



Seventh-day Adventist Church
MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

EDUCATION

Dear Principals, Teachers, and School Boards,

As we look towards August and the start of school, I wanted to send out notification to you regarding protocols and requirements relative to how we will function upon reopening in the 2020-2021 school year.

On June 30, 2020 Governor Whitmer laid out a “Return to School Roadmap” that outlines requirements, strong recommendations, and recommendations relative to schools opening/functioning in the Fall. As stated in the preamble of the [document](#), the “required” elements outlined therein apply to non-public schools as well as to public schools.

The State’s Return Advisory Council, “requires school districts to adopt a COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan laying out how they will protect students and educators across the various phases of the Michigan Safe Start Plan.” Therefore, each school should, as best fits their context, generate a plan that is reviewed and approved by their local board and in compliance with the “Return to School Roadmap” requirements.

It has been our practice since the beginning of this pandemic to follow and comply with all required mandates that have applied to non-public schools as long as they do not infringe upon our biblical beliefs. We will continue to follow this practice while also monitoring the situation relative to our mission and calling as a ministry of the Church at large.

It is the responsibility of each school within our conference to review and apply all “required” protocols in the “Return to School Roadmap.” We do not want to diminish the “recommended protocols” and where possible these should be considered if feasible. Each of our schools are different in size and make-up and will have to provide varying strategies to accomplish certain elements of the requirements. However, with planning, education of families and students, it is more than possible to achieve. There are six different stages that the State has listed in their “Safe Start” protocol. Stages 1-3 do not allow for physical in person school to take place. As we have already shared numerous times, it is important for schools to have plans in place for this potential situation to exist should the Governor’s Office revert back to a phase where physical schools will not be allowed open. This is not an ideal scenario on many levels, and we will work to avoid it if at all possible. However, success lies in having plans in place as a contingency and

this was a blessing to our system back in March when each school transitioned so effectively to a distance learning environment.

Currently most of our state is in a stage 4 “Safe Start” protocol. This stage allows for schools to be open but does contain requirements that schools are to follow while conducting school. Each protocol is clearly listed in the document. Each school should review these requirements carefully and plan, in their specific context, how these requirements will be successfully followed. Stages 5 and 6 do not have requirements but do still have recommendations that should be noted.

In addition to the school reviewing and implementing required elements in the “Return to School Roadmap” we also wanted to highlight the following:

1. Intentionally orient school board, faculty, staff, students and parents to CDC and Michigan State recommended guidelines. These orientations can also provide opportunity for interactive question and answer portions that can address parent concerns.
2. Place students’ desks six feet apart from each other (highly recommended, not mandatory).
3. Practice adequate and safe social distancing as much as possible during all activities throughout the school day.
4. Practice effective and frequent hand washing (with soap and water); not just hand sanitizer.
5. Eat lunches in the classroom. Revamp all lunch preparation and serving procedures to comply with recommended protocols.
6. Deep Clean heavily touched surfaces (door knobs/handles, faucets, counter tops, desk tops etc.) several times a day using disinfecting wipes/sprays.
7. Use face coverings (cover mouth and nose) when teacher or students are not speaking and are indoors and in closed spaces. (Stage 4 has specific requirements)
8. Limit the number of visitors coming to the school building to only essential persons and reasons.
9. Consider staggered drop-off, pick-up times for students to limit number of students in the school entrance areas and hallways.

10. Schedule activities so that only a small number of students are in the hallways at any given time.
11. Adopt physical education activities that respect social distancing guidelines and small group interactions.
12. Keep students in the same group as much as possible.
13. Schedule virtual field trips in place of off-campus trips.
14. Be alert to new CDC, state and local guidelines in a rapidly changing climate and frequently check:
mlive.com/coronavirus
MI Safe Schools Roadmap
Michigan Executive Order 2020-142
michigan.gov/coronavirus
[CDC.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)
COVID-19 Hotline at 888-535-6136
COVID19@michigan.gov

We will continue to monitor the situation as we move forward to the start of school. Thank you for your commitment to the wonderful students that attend our schools. We will continue to trust God's leading and guidance.

Blessings,



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