

## Template for Distance Learning

Referencing the MDE's documents

03.19.20 - School Closure Guidance for School Districts and Charter Schools.pdf and  
03.19.20 - Q-and-A on School Closure.pdf (<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/health/covid19/>)

### **Contents**

Education and Distance Learning	2
Attendance and Truancy	2
Distance Learning	3
Special Education Services - IEP or 504 Plan	3
English Learners	4
Students Experiencing Homelessness or Housing Instability	5
Early Learning	8
Assessment	8
Communication	9
Tribal Considerations	10
Before and After Care	11
Services	11
Care for Children of Families of Emergency Workers	11
Nutrition	12
Meals and/or Instructional Material Pick-up	13
Health and Wellness	14
Mental Health Support Resources	15
Operations	15
Funding	15
Resources and Information	16
Libraries	16
Activities	16
Staff	16
Employment and Workforce	16
Resources from the Minnesota Department of Health	16

## ***Education and Distance Learning***

### **Attendance and Truancy**

#### Requirement:

Ensure your attendance and absence policy accommodates for the implementation of your distance learning model. Clearly communicate expectations to students, staff and parents. All students should follow individual district, school, or charter school policies and guidelines for excused absences. Please exercise caution before starting the truancy process. Please coordinate with your county on any decision.

#### Question 1.1:

Describe the school's plan to ensure the attendance and absence policy/ies accommodate for the implementation of your distance learning model.

#### School Response:

Students and staff will be held accountable to have daily interaction as needed based on individual needs for instruction identified by the teacher. Education Assistants will help with communication and translations as necessary.

#### Question 1.2:

Describe the school's plan to track the daily attendance of both students and staff.

#### School Response:

UACS teachers will log the daily activity of students on a google drive sheet set up by day. Teachers will log if students are completing work each day. The district is not looking for total completion of daily assignments they are looking for activity just as if a student was at school. As long as the student comes to school they're marked "present". Similarly, if a student is completing work and interacting with the daily assignments / teacher the student will be marked "active" for that day. If there is no communication or activity logged from the student, the student will be marked "Not Active". After 2 days of a "Not Active" status the student must be contacted by the teacher and admin must be communicated with the result of said communication.

#### Question 1.3:

Describe the school's plan to clearly communicate attendance expectations to students, staff and parents.

#### School Response:

Universal Academy will use the Teachers "Message Boards" located under the "Distance Learning" tab on uacsmn.org to communicate attendance expectations. UACS will also use the messaging system to text and voice call deliver the message to all parents. UACS will use the school email to communicate all attendance expectations to staff.

### **Distance Learning**

#### Requirement:

MDE expects that students who participate in distance learning have full access to appropriate educational materials. See full guidance on distance learning from MDE ([https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET\\_FILE&dDocName=MDE032056&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary](https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=MDE032056&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary)). Districts and charters must maintain educational continuity for schools and programs. As a district or charter, you must ensure equity in your plans.

School districts and charters must ensure equal access to ALL students. As your district or charter implements a distance learning model, the Federal and State requirements must be followed. This means that students need to be able to participate in their learning equitably and have access to all relevant services and supports. Schools should provide materials for students to continue their learning. Each school would determine the most appropriate way to communicate and provide instruction for each student. Schedule leadership-level reviews of the efficacy of distance learning plans and approaches for homeless students and consider alternatives or additional support needs as part of that review. Refer to pages 3 and 4 in the most current MDE School Closure Guidance document.

Question 2.1:

Describe the school's plan to ensure that all enrolled students will have equal access to the learning and required materials, including technology. Show how the school will determine the most appropriate way to communicate and provide instruction for each student.

School Response:

Universal Academy Charter School will provide equitable learning to all students. Before students leave for the school closure due to COVID-19, all classroom teachers trained students on how to access the "Distance Learning" Curriculum through the uacsmn.org website. Students received their passwords and usernames and walked through how to complete their assignments.

The general classrooms will conduct learning online from tablets, computers, or laptops. Throughout the past week and a half UACS teachers have pinpointed students who do not have this technology available, or do not have enough technology for their family. For example a family may have 2 tablets, but 6 kids at UACS. This is not an adequate number so UACS will provide 2 more chrome books for this family so that there are 4 pieces of technology for 6 students to share. UACS wants to work with the needs of each individual family to provide the best use of technology. Teachers will communicate these needs with the administration and administration will coordinate the pickup of the technology. If a family does not have any access to technology or internet teachers will make paper copies of the information available. This information will be distributed weekly during the food drop off with the busses.

Question 2.2:

If using an online learning system and if not using an online learning system or both, describe the school's plan to ensure it can effectively support the district's unique learning and teaching needs, including the ability to provide differentiated instruction as well as one-on-one support for students who need it.

