

January 13, 2021

Dear Kenwood Families,

Thank you for your messages and calls this week as you weigh whether to remain in Distance Learning or opt into in-person learning in February. We're committed to providing as much information as we can to you to help you make your decision based on what you believe is best for your child and family. This lengthy document addresses some of the questions you've raised. **Please know the information provided in this document is subject to change as we prepare for in-person learning.**

I'll receive information about staffing availability and the number of students who are returning to in-person learning the week of January 25. The staff and I will finalize class rosters and schedules for DL and in-person learning that week and communicate that information to you as soon as possible. It's possible your child will be assigned to another Kenwood teacher in Distance Learning or in-person learning depending on our numbers. We will do everything we can to keep cohorts intact, but flexibility will be critical to this transition. **All Kenwood teachers are dedicated to building and maintaining strong relationships with our students to ease any anxiety related to the adjustment. Our students' health and well-being drive our decision-making.**

Distance Learning

For families who choose to remain in Distance Learning, the schedule will remain the same, with one exception: Focus Fridays will become Focus Wednesdays, beginning the week of Feb. 8 (this change was already in the works). As mentioned, your child's teacher may change, depending on the number of students who opt into in-person and remain in Distance Learning. The school day will begin at 8:00 and end at 2:00, as usual. Lunch/recess times will remain the same. Specialist times will remain the same. Specialist teachers may vary because they're required to support in person and Distance Learning. We're working on creating a manageable teaching schedule for them.

In-Person Learning

The school day will begin at 8:05 and end at 2:35, M-F. There isn't a Focus Day built into the in-person schedule.

All health and safety protocols that are put into place to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 spread have been developed by the District and implemented by each school site. This month I'm adapting all regulations and recommendations to Kenwood, with the assistance of the Site Emergency Team, composed of our School Nurse, Health Services Assistant, School Secretary, School Social Worker, Senior Custodian, Family Liaison, and representatives of the teaching staff. I'll share more detailed information about our safety protocols once we've finalized them.

Changing one's mind

District officials have communicated that you may change your mind about DL and in-person learning at any time. Moving from in-person to Distance Learning can happen rather quickly, but moving from Distance to in-person learning can take up to 2 weeks. There are a number of factors that need to be in place before students can return to the building. Classroom teachers will need some time to prepare for the change in rosters, breakfasts and lunch counts will need to be adjusted, and bus routes can take up to 2 weeks to update.

Arrival and Departure protocols

One door will be dedicated to bus arrivals and two doors will be dedicated to walkers/students who are transported by their families. **Family members will not be able to enter the building.** Students will take a breakfast bag/box as they enter the building, if desired, and walk through designated halls and "up" and "down" stairwells to their classrooms. Students will eat breakfast in their classrooms.

One door will be dedicated to bus departures, and two doors will be dedicated to family pick-ups. Students will be required to move about spaces in a socially distanced manner, following internal traffic flow requirements and waiting protocols.

Lunch and Recess

Following safety guidelines, up to 45 students can be seated in the lunchroom at a time. The number of students who opt into in-person learning will determine whether students eat in the lunchroom or in their classrooms. We're mindful that having two class cohorts in the lunchroom could raise safety concerns (we're trying to reduce mixing class cohorts). If we decide that students should eat in their classrooms, they will walk to the lunchroom to collect their meals and bring them back to the classroom.

All students will have 30 minutes of recess every day. This could be in Kenwood Park or on the playground, depending on the number of students who attend in-person school. The playground can accommodate one class at a time, so recess times will be scheduled between 8:30AM and 1:45PM to guarantee social distancing.

Social Distancing

Staff will be 6 feet apart from other staff and students whenever possible. Students are recommended to be 3 feet apart from other students; we know that this will be challenging to enforce at times. Physical contact between staff and students isn't recommended. Everyone will wear masks and staff have been encouraged to wear face shields. We'll do all that we can to help students feel comfortable, welcomed, and secure in learning spaces at school. Our classrooms have been set up to maintain 3 feet of space between students, but please note that 3 feet is recommended, not required. In some circumstances, students with particular learning needs may require physical support. Our special education staff have been provided with additional PPE for those circumstances.

