

Phase II (Modified)

Modified In-Person Learning Format

APPROVED

02.09.21

General Descriptors:

Modified Format: In-person learning environment with a blended learning option available for students that cannot attend school in-person

- Elementary: In-person learning environment, four* days a week. Remote/intervention day on Wednesday. DLI continues in remote format.
- Middle: In-person learning environment, four* days a week. Remote/intervention day on Wednesday. DLI continues in remote format.
- High: In-person learning environment, four* days a week. Remote/intervention day on Wednesday. DLI continues in remote format.
- **Rationale: Due to the dual (in-person and DLI) format of middle and high classes and the ongoing supports needed for students unable to attend in-person (including quarantine), one digital day per week is necessary to ensure student needs are being considered across both platforms.*
- **Wednesday "C Day" remains a remote format day focused specifically on connecting all students online as a class. Time will be allotted for small-group interventions (in-person or remote) and teacher planning.*
- In-Person Bell Schedules and Remote Learning Blocks
 - Modified bell schedule to accommodate transportation and ongoing remote learning needs
 - Elementary In-Person Bell Schedule: 8:45am (start) to 2:20pm (end)
 - AM Remote Instruction Block: 8:00am to 8:45pm
 - PM Remote Instruction Block: 2:35pm to 3:05pm
 - Middle In-Person School Bell Schedule: 8:05am (start) to 1:40pm (end)
 - PM Remote Instruction Block: 1:40pm to 2:50pm
 - Period-by-period schedule may vary by school. Please see school schedules for more information ([link](#))
 - High School Bell Schedule: Bell times in relation to when a student begins their in-person day. Please see school schedules for more information ([link](#))
 - Modified school operations designed to limit group sizes in large spaces (cafeterias, auditoriums, etc.)
 - Closed high school campus prohibiting off-campus lunch
 - Cohort recess groupings to limit student exposure
 - Extra-curricular activities/events in accordance with MHS A guidelines with spectator plans approved by Lewis & Clark Public Health (LCPH)
 - School-based childcare available through SACC
 - Fieldtrips limited, pending principal approval
 - External use of school/district facilities limited to after-hours pending district and/or health department plan approval

Health Precautions/Practices:

- Face masks are required for all students, employees, and visitors unless a physician documented contraindicated reason
- KN95 masks available for all employees working in close proximity (6 feet or less)
- Ongoing precautionary practices including hand hygiene, bathroom hygiene, and clean-in/clean-out practices
- Students and employees should aim for a physical distance of three (3) feet when feasible. Distancing of 6 feet remains the optimal environment.
- Ongoing contact-tracing and quarantine protocols in alignment with LCPH orders/guidelines
- Ventilation/filtration modifications providing no less than four (4) air changes per hour of clean air (fresh or purified)
- Visitors not allowed beyond school office during regular school hours without special permission

Phase II Detailed

Modified In-Person Learning Format

Phase II is a highly modified phase of school. In this phase, families may choose for students to attend school in-person for up to four days each week. While not currently attainable, a five day per week option will continue to be considered and developed as a preferred option for Phase II. Understanding that many students/families will need to remain in a remote setting (Digital Learning Initiative, quarantine orders, etc.) school start/end times and the four-day in-person schedule have been designed to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all enrolled students (in-person and remote). While our teaching/learning environment may resemble traditional, in-person school, many of our regular school procedures have been modified to ensure the safest possible environment. This includes the below-detailed health/safety protocols required for all on-campus students, employees, and visitors.

