

Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind

COVID-19 Emergency Measures

1905

Student, Staff, and Community Health and Safety

The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind has adopted the protocols outlined in this policy during the term of the declared public health emergency to ensure the safe and healthy delivery of education services provided to students on the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind property in accordance with Policy 1906, and a safe workplace when staff are present on the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind property, and the safety, health and well-being of parents and community members. The supervising teacher, principal, director of student life, superintendent or designated personnel are authorized to implement the protocols in coordination with state and local health officials.

Symptoms of Illness

Students and staff who are ill, feeling ill, diagnosed as ill, or otherwise demonstrating symptoms of illness must not come to school or work. Students who have a fever or are exhibiting other signs of illness must be isolated in a designated area until parents or caregiver may arrive at the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind to retrieve the ill student. All surfaces and areas should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected once the student has vacated the area by staff utilizing safety measures in accordance with state and/or local health standards as applicable.

Students may engage in alternative delivery of education services during the period of illness or be permitted to make up work in accordance with Policy 1906. Staff members will be provided access to leave in accordance with Federal and State Policy or the applicable Master Contract or Memorandum of Understanding.

Parents, guardians, or caregivers of students, who are ill, feeling ill, diagnosed as ill, or otherwise demonstrating symptoms of illness must not be present at Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind for any reason including but not limited to events or gatherings or to drop off or pick-up students excepted as provided by this policy. To avoid exposing others to illness, parents or caregivers who are ill must make arrangements with others to transport students to the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind or events, if at all practicable. If not practicable, parents, guardians or caregivers must not leave their vehicle during pickup or drop off and must arrange with the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind staff to supervise students in accordance with physical distancing guidelines in this Policy.

Physical Distancing

Students, staff, volunteers, and visitors will maintain a ~~three-foot~~ six-foot distance between themselves and their colleagues and peers throughout the school day inside any Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind building, provided transportation, and on the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind property before and after school. Staff members will arrange classrooms and restructure courses, transportation services, and food service to meet this standard.

Recess will continue as scheduled in accordance with physical distancing guidance without the use of playground equipment. Any other use of school playgrounds is strictly prohibited.

Drop off and pick up of students will be completed in a manner that limits direct contact between parents and staff members and adheres to social distancing expectations around the exterior of the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind building while on the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind property.

Masks as Personal Protective Equipment

~~The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind encourages staff and students to wear cotton-based masks, face shields to protect colleagues and peers while present in any Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind building.~~

Face Coverings

Staff, Students, and visitors are encouraged to wear a face covering, mask or face shield while present in any school building. The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind does not require the use of masks and will not provide masks except in cases required by this policy or at the discretion of the administration

Allegations of harassment of any person wearing or not wearing a face covering, mask or face shield shall be promptly investigated in accordance with the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind policy. A student, staff member, or visitor who, after an investigation, is found to have engaged in behavior that violates the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind policy is subject to redirection or discipline.

If, after this section is adopted, the number of active COVID-19 cases in the county where the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind is located increases to the point of being considered “substantial” or “high” rate of transmission as defined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Board of Public Education authorizes the superintendent to implement a requirement for face coverings to be worn in identified the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind buildings until such a time as the Board of Public Education can adopt an applicable the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind policy. The superintendent shall coordinate with the County Health Department and the Board of Public Education Chair to determine whether face covering are a necessary response to a potential or actual COVID-19 outbreak. The implementation of a face covering requirement in the identified buildings shall not be used on the COVID-19 vaccination status in accordance with Policy 3413. In the event face coverings are required, the superintendent shall announce the face covering requirement to students, parents, staff, and visitors for the immediate successive school day each day by 3:00p.m. If the superintendent determines masks are required, signs will be installed to inform students, parents, staff, and visitors of mask requirements while present in the identified the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind buildings. In the event of a mask requirement. The following exceptions shall apply:

Students, staff, volunteers, and visitors are not required to wear a face covering, mask or face shield under this provision when:

1. Consuming food or drink;

2. Engaging in strenuous physical activity;
3. Giving a speech, lecture, class presentation, course lesson or performance when separated by at least six feet or distance from the gathering, class or audience;
4. Communicating with someone who is hearing impaired;
5. Identifying themselves
6. Receiving medical attention; or
7. Precluded from safely using a face covering, mask, or face shield due to a medical or developmental condition. The superintendent, building principal, or their designee shall request documentation from a health care provider when considering an exception to this provision for medical or developmental reasons. The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind will comply with all applicable disability and discrimination laws when implementing this provision.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind personnel will routinely both clean by removing germs, dirt and impurities and disinfect by using chemicals to kill germs on all surfaces and objects in any Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind building and on the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind property. This process shall include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily.

Personnel will clean with the cleaners typically used and will use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. Personnel will disinfect with common EPA-registered household disinfectants. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available from the supervising teacher or administrator. Personnel will follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.

The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind will provide EPA-registered disposable wipes to teachers, staff, and secondary students so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, remote controls) can be wiped down before use. Administrators are required to ensure adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection practices.

Student Arrival

Hand hygiene stations will be available at the entrance of any Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind building, so that children can clean their hands before they enter. If a sink with soap and water is not available, the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind will provide hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizer will be kept out of elementary students' reach and student use will be supervised by staff.

Healthy Hand Hygiene Behavior

All students, staff, and others present in the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind building will engage in hand hygiene at the following times, which include but are not limited to:

- Arrival to the facility and after breaks
- Before and after preparing, eating, or handling food or drink

- Before and after administering medication or screening temperature
- After encountering bodily fluid
- After recess
- After handling garbage
- After assisting students with handwashing
- After use of the restroom

Hand hygiene includes but is not limited to washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available.

Staff members will supervise children when they use hand sanitizer and soap to prevent ingestion. Staff members will place grade level appropriate posters describing handwashing steps near sinks

Vulnerable Individuals

Vulnerable individuals (defined by the Centers for Disease Control at the time of this policy's adoption as those age 65 or older or those with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy) are authorized to talk to their healthcare provider to assess their risk and to determine if they should telework during the period of declared public health emergency.

Employees who have documented high risk designation from a medical provider are entitled to reasonable accommodation within the meaning of that term in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 as outlined in Policy 5002. These accommodations may include but are not limited to teleworking in accordance with a work plan developed in coordination with and authorized by the supervising teacher, administrator or other designated supervisor. Such employees may also be eligible for available leave in accordance with the applicable policy or master agreement provision.

Food Preparation and Meal Service

Facilities must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations and guidance related to safe preparation of food.

Sinks used for food preparation must not be used for any other purposes. Staff and students will wash their hands in accordance with this policy.

Transportation Services

The Board of Public Education members authorize the transportation of eligible transportees to and from the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind facility in a manner consistent with the protocols established in this policy. The transportation director and the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind bus drivers will clean and disinfect each seat on each bus after each use.

Public Awareness

The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind will communicate with parents, citizens, and other necessary stakeholders about the protocols established in this policy and the steps taken to implement the protocols through all available and reasonable means.

Confidentiality

This policy in no way limits or adjusts the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind obligations to honor staff and student privacy rights. All applicable policies and handbook provision governing confidentiality of student and staff medical information remain in full effect.

Cross Reference

Policy 1901 – Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind Policy and Procedures
Policy 1906 – Student Services and Instructional Delivery
Policy 1006FE – Transfer of Funds for Safety Purposes

Policy 3410 – Student examination and screenings
Policy 3417 – Communicable Diseases
Policy 3431 – Emergency Treatment
Policy 4120 – Public Relations
Policy 5002 – Accommodating Individuals with Disabilities
Policy 5130 – Staff Health
Policy 5230 – Prevention of Disease Transmission
Policy 6110 – Superintendent Authority
Policy 6122 – Delegation of Authority

Policy History

Adopted on: 1-15-21
Reviewed on:
Revised on: 6-24-21
Terminated on: