

MORTON DISTRICT 709

Return to School Plan

Fall 2020

Safe Classrooms, Successful Outcomes



Lifelong Learning!

Document prepared and presented by

Morton Unit School District 709

Board of Education and the Administrative Team

Safe Classrooms, Successful Outcomes

Rationale

Morton District 709 will return to school in Fall 2020 as safely and as normally as possible. Our approach to reopening schools uses guidance from:

- ▶ [Restore Illinois Plan - IDPH](#)
- ▶ [Starting the 2020-21 School Year - ISBE](#)
- ▶ [Covid-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry - American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

In following these guidelines, we ensure appropriate adherence to safety protocols in a controlled environment while preserving our priorities of in-person instruction, safety for students and staff, and supporting our community as families balance returning to work with supporting their children.



Priorities

In returning to school safely and normally, Morton District 709 has identified the following priorities to guide our planning as we return to school:



- 1 Safety Precautions for Students/Staff**
Providing an environment that promotes the safety of our students and staff is our top priority.



- 2 High-Quality Educational Experience**
Providing an environment that promotes the high-quality educational experience found at Morton District 709.



- 3 Supporting our Community**
Providing an environment that promotes a sense of normality and continuity for our families.

Safety Precautions for Students/Staff:

Morton District 709 seeks to balance reasonable safety precautions with a positive, productive learning environment. While District 709 cannot eliminate the risk of COVID-19, our strategies are designed to mitigate that risk.

Strategies for mitigating risk:

Before sending students to school each day, it is imperative that parents make sure that their children are fever free and not exhibiting symptoms of COVID. Parents are encouraged during this time to be overly cautious when considering whether or not to send a child to school.



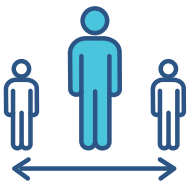
Health/Wellness/Temperature checks for each student daily/ self-certification for staff daily — Students will have their temperature taken at school each day. Students with a temperature of over 100.4 degrees will wait with school personnel for parents to pick them up.



Medically fragile students and staff — Individual students and staff with medical concerns will be afforded the opportunity to remotely learn/and work as able. Students and staff will work with school administration and appropriate health officials to determine the length of time for remote learning/work.



Educating students, staff, and parents — Each school will be promoting healthy habits that prevent the spread of COVID19, such as hand washing, not touching your face, and staying home when you are not feeling well, physical distancing, and wearing face coverings.



Physical distancing when feasible — Morton District 709 has prioritized in-person instruction in combination with a variety of mitigation strategies as mentioned in this document. Physical distancing efforts will take place in classrooms, hallways, cafeterias, and gymnasiums. Students will utilize individual desks when possible. Hallway traffic will be directed by school personnel, and lunch will be broken up in small sections so physical distance can be maintained.



Face coverings: Requirement — As required by the IDPH, face coverings are required for all individuals when they are in the building except during lunch/snack/water breaks and band. Students that don't adhere to the requirement (except for one of the allowed exceptions) will be disciplined according to the handbook, and appropriate to their age/cognitive ability.

Face coverings: Exceptions — The IDPH allows for certain exceptions to the mandatory wearing of facemasks in the building (in addition to lunch/snack/water break and band)

- ▶ Individuals that have a medical contraindication. (Requires a doctor's note)
- ▶ Individuals under the age of 2, have trouble breathing, or are unconscious, incapacitated, or unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
- ▶ Instructors who need facial visualization for instruction and communication. In these instances, face shields can be used, but there must be a 6-ft distance maintained.
- ▶ Outside of the building, when physical distancing can be maintained.



Face coverings: Breaks — Wearing a mask for a full day can be difficult. Schools will provide breaks for students from their masks using physical distancing and outside areas.



Sanitizing — Each classroom, restroom, locker room, hallway, cafeteria, and gym will be sanitized daily. Supplies for sanitizing workspaces instructional tools will be provided so that staff and students can sanitize throughout the day when appropriate.

