

Mt. Blue Regional School District RSU 9



Return to School Handbook 2023/2024 School Year

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Introduction

To provide meaningful learning experiences across all of our schools, [our plan is informed by the evolving guidance from the Maine Department of Education \(ME DOE\) and the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(ME CDC\)](#). RSU 9 is promoting health equity to ensure that all students and staff can be at school and access the resources available which support physical and mental health needs. *RSU 9 Staff and Families need to understand that changes to this plan can happen without advanced notice, based on advice from state and federal agencies.*

The RSU 9 plan is based on the following:

- As of July 20, 2021, the recommendation is to return to school for “Full In-Person Learning” to maximize the learning experiences for all RSU 9 students.
- Following the most up-to-date guidance and recommendations from ME/US CDC when any staff or student tests positive for COVID.

Educational Models

RSU 9 Continuum of Instruction for the 2023-2024 School Year

The following represents the continuum of educational program delivery proposed for the upcoming school year (FY 2024). Our District’s goal is to maximize in-person instruction for our students. Understanding conditions can change rapidly, it is imperative that we are prepared to deliver educational programming in all of our schools throughout the upcoming school year. This plan is subject to periodic review and change if warranted by conditions in our county and state as advised by ME CDC, the Maine Dept. of Ed, and other regulatory agencies.

RSU 9 will use and implement the safety protocols as required and recommended by the State of Maine in a manner to maximize in-person student learning while being prepared to transition between the following levels and mitigating strategies when and as needed.

Communication from the Maine Department of Education (8/12/21) indicates the State of Maine will be following the Federal CDC Guidance relative to COVID-19.

Home-Based Learning

Just like when students are hospitalized or have an infectious illness during non-COVID times, students may be out for a number of reasons during the school year, including

having COVID. If that is the case, teachers will supply work as they have in similar situations before COVID previously by using Google Classroom (6-12), Seesaw (K-5), or through paper packets sent home. Teachers will communicate with students and families as instructional needs warrant it. Families should continue to contact teachers for any questions they may have. *A teacher who feels most comfortable with synchronous learning may invite a student into the classroom, but only if the student's internet connection is strong and there is a mutual agreement between home and school, with principal approval.*

Health and Safety Guidelines Explained

Consistent and Correct Mask Use

- Indoors: Masking is no longer required but is optional for all students and staff except in the following situations:
 - At school on days 6-10 of isolation (without any symptoms),
 - Days 6-10 of quarantine if no exemptions are met.
- Outdoors: no requirement to wear masks outdoors.
- Exceptions can be made for the following categories of people:
 - A person who cannot wear a mask (per a documented medical concern), or cannot safely wear a mask due to a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
 - Mask or face covering guidelines covered in students' current (as of June 2021) IEP if applicable.
- Students and staff members are encouraged to bring their own masks, but quality and effective masks will be provided to those who need a mask. Students in grades PreK - 5 may use or be offered multiple masks during the day. Used reusable masks will be placed in a baggie and sent home with the student at the end of the day.

Ventilation

Ventilation is an important strategy in preventing the spread of COVID-19. This has been done in multiple ways, including opening multiple doors and windows, through the use of fans bringing in extra air and sending used air out, and ensuring HVAC or air filtration systems are running *properly.

**Ventilation System failure could result in a temporary school closure while systems are brought back online.*

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

Students and staff will follow and practice hand washing and respiratory etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes) to avoid spreading COVID-19.

- Staff members will teach and reinforce handwashing as needed.
- If handwashing is not feasible, students and staff will use hand sanitizer.

Staying Home When Sick and Getting Tested

If a student or staff member fails their health screener (to be done at home), they will need to notify their school or department, call their primary care physician, and stay home.

At Home Health Screening Tool for Staff & Families

Please review this screening tool **before** school **every morning**. This tool is for your reference only, **do not** send it to school.

If you are experiencing any combination (**2 or more of the less common symptoms, or 1 or more of the more common symptoms**) of the below-listed symptoms, please stay home. You are encouraged to test for Covid-19, consider contacting your medical provider for further instructions.

Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms?

Less Common Symptoms (2 or more)	Most Common Symptoms (1 or more)
<input type="checkbox"/> Body aches <input type="checkbox"/> New headache <input type="checkbox"/> Runny nose/congestion <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea/Vomiting/Diarrhea	<input type="checkbox"/> New, uncontrolled cough <input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing <input type="checkbox"/> Symptoms such as temperature over 100.4 degrees F or 38.0 degrees C, body aches, and/or shaking chills. <input type="checkbox"/> Sore throat <input type="checkbox"/> New loss of taste or smell

****If any of the above-listed symptoms are sudden or severe, seek immediate medical attention.****

Please indicate yes or no next to the following statements:	Yes	No
Have you taken cough/cold medication and/or fever reducers such as Tylenol/ibuprofen today for the above-listed symptoms?		

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, stay home and notify the school that you are staying home due to failing the health screener. Contact your medical provider for instructions.

Isolation

Per CDC guidelines, masking following exposure is covered in the [Covid FAQ one pager](#).

Cleaning and Disinfection

The data from science continues to show that cleaning and disinfecting classrooms once a day removes potential virus exposure. If a school space or bus has had someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, we will follow US CDC guidelines to disinfect the space.

Testing

Test kits are available to students and staff at no cost. Please contact your school nurse to get test kits.

RSU 9 no longer tests anyone for Covid-19 at School.