

As we prepare for the return of students this fall, the SWWC Educational Learning Centers (ELCs) remain committed to providing students with vital educational services. Our administrative team has been meeting regularly and is closely monitoring and following state and local recommendations, including those from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Health and Human Services (DHS), the Commissioner of Education and the Governor.

We have several plans in place to ensure our ELCs continue to be a safe and healthy place to learn and work. When determining which method of delivery to apply, SWWC administrators will use data and advice from experts to implement the option that is most feasible, practical and will best meet the needs of students and staff while keeping them safe. We need the cooperation of our learning communities to limit contact between individuals and to minimize exposure.

SWWC has identified a COVID-19 Coordinator who will be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns and will help coordinate with the local authorities regarding COVID-19 cases.

SWWC CONTACT INFORMATION

Individuals can use the contact information below for questions or concerns related to COVID-19 or to report if an individual or their student has symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or had close exposure to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.

All inquiries and reports will be handled in a manner that is consistent with applicable law and privacy policies, including with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Morgan Litzau, School Nurse

COVID-19 Coordinator

Phone: 320-877-7074, ext. 2419

Email: morgan.litzau@swwc.org

Abby Polzine, Director of Human Resources

COVID-19 Coordinator

Phone: 507-537-2243

Email: abby.polzine@swwc.org

SUPPORTS FOR EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH WELL-BEING

As the stress from the pandemic has continued, the rates of depression, anxiety and traumatic experiences have increased and threaten to have long-lasting negative impacts on the body and the brain. To meet the needs of families, students and staff, SWWC has and will continue to work on the following to provide ongoing services in a safe and effective manner:

- SWWC staff will maintain weekly contact with families in order to identify strengths and assess challenging areas.
- If the family is participating in outside mental health services, SWWC staff will make regular contact (as permitted through valid Release of Information on file) with the provider in order to coordinate care. If appropriate, staff will make referrals and assist the family in obtaining additional support.
- SWWC staff will share evidence-based mental health resources and supports with families through telephone calls and in paper form with all being served. Electronic dissemination of information will be available via online meetings and email. The information to be accessed will include providers who are available in the community in which the family resides, as well as statewide and national hotlines, printed materials and websites.
- SWWC will collaborate with county agencies, community mental health centers, private providers and Greater Minnesota Family Services for referrals and ongoing case management.
- In the event that a student is not connected to a mental health provider, SWWC staff will discuss referral options with the parent/guardian. If the family wishes to pursue services, staff will provide them with the names, telephone numbers and addresses of all public and private providers in the child's community.
- If a family is uninsured or underinsured, SWWC staff will provide the parent/guardian with the telephone number, physical address and website to their local county social service agency income maintenance division.
- SWWC will provide families with evidence-based resources regarding discussing COVID-19 with children. Resources are available on the SWWC website.
- School-based mental health supports are available at all six ELC sites through Greater Minnesota Family Services. These practitioners become familiar faces within our setting and provide care in a professional, non-disruptive manner.
- SWWC staff will provide students and parents with recommendations for wellness and social activities and opportunities as part of social skills instruction.

For further inquiries and supports, individuals can contact:

Rachel Cox Raverty, Mental Health Consultant

Office: 507-831-6935, ext. 1836

Email: rachel.coxraverty@swwc.org

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) directed school districts to develop learning plans that describe the conditions for learning and address students’ and educators’ basic physical safety needs, including the emotional and environmental factors that can impact educators’ capacity to teach and students’ capacity to learn.

The SWWC Educational Learning Centers provide special education and individualized services to students with unique needs, in specialized environments for learning. Individualized Education Programs (IEP) will continue to be implemented while school is in session. SWWC will continue to provide highly effective instruction using evidence based practices and effective curriculum.

When determining which option to use, Site Administrators will:

- Coordinate with district and county health services where ELC building is located.
 - o ELC – Pipestone will coordinate with Pipestone Area Schools.
- Review the county data where students reside. In the event a high number of students come from one county that is adjacent to the county where the ELC building is located, consideration will be given to that county’s COVID-19 case count.
- Involve SWWC’s School Nurse, Morgan Litzau, in reviewing data and assisting with making recommendations.
- Submit option selection for review to the Deputy Executive Director, who will then present to the Executive Director for final approval and submission to the MDE Portal.
- Develop and engage a site Learning Model Advisory Council to monitor the community and school-level impact of COVID 19 on a regular basis. Adjustments to the learning model will be in a recommendation to the Executive Director.