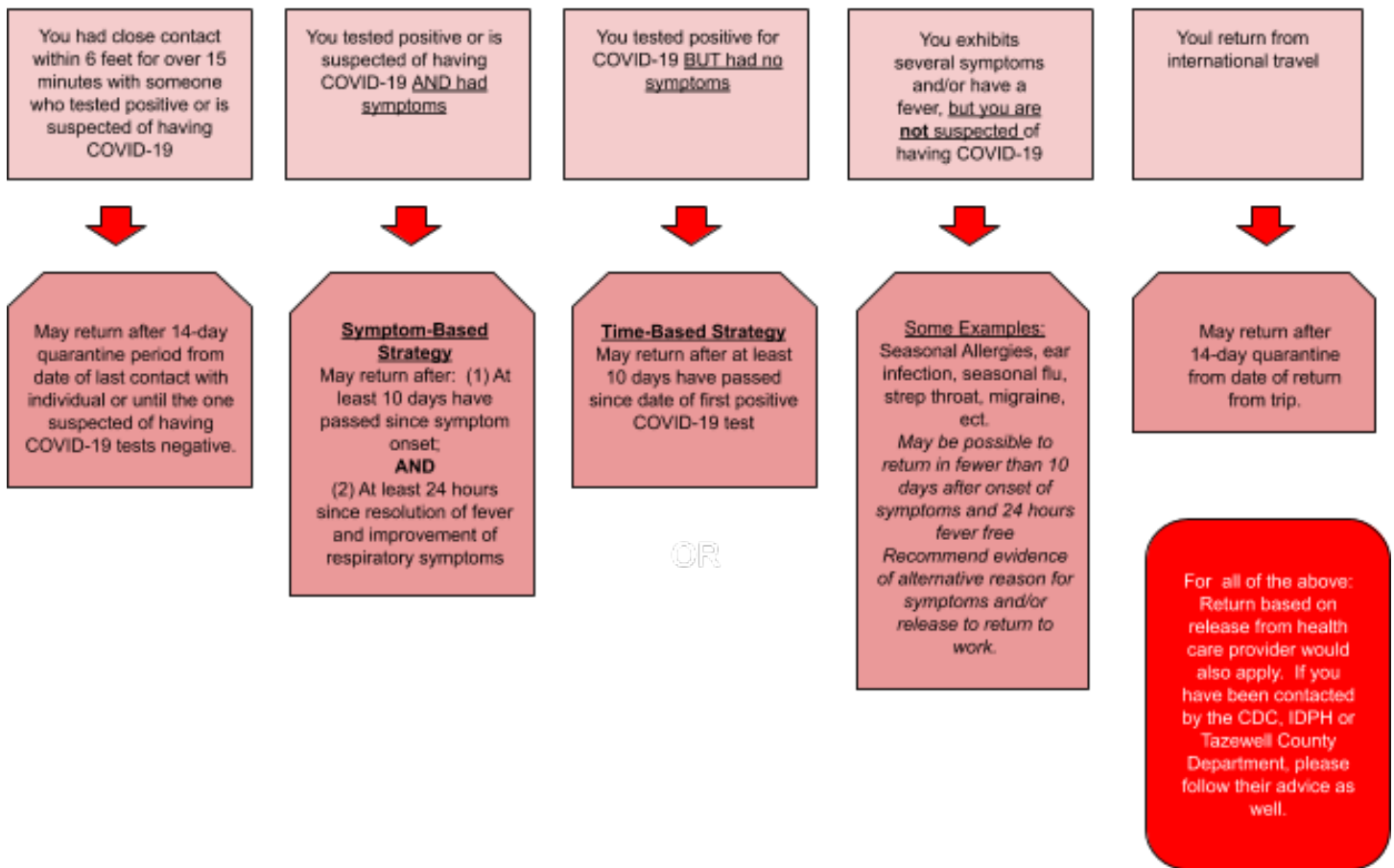


Tracking — In order to isolate incidents, the district will track students' daily contacts with assigned seating on buses and in classes.

Outbreak Protocols and Closures

Morton District 709 will be closely monitoring student health including assessing student illness, sending students home from school, and notifying others of possible significant exposure. Based on the health of our students and staff, decisions will be made regarding if it is advisable for schools/classes to continue in-person instruction or move to remote instruction.

RETURN TO SCHOOL FLOWCHART FOLLOWING A COVID-19 RELATED ABSENCE



High-Quality Education Experience

In this time of great uncertainty, District 709 believes that in order to provide the highest quality education experience, classes must use a combination of in-person and remote learning. In-person instruction is the most effective and therefore our highest priority. In-person instruction allows our staff to use the full range of curriculum materials and pedagogical tools. However, there are times and situations when remote learning will be necessary.

