



## **Metro Kids COVID-19 Policy 2021-2022 School Year**

Along with DMPS, Metro Kids is excited and ready to welcome students back for another school year. Things are beginning to feel like “normal”, at the same time new variants of the COVID-19 virus are starting to cause renewed concerns as cases increase, both in Iowa and around the world, especially among people who are not yet vaccinated. As we progress throughout the school year, we know that we will see many changes that may cause a change in policy.

### **VACCINATIONS**

Getting vaccinated is the single most important thing eligible students, staff and parents can do. It is the most proven, surest way to protect yourself from the virus and put the pandemic further behind us. Since the COVID-19 vaccine started to become available for the education sector back in February and then available to people over 12 later in the Spring, DMPS has encouraged everyone and anyone who is eligible to get vaccinated. The school district has hosted several clinics for staff and students provided by local health care providers.

At this time the vaccine is available for people 12 and older, which essentially covers all middle and high school students. The eligibility age is expected to be lowered, but no date has yet been announced. However, all eligible members of a household being vaccinated improves the odds of our under-12 students from contracting and spreading the virus.

**To schedule a vaccination, please visit [www.immunizepolk.com](http://www.immunizepolk.com).**

### **FACE MASKS**

At this time, [the U.S. Centers for Disease Control recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status](#). In Iowa it is now against the law for schools to require face masks. DMPS and Metro Kids strongly encourages people to listen to the health experts and voluntarily do the right thing in order to keep themselves and others healthy. (**NOTE:** face masks are still required on public transportation, including school buses.)

### **MITIGATION**

DMPS and Metro Kids will continue measures to minimize the spread of the virus within our buildings. This includes steps such as:

- continuing greater air circulation,
- maintaining hand sanitizing stations,
- enhancing day-to-day cleaning,
- continuing the process of replacing water fountains with bottle filling stations.

The school district is also in regular contact with local health care providers and county public health officials on a range of health issues, including whether there are additional measures we can take given the current restrictions.

### **POSITIVE COVID CASES/EXPOSURES/ILLNESSES**

An important piece of keeping schools healthy and safe is for people with an illness – COVID-19 or other – to stay home. The following protocols are in place at DMPS schools:

- Any student or staff member who tests positive for COVID-19 must isolate for a minimum of 10 days, in compliance with federal, state and local public health guidelines. If a person tests COVID-19 positive and has symptoms, they must stay home at least 10 days since the symptoms first appeared and 24 hours without fever (without fever-reducing medication) and other symptoms of COVID-19 have improved. Students or staff should not return until they feel well enough to participate in class or work. Please work with your school nurse and/or administrator if you have any questions.
  - Metro Kids fees will not be incurred during quarantine with a positive case and nurse confirmation.
- Any unvaccinated student or staff member who is identified as a close contact to a positive COVID-19 case is recommended to stay home (quarantine) for 14 days after exposure, in accordance with public health best practices. Testing is recommended 5-7 days after exposure. Persons who are fully vaccinated and are identified as a close contact do not need to quarantine. However, they should monitor for symptoms and testing is recommended 3-5 days after exposure.
- Any student or staff member who is showing symptoms of any illness, even if they test negative for COVID-19 or have an alternative diagnosis, should stay home. Testing for COVID-19 is strongly recommended for anyone with COVID-19 symptoms and/or if there has been an exposure to COVID-19. Follow-up with a health care provider is also recommended.
- [Click here for more information on COVID-19 symptoms.](#)

In addition, schools will have “isolation rooms” for students and staff who may develop or show COVID-19 symptoms during the school day. Air purification units have also been installed in these areas as well as nurses’ offices to help minimize the spread of the air-borne virus.

### **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

Social distancing is no longer feasible, of course, with a regular five-day school week for the vast majority of our students, nor can school districts change their learning models to hybrid or virtual in the event of an outbreak. Those facts make all of the above steps – from getting vaccinated to following mask recommendations to our mitigation work – that much more important.

Resources:

CDC Guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>

IDPH: Common Childhood Illnesses and Exclusion:  
[https://www.idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/128/childhood\\_illness.pdf](https://www.idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/128/childhood_illness.pdf)

The most updated guidance from the Iowa Department of Human Services (the organization that licensed Metro Kids) can be found here:  
[https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/DHS\\_ChildCareGuidance.pdf?032120201912](https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/DHS_ChildCareGuidance.pdf?032120201912)

***NOTE: This policy may be updated as needed as the response to the growing number of COVID-19 cases may lead to changes.***