

Reopening Plan for 2020-21 School Year

July 22, 2020

Last Update: August 4, 2020

The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind is committed to the safety and well-being of its students and staff. During this time of uncertainty it is important that our school is ready for many scenarios for this next school year. As we recognize that the best education we can provide our students is that of a face-to-face educational environment the school has developed a plan in hopes of providing that experience for our students. However, this is not at the risk of putting our staff and students in harm's way.

Our plan for reopening our campus is designed using the Governor's Plan for Reopening Safe and Healthy Schools for Montana, OPI Reopening Montana Schools Guidance: Putting Montana Students First, MTPEC Back to School: A Roadmap for Safety Reopening Montana's Public Schools Using Emergency School District Policies, and AASA COVID-19 Recovery Task Force Guidelines for Reopening Schools: An Opportunity to Transform Public Education.

Our goal is to provide quality instruction to our students, maintain a healthy and safe setting for all, and provide needed support to our families. One main focus has been to consider the emotional well being of our community during all decisions made while creating the plan. We have found ways to implement the Phase 1 and 2 recommendations set forth by the Governor. In addition, we have looked at the recommendations of OPI with regards to emotional stability, academic planning, and safety and feel we can meet the recommended requirements.

This plan outlines how we will take safety into consideration in all departments of our school; education, residential, and outreach programs. In addition, it considers what our next step would be if we need to start shifting back to a more remote learning situation. However, that information is not in great detail to limit confusion in this document. This document will continue to be updated as COVID-19 information becomes available and other guidance is provided to the school. Please refer to our website for the most up-to-date version.

We welcome returning faces and look forward to meeting those who will be new at MSDB in the Fall. We wish everyone a happy and healthy 2020-21 School year.

General School Actions

The following items apply to all areas of Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind.

Self-Monitoring

- All staff and students should be familiar with the symptoms of COVID-19, which can be found at https://www.cdc.gov.
- All staff and students are expected to self-assess their health before coming to campus.
 For students, this will include parents/house parents assessing the student. We
 recommend a daily temperature check before coming to campus. Students will be
 checked by school staff when they enter the building. Any student or staff with a fever of
 100.4 or higher, will be sent home and will be encouraged to contact a healthcare
 provider.
- Education related specifically to curbing the spread of the virus will be provided to staff and students.
- Staff and students diagnosed with COVID-19 are encouraged to immediately notify
 Diane Eddy (406) 771-6100 (School Nurse) and Paul Furthmyre (406) 560-4688 (Interim
 Superintendent). Mrs. Eddy will work closely with the Cascade City-County Health
 Department regarding COVID-19 testing and contact tracing.

Testing and Contact Tracing

- MSDB will work through Diane Eddy as the point person and follow the direction of the Cascade City-County Health Department regarding COVID-19 testing and contact tracing.
- Each department will keep records of those attending in-person classes and meetings on campus. Departments will keep the records for a minimum of four (4) weeks to aid the Cascade City-County Health Department with contact tracing. Seating charts will be provided to the superintendent at the beginning of the school year and any time a change is made after that.
- In order to enable contact tracing and enhance the health of the staff and students, MSDB buildings will be open only to students, 10-day observation students, and others with a specific purpose to be on campus. We will remain this way until the State of Montana or Cascade County moves to Phase Three of the state's Reopening the Big Sky Plan.

Staffing

- Staff will be expected to report to campus on the first day of the scheduled orientation, August 17th, 2020. This year's orientation schedule will be created to ensure the departments are seperated and not together.
- Employees with increased risk should work with the Superintendent to identify an
 appropriate plan for return to work. This includes individuals who wish to seek ADA
 reasonable accommodations.

Cloth Face Masks and Face Coverings

- Staff and students will be expected to wear cloth face masks or coverings in all areas where physical distancing is difficult.
- Cloth face masks will be provided at no-cost to the staff and students of MSDB. However, they are welcome to wear a cloth mask of their choosing.
- Scheduled visitors will be expected to wear masks and coverings in all areas of the school, even where physical distancing is possible. MSDB will provide visitors with

disposable coverings provided by the State of Montana. The visitor may also wear a mask or covering of their choice as long as it meets the requirements of the CDC.

