

DRAFT

MORTON DISTRICT 709

Back to School!



Fall 2021

Morton District 709 Parents,

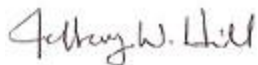
The 2020-21 school year was unprecedented in a number of ways. For Morton District 709 it saw our teachers, students, administrators, staff and community pull together like never before to ensure our students had in person learning for the entire school year. We are thankful for everyone's effort and recognize that it took all of us to make it happen!

Our efforts for the coming year included our continued advocacy through our state organizations and legislators for local control. Hundreds of school districts throughout the state participated in the #MakeitLocal twitter campaign to emphasize that school districts needed the flexibility to make decisions that best served the communities that they represent. We need that flexibility to provide in-person learning that allows us to get back to the instructional strategies and educational opportunities that create the deepest learning possible for our students.

As we look forward to the 2021-22 school year we find ourselves in familiar territory. We realize that COVID 19 is something we will continue to live with for the near future, and need to do so without sacrificing the quality of educational opportunities our students deserve. Because of our success in 2020-21 and the commitment of the Morton 709 community we are confident we have the necessary tools to take the next step toward a normal school year. We are happy to announce that for the 2021-22 school year we will be back to most of our regular routines regarding lunch, PE, music and other educational opportunities.

Should the rate of transmission of COVID-19 in our schools increase to certain levels, we have a tiered plan for mitigation outlined below. Just like last year, your diligence in sending healthy students to school will be of the utmost importance.

We are looking forward to the upcoming year and appreciate your support of Morton 709!



Morton District 709 Superintendent

Level 1 Status Defined

Morton CUSD 709 is defining the current state of local COVID infection as Level 1 and will be implementing several general mitigation strategies to provide as safe a school environment as possible while providing in-person learning that is as close to normal as possible. While District 709 cannot eliminate the risk of COVID-19, our strategies are designed to mitigate that risk.

The following are the general Level 1 Mitigation Strategies that the district will implement throughout the entire 2021-22 school year. However, if the local infection rate increases substantially, the district may implement one or more of the additional mitigation strategies articulated under Level 2.

Parent/Guardian Rights and Responsibilities

Prevention:

Preventing the spread of COVID begins at home. Parents are encouraged to be overly cautious when considering whether or not to send a child to school. Before sending students to school each day, parents need to make sure that their children are:

- Fever-free
- Not exhibiting any symptoms of COVID
- Not waiting on the results from a COVID test

Communication:

Parents whose child is positive with COVID must complete the district form that is located on the district website. [\(LINK\)](#) This form will be automatically sent to the school principal and nurse.

Vaccination:

The district views the vaccination status of students and staff as private information. However, the district may have to require proof of vaccination for students in order to allow them to avoid certain mitigation strategies, such as healthy quarantining.

The district will not pressure parents to have their children vaccinated, and as vaccines become more available for children of all ages, the district respects the authority of parents to make those decisions for their children. Parents who are interested can visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find out where they can get their children vaccinated in our community.

District Level 1 Mitigation Strategies

Disinfection:

Hand washing: Teachers will continue to encourage students to wash their hands regularly and will provide time during the day to do so.

Cleaning Surfaces: Common surfaces and desks will be sanitized on a daily basis by custodial staff.

Masks:

While the CDC recommends that unvaccinated students wear masks, Morton District 709 is leaving the decision to parents as to whether or not their students should wear a mask while inside the school buildings. Below is a summary of where masks are required or optional:

Buses: Masks are required for all students while riding the bus.

Inside the School Buildings: Masks are optional for all students and staff members, regardless of vaccination or immunity status.

Athletics: Mask regulations will be determined by the IHSA and IESA and may differ for indoor and outdoor activities..

Distancing:

The CDC recommends that students remain distanced by at least three feet, while maintaining as normal a learning experience as possible. There will be times, however, when students may be closer, such as during lunches, in hallways, and during some instructional and extra-curricular activities. All classrooms will have seating charts with seats as far apart as reasonably possible.

Quarantines:

Healthy Quarantines: There are no healthy quarantines under level 1, except for those who are living in the same household with a positive case and are neither vaccinated nor immune.

Symptomatic Quarantines: The schools will identify and notify those students who were in close contact with a positive case, defined as being within 3 feet for over 15 minutes. Parents will be alerted of the close contact, but students and staff will only be quarantined for 10 days from the point of contact if they exhibit COVID symptoms. The school nurse will screen students and staff for symptoms to determine whether or not they must quarantine. Students and staff may return from quarantine earlier than 10 days if they provide evidence of a negative test result of any type or receive a written alternative diagnosis from a doctor.

Visitors:

We will allow visitors to come to our schools again under normal, pre-Covid guidelines.

Level 2 Mitigation Strategies

In the event of a significant increase in COVID infections, additional mitigation strategies beyond Level 1 may be implemented in a single classroom, a single grade level, a single school, or the entire school district. The decision to increase mitigation strategies will be dependent upon school, community, and county-wide metrics. Below are some examples of potential Increased mitigation strategies that may need to be implemented in the event of increased spread of COVID.

Masking:

Students and staff may be required to wear masks, temporarily or permanently, regardless of vaccination or immunity status, within a particular part of the district.

Distancing:

The school administration may need to limit the frequency of group gatherings and/or limit the number of people allowed in one space. Distancing during lunch may need to increase, which may lead to the need to add additional lunch periods. In the classroom and during activities, we may need to reduce or eliminate the times when students would normally be within 3 feet or less of one another.

Quarantining:

Healthy quarantines may be used in circumstances involving close contacts, even when the students and staff are not exhibiting symptoms. This may even include those who are vaccinated or are considered immune.

Group Quarantining:

In severe cases, there may be a need to temporarily quarantine whole elementary classrooms of students or other self-contained classes at the JH or HS. This could include an entire grade level within a building or the entire school building. Temporary remote learning will be provided to the students in these situations.

Visitors:

We may limit or eliminate unnecessary visitors from entering our schools as we did in 2020-21.

Remote Learning

The use of Remote Learning will be limited in accordance with ISBE's declaration:

"Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, all schools must resume fully in-person learning for all student attendance days, provided that, pursuant to [105 ILCS 5/10-30](#) and [105 ILCS 5/34-18.66](#), remote instruction be made available for students who have not received a COVID-19 vaccine or who are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, only while they are under quarantine consistent with guidance or requirements from a local public health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health."

Students that are absent due to medical reasons will be able to stay connected to their classes in different ways, depending on the duration of the absence. Teachers will work with students to provide the best possible accommodations based on the individual details related to the absence. All of these accommodations do not apply to voluntary absences.

- Short term absences (less than 3-days). Students can find class assignments through Schoology.
- Longer absences (Up to 2-weeks). In addition to accessing work through Schoology, students will also be able to utilize temporary remote learning with their teacher(s).
- Long term absences (More than 2-weeks). Educational resources will need to be accessed through [Home/Hospital Instruction](#).

Students with Disabilities

Parents of students who need accommodations, modifications, or assistance related to COVID-19 safety protocols, disabilities, underlying medical conditions, or weakened immune systems should contact their student's case manager to discuss his/her need(s).

Students that are medically unable to attend for an extended period of time will need to follow the procedures for home/hospital services pursuant to [105 ILCS 5/14-13.0](#).

[Home/Hospital Instruction](#)