OPTION 1: IN-PERSON

In-person learning will be similar to a regular school day, to the extent possible, while implementing the required guidance from the MDE and MDH. A regular school day schedule will be followed. All students and staff will return to the school building.

While providing instruction with an in-person delivery format, the ELCs will create as much space between students and teachers as is feasible during the day, but will not be held strictly to enforcing 6-feet of social distancing during primary instructional time in the classroom. Masks and/or face shields will be required.

OPTION 2: IN PERSON ELEMENTARY; HYBRID LEARNING SECONDARY

In-person and a hybrid blend will be used and person-to-person contact will be minimized. Under a blended in-person and hybrid instruction model, the ELCs will limit the overall number of people at each site and on all transportation vehicles to a maximum of 50 percent occupancy. Social distancing with at least 6-feet between individuals will occur at all times. All staff and students will be required to wear face masks or face shields. Under option 2 delivery, all staff will report to the site and students will be assigned to a “group” and will follow the schedule below:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Elementary <i>K-Grade 5</i>	In-Person	In-Person	In-Person	In-Person	In-Person
GROUP A <i>Grades 6-8</i>	In-Person	In-Person	Distance	Distance	In-Person
GROUP B <i>Grades 9-12</i>	Distance	Distance	In-Person	In-Person	Distance

OPTION 3: HYBRID LEARNING FOR ALL

Hybrid learning for all students will be used and person-to-person contact will be minimized. The ELCs will limit the overall number of people at each site and on all transportation vehicles to a maximum of 50 percent occupancy. Social distancing with at least 6-feet between individuals will occur at all times. All staff and students will be required to wear face masks or face shields.

When providing instruction under option 3, all staff will report to the site and students will be assigned to a “group” and will follow the schedule below:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Elementary <i>K-Grade 5</i>	In-Person	Distance	In-Person	Distance	In-Person
GROUP A <i>Grades 6-12</i>	Distance	In-Person	Distance	In-Person	Distance

OPTION 4: HYBRID LEARNING ELEMENTARY, DISTANCE LEARNING SECONDARY

Hybrid for elementary (K-5) and distance learning for secondary (6-12) will be used and the ELCs will limit the overall number of people at each site and on all transportation vehicles to a maximum of 50 percent occupancy. Social distancing with at least 6-feet between individuals will occur at all times. All staff and students will be required to wear face masks or face shields.

When providing instruction under option 4, staff will report to the site and students will be assigned to a “group” and will follow the schedule below:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Elementary <i>K-Grade 5</i>	In-Person	Distance	In-Person	Distance	In-Person
GROUP A <i>Grades 6-12</i>	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance	Distance

OPTION 5: DISTANCE LEARNING FOR ALL

Distance learning will be used as the severity of infection risk is so significant that in-person contact between school service providers and students must be minimized as much as possible until the risk is reduced and schools are adequately prepared to provide a safe environment for both students and staff. ELC staff will be allowed to deliver instruction from home when possible. If staff are on site, social distancing with at least 6-feet between individuals will occur at all times. All staff will be required to wear face masks or face shields.

SWWC recognizes that not all students have access to technology or adequate internet connectivity. As such, when students are in distance learning, learners will access materials through packets and similar learning materials as a primary means of instruction. SWWC will provide materials to students through mail and/or staff will deliver and pick up materials. In some cases, the use of technology and internet will be used as a means of delivering instruction. In those cases, SWWC will work with families to ensure they have the resources needed to receive this instruction.

SWWC spent time this summer revising and improving its distance learning practices. Specific disciplines developed in-depth plans to address the unique characteristics of their discipline. Staff will be provided access to those plans and will be provided support with implementation.

DISTANCE LEARNING OPTION FOR ALL

All parents will be able to select a distance learning plan for their child(ren). Parents should contact the Site Administrator to set up distance learning.

HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS

According to the CDC, everyone is at risk for getting COVID-19 if they are exposed to the virus, however, some people are more likely than others to become severely ill. To learn more about who is at 'high risk' use the CDC website link at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-increased-risk.html>

Students and/or staff who believe they are at high risk, should notify the Site Administrator. Students will have the option to participate in distance learning at any time with the request of the parent.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SWWC educators will be provided professional learning that will prepare them to teach students in the 'new normal'. Staff, students, and families will receive information about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and when individuals should stay home and when they can return to school. Also, staff will receive training in cleaning, disinfecting and similar COVID-19 preparedness.