Physical Distancing

- All areas of MSDB will take steps to create 6 feet of distance between individuals where
 practical. All students and staff are expected to monitor their own behavior to maintain 6
 feet of space between themselves and others.
- In some areas and instances, students and staff may be closer than 6 feet but separated by appropriate sneeze guards and barriers.

Healthy Habits and Good Hygiene

- All individuals are expected to practice frequent and thorough hand washing and to use hand sanitizer regularly, especially after handling documents.
- Individuals should cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue in order to prevent spread.

Leveraging Technology

- All staff at MSDB are encouraged to apply technology to enhance our students educational experience.
- Each department will have an alternative to face-to-face instruction to serve high-risk individuals.
- Meetings will be conducted electronically, even when working on campus until the state
 enters Phase Three of the state's Reopening the Big Sky plan. If in-persons meetings
 are needed, the meeting organizer will notify the superintendent and receive approval
 prior to scheduling.
- Staff will be expected to use Google Classroom to create a paperless process for distributing and collecting documents.

- Each department and individual should be prepared to return to remote working, teaching, and learning should the need arise and such direction is given by the Governor's Office, Board of Public Education, or local, state, or federal authorities.
- Staff should prepare lessons that can be implemented in both face-to-face and remote instruction.

General Facilities

Buildings, Maintenance, Safety, School Vehicles

Increasing Physical Distancing

- Maintenance and administration will work together to review room occupancy limits based on square footage.
- Evaluate and move/remove furniture in break, common, office, and conference areas to promote physical distancing and discouraging congregating.

Reducing Potential Spread

- Sanitize horizontal/vertical surfaces daily (desks/tables/handrails/door handles)
- For cleaning and sanitizing break, common, and conference rooms a red/green system will be utilized. Red will indicate that the room has been used (even if only by one person) and needs to be sanitized. Green will indicate that the room has been sanitized.
- We will place hand sanitizer in all offices, classrooms, and common spaces.
- We will examine traffic flow, entrances and exits, to reduce contact.
- Will replace reusable items with single-use options in common areas
- All staff will be asked to remove high-touch items, such as magazines, shareable pens, from their common and public areas.
- Plexiglass barriers will be placed in high-contact areas
- Markers will be placed 6 feet apart on the floor where congregation of staff and students may occur
- Will encourage all interior doors to be open during school hours to reduce touchable areas.

Promoting Healthy Habits and Good Hygiene

- Will work with safety committee to post signs promoting physical distancing, healthy hygiene, and traffic flow
- Maintain adequate stockpile of cleaning/sanitizing supplies
- Ensure garbage cans are in every room for easy disposal of tissues and sanitizing supplies.
- Garbage bags will be emptied on a daily basis.

Leveraging Technology

• For scheduling conference rooms, those requesting a room need to let Paula Mix know via email a minimum of 5 days prior to using the room. She will make sure that it is sanitized again before the use.

Preparing for Potential Illness

- Staff will need to communicate with the superintendent and business manager via email for any specific cleaning needs.
- If notified of a case on campus, the areas will be closed where the individual has been for 24 hours before entering to clean.

Other

- School Vehicles
 - Driver must sanitized after each use (disinfect steering wheel/dash/switches and seating areas)
 - All occupants must wear a mask or covering while in vehicle.
 - When possible, only one person per row of seating.

Events

Community, Public, School-Sponsored Events and Meetings

Increasing Physical Distancing

• Post signs and floor markings to promote physical distancing of 6 feet.

Reducing Potential Spread

- Schedule no visitations or tours of any kind until the state enters Phase Three of the state's Reopening the Big Sky plan. This includes class and community tours.
- Provide sanitizing supplies and PPE for users.
- Work with Cascade City-County Health Department on guidelines for the use of the Mustang Center

Promoting Healthy Habits and Good Hygiene

 Post signes to promote physical distancing, face masks, healthy hygiene, and traffic flow.

Leveraging Technology

10 school days prior to the event, organizers must email Paula Mix indicating what areas
of the campus will be used for the event and provide a list of potential attendees. Final
approval will be given by the superintendent.

- Require attendance sheets for any event to assist with contact tracing.
- Consider ways to gather attendee information while reducing contact and potential spreading of virus.
- Require advance registration for all meetings.

