

Alpena Public Schools

COVID-19 Guidelines for Students and Parents 2020-2021

The goal of Alpena Public Schools is to ensure that ALL LEARNERS are PARTICIPATING, ENGAGED, NURTURED and ACHIEVING. Alpena School District will participate in the Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, (DESE) Ready for Learning Model. This model focuses on three indicators for student success: blended learning, guaranteed and viable curriculum, and a student-focused approach. The Alpena School district will adhere to Arkansas Department of Health guidelines to provide a safe learning environment. The following information is intended to answer questions students and parents may have about reopening of schools in August.

What is the first day for students?

School will begin on August 24,2020. This date is subject to change if ADH sends updated guidance..

Who will be required to wear face coverings?

Currently, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) is recommending all individuals 3 years old and over wear a face covering. We are requiring that adults and students age 3 and up wear face coverings when physical distancing cannot be achieved particularly on school buses. Students under 3 years of age and those with health issues and special needs will not be asked to wear face coverings. Students will be required to wear face coverings in areas with a high concentration of students where social distancing can not be maintained. In the event we have an increase in the number of positive cases, face coverings could be required.

Do we need to provide masks for our student or will one be provided?

The district will provide a cloth mask for every student. Students may bring their own if preferred.

Will bus transportation be provided?

Yes, the district will provide bus transportation for all students. Based on current ADH guidance, students will be required to wear a face covering on the bus. This will allow us to transport more

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students, however, parents are encouraged to transport students when possible.

Will visitors be allowed at school?

Under current ADH guidance, visitors will not be allowed in the school except for the reception area. Parents will not be allowed to eat with their children. Schools will discontinue large group gatherings (assemblies, pep rallies, etc.).

Alpena Public Schools has always welcomed parental support in our buildings; however, with the current guidance, visitors are not allowed in buildings. This guidance may change at a later time, but it is the guidance we have today. Visits to the school will be limited to essential activity.

How normal will the day be for a student?

Our goal is for your student(s) to have as normal of a day as possible while we also provide as much safety as possible. Students will not remain in the same classroom all day but will be able to transition from one class to another. Of course, sanitation will take place before a new group of students enter a space.

Will students at the elementary still have extra classes like PE, art, music, guidance and library?

Yes, students will continue to participate in activity classes, check out library books, and receive guidance and gifted instruction. In some cases, the teacher may present their lesson in the student's classroom to reduce the amount of cleaning possible. In others situations, such as PE, students may have an assigned area in the gym with specific materials assigned to their classroom.

Will my elementary student have recess?

Yes. Elementary students will have outdoor play time with restrictions that limit the number of students they come in contact with.

Will social distancing guidelines be observed?

Social distancing will be observed as much as feasibly possible but at times students will be closer than the recommended 6 ft. apart. When social distancing requirements cannot be

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maintained such as class exchange time, etc., students will be expected to wear face coverings. We will modify classrooms and cafeteria spaces to increase the space between students but cannot always guarantee it will be 6 ft.

Will classrooms be arranged differently to protect students?

Yes, classrooms will be arranged to provide more space between students. That might mean all desks are arranged in rows facing in a single direction. It might result in reading areas with bean bags, couches or comfy chairs being removed. It might include dividers between students who are seated at a table. We will make every effort to provide distance but not limit students' ability to interact and communicate with others in their classroom. Sharing of supplies and materials will be limited.

Will students attend school every day or will we have some type of alternative schedule?

We plan for students to attend school daily following a very similar schedule to the traditional school day.

If an individual tests positive for COVID-19, what will happen?

In the event an individual tests positive, we will follow the latest guidance from the ADH. We will be in direct contact with ADH. This could result in a brief closure to provide time for additional cleaning and sanitation.

If I don't want my student to return to a traditional classroom, what are my options?

The District will provide enrollment forms on the district website for parents interested in entering a contract for their child to participate in offsite virtual learning or a blended learning option. This would provide an educational program for students who did not feel comfortable returning to onsite instruction. The enrollment document will be required to be completed and submitted to the district office no later than August 7, 2020.

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What is the difference between blended learning and Virtual or digital learning?

Blended learning utilizes a combination of methods which allow students to either be physically present in the classroom or attending classes from home. This is accomplished through the use of Google Classroom. Students who are on campus are present with the teacher. Students at home are present with the teacher through the use of video; mostly Zoom. 7-12 students are expected to be on time for each class as they start on schedule. Lessons are also recorded for later reference, but the at-home student is required to attend class or join the teacher remotely during a scheduled class time. All school rules apply. The parents must ensure that the home environment is appropriate to school, handbook and dress code apply.

Virtual learning through a web-based digital program is needed because it allows the student and parents the flexibility to select a different pace or schedule, but they are not actively interacting with our teachers. Some of our families just don't feel comfortable sending students back to school at this time. Many of those parents work and can't be home to help with school work. That is especially relevant to families with small children who go to childcare during the day. Lessons are uploaded by teachers at the virtual provider and students work and submit them into that program. They can also reach out to those teachers for support. Attendance would be taken based on their actual progression through the coursework.

If students choose to do full-time virtual, will they be able to participate in extracurricular activities?

Students registered in virtual learning may also participate in extracurricular activities, following the guidelines of their respective activity as issued by the coach and AAA.

Transportation to practices must be provided by the parent.

Will my student eat lunch in their classroom?

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Based on current guidance, the ADH is recommending cafeterias limit the capacity of students in the cafeteria. We anticipate that we will be required to adjust lunch schedules or use alternative areas, such as large gathering spaces or potentially have lunch in their classroom on a very limited basis. Proper sanitation of all areas will be completed after each meal and ADH guidelines will be followed. Parents are encouraged to send a water bottle with their students. Use of a community microwave may be restricted or limited.

What special precautions will be implemented in regard to cleaning and sanitizing?

Sanitation and cleanliness will be a high priority for our district as we return in the fall. We will be sanitizing high touch surfaces (door knobs, light switches, etc.) and restrooms on a continuous basis throughout the day. We will provide hand sanitizer throughout our campuses.

If a student comes to school sick, what will happen?

If a student comes to school sick, the school nurse will screen the student and check their temperature. If temperature is over the ADH guidance, the student will be sent home and will need to be fever free for 48 hours without medication before returning to school. When the child returns to school they will check in with the school nurse. If the student tests positive for COVID-19, a release letter will be required from a medical professional for the student to return on campus.

How will you help fill any gaps my student has from the previous year?

Curriculum teams have worked to revise the curriculum so that missed essential standards will be addressed when students return. Additionally, students will be assessed to determine individual strengths and deficits. These assessments will determine if students need additional support.

What happens if we have school closures again?

If schools close again, a plan for at-home digital learning has been developed. This plan will include lessons from Alpena Public Schools digital resources and Arkansas Ready for Learning. Students will learn how to use these Learning Management Systems by participating in lessons throughout the week while at school. Blended learning that includes both on-site traditional

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instruction and digital instruction will become the norm. Students will be held accountable for their assignments. Work will be graded and expected to be turned in to your child's teacher.

Will our students have the same arrival and dismissal times?

Depending on guidance from ADH, arrival and dismissal times may be varied, in order to increase social distancing and to decrease the number of students in the cafeteria and gym before school starts.

What advice do you have for students with special needs or students with weakened immune systems and pre-existing conditions?

The district will be prepared to accommodate students with special needs through both onsite and offsite instruction. If parents have concerns about their students who may be at high-risk because of COVID-19, they may explore the virtual learning option which allows the student to continue their education from the safety of their own home. Teletherapy will be offered to those students who are eligible for a related service based on their IEP/504.