



LAKE OF THE WOODS School

PO Box 310 • 236 15th Ave. SW • Baudette, MN 56623 • 218-634-2510 • Fax: 218-634-2750
Jeff Nelson, Superintendent

A Message from Superintendent Nelson

November 19, 2020

Last night Governor Walz issued Emergency Executive Order 20-99. This order implements a four-week dial back on “certain activities to slow the spread of COVID-19.” Here are some highlights of the order that will directly impact schools:

- Prohibited social gatherings do not include schools, child care, educational services for distance and hybrid learners, and other educational services.
- Does not restrict legislative and other governmental meetings, such as school board meetings. Remote meetings are strongly encouraged.
- Youth sports must stop all in-person activities - including practices, workouts, games and tournaments. This includes sports offered by schools, MSHSL, or similar organizations. This includes any non-school activity in school facilities.
- PE instruction that meets academic requirements as part of the school day is still permitted.
- Licensed child care providers may continue to operate.
- Public pools, gymnasiums, fitness centers, recreational centers, indoor sports facilities, trampoline parks, indoor and outdoor exercise facilities, martial arts facilities and dance and exercise studios are closed to the public. During this time, schools are not allowed to rent out their gyms, weight rooms or other facilities.
- Executive order 20-99 will be in effect from Friday, November 20 at 11:59 pm through Friday, December 18 at 11:59 pm.

What does this mean for Lake of the Woods School?

At this time we intend to continue with our current learning model for the elementary and high school. We will also continue to provide tutoring and academic support services to students in distance, hybrid, or in-person learning. Child care services will continue to operate within the school building. All other after school, in-person programs and activities will be suspended during the four-week period. This would include:

- Community Education classes, open swimming and adult swim will be suspended. Use of the weight room will be limited to PE classes during the normal school day. The weight room will be closed after school (this includes school staff members).
- Use of school’s facilities will be prohibited. This would include, Just for Kicks, 4-H, Scouting groups, JO sports groups, etc.
- Only students who are scheduled for tutoring and support sessions with school staff will be allowed to be in the building after 2:30.



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- School personnel will maintain their normal work schedule and will have normal access into the building.
- Mental Health Services and scheduled, in-person appointments will be allowed to continue when remote access is not available or feasible.

I understand how disappointed everyone will be with these new restrictions, but with the explosion of active cases and the strain this puts on our public health system, I feel these steps are appropriate at this time and will hopefully allow us to safely maintain our current learning model.

I also want to take this time to remind students, staff, and parents of the importance of following all of our mitigation procedures, which include:

- Covering your mouth and nose with a face mask at all times when around others.
- Keeping a minimum of 6' social distancing.
- Washing hands and following disinfecting procedures.
- Completing daily health screenings.
- Staying home if you or someone in your family is ill and keeping everyone in the household home until testing results, or an alternative diagnosis is determined by your health provider.
- Following quarantine/self-isolation procedures as directed by the school nurse or public health.

None of these steps alone can provide 100% protection, but when all of them are implemented together, we dramatically increase the effectiveness of our efforts to keep everyone safe and at school. It is because of our adherence to these mitigation procedures that our school is still one of the safest places for children and staff. As our local community spread continues to increase, it becomes even more important for all of us to follow these procedures. It is just as important that each of us are making personal decisions outside the school walls that will limit our exposure and help keep ourselves and those around us safe.

Keeping our students in school is the best way to keep them safe and the best way to serve our community. We are better able to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs when students are in-person. We better serve our community when students are in school and parents are able to work and provide for their families. I would like to commend all of my staff for their commitment, hard work and grit as we work through this pandemic. I would also like to thank the Lake of the Woods Community for all of your support during this difficult time.

Take care and stay safe!