Work / Break Rooms

Applies to all work/break rooms at MSDB

Increasing Physical Distancing

- Only three (3) employees can be in the workrooms at a time
- Remove excess seating to provide for adequate social distancing
- Be mindful of others workspace

Reducing Potential Spread

- Provide sanitizing supplies and hand sanitizer. Wipe down the work area before and after working.
- Place one chair at each table in the room
- Sign in/sign out of the workrooms.
- Sanitize all appliances and equipment used

Education

Bitterroot and Aspen Buildings

Increasing Physical Distancing

- Identify specific areas for student drop off and pick-up (limit the number of students assigned to each area)
- Breakfast foods for day-students will be grab and go items
- Students from the cottages will go straight to their 1st period classrooms
- Transitions schedule students in such a way to limit transitions throughout the day;
 where possible have teachers rotate rather than students
 - Stagger release times and have assigned routes to minimize foot traffic
 - Between buildings
 - Have one set of doors designated as an entrance and a second set of doors designated as the exit.
 - Use specific routes for traveling to and from different buildings to control the traffic flow
 - In the hallways
 - Students/staff wear masks/face shields during transitions
 - Use accessible signs/markers to remind about 6 foot distancing
- A staggered lunch will be done for younger and older students. Preschool students will be served lunch in their classrooms with a paraprofessional.
- Limit the number of visitors in buildings and classrooms
 - Utilize a waiting area for visitors
 - Elem/MS/HS Classrooms
 - One student per desk with all necessary supplies (no sharing)
 - If tables used, two students per table with a plexiglass divider
 - Mark floor to identify location of desks/tables in classroom to maintain proper distancing
 - Use of plexiglass dividers on desks
 - Where possible desks set in a 'u' configurations facing the teacher to allow access to communication (DHH department)
 - Remove extra chairs/tables/desks from classrooms
 - Preschool Classrooms
 - Small groups of students
 - Minimize the crossover among children and adults within the school
 - Limit unnecessary visitors
 - Offices/Secretaries desks
 - Plexiglass barriers Specialists offices, secretary desks
 - Limit number of students/staff meeting in an area/office (use larger meeting room instead of office if necessary)
 - Student lockers will not be utilized. This will reduce the need for hallway use across multiple areas of the building.

Reducing Potential Spread

- Common areas (IMC, Library, Meeting rooms, Motor Lab, Computer Lab, Teacher Work room)
 - Use hand sanitizer upon entering the area
 - Wipe down the area (or inform maintenance that an area needs cleaning?)
 - Drinking fountains will be covered. Bottle filling stations can be used.
 - Bathrooms

Bitterroot - designate bathroom for visitors on campus

Classrooms

- Establish routines that include sanitizing hands and wiping down areas at the beginning and end of each class
- o Individual sets of student supplies no sharing where possible
 - Use bins to store individual materials in the classroom (textbooks, folders, pencils/paper, etc.)
- Limited sharing of technology and equipment
 - Assign specific students to technology/equipment
 - Sanitize after each use
- Drinking faucet on sinks will be covered
- Bathrooms
 - Bitterroot use main bathrooms instead of classroom bathrooms so that a regular cleaning schedule can be maintained (exception: preschool area)
 - Aspen designate bathrooms to be used and establish a cleaning schedule

Promoting Healthy Habits and Good Hygiene

- Daily health checks for students and staff
 - Temperature checks as students arrive and before departure at the end of the day
 - Regular health screening questions for staff and families (How often? What does this look like?) (AAP suggests possible self reporting from families at regular intervals where possible.)
 - Things like: Does your student have any of the following symptoms [on the first day after a break or for a new student, please ask about symptoms in the past three days (72 hours)]:
 - o A cough
 - o Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - o A fever of 100.4°F or higher or a sense of having a fever
 - o A sore throat
 - o Chills
 - o New loss of taste or smell
 - o Muscle or body aches
 - o Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
 - o Congestion/running nose not related to seasonal allergies
 - o Unusual fatique
 - Does anyone in your household have any of the above symptoms?
 - Has your student been in close contact with anyone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19?
 - Has your student had any medication to reduce a fever before coming to school?