School Response:

UACS has a diverse group of learners in each grade. Students work below, on, and above grade levels. The Pearson Reading Street and Envision 2.0 curriculum will be available for teachers to assign to all students across grade levels just as if they were in the classroom. For example a 4<sup>th</sup> grade student working at the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading level can be assigned 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading assignments to turn in on the PearsonRealize system. Students who have a 1 on 1 Para-educator will still have daily check ins with their 1 to 1. The 1 to 1 para will check in with the student over the phone and be available to help with organization, completion, and explanation of the classroom assignments. The teachers will also be checking in with these students as well as all general education students.

Question 2.3:

Services by non-teaching staff - Describe the school's plan to provide programming options for school nurses, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, paraprofessionals, other school specialists and cultural liaisons during the distance learning period.

School Response:

**School Nurse:** Attends Covid -19 Weekly Webex from MDH and briefs the health Office Coordinator.

**Paraprofessionals:** The paraprofessionals are reporting daily to the teachers. They are working regular school hours as a Liaison between teachers, students and parents. They assist the teachers with making phone calls to parents and anything else. We have also briefed the Paraprofessionals about providing daycare services ***if requested*** by first responder families.

Question 2.4:

**Data Security** - Describe the school's plan to ensure the distance learning model in use is secure and will not allow for the release of protected student or staff information.

School Response:

The curriculum that UACS is using is password protected and UACS will never post or release the passwords. If students are using the PearsonRealize curriculum online they will use an individual password and username. Science and Social Studies curriculum will be accessed and communicated via the google drive. In this scenario students will need a password protected UACS email address to access. The UACS IT department

Question 2.5:

Describe the school's plan for distance learning that addresses staff, student, family, volunteer, and contractor health.

School Response:

The UACS Executive Director, Farhiya Einte, will be making calls to all families via the UACS messaging system at least 2 times a week. These calls will include motivational, informational, and reassuring content to help relieve family stress at home. All families have the personal contact information of the Executive Director, Farhiya Einte, and the Assistant Director, Alana Woods, and are encouraged to call if they have any questions or issues. UACS will stay connected via daily and weekly email or conference calls with all staff, volunteers, and contractors to ensure their health is put at the forefront of focus.

Question 2.6:

For students who go to a daycare provider because their parents work, how does the distance learning program work for them?

School Response:

Students can complete their work anywhere at any time. The UACS attendance will be taken the following day so that if students need to complete their work at night they can submit it at any time and it will still be completed. Teachers are encouraged to work with the families individually for due dates. If a family needs special timelines for finishing work due to day care or other situations UACS will be understanding during this time.

Question 2.7:

If the requirement to care for emergency workers extends beyond March 30, how will a school provide distance learning for these children while they are in the school facility?

School Response:

At this time, UACS does not have any families that need School-Age student daycare.

## **Special Education Services - IEP or 504 Plan**

### Requirement:

Schools will ensure students with disabilities will continue to receive specialized instruction and related services through the distance learning model that includes equitable access to specialized instruction and related services for students with disabilities so that they have access to general education standards and continue to demonstrate progress toward the general education standards and IEP goals. The school district remains responsible for the free appropriate public education (FAPE) of its students eligible for special education services who have an individualized education program (IEP) or 504 plan. Districts and charters must plan how they will continue to meet the requirements of Part B (3- 21) and Part C (birth to three) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B and Part C.

- Develop a process to communicate with parents and guardians regarding their child's services, which should include discussion regarding amending IEP's to address how best to meet the student's needs in a flexible learning model. This includes direct specialized instruction, related services, and accommodations.
  - Consider what other IEP team members, and agencies and organizations should be included in the communication, including contracted providers and non-public agencies. Tele-related services can be used to address needs such as speech and language, and mental health services.
  - Review the delivery of special education and related services, as well as general education curriculum to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to distance learning. This includes children from birth through age 21. This will necessitate communication between the case manager, the general education teachers, the parent/guardian and related services providers to ensure that students with disabilities can be appropriately involved and make progress toward the general education standards and IEP goals.
  - Districts will need to address translation and interpreter needs for students and families when developing and providing instructional materials.
  - Consider the use of hot spots and free internet services being offered by internet companies for the delivery of instruction and for due process procedures.
  - Consider delivering instructional materials to students through the school bus transportation routes.
- Develop a protocol to communicate with school administrators and educators in order to prepare staff to plan for the needs of students eligible for special education, child find activities, evaluations/reevaluations, and IEP implementation.
  - IEP's must continue to be implemented.
  - Address the process you will use to hold IEP meetings to review IEP goals and services, and the process to conduct evaluations and reevaluations. This could include virtual meetings and phone conferences.

Review the memo from the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs with questions and answers to federal special education issues related to school closure, district closure and services and programming for medically fragile children on IEPs and educational opportunities, such as distance learning.

See pages 9 to 12 in the MDE document for more detail.

### Question 3.1:

Describe the school's plan to support a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and/or 504 Plan. Show how the school will continue to meet the requirements of Part B (ages 3- 21) and Part C (birth to three) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B and Part C.