Operational Description:

- **Weekly Schedule:** In the modified, Phase II model, in-person learning is the primary mode of instruction. However, with many students needing to remain in a remote setting (for both short and long-term periods of time), daily and weekly schedules have been modified to ensure blended learning options remain viable for anyone who cannot attend school in-person.
 - **Digital Learning Initiative (DLI):** Remote school attendance through the Digital Learning Initiative will continue in Phase II for all levels (elementary, middle, and high). While some schedule changes may become necessary when phasing-up or down, the structure and attendance of DLI should remain consistent.
 - **Elementary School:** Elementary students may attend school in-person, beginning with a four-day in-person schedule – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday. While a majority of elementary-level teachers are not responsible for both in-person and DLI instruction, ongoing quarantines continue to impact daily attendance. Attendance on Wednesday, “C Days,” will remain generally remote unless students are attending in-person intervention programs or other structured opportunities. Wednesdays will also continue to include needed time for teacher planning.
 - **Middle School:** Middle school students attending C.R. Anderson Middle and Helena Middle may attend school in-person for up to four days per week on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday schedule. A fifth, remote/digital day (Wednesday) is required within the weekly schedule to ensure that student needs are being met and that teachers have the required time to prepare for the dual requirements of their teaching. Attendance on Wednesday, “C Days,” will remain generally remote unless students are attending in-person intervention programs or other structured opportunities. Wednesdays will also continue to include needed time for teacher planning.
 - **High School:** High school students attending Capital High and Helena High may attend school in-person for up to four days per week on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday schedule. A fifth, remote/digital day (Wednesday) is required within the weekly schedule to ensure that student needs are being met and that teachers have the required time to prepare for the dual requirements of their teaching. Attendance on Wednesday, “C Days,” will remain generally remote unless students are attending in-person intervention programs or other structured opportunities. Wednesdays will also continue to include needed time for teacher planning.
 - **Project for Alternative Learning (PAL):** PAL will return to an in-person format for all students utilizing the above-noted Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday format. Wednesday will remain a remote “C Day” until determined otherwise.
 - **Access to Success:** High school students attending Access to Success will attend school on a daily/weekly basis as communicated by Access to Success and Helena College. Students/Families are encouraged to contact Access to Success for additional information – (406) 447-6380 or <https://accesstosuccess.helenaschools.org/>

- **Daily Schedule:**
 - **Bell/Period Schedules:** Bell (start/end) times at all levels have been adjusted to allot for time needed to meet the needs of students attending in-person and online. In addition, the below tiers aid in providing needed transportation to/from school. By design, bell times in Phase II aim to remain consistent with Phase I including AM and/or PM remote learning blocks.
 - Elementary In-Person Bell Schedule: 8:45am (start) to 2:20pm (end)
 - AM Remote Instruction Block: 8:00am to 8:45pm
 - PM Remote Instruction Block: 2:35pm to 3:05pm
 - Middle In-Person School Bell Schedule: 8:05am (start) to 1:40pm (end)
 - PM Remote Instruction Block: 1:40pm to 2:50pm
 - Middle Schools will be utilizing a block or “double-block” schedule. This schedule calls for students to attend an extended period opportunity on designated days, essentially doubling their per-period time on specific days of the week.
 - Period-by-period schedule may vary by school. Please see school schedules for more information ([link](#))
 - High School Bell Schedule: Bell times in relation to when a student begins their in-person day. Please see school schedules for more information ([link](#))
- **School Operations:** School operations in Phase II have been modified to reduce the risk of virus transmission. These modifications include designated traffic patterns within schools, reduced restroom capacity to avoid interior lines, and specifically designed breakfast/lunch opportunities.
 - Cafeterias, gymnasiums, and other large spaces will function with reduced capacity to ensure appropriate distancing especially when students are unmasked and eating. Students may unmask to eat in designated spaces only with limitations on the total capacity of that space. Due to the unique nature of each school campus, schools will develop site-specific plans for student dining options.
 - Cohort recess and lunch groupings at the elementary level will be utilized to limit student exposure.
- **Remote Learners:** Students attending via the Digital Learning Initiative (DLI) remain actively engaged in school but attend via ongoing online teaching/learning services. DLI students will remain enrolled and assigned to their home school and receive ongoing instruction from designated in-person teachers or assigned digital resource teachers. DLI students should have opportunities to attend school both synchronously and asynchronously.
- **School Event/Activities Protocols:** School events will be limited in Phase II. Guidelines for specific, annual events include the below restrictions.
 - Open Houses, Parent/Teacher Conferences and Parent Nights: These types of events/meetings may include in-person attendance but will require a specifically designed/approved plan. Otherwise, it is recommended that these events/meetings remain digital.
 - School Assemblies: School assemblies may occur provided that the students remain within their cohorts/classes. Gatherings of any size beyond scheduled class cohorts must be approved by the school’s administrator.
 - Field Trips: Proposals must be reviewed/approved by school nurses and school administrators. Overnight fieldtrips are not advised in Phase II without specific planning and approval by the superintendent/designee.
 - Musical and Theatre Events: In Phase II, indoor events will be modified in an effort to limit gathering sizes and maximize public safety precautions. Events involving the public must include a pre-approved plan that aligns with local orders for gathering sizes. Event plans must be reviewed/approved by school nurses, school administrator, and Lewis & Clark Public Health. Outdoor events, if possible, are preferred but will need to remain aligned to local orders for gathering sizes.
 - Activities/Athletics: Extra-curricular activities/events must be in accordance with MHSA guidelines. Plans associated with spectators (non-school members of the public) must receive approval by Lewis & Clark Public Health.

