



May 6, 2021

Dear School Leaders,

Governor Walz has announced another step forward in Minnesota's fight against COVID-19. More than 2.5 million Minnesotans have gotten a vaccine, which is putting us on track for a great summer.

We have reasons to be optimistic about our progress against the virus, but our school-age children have been significantly impacted by the virus in recent months, so we must continue to be diligent with health and safety requirements as we wrap up this school year.

Since our youngest Minnesotans are still not eligible for the vaccine, the Safe Learning Plan for schools will continue to the end of the school year. We have to protect students, teachers and staff in Minnesota's schools, and that doesn't change.

Updates to Minnesota's COVID-19 response

Today Minnesota begins a three-step process that will lead to **an end of all COVID-19 restrictions by May 28**, and **an end to the masking requirement by July 1**, safely returning us to the things we miss and the people we love.

- **Step One:** On May 7, the state will start with initial steps to relax some restrictions, primarily in outdoor settings. This means:
 - Removing limits and distancing requirements for outdoor dining, events, and other get-togethers, and end the mask requirement outdoors, except at events with controlled access over 500 people. So unless you're in a very large crowd at a formal event, you don't need to wear a mask when you're outside.

- Increasing occupancy and group size for all indoor activities and events.
- Provide recommendations for fairs, parades, and other outdoor celebrations to highlight best practices to stay safe and make summer in Minnesota great.
- **Step Two:** On May 28, the Friday before Memorial Day, all limits and restrictions will come to an end, including for indoor events and gatherings. Two requirements will remain:
 - Face coverings indoors and for the largest outdoor events with controlled access.
 - Businesses will have plans that keep their employees safe – as they have from the beginning of the pandemic – guided by a simple universal state guidance document that will include no new requirements.

Step Three: Once 70% of Minnesotans aged 16+ get their vaccine – but no later than July 1 – the remaining face covering requirement and the requirement for business preparedness plans will end. While critical work on vaccines will continue, no requirements will remain.

What this means for schools

Safe Learning Plan

The Safe Learning Plan—including Executive Orders 20-19, 20-82, 20-94 and 20-95—will continue to be in full effect for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year. **This means you should continue following the Safe Learning Plan until whenever the last teacher contact day is for your individual school district or charter school.**

For year-round schools only, the Safe Learning Plan—including Executive Orders 20-19, 20-82, 20-94 and 20-95—is in effect until June 13, 2021 at 11:59 p.m.

Summer Programming

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has released updated [guidance for all organizations](#) which outlines social distancing, quarantine, contact tracing, hygiene, masking and other requirements. This guidance will continue to be updated as we move through the steps outlined above. Schools should refer to this guidance as they plan and implement summer programs following the end of the school

year. **Additional health and safety recommendations for summer programming will be provided to schools in the coming weeks.**

Middle and high schools will continue to be able to offer COVID-19 testing for students through the state program throughout the summer.

Prom and Graduation Celebrations

Schools should continue to follow the [Stay Safe – Entertainment Venue Guidance](#) for celebrations such as prom and graduation. These guidance documents will continue to be updated as we move through the steps outlined above.

Face Covering Requirements

Beginning tomorrow, May 7, masks will no longer be required outdoors – including during recess. Face coverings will continue to be required indoors until the statewide requirement is lifted.

Looking Ahead

We are continuing to partner with MDH to plan for next fall. We remain hopeful that we won't need to have a Safe Learning Plan for the 2021-22 school year. MDE and MDH will continue to provide guidance and recommendations for schools to ensure learning can safely continue. We will provide more information in the coming weeks.

Thank you, again, for your partnership and leadership throughout this school year.

Heather Mueller, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education