School Response:

Because of COVID- 19, UACS will make sure all SPED students have access to the internet and technology in order to be successful. The SPED team will communicate with students/families on a daily basis to deliver instructional services and support using a combination of phone calls, video chatting/meetings, and instructional packets. Related services, i.e. speech and occupational therapy, will be providing packets of assignments and activities for students to complete at home. Related service providers will communicate with students and families through the special education staff to provide them feedback on Fridays. The distance learning provided by Universal Academy will ensure that special education students continue to demonstrate progress toward the general education standards and their IEP goals and objectives. SPED department and Administration will continue their weekly meeting via skype.

**English Learners**

Requirement:

Provision of education for English learners is an important consideration when engaging in this planning. The school district remains responsible for educating English learners. Districts and charters must plan how they will continue to meet the requirements of English learners' educational needs.

By law, students who are identified to receive English language development services must be provided support that allow them access to academic content. English learners must receive research based, appropriately resourced support to access content, and districts may not withhold services based on characteristics such as immigration status. A brief overview of legal requirements for English language development services can be found in the U.S. Department of Education's Dear Colleague Letter regarding education for English learners.

Immediate considerations for English learners include:

- Access to reliable internet connection
- Communication with families that may not speak English as a primary language
- Ability of the student to understand and produce complex academic language for assignments without typical scaffolds
- Availability of scaffolding methods that are available in a distance learning environment

Ultimately, English learners need to have the chance to access grade level standards and still need some sort of support to access academic content.

See pages 12 and 13 in the MDE document.

Question 4.1:

Describe the school's plan to support a student's Individual Learning Plans for English Language Learners which must still be followed? Describe plans to address all requirements.

School Response:

The majority of UACS students are ELL. All teachers have been assigned a translator to help students with expectations and communication. The ELL teachers will continue to meet with their students based on the ELL plan. Because of COVID-19 the expectations will be communicated by the teacher through bi-lingual support staff that facilitate teacher/student/parent communication. The district made sure that all ELL students have access to internet and devices in order to have equal access for all students. Most families at UACS are not English Language Speakers. They are not equipped to help their students

with school work, so UACS will make sure that the communication is very effective and none of the families are overwhelmed by Distance Learning.

### **Students Experiencing Homelessness or Housing Instability**

#### Requirement:

Every school and school district's distance learning plan should specify how it will satisfy the Federal requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, to support homelessness students throughout this crisis and promote their full participation in their education throughout the duration of the distance learning period.

During the planning period, schools and school districts should:

- Understand the legal requirements for districts to support homeless students in having full access to education, which remain in full force and effect. In addition to MDE's posted guidance for school districts on meeting these requirements, several technical assistance centers and associations also have guides for implementing these requirements, including the National Center on Homeless Education, the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, and SchoolHouse Connection.
- Designate key staff who will coordinate homeless-specific responses at a district or school level. In addition to the Federally mandated district-level homeless liaison role, schools with a high rate or large number of homeless students will benefit from having designated staff at a school-level for assessing, planning for, and responding to the needs of homeless students.
- Monitor evolving and emerging recommendations specifically pertaining to homeless students during the COVID-19 pandemic offered by SchoolHouse Connection and that may be available from other sources over time.
- Follow social media accounts of and subscribe to the mailing lists for organizations that will consolidate and disseminate recommendations and resources to support homeless students throughout the pandemic, including the National Center on Homeless Education, the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, and SchoolHouse Connection.
- Assess the living situations and other characteristics of students flagged as experiencing homelessness in their student record to help triage where the greatest support will be needed for these students to fully participate in distance learning. For example, students who are presently unsheltered or staying somewhere not meant for habitation may have a more difficult time participating in distance learning than students who are staying in an emergency shelter that is equipped with internet access.
- Develop, implement, and distribute an assessment of each student's needs related to distance learning that does not presume that students have stable or consistent housing. This assessment should be easy for parents or guardians to complete and guide them to resources to help meet basic requirements for participation in distance learning (e.g., a consistent place to do homework that allows students to concentrate).
- Determine how existing or alternative transportation options could be deployed to meet basic student needs that would normally be met at school, such as delivery of meals, educational materials, or other resources.
- Engage your local shelters or other locations where students experiencing homelessness may be concentrated (e.g., emergency shelters, domestic violence shelters, drop-in centers for homeless youth, etc.) to help strengthen their ability to support students' participation in distance learning.

This could include, for example, loaning computers from a school computer lab to a location where students could use them within a shelter to do their homework.

- Engage your local public health departments, county or Tribal human services departments, and Continuum of Care region on planning efforts to meet the needs of homeless students throughout the pandemic. With these local partners, develop protocols for how schools would identify and meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness in ways that are consistent with protecting student privacy, including the special provisions that apply in emergencies.
- Engage your local libraries to assess their ability to help support students' success with distance learning, including study spaces, computer access, and access to instructional materials.
- Establish a hotline for students who may have difficulties participating in distance learning to use in connecting with school personnel who can help troubleshoot or identify options, ideally with the option to allow text messaging in addition to telephone calls.
- Anticipate increased student support needs related to anxiety and trauma related to the pandemic.
- Throughout the distance learning period, schools and school districts should:
- Implement expectations for distance learning that do not require students to check in or report attendance over video or audio connections, which may be infeasible in the setting where a student is located.
- Encourage students and parents to reach out if their living situation changes and to access additional support to promote every student's ability to participate in distance learning.
- Monitor participation and engagement of homeless students in distance learning (e.g., including both and performance) as a distinct group, to help guide whether additional staff support, engagement, or assistance are needed for students experiencing homelessness.
- Schedule attendance leadership-level reviews of the efficacy of distance learning plans and approaches for homeless students and consider alternatives or additional support needs as part of that review.

