



Midway Star Academy Safe Learning Plan

District #4153

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Midway Star Academy's Safe Learning Plan

Midway Star Academy followed the guidance in Minnesota's [Safe Learning Plan](#) to continue to educate students and keep our community healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Minnesota's Safe Learning Plan was created at the request of Governor Tim Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). The State allows schools to implement different learning models as long as schools take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

This document explains the updated Safe Learning Plan for the 2021-22 School Year and outlines resources and supports that were and are available. The plan presents how Midway Star managed a safe return to in-person learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Reopening our facility for in-person instruction was what we wanted for our students. The main priority continues to be the health, safety and wellness of our students, staff, and community.

After careful analysis and consideration of Midway Star's community, student populations, staff, facility and resources, the school decided on starting with distance learning and then allow students to transition to either the hybrid learning model or the in-person learning model for the 2020-2021 school year.

At the beginning of the school year the distance learning model was the priority. All students participated in online learning for the distance learning plan. This was previously described in the "Midway Star Academy Fall Plan (9/15/20)". The In-Person and Hybrid models were implemented when Midway Star felt it had the proper precautions in place under the guidance of MDE and MDH. Midway Star switched to the Hybrid Model on 9/21/20, back to Distance Learning on 11/10/20, and returned to the Hybrid Model (primarily in-person) under the guidance of MDH on 2/1/21.

The Distance Learning Model at Midway Star Academy

The Distance Learning Plan ensured that all enrolled students had equal access to Midway Star's learning program to continue their education this school year. They received required materials, including technology resources to enable participation and contact with their teachers. Midway Star staff worked normal school hours during this time.

The primary method for student distance learning was through online technologies. All enrolled students received a Chromebook and internet access. We also informed families of free online services and provided flexibility in their access to learning activities in Google Classroom, Seesaw, Imagine Learning, IXL, etc. Any family and student not able to use these resources were provided with printed equivalent materials for students to engage with lessons and learning activities.

Classes were initially conducted through Google Meet, which was familiar to most students from the previous academic year. Students attended virtual classes via Google Meet using a "bell schedule" which resembled a typical school day. Teachers also assigned tasks via Google Classroom (6-8) and Seesaw (K-5).

Teachers and other school staff were (and still are) familiar with our students and work to be culturally responsive and relevant throughout the school year. This practice continued during distant learning interactions with students. Staff roles and responsibilities were configured to support a wide range of student learning needs and activities. Multiple adjustments were achieved to ensure that families and students were supported and engaged for student

learning and achievement. This included services to ELL students, SpEd students and students newly arrived in the USA or this community.

Instructional leadership by Executive Direction Mohamed Warsame, Assistant Director Sam Pfeifer, and Operations Manager Nimco Ali at Midway Star continued as a normal part of schooling. Similar to scheduled classroom visits in the building, the instructional leaders conducted online 'classroom' visits to assess how well the instruction and activities presented in online Classrooms (and other online platforms) addresses the students' needs. Leaders communicated and supported teacher learning and made adjustments to their instruction practices and methods based on evidence and emerging patterns with student learning. School leadership updated the board on the distance learning plan and implementation at board meetings.

During this Distance Learning time Midway Star continued to protect all student and staff information that was to remain non-public. This applied to online resources as well as other media and other kinds of data.

The In-Person Learning Model and the Hybrid Learning Model

From 9/21/20-11/10/20 and again on 2/1/21, Midway Star allowed students to transition to either the Hybrid Learning Model (primarily In-Person). Some families/students decided to remain in distance learning for the remainder of the year. All students still in distance learning received services as described above. The Hybrid Model featured In-Person classes from Monday-Thursday and online classes on Friday.

Students participating within the building must follow safety precautions while in the school facility. This starts with always wearing face coverings as mandated by state officials. The In-Person Learning Model is made as close as possible to the standard program design prior to the start of the pandemic. Some improvements were gained over the program design from before the start of the pandemic. Health and safety specifics modify practices and procedures. See the Health and Safety Procedures section below.

The daily schedule continues with student classes (in-person or online) running Monday through Friday from 7:00AM - 2:30PM. Students are provided transportation to and from school by bus with modifications in practice to meet health and safety requirements. Adjustments are made as appropriate to current regulations and guidelines.

The In-Person Learning Model has students in classes every day. Each student receives their personalized class schedule with their teachers just like the school program did prior to the start of the pandemic. This model includes some blended learning, as before.

The Hybrid Learning Model has students in classes Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday at the same times as students in the In-Person Learning Model. All Midway Star students attend classes remotely on Friday under the Hybrid Learning Model.

Students remaining in the Distance Learning Model continue with established online learning protocols, practices, and schedules.

Families continue to have the option for their children to stay in distance learning from February through the rest of the academic year.

