

Big Stone City School District 25-1

Start Well 2020 Plan for Distance Learning



**BIG STONE CITY
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During times of school closure and distance learning, the Big Stone City School District (BSCSD) is committed to working with families and the community to ensure that every learner receives the equitable support necessary to meet their basic, emotional, social, and academic needs. This action plan outline provides a functional framework for day-to-day operations during extended periods of academic disruption and/or irregular scheduling.

Approved by the Big Stone City School District on **July 20, 2020**.

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Purpose

The purpose of this guiding document is to provide a functional framework for day-to-day operations during extended periods of academic disruption and/or irregular scheduling. This will in turn maximize the protection of our educational community while minimizing educational and social disruption to the greatest extent possible. The Big Stone City School District is committed to working with families, and community members to ensure that every learner receives the equitable support necessary to meet their basic, emotional, social, and academic needs. This plan outlines the district strategy in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from long-term disruption in an effective and efficient manner.

Please watch for continued communications regarding any changes in these guidelines as we update protocols as necessary.

Return to School Plan 2020

BSCS will educate staff, students, and families about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, the importance of conducting self-checks before coming to school, when they/their children should stay home and when they can return to school.

Regular screening for symptoms and on-going self-monitoring throughout the school day can help to quickly identify signs of illness and help reduce exposure. Staff and students should be encouraged to self-monitor symptoms throughout the day. Staff or students who develop symptoms during the school day must notify administration immediately. CDC guidelines on positive cases and close contact situations will be followed.

Level 1: Onsite/In-person Delivery: Continuation of school with enhanced safety precautions. Modifications for families to allow us to better meet the needs of medically vulnerable students and families with a higher risk of severe illness.

Level 2: Modified Delivery: This would be a combination of distance and in-person instruction with increased safety and disinfecting measures. This plan may be implemented in the case of a grade level being quarantined due to exposure of a student or staff member, per the Department of Health guidelines. Flexibility is key to our ability to “switch gears” for learning.

Level 3: Distance Learning: All students would participate in the virtual learning of new material, interactive lessons, graded assignments, and assessments. This would be enacted if it is necessary to close school.

Requirements: Level 1 and 2:

- School transportation will be provided with enhanced safety precautions. Encourage families that are uncomfortable with guidelines to transport child(ren). Third-party bus services will follow their transportation guidelines and safety procedures.
- Arrange classroom seating to provide spacing, as feasible.
- Students stay in their classrooms, with teachers moving, as necessary.
- Discontinue self-service food or beverage distribution in the cafeteria.
- Distancing precautions will be instituted in the cafeteria and/or gym. If necessary, individually plated meals will be served in classrooms.
- Procedures will be implemented to remind students and staff to always stay 6 feet apart in common areas, recognizing that it is not always feasible to have 6 feet of social distancing during primary instruction time in the classroom.
- Have staff monitor arrival and dismissal to avoid congregating. Upon arrival students will go directly to their classroom. Dismissal procedures will vary by grade level.
- Non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups will be limited. All outside visitors will need to be approved prior to their visit. All visitors will be screened and closely monitored.
- To respect and protect the vulnerable loved ones within our families, students are strongly encouraged to wear a mask to school. BSCS will provide a cloth face covering to all students and staff. Students and staff will wear face coverings in common areas such as hallways.
- Avoid sharing electronic devices, books, toys, and other games or learning aids when possible.
- Establish a schedule for routine cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces and shared equipment.

Possible Additional Requirements: Level 2:

- Classroom/Building – deep cleaning protocol of regularly touched surfaces.
- Implement contactless pick up of meals and school materials for days that students are not in the school building.

HANDLING SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED POSITIVE CASES

- Inform staff how to report to administration any student/staff cases in which they may become aware.
- Post signage at main entrance(s) requesting that people who have been symptomatic not enter the building.
- Establish a dedicated space for symptomatic individuals who are waiting to go home. Distinguish this space from areas where student health services will be delivered to those who are well and need routine care.
- It is **not required** for students or staff members to have documentation of a negative viral test or a letter certifying release from isolation in order to return to school, but they must follow recommended guidance regarding when to return to school.
- Individuals with two temperature readings of 100.4 degrees or higher (or CDC guidelines) will be sent home and may return to school after 72 hours of no symptoms without medications.

Response Strategies

The Big Stone City School District will adhere to CDC guidelines in its decisions, considerations, and recommendations to its stakeholders. Practicing healthy everyday habits to prevent and protect against the spread of disease will be a priority. This includes the following:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, stay away from others to prevent passing on your illness to others.
- Stay home when you are sick so you prevent passing your illness on to others.
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing with a tissue and then throw away the tissue.
- Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing and often throughout the day. This is always best and the preferred method. If soap and water is not available, hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol content will kill the viruses, but not wash them away.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs are often spread touching these body parts.
- Practice other good health strategies – clean and disinfect surfaces in your home, especially when someone is ill.
- Get plenty of sleep, manage your stress, and be physically active.