See pages 14-16 of the MDE document.

Question 5.1:

Describe the school's plan to satisfy the Federal requirements to support homelessness students throughout this crisis and promote their full participation in their education throughout the duration of the distance learning period.

School Response:

Because of this unprecedented COVID-19 outbreak, UACS District has a designated Homeless Liaison, Farhiya Einte, who gives attention to families experiencing housing concerns. The homeless liaison will guide families and assist with any problems that they may face this urgent time. UACS has 1 family who is homeless at the time of this crisis. UACS has provided technology for this family and will do routine check ins with the family. UACS will also provide food for this family. The mother is very active with her students' academics, and is in constant communication with the Director Farhiya Einte. Although UACS has implemented checking in students attendance during distance learning, homeless students are not required to check in or report over video conferences because of their housing situation. The homeless liaison, teachers and support staff will review the cases of homeless students and stay updated with their daily assignments and assist them.

**Early Learning**

Requirement:

School-based early care and education programs such as voluntary prekindergarten and school readiness plus are expected to be included in your district's distance learning plan.



Voluntary Prekindergarten and School Readiness Plus -Through the implementation of age-appropriate distance learning activities, programs will be expected to meet minimum hour requirements excluding the instructional hours that would have occurred during the ten-day planning period. Read the guidance on creating a distance learning plan for prekindergarten children.

School Readiness, Early Childhood Family Education Programming - Community Education programs such as Early Childhood Family Education and School Readiness will not be required to be included in your district's distance learning plan whether these programs are included in the plan can be a locally determined decision.

Health and Developmental Screening -At this time, programs offering Health and Developmental Screening may postpone services and work with MDE to extend deadlines if needed.

Early Childhood Special Education -Please see section on Special Education Services – IEP and 504 for guidance.

Head Start Program -Head Start programs are to follow recommendations from their local health officials and Health Service Advisory Councils. Program must inform MDE and the Regional Office with program changes. The federal Office of Head Start has provided additional guidance.

Early Learning Scholarships Program -MDE will ensure children and programs who receive early learning scholarships will continue being served and funded. Please see guidance below.

- Absent days will not be counted towards the 25 maximum absent days policy in order for families to make individual decisions that are best for their families.
- Programs that temporarily close due to response to COVI-19 mitigation, regardless of program type, will have closure days waived for the duration of the crisis. Programs receiving Pathway II funds, can continue to request payment for the slot. Pathway I may continue to invoice the Area Administrators.
- As funds allow, a child's scholarship temporarily may be increased if the program regularly attended closes, but the child is able to attend another eligible program as back-up. This will reduce the risk of the first program losing revenue and the family losing funds from their scholarship if used at a program they are unable to attend. This would allow some children to have more than \$7,500 for the current scholarship year. MDE will work with Area Administrators to maximize the use of all funding to support this action. MDE will provide Area Administrators modified planning forms to support this effort.

See pages 16 to 17 in the MDE document.

Question 6.1:

Describe the school's plan for how prekindergarten program/s will continue while following its distance learning plan.

School Response:

UACS preschool families will receive biweekly packets that will be delivered to them via the busses with the food drop off. Completed work will be left for pickup at the time of drop off for the teacher to assess.

Question 6.2:

Minimum Hour Requirements - Describe the school's plan to meet minimum hour requirements excluding the instructional hours that would have occurred during the ten-day planning period. Relate these plans to the implementation of age-appropriate distance learning activities.

School Response:

UACS prekindergarten hours exceed the state minimum requirements. UACS had planned 170 days of school for the year. Excluding the 10 days of planning for Distance Learning period that means 160 days for pre kindergarten. Each day is 7 hours which comes to 1,120 hours.

## **Assessment**

### Requirement:

State assessments cannot be administered during a distance learning day. The testing windows will not be modified or extended. See pages 17 to 19 in the MDE document.

### Question 7.1:

What is SCHOOL's plan to focus on the education and assessment of all students?

### School Response:

UACS Administration will continue to have weekly Data Meetings with teachers regarding the completion and progress of student learning through the Distance Learning Plan. These meetings will be held over email unless there is a need for a phone / hangout meeting. During these data meetings teachers and administrators will discuss student progress on the academic standards and lessons being taught. Teachers and Administrators will pinpoint students who are not progressing and will determine a plan to intervene. The District will also administer the NWEA test in May as planned.

### Question 7.2:

Describe the school's contingency plan to administer state assessments should there be opportunity to do so.