- School Pictures: Weather permitting, school pictures are encouraged to take place outside. Should an outdoor setting not be available, distancing and mask expectations (when not being photographed) should be enforced.

- **Visitor Protocols:**

- Allowed visitors/volunteers include student teachers, student nurses, associated supervisors, approved contractors, and city/county/state employees associated with child services.
- Restricted visitors and volunteers will need special permission from the school administration to proceed beyond the front office. Restricted visitors are encouraged to utilize email/phone for general communication. Restricted visitors include all individuals not specifically noted above.

Health & Safety Protocols:

- **Masks and Other Personal Protective Equipment:**

- All students, employees, and visitors must wear a mask properly at all times as part of our Phase II protocols. This is a requirement for every student, employee, and/or visitor unless that person has a medical contraindication for wearing a mask verified by a medical provider (MD, DO, NP, PA only).
- KN95 Availability: All employees that serve on a school site or are in direct contact with students will be provided access to KN95 respirators.
 - KN95 masks are made from multiple layers of synthetic material (polypropylene plastic polymer) and meet the standard for filtering out and/or capturing 95 percent of micron air particles (as small as 0.3 microns in size).
 - KN95 masks are listed as “limited use” and should only be worn for a single day. For maximum effectiveness, a new KN95 mask should be worn each day.
 - Please note that KN95 masks are foreign made and meet foreign standards as opposed to the US made N95 masks. At this time, KN95 masks are the optimal mask available in-bulk for non-medical purposes.
- Masks, face shields, gloves, and/or goggles will be provided to all employees working with medically fragile students. Additionally, masks, face shields, gloves, and/or goggles will be provided and required for any employee supervising symptomatic students.

- **Distancing Practices:**

- Students and employees should aim for a physical distance of three (3) feet when feasible.
- If unmasked (breakfast/lunch) students and employees should aim for a physical distance of six (6) feet and consider the use of protective partitions.
- To aid in physical distancing, desks/tables should be spaced to allot for the maximum, allowable space between students. Desks/tables should be turned to face the same direction in the classroom to avoid causing students to sit in a manner in which they are facing one another.
- Protective partitions should be utilized particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least three feet apart and/or masking is not available.
- Physical guides, such as direction arrows for hallway traffic and signs on floors/walls, will be utilized to reduce the unneeded congregation of individuals in a given space. These practices may include one-way hallways and/or spaces that are off-limits to students.
- Available outdoor spaces should be converted into usable spaces for instruction, eating, and/or recreation. Weather permitting, schools will work to utilize their full grounds to provide distanced, outdoor opportunities.

