

Birch Grove Community School

Distance Learning Plan/Policy

In response to Minnesota's Emergency Executive Order 20-02, Birch Grove Community School (BGCS) has established a distance learning plan to ensure that students receive equitable educational opportunities during a school closure as a result of COVID-19.

BGCS will implement a distance learning plan that allows for the continued education of all students, and will make all efforts to help students and families during this unique and unprecedented situation

K-5 Education

Declaration: A distance learning day will be declared by the Minnesota Governor and/or the school Director to protect the health of the community during a public health emergency due to COVID-19

Notification: The school will notify parents/guardians/families of a distance learning day at least two hours prior to the normal school start time that students need to follow the distance learning lesson plans for the day(s). Materials will be distributed to students based on the learning plan. Contact information for connecting with the licensed teacher(s) will be listed in the plan. Lesson plans will be distributed to families in various forms.

Teacher Access: Students will receive daily interaction with their licensed teacher(s). Teachers will be accessible during normal school hours to assist students, parents/guardians/families - after hours may be available through scheduling with the classroom teacher(s). Teachers will monitor student progress and provide feedback to students through regular meetings and/or alternate communications (email, text messaging, phone, learning management systems).

Attendance: All families should follow the school's attendance policy for excused absences. Teachers(s) will take and record attendance using a method approved by BGCS. The method will separate attendance and performance to accommodate access limitations for video or audio connections, students experiencing homelessness, housing instability, or otherwise limited or inconsistent access to connection media and working spaces. Before recording a student absent, teachers will attempt to contact the student/family to confirm attendance and/or performance of the work. Students that do not participate in planned activities are considered absent under the school's attendance policy. Absent students will be required to complete the work assigned on the distance learning day following the same procedures as on-site absences. BGCS may change or waive any attendance requirements on a case-by-case basis. BGCS encourages parents/guardians/families to contact the school if they encounter or expect to encounter any difficulties participating in distance learning as described by this policy and the distance learning plan.

Content: BGCS will provide materials for students to continue their learning. This may take the form of worksheets, textbooks (hard copy or on-line copy), manipulatives, telephone instruction, online resources, or other methods. Teachers will implement as seamlessly as possible into the regular instruction that has been occurring,

Access to Technology: If using electronic equipment to implement the distance learning plan, BGCS will identify and accommodate students and families meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- Students without internet access at home
- Students without access to digital devices
- Families without a sufficient amount of technology for the number of children in the household
- Students that cannot access technology due to the rules of a childcare provider
- Students that cannot use technology due to religious reasons

Special Education Services: BGCS will ensure that students with disabilities will continue to receive specialized instruction and related services through a distance learning model to meet their needs. BGCS will ensure equitable access to specialized instruction and related services for students with disabilities to maintain access to general education standards and continue to demonstrate progress toward the general education standards and IEP goals. BGCS will develop a process to communicate with parents/guardians/families regarding their child(ren)'s services, which may include amending IEP's to address the student's needs in a flexible or distance learning model. BGCS will develop a protocol to communicate with the school director and educators in order to prepare staff to plan for the needs of the students eligible for special education, child find activities, evaluations/reevaluations, and IEP implementation.

Emergency Workers Childcare: Childcare will be provided for emergency workers that include healthcare personnel, emergency medical service personnel (full-time), law enforcement personnel, firefighter personnel, personnel providing correctional services, public health employees, and court personnel as defined by the Minnesota's Q-and-A on School Closure - 03.15.2020 notice.

English Language Learners: BGCS will continue to serve English language learners during distance learning days. To the extent possible, classes will reflect the language proficiency of the students. In order to keep families informed, BGCS will continue methods of communication with parents/guardians/families of students that do not use English as a primary language.

Students Experiencing Homelessness or Housing Instability: BGCS understands that students facing homelessness may be particularly vulnerable to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. BGCS will work with students experiencing homelessness or housing instability to minimize the impact that their situation has on their educational experience. This includes the following measures:

- Monitoring participation and engagement in distance learning as a school group, to help guide whether additional staff support, engagement, or assistance are needed for students experiencing homelessness. This includes monitoring for attendance.

- Participation – scheduling leadership-level review of the efficacy of distance learning plans and approaches for homeless students and considering alternatives or additional support needs as a part of that review. Monitoring emerging guidance or recommendations on supporting homeless students and implementing changes as appropriate. Maintaining regular contact with local health departments, county or Tribal human services departments, and Continuum of Care planning bodies on ongoing or emerging needs and to connect to resources that can assist students and parents/guardians/families experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. Coordinating with organizations and community members to secure access to appropriate educational spaces for studying during distance learning days.

Nutrition: BGCS is not with the National Hot Lunch Program, but serves an in-house meal two days a week, the other 3 days a week, students bring a cold lunch from home. Families are to be notified to request up to 2 lunch meals a week should they find they need this, free of charge. Meals will be available for pick up or may be delivered in a manner that allows for social distancing. Only members linked to the specific child will be allowed to pick up meals.

All school staff, including non-salaried, hourly staff, will earn pay and benefits as planned in the school budget and Employment Offers.

This policy will begin effective March 30, 2020 and will remain in effect as long as state law allows and emergency declarations are in effect.

This policy will be posted on the school website at www.birchgroveschool.com