The student must be excluded from school if the answer to any of the above questions is "yes."

- Establish routines that include sanitizing hands and wiping down areas at the beginning and end of each class
- Post accessible signs promoting physical distancing, face masks, healthy hygiene, and traffic flow

- Work with Health Services and Health Enhancement classes to educate students about the healthy habits and why they are important
- Provide information regarding counseling sessions and other assistance offered by the Employee Assistance Program
- Communicate regularly with families and staff about the importance of staying home when sick.

Leveraging Technology

- Communication
 - Use Zoom platform for staff meetings, ER/IEP/504 meetings, department meetings
 - Use call/text/email/video as a mode for communication for:
 - Scheduling
 - General questions
 - Sharing info about up-coming events
 - Use Infinite Campus for tracking attendance
 - Use technology to communicate with parents: texts, email, FaceBook, Infinite Campus, Plan Book or other electronic lesson plan format
- Classrooms
 - Google classroom will be used in all classes
 - Lesson plans will address in class and online learning environments
 - Zoom, Google Meet, and Facetime utilized to facilitate long distance instruction as needed
 - Incorporate virtual activities and field trips
- Electronic scheduling of common areas to limit the number of people (library, computer lab, life skills room)

- All visitors on campus must sign in/out and include contact information
- Attendance will be taken for each period
- Notations for any visitors or specialists present during a class
- Students sign in/out of class (time/reason) if they leave for any reason
- Follow protocols for a student or staff who demonstrates symptoms during the school day.

Education

Public School Interpreters

Increasing Physical Distancing

Reducing Potential Spread

Promoting Healthy Habits and Good Hygiene

Leveraging Technology

Outreach

- Keep a log of people entering the Outreach Office
- Self monitor wellness

Increasing Physical Distancing

- OR Consultants will make contact with schools and parents to determine how the visit will occur. No visits will happen if Consultant or contact person/people have symptoms
- They will assure 6 feet between

Reducing Potential Spread

- Provide sanitizing supplies and hand sanitizer in all work areas including home offices and state vehicles
- Encourage face masks or dividers when working with students; dividers will be provided
- Use sanitizing supplies to clean tables/materials after use
- Have a place to store shared items during transport until proper sanitation can happen; practice "Pack it in, pack it out" behavior
- Sanitize equipment between each use
- Avoid using anyone else's personal protective equipment, phones, computer equipment or other personal work tools and equipment
- In situations where work tools must be shared, employees will take precautions to sanitize tools between use, as well as wash their hands before and after use

Promoting Healthy Habits and Good Hygiene

- Outreach will develop a letter to be sent to parents stating the promotion of physical distancing, face masks, healthy hygiene, and necessary space to safely provide a home visit.
- Provide information regarding counseling sessions and other assistance offered by the Employee Assistance Program or State Insurance Plan
- Educate employees on how to tell people to maintain their distance/wear a facemask around you, for example, "We are practicing social distancing; can you please back up to stand on the sticker on the floor?"
- Educate employees on notification process if tested positive for COVID-19 by their healthcare professional
- Educate employees about the free COVID-19 testing under our insurance; they can contact their personal healthcare provider
- Create an FAQ to answer questions related to employee work expectations around exposure to COVID-19

Leveraging Technology

- Limit home visits to necessary family members, use an alternate environment or use remote technology if safe practices cannot occur.
- Hold meetings in spaces where people can properly social distance.
- Follow school/business procedures for COVID-19 when traveling for Outreach business

- Keep a daily log of visits, establishments and personnel contact to assist with contact tracing
- Require attendance sheet for events to assist with contact tracing; consider ways to gather attendee information while reducing contact and potential for spreading virus,

- such as requiring advance registration, with staff marking attendance the day of the event
- Create procedure for employees to self-report positive diagnosis for COVID-19

Travel

- Encourage virtual attendance to meetings and conferences in areas where cases are occurring
- Be aware conditions could change at any time; travelers (whether for personal or business reasons) may be unable to leave a state or may have to quarantine for 14 days upon reentry to Montana

Events

- Prepare for social distancing in cottages and during events
- Live-stream and record so online, high-risk, and physically distant students can participate
- Complete evaluations electronically for any events we are able to host
- Develop events that do not need many supplies and discourage shared materials