Other mitigation strategies used to protect the community may include the following:

- Social distancing - creating ways to provide distance between people in close contact areas, including at work and school.
- Cancellation of non-essential events
- Temporary closure of facilities
- Being prepared and informed to respond effectively, taking an active role in the event of a localized outbreak.
- Communication with employees, students, and community members by using educational materials to inform on updates of the outbreak or pandemic, when to stay home when you are sick, and good hygiene methods including hand washing

- protocol or other effective strategies.
- Maintaining a clean environment.

Immediate directives for the school district may include the following:

- School leadership may modify or shut down varying degrees of district operations in the interest of public safety.
- School leadership may delegate necessary directives and duties to district employees, according to need or at the direction of lead agencies.
- Teachers may prepare alternative or uniquely outfitted lesson plans that are conducive to the needs of personal or widespread illness.
- The Big Stone City School may prioritize essential staff functions and cross train staff to ensure that if a large percentage of staff is gone, other employees are able to fulfill essential roles.

Communication

The Big Stone City school families can expect regular communication from the school district via its typical outlets. This includes the district website, Facebook, ClassDojo, Google Classroom, email, phone calls and the school dialer. District staff will keep school families up to date on points of contact, hours of operation, modes of delivering items such as food and/or school materials, access to facilities, expectations from students and staff, and advising of best practices during times of closure.

Nutrition

The school will work to provide food and nutritional resources for our students through long term closures. While modes of distribution may change in order to meet demand and CDC guidelines, current modes of distribution and guidance will include:

- Meal Bags for breakfast and lunches can be picked up at Door #2 during the hours of 11:30AM - 12:30PM, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.
- Families who lack transportation or with medically fragile children can request that food be delivered to their residence.
- Each student will be eligible to pick up 5 breakfasts and lunches each week.
- USDA nutrition guidelines will be followed, taking special care to address allergy and dietary restrictions.

Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at:

http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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Mental Health Support Resources

The stress of preparing for widespread illness, crisis, and/or school closure can increase the worry and anxiety of students, staff, families, and communities. BSCSD is aware of and will work through plans on an individual basis to cope with the potential impact these closures will have on the mental health and wellbeing of students, staff, and families. The following resources can help provide support during school closure.

[The Helpline Center](#) - or dial 2-1-1

[Human Service Agency](#) – counseling services Watertown SD, with satellite office in Milbank

[South Dakota Department of Education](#)

[National Alliance on Mental Illness South Dakota](#)

[Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)

Distance Learning

Distance Learning defined: Distance learning involves the implementation of educational activities through correspondence rather than proximity. Methods may include online strategies, such as email communication, digital transmission of coursework, independent study, delivery/exchange of hardcopy materials through a delivery site or door-to-door interaction, video or live broadcast instruction, and phone calls.

Students engaging in distance learning will have access to appropriate educational materials and receive daily interaction with their teacher(s). All instructional staff employed by BSCSD must maintain educational continuity and regular, accessible communication and learning opportunities for their students, based on guidance provided by the school district during a unique time of crisis. In doing so, the district will uphold the mandate that every learner is entitled to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE), understanding that this may include modifications to typical instructional strategies, expectations for completion of coursework, and modification of time required to complete a lesson, unit, or course. Above all, staff will ensure equitable opportunities to learn for ALL students. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Ensuring all learners have access to learning activities and required materials, including technology. This may require multiple mediums, depending on the nature of each child's home life scenario and their ability to conduct regular educational activities from a distance, including digital, hardcopy, or verbal communication of learning materials and expectations.
- When using an online learning system, ensuring that 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. This may require offering equitable but alternative methods of delivery for those who need it. Regardless of where the learning is happening, supports identified on a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan must be provided. Language Acquisition Plans (LAPs) for English Learners must also be followed.
- Providing training to staff, students, and parents/guardians on implementation of distance learning models and the district's expectations.

- Tracking the attendance of both students and staff.
- Ensuring the distance learning model in use is secure and will not allow for the release of protected student or staff information.

As noted above, equitable access to learning will be a priority and will be accommodated or modified according to the needs of every BSCSD student. It is acknowledged that this may require unique considerations for each child, depending on IEP, 504, or LAP requirements, as well as internet accessibility and support/scheduling requirements that are significantly altered due to unique circumstances at home. Instructional staff will be advised to make every lesson accessible in a variety of mediums, including digital and hardcopy, and will be aided in their communication and delivery efforts by district resources and support staff.

In preparation of appropriate instruction, grades K-5 and 6-8 will determine the most appropriate way to communicate and provide instruction to its students. This may include, but will not be limited to the following:

- Digital Instruction will include online learning resources and correspondence tools, such as ClassDojo and Google Classroom.
- Lion Bags, which could be distributed or dropped off on designated distribution days and times at Door #2.
- Online learning tools and websites including, but not limited to: ClassDojo, Google Classroom, MobyMax, Freckle and RenLearn.
- Textbooks, workbooks, or other hardcopy materials
- Web conferencing, Zoom Meetings.

