

**SUN RIVER VALLEY ELEMENTARY LE: #1225**  
**SIMMS HIGH SCHOOL LE: #0118**

**June 13, 2023**

Dear Parents and Guardians:

COVID-19 continues to affect nearly every aspect of how our families, businesses, and schools go about their daily work. Sun River Valley School District staff have been gathering the past few weeks to develop a plan for how our schools can provide a safe and secure setting for students to learn. The enclosed plan builds upon all that we learned last spring when, with your help, our teachers and students quickly moved to home-based instruction.

Our goal to resume instruction and operations at our schools relies on the following priorities: a healthy and safe setting for students, staff, and the community; helpful support of teachers and staff; and responsible financial and operational procedures. We intend to meet this goal by upholding these priorities.

We have implemented measures throughout the District to promote a safe and healthy setting for learning, teaching, and working. Our District's plan relies on the practical application of scientific information to transform instruction, cleaning and disinfecting, transportation, food services, and activities. The District has implemented physical distancing by reconfiguring classrooms and gathering spaces, developed school arrival and departure procedures; installed sanitizing stations, hygiene signs, barriers and other measures to assist with individual protection; and purchased material and supplies to implement all aspects of the plan.

We are confident these and other proactive measures outlined in the plan will meet our shared goal. While not our intention to revert to instruction away from the schools, the School District understands that even with our best prevention efforts, it is possible that there may be an outbreak of this highly contagious virus in our community. To prepare for this possibility, the District has developed a dynamic home-based instruction program in the event the schools are required to close for any period of time.

We've worked to think of everything to make sure the students can come back to their classrooms, work with their teachers, and enjoy their friends just as we left last spring. If there is something you think we have missed or if you have questions, please let us know by sending an email to [dmarzolf@srvs.k12.mt.us](mailto:dmarzolf@srvs.k12.mt.us). Our School District remains committed to maintaining timely and relevant communications with staff, families and the community as this new school year begins. With your help, your students' enthusiasm, and our teachers' leadership, we'll meet this challenge and have a successful school year.

Our reopen and health plan will be discussed at our regularly scheduled board meeting on June 13, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Business Room.

### **Reopen Plan**

Our plan is to reopen school as scheduled on August 23, 2021 with all PK-12 students in school. How the pandemic evolves at the local level prior to and throughout the school year could influence a change in the plan. If the governor or local health department would close schools again, we would operate on a distance-learning model during that time. Potentially, some students would receive help from the teacher in the building during a closure.

### **Health and Safety**

Regarding COVID-19 and the current situation at Simms High School and Fort Shaw Elementary, we are requiring procedures that will mitigate the risks of COVID in our building. The following procedures are in place during this pandemic:

1. All students and staff will wear masks as per **federal law** on school buses **when social distancing is not practical or possible** .
2. Parents are asked to please take your child's temperature at home prior to leaving for school. If the temperature is 100.4 degree Fahrenheit or higher, do not send the child to school. Additionally, **do not send** students to school this year when they are sick. The school attendance policy will be adjusted accordingly by the building Principals on a case-by-case basis so that this requirement can be met during the pandemic. We understand that some people may be asymptomatic with a virus, but taking temperature is a relatively easy procedure that could help mitigate the risks COVID and opening school.
3. The school has purchased some infrared thermometers and may check temperatures at school. Students with a temperature above 100.4 will be kept isolated until he or she can be picked up by an adult or immediately sent home if possible.
4. Students and staff need to wash their hands with soap and water often. Wash hands before getting on the bus, before and after lunch, before and after recess, and after using the restroom, etc.

### **Distance Learning**

This will only be used during a complete closure as directed by local health authorities or the governor. Sun River Valley Public Schools will not have an opt-out option. The school will not be using a hybrid or mixed teaching model whereby some students are taught at the school and others are taught at home when the school is open. **The school will address educating students with a disability or situation that is affected by the pandemic on a case-by-case basis via a 504 plan with accommodations, which could include distance learning.** Please contact Mr. McKinley or Ms. Kincaid so that a plan can be put in place for a student in this situation. At the high school level, educating the student under this scenario would be through the Montana Digital Academy and would be for the entire semester.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

The decision regarding high school activities will be directed by the MHSA. Activities below the high school level will be determined by the school board and administration. Students must still meet attendance and academic requirements to be eligible for participation. At this time, practices for the fall schedule will begin on August 13 at the high school level. Jr. High practice start date is August 16.

### **Food Service**

The school will continue to serve breakfast and lunch. The food service will make necessary changes to ensure that the procedures meet all health guidelines during the pandemic and so that food is served in a safe manner. The location that some students eat at will be adjusted accordingly so that social distancing can be followed. Classrooms will be used for this. Students may sit outside when weather allows for this. Breakfast will be taken to and eaten in a student's first period classroom only. It's likely that the school will not provide meals in the event there is a brief closure of the school.

### **Transportation**

Our plan is to provide transportation as normal. Riders will be required to wear masks as per federal law and social distance as much as possible on the bus. The bus driver will assign seats. Family members will sit together if necessary to use space efficiently. As always, parents will have the option of students riding the bus or driving them to school. Please have students wash their hands with soap and water before bus trips.

### **Special Education Services**

It is our plan to provide services as dictated by the student's IEP. We assure parents that we will work with them and provide the level of support that is appropriate.

### **Registration**

New students to our school need to contact Kristi Leach at Simms High School at 264-5111, or Kori Hillyard at Fort Shaw Elementary at 264-5586 to get registered for school.

**Early Kindergarten Schedule**

This will be the same as normal. Half days Monday through Thursday.

**Information will continue to be provided on the school website, the school Facebook page and via the Infinite Campus messenger system.**

Sincerely,

David Marzolf  
Superintendent, Sun River Valley Public Schools