Deaf Mentors/Family Advisors

- Will self monitor before visits
- Review ASL COVID 19 VIDEOS if necessary https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4gborCUztk&list=PLvrp9iOILTQatwnqm61jqFrsfUB4RKh6J&index=7&t=0s
- Assure guidelines for masks, social distancing and health can be met by family members at the home or meeting will be held virtually
- Limit the items brought into homes and assure items brought into the home are cleaned to specifications before going into the home and again after leaving with disinfectant cleaner
- Have weekly contact with the Outreach Consultant they work under to assess services
- Report any COVID concerns or illness to the Outreach Director Carol Clayton-Bye 406-403-1322

Other

- Identify steps OR Consultant will take if someone they had contact with becomes diagnosed
- Share materials electronically when possible
- How/where will we provide updates? One location for all? Web page, Facebook or others
- OPI Providing Assessment: https://docs.google.com/document/d/10TyECEfuxT-BBqkSJOwQ_DZd-SKNobHVt79C6EFI7Wc/edit
- OPI Special Education http://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Special-Education/COVID-19-Special-Education-Information#93815612-resources---updated-6222020
- OPI, MPTI, DRM Parent Letter http://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Special%20Education/COVID19%20SPED/Joint%20Letter%20MOPI.MPTI.DRM%20(002).pdf?ver=2020-04-09-143952-327
- OPI Parent Guide https://www.ncld.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/A-Parents-Guide-to-Virtual-Learning-4-Actions-To-Improve-your-Childs-Experience-with-Online-Learning.pdf
- OSEP Guide https://osepideasthatwork.org/continuity-learning-during-covid-19

Residential Program

All Wings, Campus Kitchen and Dining Rooms

Increasing Physical Distancing

- One student per bedroom (current population allows this to happen)
- One student per bathroom (current population allows this to happen)
- Plexiglass dividers for kitchen table "u" shaped
- Remove chairs to match number of people (student and staff) in wing
- One person per couch in activity room
- Plexiglass dividers for tables in activity room
- Students hang coats and backpacks in their bedrooms
- Remove extra chairs in activity room
 - Office/desk
 - Reducing traffic by limiting staff and students in office area
 - Plexiglass barriers in offices
 - Secretary delivers mails to cottage wing, dining room or staff office area
 - Secretary makes copies and distributes
 - Call/text/email for basic questions, vehicle checkout, etc.
 - Vehicles
 - Limit number of people in vehicle

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- Dining Room
 - Have two lunch periods to reduce number of students in dining room
 - Students and staff utilize coat racks on both sides of dining room to reduce congestion
 - Place plexiglass dividers on tables
 - Maintain six feet while in line, mark with tape
 - Keep mask on until seated at table. Fold and place mask in lap.
 - Either leave dirty dishes on the table (this could be work study job) or monitor the traffic for the dirty dish line to reduce traffic and physical contact in passing
 - Raise hand if need something and staff will attend to need

Reducing Potential Spread

- Staff coming to work temp checked. If more than 100.4 they can not work
 - Log of staff, date and temp for each day
- Students returning from school, temp checked. If more than 100.4 go to the infirmary
- After staff hanging up coat, wash hands in sink for 20 seconds and then use the countertop paper towels to dry hands
- Reduce physical contact by no hugging, handshakes, etc. Encourage elbow shake or a verbal/visual "hello"
- Students should not go in other students rooms or bathrooms
- Purchase plastic covers for sofas and other cloth chairs (not offices or bedroom)
- Wipe pool balls, cue prior to playing and wipe them done after done playing
 - o Post accessible sign with directions to keep clean
- For foosball wipe down ball and handles prior to play and when done playing
 - Post accessible sign with directions to keep clean
- Wipe down Wii controllers for each player or play using rubber gloves
- Spare cardswipes wiped down before and after each usage
- All light switches and handles wiped down several times per day (assign staff)