Remote Learning

In addition to a school-wide or district-wide closure, there are three possible situations when an individual student could receive remote learning instruction.



1. Medically Fragile Student: A medically fragile student may receive permission to receive remote learning instruction for a semester or a full year at a time. The parent must provide the school with a doctor's note indicating that a student has a qualifying medical condition that puts the student at a higher risk of being more negatively affected by the COVID virus.

2. Extended Illness: A student may receive permission to receive remote learning instruction if he/she is sick for three or more days for any reason, whether it is COVID-related or not. A doctor's note is required to activate remote learning instruction.

3. Healthy Quarantine: A student may receive permission to receive remote learning instruction if there is a legitimate need for the student to be quarantined as a healthy individual. A healthy quarantine may be initiated by either the school or a parent.

▶ **School-Initiated:** When the school is requiring a student to quarantine at home due to exposure at school or identification of a number of specific COVID symptoms.

▶ **Parent-Initiated:** Remote learning for a parent-initiated, healthy quarantine requires a parent to complete a form explaining one of the below qualifications, the specific circumstances, and the expected or requested duration of the quarantine.

- ▷ When the student is self-quarantining at home for more than three days out of an abundance of caution after exposure to another person outside of school who has the COVID virus.
- ▷ When there is a medically fragile individual in the same household as the student who would be put in great danger if the student were to attend school.
- ▷ When a request has been made by a parent and approved by the administration. Approval must be granted for one full semester of the school year at a time and must be renewed each subsequent semester.

Attendance and Grading Procedures: Attendance and grading procedures for remote learning will parallel in-person instruction procedures with a few exceptions. Specific details regarding Remote Learning can be found in District 709's Remote Learning plan.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Morton District 709 is a member of the IHSA. As such we will follow IHSA's guidance that has been developed in conjunction with IDPH. IHSA will be in Phase 4 of implementation when Illinois moves into Phase 4. To ensure the safety of all students, coaches and sponsors will be following the protocols set forth by IHSA.

Music

Music classes will adhere to the same policies as other classes with the exception of the band. In band class, masks will not be worn by students who need to play wind instruments. Outside areas and smaller sections will be used when feasible to provide for physical distancing.



PE

PE classes will use outside areas as much as weather permits. At the junior and senior high, changing into PE clothes will only be done when feasible and necessary.

Special Education/RTI

Meeting the needs of our students who need additional support is a high priority and a challenge to do in a remote learning environment. Therefore, even in times of mandated remote learning, District 709 will seek to provide safe, in-person instruction to facilitate the attainment of each students' personal learning goals.

Student Support

Morton 709 is committed to supporting the needs of all students, staff, and families. Support may be needed for academic success, technical support, or social-emotional needs. If you need support of any kind, contact the office at your student's building.



District Procedures

Arrival/Departure

Space will be made available for students to physically distance when they arrive at school in the morning and are waiting for classes to start. In the afternoon, traffic patterns and limiting when possible the students leaving at the same time will provide for physical distancing.

Lunch

Cafeterias will have no more than 50 students at a time and physically distanced as much as possible. Other locations for lunch may be used as well. Tables will be disinfected between each lunch period. Cafeterias may use disposable plates and dinnerware and utilize pre-packaged foods as much as possible. Open salad bars and other exposed food will be eliminated.

Passing Periods

Buildings will promote physically distancing during passing periods by creating traffic patterns and limiting where possible the number of students in the hallways.

Transportation

When possible, we'd encourage students to use alternative methods of transportation to get to and from school. When not possible, we will limit seating on the bus, open windows as weather permits, and require the wearing of masks.

Visitors

In order to minimize the number of people in our buildings, and maximize the amount of space we have to physically distance, visitors will be limited by the building principal. Any visitor that is approved will need to adhere to all the same rules and regulations as our staff and students.

References

- ▶ [Updated Summer School and Other Allowable Activities](#)
- ▶ [ISBE Summer School Key Elements](#)
- ▶ [Legitimate Safety Precautions for Students/Staff](#)
- ▶ [Community Mitigation Strategies - CDC](#)