### School Response:

The state has closed the testing window and UACS will not administer the MCA test.

## **Staff**

### Requirement:

During your planning week, provide training to staff (including classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, school support staff) on distance learning practices. Consider how you will utilize staff in a virtual way: can calls be forwarded during school hours? Because districts and charters will be receiving full funding for providing distance learning, it is expected that all staff, including non-salaried, hourly staff, will earn pay and benefits as planned in the school budget and bargaining agreements. Likewise, if calendars are extended to accommodate school reopening, districts and charters are expected to provide full pay and benefits for that period as well as they will be receiving full funding. See page 23 in the MDE document.

### Question 8.1:

Describe the school's plan to provide training to staff, including classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, school support staff, on distance learning practices during the planning week and beyond.

### School Response:

Because of COVID-19, UACS plan to train their staff through a Webinar during the distance learning planning week and beyond. UACS held an all staff meeting at school regarding the expectations for all staff members during the closure and in case of long term closure. During this time the administration made it clear to the staff that this is a time where all employees are still on duty and must report to

work and complete all required duties. UACS administration will communicate via email and phone conferences the expectations and needs from each individual staff member as we see fit. The HR staff will communicate with teachers regarding education assistant communication and involvement if there are any issues. UACS staff will not be at school unless it is deemed necessary through communication with families. In the event that a family needs to come to school this will be communicated with the front desk and arrangements will be made.

### ***Communications***

#### Requirement:

MDE will communicate with superintendents and school leaders via GovDelivery.

In communicating with families, your community, and community partners\* and local media, keep in mind the following:

- When and how to expect communication from the district
- Where they can find the distance learning plan on your website (must be posted on website before distance learning begins)
- What is the structure of distance learning in your district?
- When will educators and school leaders be available and how can they be reached?
- How will students be able to retrieve their belongings from school (from lockers, etc.)?
- Student expectations (attendance, assignments, hours, due dates, etc.)
- Reminder about Student Information System and how to sign up
- How to access meals
- How to access telehealth
- How to access best practices around health from MDH

\*Community partners often include (but not limited to): first-responders, local government, elected officials, nonprofit organizations, libraries, businesses, childcare centers, and associations.

#### Language Access

Every family deserves access to the information provided by their district or charter school. Language translations and interpretations of this information should be made available as quickly as possible.

#### Contracted Services

When communicating with contracted service providers, consider what aspects of your regular service will be changing (school lunch menu, busing services, etc.).

#### Communication to Staff:

- Expectations on how they will report their attendance
- Expectations around staff presence at each building

See pages 19 to 20 in the MDE document.

#### Question 9.1:

Describe the school's communication protocols and plans that school administrators and educators use to prepare staff to plan for the needs of students.

- For general education students
- For students eligible for special education, child find activities, evaluations/reevaluations, and IEP implementation. See information related to implementing IEP's is found on pages 9-11 of the MDE document.
- For students eligible for English Language programming.

School Response:

MDE will communicate with the Executive Director, Farhiya Einte via GovDelivery.

Ms. Einte sends school wide messages twice weekly and as needed, in order to communicate efficiently with parents and students. The Admin team is available to students, teachers and parents for any additional questions. Their contact information-- email and phone number-- is readily available on the school website.

Universal Academy Administration will facilitate all communication over email, google hangout / zoom, or phone. Administration has communicated that staff is expected to respond to email / phone communication on the same day during operating hours from 7:00-3:30. This means if an administrator sends communication after hours staff is required to respond the next business day. If communication is sent during business hours, staff is required to respond before the end of that day.

UACS will have a weekly Admin Meeting as well as a weekly SPED team meeting via google hangout.

Teachers will post daily on their "message boards" located on uacsmn.org under the "Distance Learning" tab at the top. Families will be directed here to find out information such as when the teacher is available and how best to communicate with the teacher. If families need to come to school to pick up / drop off any information this will be communicated to the teacher, and the teacher will let administration know. Administration can coordinate who will help the family get into the school on an as needs basis. Families at UACS know that they can always contact Farhiya Einte, Executive Director, and Alana Woods, Assistant Director at any time. These contacts have been sent out via the school's messaging system.

Question 9.2:

Describe the school's plan to communicate with parents, students and the community regarding the implementation of the distance learning model and the school's expectations when all in-person school-sponsored activities are suspended.

School Response:

During the distance learning period in these extenuating circumstances the Executive Director, Farhiya Einte, will regularly send inspirational messages weekly and as needed to both students and parents.

Most of the communication regarding the school's Distance Learning Plan will take place individually from teachers to each student. Teachers will utilize bilingual support staff that has been assigned to their class to help with this communication. Information will also be posted on the uacsmn.org website under "Distance Learning"

Question 9.3:

Describe what information and resources the school will offer staff, students, families and others to help protect people with and without COVID-19 infection.

