024 School Year**

**Updated**

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**Contact Person: Jim Hulscher, Superintendent  
605-783-3631**

**2023-24 School Year Reopening Plan  
Hamlin School District 28-3**

*The Hamlin School District #28-3 will continually update guidelines from national, state, and local health officials.*

## **Introduction**

### **South Dakota Department of Education (SD DOE) Guiding Principles for Reopening Schools**

#### **SD DOE maintains the below assumptions:**

- Schools will provide instruction in the fall and throughout the 2023-24 school year.
- COVID-19 will continue to spread, with or without a vaccine, into the future.
- Schools can take practical steps to mitigate spread of the virus while continuing to focus on student learning.
- Each district will make decisions based on scientific information at the time, current status of virus spread in and around the school community, and in the best interest of staff, students, and families.
- This document does not constitute a legal guide.
- **Decision-making should be based on what we know to be true about COVID-19, knowing that our understanding of the virus will continue to evolve.**

#### **SD DOE expectations for schools:**

- Schools will continue to be a safe environment for students, focusing on both social-emotional and physical health. Local decisions will be rooted in what is best for students.
- Schools will take reasonable steps within the context of COVID-19 spread in the community to protect the school community. National guidelines, while helpful to provide a context, are only a guide. SD DOE expects school leaders to make informed judgments to limit the spread but still provide for continuity of learning.
- Every student will have the opportunity to engage in a full year of learning, irrespective of the spread of COVID-19 in a community.
- School leaders will work transparently with their school boards, staff, and community to communicate decisions and the underlying assumptions guiding those decisions.
- School leaders will need to make difficult decisions to ensure the health – both mental and physical – of their entire school community.

This document is built upon the guidance and recommendations of public health officials; it is aligned to the South Dakota Department of Education *Strong Schools 2021-22* guidance published on July 27, 2021, and recommendations from the South Dakota Department of Health. It is designed to prioritize the health and safety of students and staff as school buildings are reopened and delivering instruction for the 2023-24 school year begins.

#### **Reopening Plans and Schedules**

South Dakota School Districts are required to have plans in place to ensure continuity of educational services should the state's COVID-19 metrics change significantly, requiring additional restrictions to control the spread of the disease. These plans will be the foundation for a successful and agile academic school year. If you need assistance or translation of this

document, please contact the school or if you need this in another language, we recommend using Google translate.

Depending on circumstances in our community at the time, we need to be prepared to implement each of the following, depending on the situation: a Back to Normal plan; a Distance Learning plan; and a Blended plan consisting of both back to normal and distance learning. As impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic evolve, the SD DOH and SD DOE will continue to provide updated guidance and recommendations to school districts on navigating the academic, social, and emotional effects on students and employees. We need to be able to transition back and forth, and, as conditions can change overnight, we need to be able to transition quickly.

### **Assumption of Risk**

The Hamlin School District acknowledges that there is no way to guarantee a totally safe environment from an infectious disease but implementing best practices and following deliberate procedures has proven to significantly reduce the risk and the spread of the coronavirus.

## **Student Learning: Instructional Plans**

### **ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN**

**Phase 1: Back to Normal:** Return to in-person learning for all students with modifications to programs and spaces as required to ensure social distancing, enhanced cleaning practices, improved personal hygiene practices, family health screenings and a variety of other changes to address recommended health and safety standards. All students would begin the year on campus in a traditional setting. In-person classes are held and may be canceled intermittently with a transition to a Distance Learning as necessary. Getting all students back to school on a regular basis would be the top priority, with stop and starts due to what is happening in Hamlin County in regard to COVID-19.

- Students will have access to Google Classroom which is the District's Learning Management System. All learning apps, links and district curriculum materials will be housed in this common location.
- Online instruction utilizing this platform will begin with students immediately so they are capable of logging into Google Classroom and accessing the learning tools and programs they will need should school transition to a blended or virtual delivery format. This online instruction will occur in all educational settings.
- Activities within the school day may be modified (e.g., recess, lunch, elective courses, arrival, and dismissal).
- Direct instruction on CDC guidelines such as hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette will be provided and modeled by all staff.