All activities in the school facility must comply with health and safety standards and practices as mandated by the MDH, MDE and Midway Star policies. Adjustments to these practices are

based on changes in requirements and guidance by the authorities. See the Safety and Health section below.

Attendance and Truancy

The Midway Star attendance policies remain unchanged. The Distance Learning plan adapts student attendance and absence as if students were present physically. Specific means for determining attendance are configured for distance learning. Attendance for In-Person learning is the same as prior to the start of the pandemic. Attendance for Hybrid Learning is the same as for distance learning when away from the facility and the same as In-person learning when in the facility.

All Staff are required to contact and communicate with students daily. Teachers have scheduled times to collaborate with students, primarily through the daily class schedule and designated office hours. Then each staff person updates daily student attendance rosters based on evidence of student logins online, phone calls and in-person class rosters.

Teachers document student engagement as measured by participation in online class/learning activities and in-person class activities. All students must connect with instructors directly or through the learning platform for each assignment in order to be counted for attendance and credit. For students that we find that are not engaging, staff conduct additional outreach efforts that might include delivery of additional support systems or modified learning activities. Students who do not complete online tasks on time are considered “absent” for those days. Per MDE, these absences are counted as truant.

Special Education Services - IEP or 504 Plan

Each student with an IEP receives appropriate services to the degree possible through the distance learning program and/or in-person services with teachers and paraprofessionals. Each student’s IEP is monitored and the appropriate teacher works with the student through customized assignments, phone calls and conversations with others who support the student’s learning and learning plan. Schedules with families help to ensure good communication by phone or web-based media. This helps students receive their IEP-allocated minutes of support. Progress is assessed through appropriate weekly assessments. For students that are not engaging, we will conduct additional outreach efforts that might include delivery of additional support systems or more hands on learning activities.

IEP Meetings are scheduled and then conducted through the most appropriate means.

Documentation is created and stored in the normal ways and secure digital versions are made available to anyone party to IEP plans.

English Learners

For English Language (EL) Learners, Midway Star’s EL services provide targeted services to students depending on their WIDA levels, as determined by the ACCESS test, as well as their overall cognitive academic language proficiency as determined by NWEA, MCA, and internal metrics such as their quarterly writing projects. EL teachers continue to provide instruction to students and support these students in their general education classes by assisting with differentiation and language supports for each student.

Health & Safety Procedures

For students and staff involved with the In-Person and Hybrid learning models specific health and safety protocols and practices are required for activities in the school facility and on bus transportation. These practices are adjusted based on current guidance and regulations from the MDH, MDE, and Midway Star Administration. All practices are in place to protect the health and safety of students, staff, and their families.

Facility Entrance and Movement within the Facility

Following are the expected procedures to be followed by students and staff relating to school entrance and movements while in the school or on school transportation. These requirements may be disbanded or modified by the MDH and MDE as the COVID-19 situation improves locally and in the state.

- People arriving to the school facility get their temperature taken, sign in, and answer relevant questions pertaining to possible exposure to or symptoms of COVID-19.
- Daily health screening is conducted by the school for all students and staff prior to entering the school building.
 - Temperature check is conducted.
 - Anyone with an elevated temperature is directed to an isolation area for additional screening.
 - Students and staff are to remain in the isolation area until they are rescreened and either cleared to enter or they go home.
 - Students that are dropped off must enter through the main entrance.
- Parents/Guardians are required to conduct a wellness screening of their child before sending them to school. Please keep sick children home.
 - Temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when taken by mouth;
 - Sore throat;
 - Uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline);
 - Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain; or
 - Onset of emerging or severe headache, especially with a fever.
- The school prioritizes for school staff to receive COVID-19 testing every other week as much as is feasible. This practice may be modified as guidelines are relaxed by authorities.
- Non-essential visitors **are not** allowed into the school building. Parents seeking to visit please make prearrangements to do so.
- Large group activities are prohibited until state guidelines allow resumption. Specific restrictions may still apply and be communicated to staff, families, and others.
- Cloth masks and/or face shields are required to be worn by all staff, students and any visitors while entering and while within the building and while traveling on a school bus or contracted vehicle. This rule shall continue through the end of the 2020-2021 school year.
 - The school provides students and staff with disposable masks upon request.
 - Students and staff may choose to supply their own face covering provided it meets the COVID safety guidelines.
- Hand wash and sanitize as much as possible.
- Social Distancing for students and adults of six feet of distancing, as much as possible.

- When vaccination rates and local/county infection rates allow then the relaxation of restrictions adjustments are to be made according to new guidance from the MDH and MDE. This is determined in part by the 14 day average of county infection rates, expressed as infections per 10,000 people. If the rate is below 10/10,000 and not rising the restrictions can be fully relaxed.
- Exceptions may apply to mask wearing during physical education or when eating/drinking. However, the school may consider if doing these activities without masks is a significant risk factor to people's health and safety. If the situation is too risky these activities may not be allowed at all.

