



**Kato Public Charter School  
Safe Return to In-Person Learning Plan  
2023-2024 School Year**



**KPCS MISSION:**

To provide unique educational experiences that introduce students to real-world situations through experiential learning, community engagement, post-secondary educational opportunities, and learning agreements tailored to the individual needs of our students based on Minnesota graduation requirements.

**KPCS VISION:**

To develop well-rounded, confident, and responsible individuals who aspire to achieve their full potential.

**KPCS VALUES:**

**Community** - Collaborating towards something bigger than ourselves

**Responsibility** - Being accountable to ourselves and others

**Respect** - Valuing ourselves with acceptance and consideration of others; treat them as we wish to be treated

**Growth** - evaluating ourselves academically and socially

**KPCS KODIAK CODE:**

**Responsibility** - Teaching and demonstrating responsibility academically, and socially.

**Respect** - Teaching and demonstrating respect for self and others.

**Ready** - Teaching and demonstrating how to be ready for academic success and the unexpected.

School and district administrators are directed by the Minnesota Department of Education to develop a Safe Return to In-Person Learning Plan for 2023-2024 utilizing [Planning Guidance from MDE](#). This document is our educational plan developed to address the 2023-24 school year. As new information and guidance is provided this document will be updated.

**Community feedback will be sought throughout the year in the ongoing development of this plan, including:**

- [Online Feedback Survey](#) - Continuously available for comment July 2023-June 2024
- Fall Student Enrollment - August 2023 through October 1, 2023
- Kato Public Charter School Board Meetings - Every 3rd Thursday at 4:00 PM
- Student and Family Spring Conferences - January 2024

Kato Public Charter School is currently soliciting feedback as we plan for our 2023-2024 School Safety Plan.

## **I. District Statement**

Kato Public Charter School School used a variety of resources and guidance provided by the Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Department of Health, the Center for Disease Control, and many national and government organizations in developing this plan. This plan is meant to be a guidance document only and is not intended to be a legal document or determining liability. Kato Public Charter School is striving to ensure the health and safety of our students, staff, and community members is our highest priority during the 2023-24 school year. We want to provide the best education in the safest environment possible for the KPCS family and community.

## **II. Welcome and Covid-19 Program Coordinator Contact:**

Kato Public Charter School will once again offer in-person learning for the 2023-24 school year. Following further direction from the Minnesota Department of Education and the Governor, Kato Public Charter School will communicate with families and the community regarding specific details and educational programming plans for the start of the 2023-24 school year.

Students will be engaged during 2023-2024 in conversation regarding the safe learning plan in Student Advisories and Student Counsel. For questions regarding these plans, Please contact The Covid-19 Program Coordinator, Dr. Baxter mbaxter@katopcs.org or call 507-387-5524.

## **III. Safety and Security**

Kato Public Charter School wants to ensure that as many of the elements of health and safety for our staff and students are addressed and supported. Throughout this document there will be many references to best practices, guidelines, recommendations, and strategies that will be implemented and followed to ensure that our school building is as safe and secure as possible. Aside from following Kato Public Charter School's previously determined safety and security policies and procedures, Kato Public Charter School will integrate and intensify many other practices specifically related to COVID-19.

These practices are determined after consulting the following guidance and support offered by The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC):

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/health/covid19/>

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/socialdistance.pdf>

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/k12planguide.pdf>

## **IV. Academics**

### **Attendance**

Kato Public Charter School will continue to follow the state guidelines and our previously established policy around attendance (policy 504). Students are expected to attend school for

the entire length of the school day, as prescribed by Kato Public Charter School attendance policy or the Distance Learning Plan. Attendance will be monitored and taken daily.

The core school day can vary among schools within a district/charter school and among grades within a school. Districts and charter schools' school calendars are expected to provide the minimum number of annual instructional hours and a minimum of 165 instructional days for grades, which Kato Public Charter School does follow:

- 935 hours for grade 6
- 1,020 hours for grades 7-12

Kato Public Charter School's [calendar](#) has been board approved for the 2023-2024 calendar year.

In the event that a student is unable to attend school for health reasons related to COVID-19 or any other illness, Kato Public Charter School will provide that student with an alternative learning plan so that the student can continue to engage in their educational programming while remaining at home. These situations will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Kato Public Charter School will also continue to implement and comply with educational programming for any students whose attendance at school is modified or accommodated due to needs identified through a 504 Plan or Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Kato Public Charter School also recognizes that the shift in the delivery of educational programming and learning could directly impact a student's ability to engage and participate in their learning day-to-day. District and school staff will be monitoring student progress to identify warning signs or concerns that may come up if a student is not making adequate progress academically. If a concern around a learning loss is identified and a student is in need of some additional support or services to assist them in progressing academically, Kato Public Charter School will develop a plan to address this need (such as tutoring, modifications, accommodations, etc.)