- **Hygiene Practices:**

- Hand washing and/or the use of hand sanitizer will be a regular practice across the school day in Phase II. Soap and water for hand hygiene are preferred but not always available. When hand washing is not possible, hand sanitizer will be utilized. Please note that these practices of regular hand washing/sanitization may cause dry skin.
- Hand washing and/or the use of hand sanitizer should occur when:

- entering and exiting the classrooms and/or school buildings
 - prior to and after recess
 - before and after meals
 - upon exiting the restroom
 - before/after handling shared materials used across classes/classrooms
 - Clean-In/Clean-Out: In any situation where students are sharing a specific desk/table within a given school day, it is advised that schools/students utilize “clean-in/clean-out” protocols. “Clean-in” involves employees and/or students cleaning surfaces prior to being seated for the class period. Likewise, “clean-out” involves employees and/or students cleaning surfaces prior to exiting the classroom. These protocols ensure that shared spaces are cleaned twice as part of each class change.
 - Elementary hand hygiene should be supervised if possible. This practice will be part of start-up education for all students.
- **Contact Tracing and Quarantine Protocols:**
 - Personnel trained by Lewis & Clark Public Health will conduct contract tracing for each confirmed case of COVID 19 (students and employees). In doing so, close contacts will be assessed using the below CDC definition for exposure. Identified close contacts will need to immediately quarantine and remain in isolation from the public for a determined amount of time. Quarantine orders are legally enforceable documents and contain a specific exit date for each identified contact.
 - The CDC currently defines a close contact as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated. ([source](#))
 - The Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday weekly schedule being utilized by middle and high schools in Phase II, coupled with the potential use of block schedules, is expected to reduce cross-cohort exposure. Together, these two facets of the Phase II plan are designed to reduce close contacts and required quarantines.
 - **Closed Campuses:**
 - High School campuses will remain closed for lunch, precluding students from exiting and reentering during the designated lunch period.
 - All campuses remain closed to visitors unless provided permission by the office/principal. Inquiries are encouraged by email/phone to avoid additional exposure. Supplies/materials that need to be dropped-off can occur through each school’s front office.
 - **Transportation:** Bus transportation in Phase II involves a minimal number of students per bus to ensure physical distancing and reduce potential contacts. Routes are school-specific routes, requiring less time on the bus per ride/route. Transfer points have been eliminated to ensure that students utilize only one bus and ride only with students enrolled at the same school.
 - **Symptom Screening:**
 - Families will be asked to perform daily symptom checks prior to sending their students to school. Symptom checklists and guides will be provided to assist parents/guardians in checking for symptoms before a student leaves for school and/or boards a bus. It is vital that students are not sent to school with any of the noted, [CDC-identified symptoms](#).
 - Students identified as symptomatic by school personnel will be cared for in isolation to reduce exposure to other students and/or employees. Parents/caregivers will need to immediately report to school to pick-up children with identified symptoms.
 - **General Entry/Exit:** In Phase II, staggered practices will be utilized for entry/exit of school buildings. Elementary schools will utilize a practice of lining-up classes to enter the building at different times. Entry will be appropriately distanced by cohort. To minimize entry/exit congestion, schools will utilize multiple sets of doors with classes/cohorts assigned to specific points of entry/exit.