Bus Transportation:

Following is expected procedures to be followed by students and staff relating to school transportation by School Bus or Type 3 vehicle related to In-Person and Hybrid Learning. The goal is to meet 50% capacity spacing in vehicles.

- No passengers in the seat directly behind the driver.
- Assigned seating required.
 - Students sit in alternating rows leaving an empty row between riders.
 - Students either sit alone or as a household.
 - Students are required to remain in their assigned seats the whole route.
- Bus loads back to front and unloads front to back.
- Masks are required to be worn by staff and students while on the bus.
- No eating or drinking while on the bus.
- Use hand sanitizer upon entry.
- Staff monitors direct students to wear masks & stay in assigned seats.
- Students are restricted to their assigned route only.
- Containing students in pods reduces the risk of exposure.
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for alternative transportation arrangements.
- Buses are sanitized between routes.

Procedures for COVID-19 exposure scenarios of students and staff

Isolation and re-admittance procedures for positive COVID cases - following MDH procedures.

- Parent/Guardian is responsible for reporting to the school of any symptoms in their students or possible COVID-19 exposure.
- If the school is notified of a positive COVID case of a student or staff member this information is shared with MDH.
- Person's name and phone number. Date first developed symptoms.
- If not symptomatic, the date they were tested and why they were tested.
- Date the person last attended school.
- MDH uses this information to determine any exposures (close contacts) that may have occurred in a school setting.
- Close contact is anyone who was within 6 feet of the person who is sick while they were considered to be infectious, for 15 minutes or more (regardless of whether either person wore a cloth face covering or face shield).

- Midway Star sends notice to all identified close contacts of their exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with state and federal law. The MDH follow-up team provides an exclusion letter and a fact sheet that the school is asked to give to all close contacts.
- MDH then evaluates next steps and provides guidance. The evaluation takes into account the information available, with a focus on those who might be considered close contacts if the person was onsite during their infectious period. MDH consider the following items to inform a recommended plan of action:
 - How long was the person on site while potentially infectious?
 - Whom did that person come in contact with?
 - Was that person with a closed group in one classroom?
 - Was that person or classroom mixing with other people or classrooms?
 - Was there intermixing between groups or classrooms?
- MDH recommendations depend on the extent of the exposure and what mitigation measures were in place at the time of exposure and may include:
 - Notifications sent to staff and families to alert them of a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school community.
 - Exclusion of close contacts, which involves requiring close contacts to stay home for 14 days.
 - Closing an entire classroom or school setting for 14 days. This depends on the extent of exposure and whether there is the possibility of ongoing transmission.
 - Take no further action.
- If a household member of a child is diagnosed with COVID-19, the child is considered a close contact and needs to be excluded from school and needs to stay at home for 14 days from the date of their last exposure to the household member.
 - Children do not represent an exposure risk within your setting solely because their parent tested positive, as long as the child has not had any symptoms.
 - If you have been able to limit the amount of time the household member has been in your setting and there was limited interaction with others, there is a good chance no one would be considered a close contact, and therefore nothing needs to be done.
 - MDH doesn't require programs to send a general notification of a positive case in this situation.
- Vaccinations and COVID exposure - If you have been fully vaccinated and been exposed to someone that has tested POSITIVE, you DO NOT have to quarantine as long as it has been more than 14 days since you've received your last vaccine (per our school nurse, CDC and MDH).

Classroom Safety: Following guidance is the expected procedures to be followed by students and staff relating to classroom safety management while attending In-Person. These may change during the course of the year as we learn more about the spread of the virus.

- Desks are to be spaced preferably 6 feet apart as possible. Students are given assigned seats, facing the same direction.
- Use hand sanitizer upon entry into the room.
- Wash hands frequently for 20 seconds with soap & water.
- Teachers frequently sanitize touched surfaces (desks, chairs, knobs).

- Masks are required to be worn by staff and students while in the school building and outdoors when 6 feet social distance cannot be maintained.
 - Students are to be provided with a mask for use in school.
 - Adjustments to social distancing requirements are communicated if and when authorities validate these changes.
- Rooms are cleaned and disinfected each evening.
- Student groups are staggered for the timing of transfers, bathroom breaks and recess to reduce mingling of student groups.

Students are to follow social distancing while in school.

- Remain 6 feet apart while in lines unless different distances are recommended.
- Follow directional marks while in hallways and the cafeteria.
- Follow a road-like traffic flow while in the hallways, always staying to the right.

Facility Sanitation - Following CDC guidance is the expected procedures to be followed by staff relating to facility safety management while attending In-Person.