Educators will be provided resources and support with delivering instruction to students in altered education environments including distance learning and a hybrid model. The social, emotional, health and well-being of students, families and staff is of the utmost importance to SWWC. Training for educators will be provided so they can continue to support families and staff during these trying times.

SWWC staff are provided additional supports through the Employee Assistance Program. More information about this program is located on the Employee Portal or through Human Resources.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

According to the CDC, COVID-19 is mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough or sneeze. It is thought that the virus may spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose or mouth, causing infection. Therefore, SWWC will adhere to processes and procedures that limit contact between individuals, provide for frequent cleaning and sanitization of surfaces, and minimize the sharing of materials to help minimize the risk of exposure during school.

Every building will have physical barriers and visual guides, including Plexiglas, signage and tape on the floors, to ensure staff and students allow for physical distancing. Common use spaces such as the gym and lunchrooms will not be used on a regular basis. Instead, these areas will only be used as isolation areas, or when deemed necessary to be used by the Site Administrator.

SWWC employs a Registered School Nurse, and school nursing services are available at each educational learning center location. School nursing services will help provide training to staff and students, and have and will guide the planning SWWC has done.

Health Screening

It is proven that regular screening for symptoms and ongoing monitoring throughout the school day can help quickly identify signs of illness and help reduce exposure. Staff and students will be encouraged to self-monitor symptoms though the day. SWWC will use a decision tree developed using information from the Minnesota Department of Health to determine when staff/students should stay home and when they can safely return.

Staff and students who are sick, have tested positive or who have been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, should not come to school. Staff or students who develop symptoms during the school day must notify school health services or the Site Administrator immediately.

Upon arrival, staff and students will participate in temperature and health screenings. Students will remain in their vehicle (bus/van/car) and a staff will health screenings and temperatures will be taken. Parents will be notified when students do not meet health screening criteria and/or temperature checks (fever is defined as 100.40F or greater) and student will be sent home.

Students and staff who exhibit symptoms related to COVID-19 during the school day will safely and respectfully be isolated from others until such time they can be sent home. Parents must provide SWWC with an emergency contact to be called in the event the parent is unable to be reached. If SWWC is unable to reach a parent, guardian or identified emergency contact person, SWWC will contact the county for assistance.

It will not be required for students or staff members to have documentation of a negative viral test or a letter certifying release from isolation in order to return to school, but recommended guidance regarding when to return to school must be used.

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing is the process used to identify those who have come into contact with people who have tested positive for COVID-19. When staff or students test positive, SWWC may need to identify individuals who were exposed to provide notification and/or to quarantine.

SWWC will notify MDH of confirmed COVID-19 cases among students and staff (as required by Minnesota Rules, Chapter 4605.7050).

SWWC will coordinate with the local health departments and engage them to determine when to notify families, staff and the public as needed if a person with COVID-19 was on the school premises while infectious. SWWC will maintain confidentiality in accordance with HIPAA, FERPA and all other state and federal laws.

Transportation

SWWC does not provide transportation for students attending the Educational Learning Centers. Students who require special transportation receive it from the student's resident district. As such, SWWC will work with districts that provide special transportation to students to ensure each bus/van ride allows for social distancing practices to the maximum extent practicable and to ensure disinfecting occurs before/after each route. All students will be strongly encourage to wear face masks while on the bus/van, unless doing so will inhibit student health.

Arrival and dismissal times will be staggered so that students and staff can follow physical spacing guidelines.

Visitors

Each building will remain locked and will be open to the public by appointment only. In most cases, visitors will not be allowed. Signage will be posted at the main entrance requesting that people who have been symptomatic not enter the building.

Field Trips

SWWC students and staff will not participate in field trips during the 2020-21 school year.

Social/Physical Distancing

According to the CDC, the more a student or staff member interacts, and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. The term “social distancing” refers to measures being taken to restrict where and when people can gather to slow the spread of infectious disease. SWWC will use social distancing measures to maintain as much space between students and staff as feasible, with the exception of hybrid learning where a minimum of 6-feet of separation between students and staff will be followed. (This means a 3-foot radius around each individual.)

Some students require physical supports where staff are unable to adhere to the social/physical spacing guidelines. In those instances, staff will wear protective gear including masks, face shields, gloves, gowns or other, while providing support to the student.