- If two students per room
 - Plastic barrier between beds? Perhaps like shower curtain or hanging plexiglass
 - One person using their closet area at a time
- Meals in cottage wing
 - Before meal, staff observe students washing and drying hands using countertop paper towels to dry
 - o Food dished up by staff, wearing mask and gloves
 - Staff wearing plastic gloves to dish up meal
 - Single serve milk
 - Staff observe students washing hands and drying with countertop paper towels
- Meals in dining room
 - Younger students eat lunch in their classroom
 - Students and staff use hand sanitizer upon entering dining room
 - Dining room staff place food on student/staff plate
 - Silverware wrapped in napkin and placed at each table
 - Upon returning from bathroom wash hands, use hand sanitizer
 - Postpone formal dinners for now and any other large gatherings
- Vehicles
 - Keys wiped down by cottage office staff
 - o Driver wipe down steering wheel, seats, knobs, door handles when entering
 - Masks worn by driver and passengers
 - Keys will be placed on wipe (on desk) and office staff will wipe and put away
- Telephones, computers, remotes, appliances
 - Clean with wipe prior to using and after using
 - If handed phone from another person, wipe down the handset or preferably transfer phone to a different line
 - Wipes should be located by the device

Promoting Healthy Habits and Good Hygiene

- Mask worn by staff and students
 - o Students do not need to wear mask in their bedrooms
 - During meals masks are not needed (folded in half, placed on lap) to use after meal is completed
- Use television/emergency monitors to show CDC recommendations and health updates
- Hand sanitizer upon entering and exiting cottage wing
- Hand sanitizer upon entering and exiting activity room
- Hand sanitizer upon entering and exiting bedroom
- Bathroom cleaned after use including the following
 - Wipe down counter (if used counter space)
 - Wipe down flusher with Clorox wipe and then wipe the seat, put soiled wipe in garbage (do not flush)
 - Shower/bath cleaned after each usage
 - Spray down shower/tub walls
 - Spray tub or shower floor with disinfectants
 - Sponge mop or hand wipe
 - Place all soiled towels, wash clothes, bathmats, etc. in laundry room items should only be used by the student
- Post accessible signage in all areas promoting hand washing, social distancing, cough protection and other tips

Leveraging Technology

- Additional cameras for Zoom meetings and or trainings
- Utilize existing technology (text/email/vp/phone) to gather information or have questions answered

Preparing for Potential Illness

- Emphasise if sick do not come to work
 - If fever, get Covid test explaining your need expedited results as work with children in residential setting
- Student Life office maintain attendance/activity/temp and contact list for students in residential program and staff
- Emphasise call in procedure during orientation
- Staff should call in as early as possible
- Maintain list of who is available to sub
- Cross train staff to work in different department if necessary and possible

Student Life Check-in Day Yellowstone Activity Room(August 23, 2020)

- Allow for early opening to reduce congestion
- Stagger check-ins if possible
- Approximate arrival time for each family
- Counselors call families to schedule ETA for arrivals
- Minimize number of people per student
- Temp check for each adult
 - If parent/adult has fever child may not check in and parent needs to return at another date
- Use tables in activity room with plexiglass dividers
- Provide pen for parents to use and take with them
- Wipe down tables after each check in
- Encourage families to stay together
- No open plates of food (usually have a fruit and cookie tray)
- Single serving drinks and snacks
- Clean public bathroom several times during check-in
- If using carts, wipe with clorox wipes after each usage (assign staff to this)
- Accessible signage should be in place for parents to see

Travel Days - staff and students travelling with Helena Town Car

- Prior to students/staff getting on the vehicle temp checked
- 100.4 students can't get on the vehicle and parents will need to pick up child
- If on travel return, student has temp, parent will return student to campus when temp has been down for 24 hours
- Masks worn by all passengers and driver
- Luggage wiped down before putting in activity room
- Luggage wiped down before placing in travel vehicles
- Use hand sanitizer entering, exiting vehicle and during the travel
- Students and staff use hand sanitizer prior to eating their sack lunch or snacks
- Students place discarded lunch, baggies, etc. in garbage bag themselves
- This information will be discussed with parents at Check-In day and mailed in separate mailing prior to the school year starting.

Visitors/Overnight Guests

Parents/siblings only, others on a case by case basis

- Temperature check upon arrival, sign in sheet
 Use hand sanitizer upon entering and exiting cottages
 Limit where can go
- o Develop specific guidelines for visitors, mail to parents prior to school starting