- Extra sanitizing in bathrooms and communal areas is done during the day.
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- Guidelines for classroom sanitation procedures by teachers and staff.
 - Desktops, door & sink handles and other frequently used surfaces are to be sanitized minimum of twice daily and/or between new student groups.
- Signage related to COVID-19 health & safety has been posted.
 - Entrance doors, symptoms of illness and face masks are required.
 - Social distance & hand washing reminder signage is prevalent throughout the building.
 - Flow and spacing indicators for social distancing placed on floors.

Facility

Physical changes to facilities to follow to provide safety.

- In-Door Air Quality has been checked and meets approved air flow and filter recommendations.
- Added safety shield barriers where needed.

Food Service

- All students are eligible to receive meals.
- Meal service continues regardless of the learning model students are in. Students in Distance Learning can select if they want school meals or they can opt out of school meals while at home. The school deliver meals to the student's house when requested.

Students in In-School Learning receive meals according to published meal serving times and plans. Specifics on meal serving, locations, and times may be adjusted based on social distancing requirements.

Students Experiencing Homelessness or Housing Instability

Homeless students are given the same support as all the other students. As well, school resources, materials, food, and teacher contact are to be provided without any limitations. Should there be any barriers to meeting these needs and requirements Midway Star staff work to creatively enable homeless students to continue effective and equal access to learning during the school year, no matter which learning model they are in.

Assessment

All classes - especially Math, Science, Social Studies, and English - have integrated or appropriately prepared assessments. This may be through online assessments (such as Seesaw, Imagine Learning, IXL, etc.), through assignments and grading, or through summative assessments such as NWEA's MAP assessments. These assessments allow students and teachers to track student standards-based proficiencies.

Some platforms and curricula provide dashboard metrics that allow students and teachers to track students' standards-based growth and proficiencies. These assessments are used to inform teacher instruction practices, teaching for targeted needs, and delivering feedback to students and parents on student progress.

Staff

Prior to the transition to distance learning, most of Midway Star teachers had experience in a blended learning model. In March 2020, all staff received professional development to fully transition the 2020 spring term curriculum and plans with supplemental resources into Google Classroom. In August 2020, all staff received similar professional development in Seesaw. This was successfully completed. Ongoing improvements with professional development will continue resulting in a more robust program adapted to distance learning and in-person/hybrid learning.

Communications

Midway Star now has expanded and resilient communications with parents, students, and the community as a result of the work done since a year ago. Midway Star staff will communicate with parents, students, and the community about the distance learning model in several ways: Through the Midway Star Website, mailings, emails, text, WhatsApp, and phone calls to parents. Students still receive communications by email and online platforms. Vendors and community partners receive communication from the website, by email, mail, and phone calls. The community is able to track plans and events on the website. Staff and school leadership regularly receive input, feedback and requests from parents and students and provide prompt responses. Interpreter staff are all active to reach families to support them and inform them of any news or adjustments that come from the administration, board, local and national agencies.

The school tracks all relevant updates from the state of MN, CDC, and St. Paul departments. Relevant conference calls or webinars are attended. Updated lists and descriptions of resources that are available to our community are maintained on our website, which is assessable online.

The school communicates with authorities, including its authorizer, IQS, about the state of the school and needs that emerge. Should any staff or students become infected with Coronavirus the school will notify the MDE and MDH and appropriate personnel and agencies

as required by then current orders. Midway Star will follow up based on instruction from the agencies.

Midway Star posts on its website information regarding homelessness and the McKinney-Vento Act. When a student or family become homeless or have unstable housing Midway Star asks them to communicate with the school about this. As stated earlier in the plan, Midway Star will work to provide information and collaboration with local organizations prepared to support family and student housing needs.

Tribal Considerations

Should any student enroll at Midway Star who is registered as a member of a Native American tribe, Midway Star communicates and coordinates with the Tribal authority or representative to support those students and tribe considerations. Midway Star is also culturally respectful and responsive to students reporting as American Indian and Alaska Native but not officially registered with a tribe.

Before and After Care

Midway Star has not provided before or after school programming and there will not be before or after school programming unless approved by MDH, MDE and the Midway Star Board of Directors. All school extracurricular activities are put on hold for the meantime.

Services

Care for Children of Families of Emergency Workers

Midway Star is committed to support our community's efforts to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Governor has required schools to support children of qualified emergency workers ages 12 and under. Since Midway Star serves students in grades K-8 this requirement does apply to Midway Star. If a family member is a qualified emergency worker and there is a need for her/his child for care, please contact the school and we will help meet your need.

Should there be students 12 and under at Midway Star whose parent is a qualified emergency worker and transportation is needed Midway Star will arrange COVID-19 compliant transportation for those children. Should the state require Midway Star to provide before and/or after school care for children of qualified emergency workers Midway Star will arrange such care for those children.

Plans must be translated and communicated in written and oral languages based on the needs of each community.

More information from the MDE

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/health/covid19/mde034139>