School Response:

Before the school closure on March 18th, UACS Health Office conducted an educational presentation on COVID-19 to all students and employees. This presentation included precautionary measures and what to do if symptoms occur. Additionally, educational materials were sent to all classes for teachers to send the COVID-19 related educational literature home with students for parents. The school will follow the guidelines set by CDC and Minn. department of health when the school closure ends.

Question:

Describe the school's plan to maintain regular contact with local public health departments, county or Tribal human services departments, and Continuum of Care planning bodies on ongoing or emerging needs.

School Response:

Universal Academy will be in regular contact with MDE's guide line, DHS, NEO and CDC.

Question 9.4:

Describe the school's plan to help staff and parents connect to resources that can assist students and families experiencing homelessness. School districts should consult with local Tribal leaders, city and county governmental agencies, volunteer organizations and private sector companies to ascertain how students' needs will be identified and met.

School Response:

UACS' administration provides resources to their staff and parents including Donors Choose and Open Doors. UACS additionally references the MDE website as a resource for staff and parents regarding the COVID-19 situation. UACS also provided technology and Education Assistant resources to our homeless family.

## **Tribal Considerations**

Requirement:

As you are making decisions, please ensure you are coordinating with local and regional Tribal leaders. Tribal Governments are sovereign nations, and they maintain a unique political status. Each will be making decisions based on what is best for their citizenry. Be aware of how school closures may impact Tribal communities and Tribal governments. This school closure plan provides unique opportunities to the state, school districts, schools, and local governmental agencies to meet the needs of all Minnesotan at this time. School districts should consult with local Tribal leaders, city and county governmental agencies, volunteer organizations and private sector companies to ascertain how students' needs will be identified and met. This may include resource distribution, mental health needs, and educational opportunities in your communities. These considerations offer the opportunity to ensure that parents, families and Tribal Nations are meaningfully engaged in solutions and the implementation of services for our students and for all Minnesotans. For assistance, work with your Indian Home School Liaison, Indian Education staff, and parent committee. Contact MDE's Office of Indian Education for a list of Tribal Education Directors.

Tribal Consultation under ESSA - All schools and districts that are required under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to consult with Tribal Nations must also collaborate with the Tribal Nations Education Committee (TNEC) members regarding the formulation of their distance learning plans. This meaningful collaboration should include Indian Education staff and TNEC members in the preparation and implementation of distance learning in your districts or schools. All distance learning plans will need to be submitted to the Tribal Liaison in the Office of Indian Education on or before March 24 in order for the Tribal Nations to review them for equitable services to American Indian students. Superintendents will be apprised of this information today in their daily meeting with Commissioner Ricker.

Question 10.1:

Describe the school's plans to communicate and coordinate with its designated Tribal Liaison Officer.

School Response:

N/A

Question 10.2:

Describe other plans the school will follow regarding its Native American student population.

School Response:

N/A

**Before and After Care**

Requirement:

All before- and after-care/school age care programs provided in schools (either by the school district or charter or by a community partner) are suspended until in-person school resumes.

MDE strongly recommends that all districts and charters identify and coordinate with any community partners that provide before- and after-care programs and send communication to families regarding their options for before- and after-care.

Question 11.1:

Describe the school's plan to communicate with families and community partners regarding any before- and after-care programs with which the district works. See page 19 in the MDE document.

School Response:

UACS has sent one call message and a questionnaire form to the families to determine their need for before-and- after- care/ school age care. As of right now, none of our families need child care assistance.

**Services**

**Care for Children of Families of Emergency Workers**

Requirement:

School districts and charter schools must provide care to, at a minimum, district- and charter-enrolled students aged 12 and under who are children of emergency workers critical to the State's response to COVID-19. School districts and charters will handle the verification of students, which may include securing a letter from the employer or showing an employment badge. The Governor encourages school districts and charters to also provide extended care – before and after school hours – to students of emergency workers. This care must be provided at no cost to families. Districts and charter schools must provide transportation to and from the care program as they normally would to and from school. Refer to page 4 in the MDE document.

Question 12.1:

Describe the school's plan to identify children of qualified emergency workers.

School Response:

Once a long term closure has been issued UACS will send home the "Child Care" form. Students will return the form the following day. The form data will be analyzed and checked for authenticity (collection of badge or signed form from employer). Students who are absent from school will be contacted by the school's messaging system, and instructed to fill out the form over the phone. UACS will create a child care schedule using paid staff to monitor the students. Students will have technology available to complete their "Distance Learning" assignments as a part of their child care schedule.

Question 12.2:

Describe the school's plan to transport and provide care to children of qualified emergency workers.

School Response:

UACS will utilize the bussing system to pick up and drop off any students of qualified emergency workers.

Question 12.3:

Describe the school's plan to provide before and/or after school care to children of qualified emergency workers.

School Response:

Once students are identified as qualifying for child care UACS will analyze the schedule of the emergency workers and provide child care for any UACS attending students during their scheduled and confirmed working hours.

**Nutrition**

Requirement:

Districts must ensure meals are available to all students who need them in the way that works best for your community, such as grab-and-go or delivery or communicating directly to students and families the location of open sites. Schools must apply for a waiver to MDE before starting this meal program. All federal/state food prep requirements must be met. Specific implementation guidelines are listed on Pages 5 to 7 of the MDE document.