**Phase 2: Blended Learning:** *This phase will be implemented if it has been determined by state and/or local agencies that a health emergency exists in our community.* A blended approach includes some students learning in the traditional setting and others in Distance Learning setting throughout the year. This scenario has students alternating between in-person and working, which significantly reduces the number of students in each building. Students could come to

school every other day or what schedule determined by the administration, and one day each week will be reserved for additional assistance. Distance Learning in this scenario will be primarily delivered asynchronously (students work independently on remote lessons in preparation for the next in-person day)

- Students will be divided by determination of administration.
- On non-classroom days, students will still be required to complete assignments through Distance Learning on Google Classroom in preparation for the next school day and they may be required to meet via distance learning with their teacher during the assigned time their class meets.
- Quality completion of work assigned will be required for final grades and course credit.

**Phase 3: Full Time Distance Learning:** *This phase will be implemented if directed by the state and/or local agencies.* We have enhanced our Distance Learning format from the spring of 2020. It is the plan for all schools to begin in a traditional setting but need to transition to full time Distance Learning for all students if needed due to what is happening at the local level.

- Instruction will be provided on-line through our District's Learning Management System, Google Classroom.
- A home Distance Learning schedule will be provided for students and teachers to follow.
- Using this model, teachers will be available during their contracted time (the regular school day hours of 8:30-3:30) to provide instruction, provide feedback, monitor progress, and provide re-teaching, as necessary. Students may be required to meet via distance learning with their teacher during the assigned time their class meets.

- Quality completion of work assigned will be required for final grades and course credit.

\*\*High School students taking Dual Credit or eLearning courses will continue to follow the same schedules and timelines as their perspective colleges.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN**

### ***Phase 1: Back to Normal***

- Online instruction utilizing the district's LMS will begin with students immediately so they are capable of logging into Google Classroom and accessing the learning tools and programs they will need should school transition to a blended or virtual delivery format. This online instruction will occur in both the resource room and general education settings.

### **Related Services (SLP, SLPA, OT, PT, Counseling)**

- Groups of students must contain students from the same classroom only.
  - Time between sessions will be allowed to sanitize work surfaces, chairs, and learning materials and therapists will pick up and return students to classrooms.
  - PPE equipment will be provided for students and therapists.

### **Phase 2: Blended Learning**

- On days when special education students are not in the classroom, special education teachers will meet virtually with students to provide direct specialized instruction.

- Special Education Teachers will send school supplies home with students to support blended and/or Distance Learning.
  - When students are not in the classroom, they will have access to the general education curriculum on the LMS (Learning Management System) as well as equitable access to their general education teachers for instruction and follow up support/re-teaching.
  - Special Education Teachers will assist general education teachers when modifying instructional materials, choice boards, etc. for students who require accommodations and/or modifications should a blended or virtual learning delivery system be implemented (accessibility).
- Special and general education staff will accommodate the option of virtual IEP meetings. Examples include but are not limited to the following: all attendees attend virtually, school staff meet in large conference room which allows for social distancing with parents and outside agencies join remotely, or special education director and one parent meet in conference room and all other attendees participate remotely.

### **Related Services (SLP, SLPA, OT, PT, Counseling)**

- If/when unable to meet in person, service providers will set up virtual therapy sessions.

### **Phase 3: Distance Learning**

- Special education staff, related service providers and general education teachers will continue to provide services, accommodations, and modifications as required by each IEP.
- During Distance Learning, members of the IEP team will:
  - Ensure compliance with IDEA.
  - Provide access, accommodations, and services virtually/remotely.
  - Focus on equity for our most vulnerable students.
  - Maintain connections between school staff, students, and families.
  - Provide a sense of structure, routine, and predictability in a time of change for students and families.
  - Display an attitude of caring and compassion for everyone!

### **IEP Team Meetings**

- In circumstances where an IEP team meeting may need to be convened during the school closure or when IEP teams are not able to meet in person due to health and safety consideration, IEP team meetings will be conducted telephonically or virtually.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

To support the whole child and develop a student's passions and interests, the Hamlin School District will maintain extracurricular activities to the greatest extent possible. Local districts will follow the recommendations of the SDHSAA and monitor their students and spectators for safe participation. Hamlin will begin the year with no restriction on attendance and adjust based on what is happening Hamlin County. Away activities may have restrictions by the host school.

### **STUDENT AND STAFF HEALTH AND SAFETY**

This Health and Safety section is extensive but not exhaustive. National, state and local guidance should always be consulted for the most up-to-date requirements and recommendations. The

school district has a full-time guidance counselor available to all students and staff to help with any social, emotional, and mental health needs. All eligible people were/are provided with the knowledge and resources to be vaccinated by our local and state health officials.