Classroom

Students and staff will be assigned to a specific classroom and transitions between rooms will be minimal. Staff that provide special services (e.g.; social emotional learning, occupational therapy, speech therapy, etc.) will provide those services in the students’ assigned classroom.

Staff entering and exiting the classroom will wash/sanitize their hands upon entering/exiting, will take their temperature and will clean/disinfect materials used before and after use.

Desks will face the same direction and will not face each other. Spacing of desks, Plexiglas and distance measures will be implemented.

Gym, DAPE and Music

Gym, DAPE and music lessons will occur outside as feasible. When it becomes necessary to provide these services indoors, lessons will be delivered in a method that doesn’t require physical exertion or singing.

Restroom Use

Bathroom breaks will be scheduled when possible and groups of individuals in the hallway together will be minimized.

Staff will wear protective gear including masks, face shields, gloves, gowns or other, while providing support to the students who require supports with toileting or when using the bathroom. Two staff members will be present in the bathroom with one student and will maintain as much distance as feasible.

Meals

The cafeteria will not be utilized and all meals will be prepackaged and delivered to the classroom for consumption. Disinfecting of the area prior to and after eating will take place. Students and staff will wash their hands and maintain appropriate social distancing during consumption.

Staff will wear masks or face shields, gloves and/or gowns to support students who require assistance with feeding.

Water

Water fountains will not be available and will be shut off. Students should bring labeled water bottles to school each day. SWWC will have extra bottles of water available for students who are unable to bring them.

Ventilation

SWWC has conducted facility inspections to ensure ventilation systems operate properly. Staff will open doors and windows, when able to do so safely, to circulate outdoor air as much as possible.

Materials

Student belongings will be separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, areas or lockers. The sharing of materials will be discouraged. When sharing occurs, cleaning of materials will be conducted between users.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

SWWC will use the *COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance for Schools and Child Care* to guide cleaning procedures at school. SWWC will ensure the availability of supplies to support proper cleaning and disinfecting and staff will adhere to increased cleaning and disinfecting practices, procedures, and any new specific requirements of the local health departments and CDC as they arise. Frequently touched surfaces and objects will be cleaned and disinfected between uses as much as possible.

Staff will follow cleaning product guidelines and cleaning products will not be used near students. Staff will ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using cleaning products.

Handwashing

Students and staff will follow CDC handwashing guidelines. Additionally, staff and students will be provided with hand sanitizer and encouraged to use regularly. Handwashing will be reinforced at key times (arrival, dismissal, before, during and after preparing or eating food, using the bathroom, blowing one's nose, coughing, sneezing, after touching objects with bare hands that have been handled by other people).

Educators will talk with children about how to stay healthy – avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth and covering their cough and will teach proper handwashing techniques.

Playground

Children of all ages need to move their bodies and stay physically active. Getting outside for fresh air and movement is important to support physical and mental health on a daily basis. To ensure students have opportunities for movement throughout the day, SWWC will offer outdoor play in staggered shifts. If multiple groups are out at the same time, individuals will have at least 6-feet of open space between play areas or will visit areas in shifts.

Groups of children will be kept together and students will not move from one group to the next. Students and staff will wash their hands before and after using the playground.

Staff will clean plastic or metal high-touch surfaces where hands frequently make direct contact like grab bar railing between groups of children. According to the Minnesota Department of Health, it is not practical to disinfect entire large playground structures, and is not proven to reduce risk of COVID19 to the public. Cleaning and disinfection of wooden surfaces (play structures, benches, tables) or groundcovers (mulch, sand) is not recommended.

SWWC will establish daily routines for cleaning playground equipment such as rubber balls, jump ropes, etc. Staff will educate children about how to care for equipment when they start and end play. Containers for clean, unused playground equipment and for equipment that needs to be cleaned will be used.

Facemasks

The CDC and the Minnesota Department of Health websites (below) describe how face coverings protect those around you. The CDC site includes a number of recent studies that illustrate the importance of everyone wearing a mask to protect others. SWWC staff will be modeling the proper wearing of masks and/or face shields while in school settings.

Face masks will be required at each site, unless wearing a mask will inhibit student or staff health. SWWC will not place cloth face coverings or masks on anyone who is unconscious or has trouble breathing, anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance or anyone who cannot tolerate a cloth face covering due to developmental, medical or behavioral needs.

It is recommended that each student and staff member bring a facemask to school each day. SWWC will provide paper masks for those individuals who do not have one available.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/masks.html>