



# **Spearfish School District**

2023-2024 School Year

## **Safe Return to In-Person Learning and Continuity of Services Plan**

Based on the Requirements of the U.S. Department of Education

**First Reading: June 12, 2023**  
**Plan Approved: July 10, 2023**

Disclaimer: This plan was adopted by the Spearfish Board of Education on July 10, 2023 and will be reviewed every 6 months by District Administration and the Board of Education. However, the superintendent reserves the right to modify rules, procedures, and expectations in accordance with national, state, and local health requirements.

Please direct questions to Kirk Easton, Superintendent: [keaston@spearfish.k12.sd.us](mailto:keaston@spearfish.k12.sd.us) or 605-717-1229

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Spearfish School, like many across the nation, is the beneficiary of federal funding to support math and literacy interventions as well as access to mental health supports. However, in order to access the federal funding through the American Recovery Plan each school district must prepare a Safe Return to In-Person Learning and Continuity of Services Plan.

In preparing our Plan, the district administration and the Board of Education took into consideration stakeholder comments prior to and during the 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 school years, student growth & achievement data, information from the CDC, the SD Department of Health, and the SD Department of Education. The Board of Education has offered the opportunity for stakeholder input at each of their regular scheduled Board meetings since July 12, 2021.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND CONSIDERATIONS**

The guidance and considerations outlined in this document are grounded in the following principles:

1. Safeguarding the health & safety of students and staff; and
2. Traditional, in-person learning.

## **CONTINUITY OF SERVICES**

1. The Spearfish School District will have traditional, in-person learning in our schools without a 100% remote learning option. The central belief is that our students are best served when connected in person with our school's academic programs, activities, and social-emotional supports led in person by our teachers, counselors, coaches, administrators, and mentors.
2. Credit recovery; tutoring, both during and after school; summer school; and extended school year will be offered to assist students who may need additional support and help outside the normal classroom setting due to absences as a result of an illness.
3. In the event of a school closure and the move to remote learning, instructional delivery and academic learning will be accomplished through the Learning Management Systems outlined under Remote Learning.
  - a. During a period of remote learning, breakfast and lunch meals may be provided to students via a single pick-up location (TBD).
  - b. During a period of remote learning, school counselors will be available to address student social, emotional, and mental health needs.

## **REMOTE LEARNING**

Remote Learning includes the closure of a school and the move to remote learning. The decision to move to remote learning will be based on the ability to maintain an effective in-person learning environment. Activities may be suspended during the period of remote learning based upon the circumstances at the time of the decision. Staff will be working with students the first weeks of school to prepare them should we have to move to remote learning.

- Every teacher in grades kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade will have a Google Classroom set up for their classroom or course sections.
- Every teacher in grades 9 through 12 will have their course sections set up in Google Classroom or Moodle.
- Every teacher in kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade will use ClassDojo to communicate with students and parents.
- Every teacher in 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade will use email. The Remind app may be used as supplemental means to communicate with students and parents.

### **STAYING HOME WHEN APPROPRIATE**

- Employees and students that are experiencing symptoms of an infectious disease such as COVID-19, RSV, and/or GI infections should stay home.
- In addition, students and staff should be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and show symptom improvement before returning to school. This precautionary measure applies to any student or staff member with a fever and related symptoms.

### **SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

- Students – each student will have access to a qualified school counselor in their respective grade level building. The school district will also utilize community mental health providers to address gaps in mental health services. In addition, the school district utilizes a school/community liaison to connect students and families with school and community resources.
- Staff – each school employee will have access to three (3) therapy sessions during the 2023-2024 school year with a counseling service contracted by the school district.

### **HEALTH PROTOCOLS**

- Teach and reinforce proper hygiene measures such as hand washing and respiratory etiquette
- Staff and students will wash hands and/or use hand sanitizer regularly
- Post signs in highly visible locations that promote everyday protective measures and how to stop the spread of germs
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces

### **BUILDING VISITATION & FACILITY USE**

- All visitors and volunteers should be in good health with no symptoms of illness.
- All facilities will be available for outside organization use (subject to availability)

### **TRANSPORTATION & BUSING**

- Increased cleaning of frequently touched surfaces
- Sanitation wipes and/or hand sanitizer provided in each bus
- Open windows and roof vents, when practical, to improve ventilation

### **STUDENT MEALS**

- Follow safe food handling procedures when handling, preparing, or serving food
- Clean cafeterias and high-touch surfaces throughout the school day
- When able, implement alternative seating arrangements and/or locations to decrease the number of students dining together during each serving session
- Hand sanitizer station set up in service line for student to sanitize before and after meals

### **CLEANING/MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS**

- Adequate supplies provided to support healthy hygiene behavior
- Normal daily cleaning and disinfecting
- Normal maintenance operations
- HVAC systems will utilize outside air whenever possible to achieve fresh air flushes
- HVAC System filters will be upgraded in compatible systems

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Every child and adolescent with a disability is entitled to a free and appropriate education and is entitled to special education services based on their individualized education program (IEP). Students receiving special education services may be more negatively affected by distance-learning and may be disproportionately impacted by interruptions in regular education. It may not be feasible, depending on the needs of the individual child and adolescent, to adhere both to distancing guidelines and the criteria outlined in a specific IEP. Attempts to meet the needs of the individual child and may require creative solutions, often on a case-by-case basis. Appropriate accommodations will be made for students with disabilities in respect to THEIR health and safety. Please contact your child's case manager if you need assistance.

## **VIRTUAL LEARNING OVERVIEW**

The Spearfish School District will allow students to access virtual learning opportunities when it is determined to be in the best educational interest of the student or is necessitated due to a medical condition. The district's preferred provider for virtual learning is the Black Hills Online Learning Community. If you have questions, please consult the online information available at <http://bholc.org>. However, other approved virtual learning options may be available for remediation or credit recovery for students in grades 6-12.

Virtual learning is a unique opportunity that is not guaranteed for everyone. The criteria below outline the circumstances that a student may be considered for virtual learning. A team from each respective building will make a recommendation to the superintendent. The superintendent will make the final decision.

### **To be eligible:**

1. The student must be enrolled in the Spearfish School District. Students must meet and maintain all pertinent enrollment requirements of the district. Students will not be allowed to open enroll into the Spearfish School District to participate in virtual learning.
2. A student who has an immune compromised system or are living with a family member with an immune compromised system. A physician's recommendation that explicitly states the student should not attend school in-person must be provided; or  
It is determined that it is in the best educational interest of the student to participate in virtual learning.
3. Acceptance into virtual learning for students with an IEP or 504 will primarily be based upon the decision of the IEP/504 team as they determine the best educational placement for the individual student.

### **Considerations:**

1. Student performance will be reviewed each trimester/semester. Learners not making adequate progress, not demonstrating proficiency, or are failing may be removed from the program at subsequent trimesters/semesters.
2. Students will be allowed to participate in athletics and extra-curricular activities.
3. Students are required to take state assessments administered by the district regardless of whether the course for which the examination is required was taken virtually or in the traditional classroom. Failure to take the state assessments may result in denial to continue with virtual learning.

Students taking courses virtually are subject to district policies, procedures and rules applicable to students enrolled in traditional courses including, but not limited to, the district's discipline code and prohibitions on academic dishonesty, discrimination, harassment, bullying and cyberbullying. Direct any inquiries about virtual learning to the building principal.