### **SOCIAL DISTANCING AND MINIMIZING EXPOSURE**

The school district will begin the year as normal. In the event of a local health emergency as determined by the health authorities, some of the responses may be put into place:

- Face masks or coverings are encouraged for staff and students who feel the need. During certain activities, this may become essential, especially if there are cases of possible exposure to COVID-19 positive people. Students and staff will be allowed to bring their own face masks or coverings. The district will also have a limited face coverings available for use.

### **CLEANING AND HYGIENE**

- Hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) will be provided at every building entrance and exit, in the cafeteria, and in every classroom for safe use by staff and students.
- Adequate supplies will be available to support healthy hygiene behaviors (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) for safe use by staff and older children, paper towels, and tissues).
- Systematically and frequently check and refill hand sanitizers.
- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol by staff and older children.
- Reinforce handwashing during key times such as: Before, during and after preparing food; Before eating food; After using the toilet; After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing; After touching objects with bare hands which have been handled by other individuals.
- Staff and students will be encouraged to cough/sneeze into their elbows, or to cover with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands sanitized immediately.
- Incorporate frequent handwashing and sanitation breaks into classroom activity.
- Allow time between activities for proper cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces.
- Establish a schedule for and perform ongoing and routine environmental cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas with an EPA approved disinfectant [for SARS-CoV-2](#) (the virus that causes COVID-19), and increasing frequency of disinfection during high-density times and disinfect all shared objects between use.
- Sharing of personal items and supplies such as writing utensils is discouraged.
- Keep students' personal items separate in desks or lockers.
- Avoid shared use of soft or other items that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected (e.g., stuffed toys, clay).

### **MONITORING FOR SYMPTOMS**

Conducting regular screenings for symptoms can help reduce exposure. Parents will verify that their children are symptom free each day or the child must stay home to protect the health of the community. Staff and students will self-monitor for symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness

of breath. If a student or staff member develops symptoms, while at school, he/she must notify a school administrator immediately. Enforce that staff and students stay home if:

- They have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 symptoms, until they meet criteria for return.

**Time requirement to return to school after fever breaks will be 24 hours**

### **HANDLING SUSPECTED, PRESUMPTIVE, OR CONFIRMED POSITIVE CASES OF COVID-19**

- Signage will be posted at the main entrance requesting that people who have COVID SYMPTOMS not enter.
- Staff, students and their families will be educated about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, when they should stay home and when they can return to school.
- A dedicated area will be available for symptomatic individuals.
- Immediately isolate symptomatic individuals to the designated area at the school and send them home to isolate and seek medical care.
- Ensure symptomatic student remains under visual supervision of a staff member who is at least 6 feet away. The supervising adult should wear cloth face covering or a surgical mask.
- Require the symptomatic person to wear a cloth face covering or a surgical mask while waiting to leave the facility.
- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:
  - Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious.
  - Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
  - Anyone who cannot tolerate a cloth face covering due to developmental, medical or behavioral health needs.
- School nurse or delegated school staff to provide direct patient care will be required to wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and perform hand hygiene after removing PPE.
- Cleaning and disinfecting procedures will be implemented following CDC guidelines.
- The following process will be followed for allowing a student or staff member to return to school:
  - If a person has had a negative COVID-19 test, they can return to school once there is no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and they have been symptom free for 24 hours.
  - If You Test Positive for COVID-19 (Isolate) Everyone, regardless of vaccination status. Stay home until symptom free.
  - If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.
- If a person is deemed a close contact by the South Dakota Department of Health, the district will uphold their findings. If a student/employee has been determined to have

been in close contact by the SD Department of Health with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, they must remain out of school for 72 hours since the date of the last exposure (if symptom free after 72 hours, the superintendent can recommend the student or staff member returns if they wear a mask and do a temperature check upon arrival to the building) unless they test positive.

### **OPERATIONS: CLASSROOM SAFETY**

Classes will begin as a normal atmosphere, until a local health emergency is determined by local authorities. At that time, some of the options may be:

- Seating/desks will be arranged to allow for physical distancing as feasible.
- Seating charts will help track virus spread if a student/staff tests positive for COVID-19.
- Desks will be turned to face the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.
- Physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, will be provided to ensure that staff and children remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (i.e., guides for creating “one-way routes” in hallways).
- Keep each child's belongings separated from others.
- Restrict use of water fountains to bottle fillers only.
- Allow students and staff to bring water bottles or containers from home.
- Students will not be allowed to share water bottles.
- Recess may be alternated to minimize the numbers of students on the playground, require social distancing and disinfect equipment between classes.