Movement throughout the building

Students will spend most of the learning day in their classrooms. As previously mentioned, they'll go outside for 30 minutes for recess, walk to and from the lunchroom to collect their lunches (or, if numbers permit, eat in the lunchroom), and, in some cases, walk to specialist class. We're still waiting for additional guidelines from the District about best practices for specialist classes. Physical education will occur in the gym or outside.

We will adhere to all Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 Plans. Our special education team will follow social distancing protocols as they provide services in homeroom classrooms and special education classrooms.

English Language services will be provided, adhering to social distancing protocols.

Transportation

On buses, seating will be arranged to maintain 6-feet of distance between the driver and all riders. The number of students on a bus will be continually monitored to create as much space as possible between riders. Seating will be assigned and documented to help with COVID contact tracing and daily ridership will be logged. Everyone on a bus (or other transportation vehicle) will be required to wear a face covering during the entire ride. Vehicles will be disinfected regularly with special attention to high-contact surfaces. Buses will unload one at a time to reduce the number of students entering the building at a time. This will take more time than it does in typical times, but it mitigates risk.

Health and Wellness

We've designated a room near the office as our student illness room. We're calling it The Panda Room. The HVAC in the room has been adjusted so that air from that room does not circulate into the rest of the building. Students who exhibit illness symptoms while at school will be required to isolate in the Panda Room until a family member is able to bring them home. If the family doesn't have access to transportation, the District will try to provide transportation if vehicles are available for student transport. We will make quarantining decisions (including contact tracing) in partnership with the District, following city and state health guidelines, based on exposure risk.

The Health Office, located in the main office, exists to support other matters related to wellness. Ms. Jackie and Ms. Traci will tend to students as needed, following social distancing protocols.

School Supplies and Materials

Students will have access to books, school supplies, District-owned devices, and other learning materials. Their supplies will have to be bagged, labeled with their names, and stored in desks, lockers, or other spots in the room that permit socially-distanced access.

Air Filtration

The classrooms at Kenwood are served with unit ventilators in each room. Since these devices cannot support MERV 14 filters without replacing all the units throughout the school, MPS has installed in each classroom a HEPA filter unit (25 units were installed in the building in December). This unit uses HEPA filtration to filter the air in the room. MPS is confident that increased filtration along with the effective use of other mitigation practices such as wearing face coverings, meets the recommended health and safety protocols for in-person learning.

Minneapolis Kids

Minneapolis Kids will resume providing fee based before- and after-school childcare for children attending in-person learning in grades High Five-5th starting February 22nd. Re-registration is required for all families needing before- or after-school care in the new, in-person model. Registration will be accepted based on staff availability & accordance to MN Departments of Education and Health guidelines. Re-Registration will begin February 1st. Please contact them at <https://mplskids.mpls.k12.mn.us/Home> for details and registration.

Many questions and answers can be found on the district webpage:

https://b2s.mpls.k12.mn.us/Phase5_FAQ.

You can also find more information when filling out the [indication form](#), due by January 22nd (or **January 15th if your child requires bus transportation**). On the second page of the form, please click on “no, I need more information” and then click “next.” You will find some tabs with more details on a variety of subjects including an overview video, transportation, safety protocols, support services, childcare, after school programs, and more.

The staff and I appreciate all that you’re doing to make a thoughtful decision about which model of learning will be best for your child and family. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to me with questions as the weeks progress. I’ll share updates with you on a consistent basis as we approach February.

I’m thinking of you all with compassion and gratitude for your partnership. I’m advocating fiercely for the vaccine to be made available to educators as soon as possible. I hope you will too, if you’re so moved.

Sincerely,

Heidi Johnson
Principal at Kenwood Community School