The meal service plan should address the following:

- Schools will have two options to serve meals when schools are closed:
  - Schools can apply for a waiver to MDE to serve student meals under Seamless Summer Option (SSO)
  - Schools can apply for a waiver to MDE to serve student meals under Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- For dismissed schools with 50 percent or more of their enrolled students certified eligible for free or reduced price meals, SFAs may develop meal distribution methods in which meals are available to all families with children enrolled in that school, with a focus on serving low income children. These schools are considered open sites.
- For dismissed schools with less than 50 percent free or reduced price enrollment, meal distribution methods must more directly target the households of enrolled children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals. These schools are considered closed sites.
- Districts and charter schools will apply through the designated Survey Gizmo that will be distributed to school nutrition directors from MDE. The application will include how you will unitize meals, delivery, how to count, and how to serve low-income children.
- Once approved for the waiver, the second step is for the school to submit an application through CLiCS. MDE application staff will then review and approve the CLiCS application.

The meal pattern (service plan) must be met and the specific meal pattern will correspond with the program option you choose (SSO or SFSP). Please watch additional technical assistance from MDE. The plan should include:

- Which sites will be closed
- Start date and time period you are seeking to serve
- Method of distribution
- Meals offered
- Plan for communicating changes with parents and households
- Method of counting and claiming meals

Other information:

- Meals must be distributed unitized. For example:
  - Food trucks/bus
  - Bagged lunch
  - Delivered to homes
  - Grab-and-Go/Pick-up
- Food must be kept according to proper food handling procedures. For example, if handing out food in a parking lot, must keep milk cold, food hot (if applicable), and use disposable paper/plastic products. Consult updated USDA and MDH guidance on extra measures particular to COVID-19.

Question 13.1:

Describe the school's plan to provide meals for students in the way that works best for the community and that fulfills meal program requirements.

School Response:

The District sent a questionnaire form to the families to determine their need for food assistance during school closure. Universal Academy Charter School will provide Breakfast and Lunch to any families who receive free or reduced meals and completed the Food and Nutrition form. Families will note how many students they have attending UACS on the Food and Nutrition form, and UACS will package and deliver those meals to the family's home. UACS will utilize the bus system that will currently not be in use due to the long term closure to deliver the food. UACS will package a couple days at a time and deliver at once. This will allow for families to use the food as they see fit or store in case of food shortage. UACS will determine the appropriate amount of meals to go home for 2 days for each family.

**Procedure:**

- a. Once a long term closure has been issued UACS will send home the "School Closure Food and Nutrition" form.
- b. Students will return the form the following day. The form data will be analyzed and checked for authenticity.
- c. Students who are absent from school will be contacted by the school's messaging system, and instructed to fill out the form over the phone.
- d. The bus company will be contacted and names / addresses will be communicated.
- e. On delivery days, the Food and Nutrition staff will package all meals and put each family's meals inside of 1 package when possible. Each package will be labeled with the family name, number of meals that are in the package, and the family's phone number.
- f. UACS is in the process of applying for a waiver.

**Meals and/or Instructional Material Pick-up**

Requirement:

Ideas are presented in the MDE document.

Implementation Options for Consideration

- Drive-up (for meals): School personnel will communicate with families the time frame in which food (breakfast/lunch) will be distributed. Families will drive to their home school or alternative location, provide their name and a sacked breakfast and lunch will be given. Each family will be provided with one meal per eligible child. Both breakfast and lunch can be given to the family at once. If the home school is located on a busy intersection, another location of the school can be used.



- Walk up (to school building): Children and adults will walk to the school or alternative location to pick-up food and/or materials
- Satellite locations (as available): Any place that families have access to. School personnel should communicate with community facilities to determine if their location is open and available to serve as a food distribution center. Locations other than schools, i.e., any place that families have access to. Community facilities could include:
  - Libraries (as available)
  - Places of worship (as available)
  - Park districts (as available)
  - Youth/community centers (as available)
  - Home delivery: School staff member or designee will deliver meal(s) and/or materials to student homes.

Families who lack transportation or with medically fragile children can request that food be delivered to their residence. Schools should initiate plans with families to make arrangements prior to delivery. For meals, both breakfast and lunch can be delivered at once.

See page 7 and review the MDE Document.

Question 14.1:

Describe the school's plan to develop and implement means for students to get meals and/or instructional materials considering variable constraints and opportunities.

School Response:

UACS will utilize the bus system and coordinate drop off and pick up of food or instructional materials.

**Health and Wellness**

Requirement:

Please consider the health and wellness of your students. How will you ensure the short- and long-term health and wellness of your:

- Students
- Staff
- Families
- Community
- Volunteers
- Contractors

Follow the Department of Health's guidelines regarding staff reporting to work, which includes not asking staff to report to work based on higher risk status or other conditions.