### **OPERATIONS: SIGNAGE**

- Signage will be posted at the main entrance requesting that people who have been symptomatic with fever and/or cough not enter.
- Signage will be posted in key areas throughout school buildings and facilities to remind students and staff to wash hands and stay 6 feet apart whenever possible.

### **OPERATIONS: CLEANING, DISINFECTING, AND SANITIZING**

- A schedule will be established to perform ongoing and routine environmental cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas with EPA approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19).
- Cleaning process will be monitored with an accountability system to ensure the cleaning/disinfecting schedule is being followed.
- Procedures will be developed to ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including securely storing and using products away from children, and allowing for adequate ventilation when staff use such products.
- Increase HVAC filter replacement frequency.
- Nonessential visitors and activities involving external groups or organizations will be limited.



## **OPERATIONS: USE OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS OR FACILITIES**

School operations will begin the year as a normal school year. If there is a local health emergency as determined by authorities, the some of the responses below may be put into place:

- The use of facilities for non-education related activities (i.e., renting of facilities after hours and on the weekends) will be suspended in order to reduce the possible spread of COVID-19 and to allow opportunities for thorough cleaning of the facilities during the evening and weekends.
- Virtual tools and platforms will be utilized wherever possible to conduct essential business and keep in-person reporting to a minimum.
- Visitors are required to call the front office before entering. When possible, items will be placed in the designated drop box in the front foyer.

## **FOOD SERVICE**

Nutritious meals at school are not simply conveniences, they are critical safety nets to support physical, mental, social, and emotional health and well-being for students. All students should have access to school meals and adequate time to consume them. Meal options will be provided which best meet the nutritional needs of students in an environment that promotes optimal social distancing and personal hygiene practices as a means of supporting optimal academic success. The school year will begin as normal. In the event of a local health emergency, some of the responses can be expected:

- Overall Safety Procedures
  - Employees will continue social distancing measures with food preparation regardless of serving method.
  - Staff will be required to wear appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).
  - Adequate time will be allowed for students to wash and sanitize hands before and after meals.
  - Clearly marked spacing on floors will be provided to promote social distancing in hallways leading to cafeterias, in serving lines, and in lines to exit the cafeteria.
  - Disposable trays, plates, and utensils may be used.
  - No self-service or sharing of food or other items.
  - Cleaning/disinfecting of tables/chairs or other contact surfaces before, during (as needed) and after meal services.
- Meal Service Options
  - Various meal service options may be used as needed to promote social distancing, including food carts, grab-and-go meals, classroom meals, etc. to provide meals to as many students as possible.
  - All previously self-serve items could be purchased prepackaged or individually wrapped/packaged by food service staff.
  - Meal service options will be continuously monitored to determine where modifications may be needed to support student/staff acceptance, student/staff well-being and promote meal participation.
- Student Seating
  - Alternative seating arrangements and/or locations may be used to decrease the number of students dining together during each serving session.
- Meal Service During School Closure

- Optional meal service will be provided if school is closed for more than 5 school days.

### **SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION**

The school year will begin as normal. In the event of a local health emergency, some of the responses can be expected:

#### Driver Requirements

- Bus drivers will be required to complete a pre-work screening which includes health questionnaire, temperature, and wash/sanitize hands.
- Bus drivers will be required to wear face coverings throughout the duration of the route.
- If a driver becomes sick during the day, they must not return to drive students.

#### Passenger Procedures

- Parent/guardians are encouraged to provide private transportation at their own cost, when possible, to reduce the number of passengers and allow for maximum social distancing.
- Parent/guardian will be provided with a symptom self-screening checklist for their child to be completed prior to boarding the bus in lieu of in-person screening.
- Passengers will apply hand sanitizer upon entry on the bus.
- Maximum physical distancing will be used when possible.
- Face masks or coverings may be required throughout the duration of the trip. Hamlin will begin the year with face masks being optional on school bus routes and base future decisions on what is happening in Hamlin County.
- Seating will be assigned by household by filling the bus from back to front.
- Bus will be unloaded from the front to back.
- Passengers that become sick during the day will not be allowed to return home on school transportation.

#### Post-Trip Planning

- Bus driver will clean and sanitize railings, seats (front/back/seat/top), sidewalls, and windows as needed.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES: EMPLOYEE LEAVE**

The Hamlin School District Employee Negotiated Agreement and Policy Manual govern the use of employee leave.

**FMLA-** While FMLA is not a form of paid leave; the district has the right to designate an employee's absence due to a COVID-19-related absence as an FMLA-qualifying event.