



Kalkaska Public Schools

Terry J. Starr, Superintendent

October 30, 2020

Dear KPS Staff and School Community,

Following a [directive](#) of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Director Robert Gordon, all K-12 school buildings - public, private and boarding in the Traverse City region are ordered to join the rest of the state and return to Phase 4 of the [MI Safe Start Plan](#) in effort to slow the spread of COVID-19.

With the increasing number of Coronavirus cases in our region and across the state, Kalkaska Public Schools is committed to taking appropriate steps to support the health and safety of our staff, students, and families and will continue to follow guidance outlined in the [KPS District Preparedness Plan](#). Paying attention to these factors, please be aware of the following Kalkaska Public Schools response plan in order to best mitigate the spread of the virus:

- All school buildings will transition to at-home virtual learning for the remainder of this school week; October 28th through October 30th.
- Monday, November 2nd is a District Provided Professional Development day for our teachers, no in-person or virtual learning on this day.
- Students at Birch Street Elementary, Rapid City Elementary and Kalkaska High School may return to in-person learning Tuesday, November 3rd.
- Students at Cherry Street Intermediate and Kalkaska Middle School will remain in at-home virtual learning through Friday, November 6th and will return to in-person learning Monday, November 9th.

Each day, our custodial staff follow specific guidelines and safe practices to keep our buildings clean and help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in preparation for the return of students and staff. As outlined in Phase 4 of our KPS Master Preparedness Plan, all buildings will adhere to even more stringent cleaning and disinfecting practices and adjust to more frequent hygiene protocols in classrooms. These changes reflect more frequent cleaning and limiting of shared materials among students and staff.

Students, parents, staff and community members are reminded of the importance of following safety protocols to help the school community slow the spread of COVID-19. Please continue to be vigilant by limiting social [gatherings](#), frequently washing hands, and wearing a mask while in public places. As always, we encourage everyone to continue to monitor for symptoms such as fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. Stay home if you feel sick and [get tested](#) if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

Holiday Gathering and Travel Guidance

With the recent increase of positive cases across the region, health officials are urging families to consider modified holiday celebrations that are small, local, and encourage wearing of masks, social distancing, and proper hygiene practices to help slow the spread of the virus. Our goal is to stay safe, keep our schools open face-to-face, and our businesses and economy moving forward.

Below is guidance from MDHHS and the CDC to consider before, during and after a gathering to stay safe this holiday season.

- [MDHHS Celebrating the Holidays During COVID-19](#)
- [MDHHS tips on TRAVELING during the holiday season](#)
- CDC [Know Your Travel Risk](#)
- CDC [Know When to Delay Your Travel to Avoid Spreading COVID-19](#)

As we monitor new developments, we will continue to provide timely communication as information is updated by health authorities. Thank you for your patience. Any changes regarding school schedules or further information will be shared through our School Messenger communication system, <https://www.kpschools.com/>, and <https://www.facebook.com/KalkaskaPublicSchools>.

Sincerely,

Terry J. Starr
Superintendent