- **Cohort Groupings:** The use of specific cohort groupings will be a regular practice as part of our Phase II protocols.
 - Elementary Schools: Elementary schools will attend music, library, and physical education in exclusive classroom cohorts. Additionally, lunch and recess will be structured by cohort. In addition to the use of designated cohorts, strict seating assignments and seating charts will be maintained in all classrooms and buses.
 - Middle Schools & High Schools: Middle and high school students will attend classes as defined by the school's block schedule. As noted above, block scheduling is a student cohort strategy designed to reduce the number of class periods within a given school day.
- **Shared Material Use:** To the greatest extent possible, students must have their own school supplies to reduce the need of shared materials. In situations where shared materials cannot be avoided (textbook sets, instructional manipulatives, etc.), students are required to sanitizing their hands prior to and after use. Library books may be checked out to students but upon return, books/materials will be quarantined for twenty-four hours before re-shelving.
- **Isolation/Care for Symptomatic Individuals:** Each school operates an identified COVID-19 related isolation space that effectively separates any symptomatic individual from other students/employees. Care will be provided by the school nurse and/or other trained personnel until that student can be signed-out by a parent/caregiver. Identified isolation/care spaces are equipped with needed supplies including protective equipment, sanitization/disinfectant supplies and needed barriers for isolation and privacy.
- **COVID Testing and Screening:** COVID testing is available for symptomatic employees via an off-campus site managed by HSD School Nurses. Employees should contact their school nurse (or direct supervisor) to schedule an appointment. At this time, COVID testing is not available for symptomatic HSD students. Additionally, asymptomatic screening is not an available service within the school system and general community.

Cleaning/Disinfection Protocols:

- Cleaning/Disinfection efforts remain heightened in Phase II with ongoing procedures for disinfecting spaces, surfaces, and any areas utilized by students, employees and/or visitors. Associated protocols include:
 - Frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high touch areas is a shared responsibility of all employees.
 - Disinfection of work areas, counters, restrooms, doorknobs, and stair railings will occur regularly across the school day.
 - Cleaning and disinfection of all hallways, common areas, and the locker exteriors will occur on a daily basis in accordance with the levels of sanitation prescribed by the CDC. CDC/EPA cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance ([link](#)) for best practices and approved disinfectants.
 - Employees are encouraged to continually wipe/disinfect counters, faxes, copiers, telephones, keyboards, and other office supplies.
 - CDC guidelines will be strictly adhered to for the appropriately clean and disinfection of buildings, buses, and playgrounds.
 - Efforts will be made to keep each student's belongings separated via the use of individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.
- Classrooms will be provided student-appropriate cleaning supplies to assist with sanitation requirements. As part of their daily classroom-based responsibilities, students may be asked to clean their desks/materials with soap/water solutions.
- Educators will be asked to remove any items/furniture not needed for specific instructional purposes. Removal of these items will allow for maximum physical distancing within classrooms and other common spaces.
- Filtration materials have been upgraded to meet the optimal specifications of each school's mechanical system. As assessment of district-wide ventilation systems has been conducted by a third-party mechanical

engineering firm. No less than four (4) air changes per hour of clean air (fresh or purified) is ensured for each classroom.

Teaching & Learning Environment:

Within Phase II, students and families should expect teaching and learning that closely resembles our normal, in-person environment. While the above-listed health/safety precautions will necessitate changes to our physical environment, teaching and learning for students attending school in-person will be classroom/cohort-based.

Throughout the year, students should expect the regular use of technology away from school which includes their homework environment and any/all remote learning blocks. Students will continue to utilize their provided device (laptop, Chromebook, tablet) as part of their normal learning supplies and materials. This will aid students beyond the hours of school in Phase II and allow for a better connection between in-school learning and homework.

Our technology platform remains consistent with Phase I with blended learning continuing but reduced. At this time, students in Phase II attend school in-person four days per week. Therefore, blended learning opportunities will decrease as in-classroom time increases. However, blended learning remains an integral part of our home/school learning environment and is designed to aid student learning during and beyond their in-person classroom time.

Social & Emotional Supports:

- Social and Emotional support services remain heightened during Phase II as our community is actively proceeding through a traumatic event. Stress and anxiety associated with the ongoing pandemic will impact the mental and emotional stability of nearly everyone, students included. In an effort to respond, each school will utilize their Social/Emotional Support (SES) team to identify, address, and support the needs of students. Additionally, employees will utilize trauma-informed practices to assess whether or not a student needs increased support services.

Other Phase II Specific Information:

- District provided SACC childcare services are operational in Phase II. Times/services will vary by school.