Assessment

Assessment and accountability limitations will require that all schoolwork be evaluated in a manner that is conducive to distance learning. Individual teachers will be in communication regarding expectations for performance on daily work and demonstration of mastery on learning targets, with adjustments being made to protocol to accommodate the assumption that supervision of assessments would be unlikely options.

Long-term closure of schools may impact the school district's ability to administer state and national standardized tests. Our assessment staff will work to keep families informed on any updates we receive. Regular benchmark testing will be conducted three times a year to monitor growth.

Distribution of Learning Materials

- Hardcopy materials will be provided through our Lion Bags.
- Digital materials will be made available through the school website and Google Classroom where applicable.
- Keeping in mind with CDC regulations pick-up and drop off procedures will be coordinated weekly. Additionally, learning material can be submitted regularly through ClassDojo and Google Classroom.

Broadband/Technology Access

If broadband internet or technology access is an issue for households in the district, the school district will work diligently to support provision of accommodations to the greatest extent possible. In the circumstance that families do not have internet access from home, we ask that you reach out to the school district so that we can ensure that your child is receiving the support necessary to meet their academic needs.

Library Services

Libraries play an important role for our learners and often serve as a refuge for support and ease of mind during academic activities. BSCSD recognizes that any closures can have a ripple effect on the learning that takes place in our school community. The BSCSD library staff will work to foster learning opportunities and support for students by providing reading resources to families during this time through digital formats and physical books.

Attendance and Truancy

Daily interaction between students with staff and other students is a vital component to distance learning. Teachers will be available regularly during the scheduled school day (8:00-4:00) in the district's on-line systems and email. Any communication received outside of the school day may be answered the following school day.

Students are responsible for daily attendance check-ins before 2:00 pm. Staff will monitor student attendance through lessons, activities and daily check-ins. If a student/family does not appear to be participating, staff will initiate contact with the student/family to determine if there are any concerns that need to be addressed and supported.

Special Education Services – IEP or 504 Plan

In the event of an extended school closure, BSCSD 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. BSCSD leadership ensures that students with disabilities will continue to receive specialized instruction and related services through a distance learning model that meets their identified needs. Teachers and staff will develop a distance learning model that includes equitable, developmentally appropriate 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 following guidelines and considerations have been identified and will be followed in accordance with local, state, and federal law:

- Educational activities that are in the best interest of each learner will be prioritized.
- Communication with parents/guardians regarding their child's services, including discussions regarding the amendment of IEPs or 504s to address how best to meet their child's needs in a distance learning model, will take place frequently and in a timely manner.
- Regular communication between district staff and administration will need to be increased in order to ensure practices are responsive to the latest local, state, and federal guidelines being distributed in response to the crisis.

Guidance for K-8

- The delivery, implementation, and assessment of lessons offered through distance learning must be equitable and accessible to all learners.
- Instructional resources must be amenable to various modes of instruction that are conducive to the varied needs and home lives of students, such as virtual and hardcopy materials, completion of coursework, and varied levels of dependency on technology.
- Emphasis will be placed on facilitating growth. Lessons will be concise, meaningful, and effective with ample opportunity for questions and feedback.

- Staff will provide daily contact with families through ClassDojo, Google Classroom, phone calls, or emails. Staff will meet face to face via web conferencing at least once a week at a scheduled time to check in on learner progress and wellness.
- Instructional staff will utilize curricular tools and resources that are familiar to learners, currently in place, and easily accessible.
- Instructional materials in Lion Bags will provide focused learning opportunities in core subject areas.
- Lessons will be focused and directly tied to South Dakota Standards.
- Professional development and instructional support will be provided for staff to ensure that all modes of distance learning are meaningful and effective.

Guidance to Support At-Home Learning and Discovery

Numerous learning resources are available to families through a variety of local, regional, and national organizations, as well as digital platforms such as educational apps and websites. When making decisions about what learning resources to use, the BSCSD advises that discretion be used when considering those that are best and most appropriate for your child.

Recognizing that students learn at different paces, it is important to consider proposed recommendations for the minimum amount of independent work time per grade level each day:

Kindergarten: 1 hour

First Grade: 1-2 hours

Second Grade: 1-2 hours

Third Grade: 1.5-2.5 hours

Fourth Grade: 2-3 hours

Fifth Grade: 2-3 hours

Sixth/Seventh/Eighth Grades: 3-5 hours

Extracurricular Activities and School Clubs

BSCSD understands the important role that school clubs and extracurricular activities play in the growth, development, and emotional well-being of our students. Opportunities for participation will be afforded whenever possible, but only under circumstances where the greater risk to students, staff, and families is not a factor.