Talking to Children about COVID-19

Concern over this new virus can make children and families anxious. It is very important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. If adults seem overly worried, children's anxiety may rise. Adults should reassure children that health and school officials are working hard to ensure that people throughout the country stay healthy. Children also need factual, age appropriate information about the potential seriousness of disease risk, so the focus of conversation should be concrete instructions about how to avoid infections and the spread of disease. Teaching children positive measures, talking with them about their fears, and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infections can help reduce anxiety. See page 8 of the MDE document.

Additional information and specific guidelines can be found at: Talking to Children about COVID-19 ([https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource))

Question 15.1:

Describe the school's plan to provide information to help staff and parents talk with children about the COVID-19 outbreak to adapt to living and working with this issue.

School Response:

UACS discussed COVID -19 best practices with all students using a powerpoint and the PA system on Tuesday March 17<sup>th</sup> while students were in their classrooms and school was still in session. This presentation gave an overview of what COVID-19 is and best practices for social distancing and hand washing. UACS also sent COVID-19 information home with the students to properly inform families. As a part of the distance learning plan, UACS will conduct their Monday inspirational meeting through the school website every Monday, beginning Monday April 6, 2020 until school resumes.

Question 15.2:

Describe the school's plan to raise awareness of and prepare staff to cope with the potential impact these closures will have on the mental health and wellbeing of students, staff, and families.

School Response:

UACS will provide resources from MDE and from CDC to their students, staff and families in the event that they may need support. UACS discussed COVID -19 best practices with all students using a powerpoint and the PA system on Tuesday March 17<sup>th</sup> while students were in their classrooms and school was still in session. This presentation gave an overview of what COVID-19 is and best practices for social distancing and hand washing. UACS also sent COVID -19 information with the students for their families. As a part of the distance learning plan, UACS will conduct their Monday inspirational meeting through UACS website starting Monday April 6, 2020 and forward till school resumes.

Question 15.3:

Describe the health practices the school will implement to protect staff, students and others from the spread of Coronavirus.

School Response:

UACS will not be in session and will not allow gatherings at the school. UACS will only have necessary people on site to help families as needed. Meetings with families will be scheduled separate from each other so there are no large gatherings.

**Mental Health Support Resources**

Requirement:

The stress of preparing for COVID-19 and school closure can increase the worry and anxiety of students, staff, families, and communities. The following resources and tips can be used by school and district leaders to protect your health and well-being of those you serve. Districts should work through plans for smooth continuity of services including school-linked mental health and other student supports.

See pages 8 to 9 in the MDE document

Question 16.1:

Describe the school's plan to address bullying during the distance learning program season.

School Response:

Universal Academy's IT will be monitoring all student communication through UACS email. Teachers will also be monitoring and communicating any bullying that they see or hear about. These concerns will be dealt with seriously just as if there was bullying going on in school. The dean and administration will hold a phone conference with any families involved in bullying.

Question 16.2:

Describe the school's plan to address bullying during the distance learning program season.

School Response:

Universal Academy's IT will be monitoring all student communication through UACS email. Teachers will also be monitoring and communicating any bullying that they see or hear about. These concerns will be dealt with seriously just as if there was bullying going on in school. The dean and administration will hold a phone conference with any families involved in bullying.

**Operations**

**Funding**

Requirement:

If your district has an Emergency Operation Plan, you should promptly familiarize yourself with its procedures to make certain your district can continue performing its essential functions if its leadership and key staff are unable to perform their duties due to closure. Your Emergency Operations Plan and other planning should include provisions to ensure your payroll processes will continue. Be mindful of vendors who are seeking to take advantage of this crisis. If it seems too good to be true, it is. If you suspect a vendor is fraudulent, please notify the Minnesota Attorney General's office.

Question 17.1:

Describe the school's plan to maintain financial and payroll processes.

School Response:

In these extenuating circumstances, UACS has implemented an emergency Operation Plan. Payroll staff and HR will be working to insure that the payroll process will continue. All UACS vendors will be informed of school closure via email or phone. UACS is mindful of vendors seeking to take advantage. UACS's Invoices will be paid in a timely manner. Transportation and food vendors will be communicated daily to assist our food and nutrition. If a vendor is expressing fraudulent behavior, UACS is to report it directly to the Minnesota Attorney General's Office.

**Resources and Information**

**Broadband Access**

Information that may help schools is provided. See page 21 in the MDE document.

**Libraries**

Information that may help schools is provided. See page 21 in the MDE document.

- All St. Paul library facilities are closed to the public March 16-27
- Hennepin County has closed all public-facing services at all 41 libraries, human service centers, and licensing service centers through April 6.
- All Ramsey County Library locations are closed starting Tuesday, March 17 through March 23.
- All Cass County Public Library locations will be closed from March 17th through April 5th.

**Employment and Workforce**

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development is developing guidance on how to mitigate impacts of school closure on family employment and community economic impact, particularly for parents and families in the healthcare industry.

**Resources from the Minnesota Department of Health**

Pages 24 to 25 contain information to help prevent the spread of COVID19.