### **Instruction**

Kato Public Charter School maintains that it will continue to provide a quality, equitable education to all of its students. Kato Public Charter School believes that it is essential for students to continue to develop and grow educationally, but also as a member of the community. The academic expectation for all students is to develop them into well-rounded, confident, and responsible individuals who aspire to achieve their full potential. KPCS staff and administration will help our students develop personal independence and curiosity through the exploration of academics and self. KPCS will work to instill good study habits in our students, as well as the preliminary mastery of academic subject areas and material associated with Minnesota State Standards. Because Kato Public Charter School is a small learning community, students benefit from a one-on-one relationship with the teaching staff and advisors.

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Academic Expectations are outlined in the Student/Parent Handbook that can be found on our webpage (<https://www.katopcs.org/>).

During the 2023-2024 school year, students will follow a scheduled school day and receive daily in-person instruction and support. Students will be assessed on assignments, projects & seminars in both in-person and in online settings. If KPCS has to return to a hybrid teaching model due to health concerns we will follow our Hybrid instructional plan.

- A. **In-Person Instruction:** Students 6th-12th will report to school and receive in-person daily instruction and individual support. Students will be provided classroom instruction, individual support, collaborative projects, and extra-curricular activities.
  
- B. **Hybrid Instruction:** Students 6th-12th will engage daily by either in-person instruction at Kato Public Charter School School or through online learning. Hybrid schedule:
  - HS students will engage in online learning Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays. Tuesdays and Thursdays will be in-person learning. Students will limit classroom exchanges and do most of their learning in small groups.
  - MS students will engage in online learning Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays. Mondays and Wednesdays will be in-person. Students will limit classroom exchanges and do most of their learning in small groups.

This model allows KPCS the ability to space students 3-6 ft apart and limit the number of students in a classroom to 15 or less.

- C. **Distance Learning Instruction & SEL (Social Emotional Learning) Support:** Students 6th-12th will engage in daily instruction through an online learning platform that involves direct instruction from their assigned advisors and teacher(s). Kato Public Charter School will follow the plan as described in our [KPCS Distance Learning Plan](#).
  
- D. **Distance Learning Instruction:** Students 6th-12th will engage in daily instruction through an online learning platform that involves direct instruction from their assigned advisor(s) and teacher(s). Kato Public Charter School will follow the plan as described in our [KPCS Distance Learning Plan](#).

Kato Public Charter School will use the following methods for classroom & one-on-one support/Teaching:

Kato Public Charter School will continue to use the Student Information System (JMC), and Google Suites for Educational delivery for in-person learning, hybrid learning and distance learning. In addition, students and staff will use Zoom, google classroom, google meets, and google voice to support virtual meetings.

All special education and general education paraprofessionals will continue to serve students via virtual communication if there is a return to distance or hybrid learning. All support staff have been trained on how to assist students via online communication platforms.

At all times teachers will maximize the distance between desks as much as possible. Unnecessary furniture will be removed from rooms in an effort to create more space between desks. Classrooms that use tables for student and group seating will need to evaluate their ability to distance students with the tables and evaluate the feasibility and availability of desks, and/or their ability to use tables. If determined to be needed during the 2023-2024 school year teachers will remove flexible seating options that do not allow for social distancing.

As educators, we know and understand best practices and the value that small group instruction brings to our students. We encourage the use of small group learning, but in a way that socially distances students to the best of our ability in a safe manner. We encourage faculty to work with their school administrators to consider how they can conduct small group instruction in a safe manner.

**Assessments:**

Kato Public Charter School teachers will ensure they are using equitable, appropriate assessments that are accessible to all students. This includes options for anywhere/anytime assessments and considerations for limited access. Kato Public Charter School staff will remain adaptable to student needs as they arise. Academic progress will be monitored directly by the teaching staff: every student is assigned an advisor who will check in daily and communicate all school information. The teaching staff will communicate weekly progress with families directly as needed. Advisors will also coordinate any required student support services with special education staff, paraprofessionals, and other support staff as needed.

State mandated assessments will still take place, as required by law, unless indicated otherwise by the Minnesota Department of Education.

### **Professional Development**

Staff training, Preservice, and Professional Collaboration will occur from August 21st through August 31st, 2023. Continued staff training and professional development for staff will occur throughout the 2023-2024 school year. The administrative staff and school leaders review data, the strategic plan, and immediate staff development needs to determine the Learning Program Priorities and training each school year.

Kato Public Charter School is dedicated to the continued development of staff. There will be ongoing, continuous professional development offered throughout the school year on Instructional Tools, mental health, nurturing an equitable learning environment, wrap-around services (for students & staff), and other essential topics to promote student wellness and learning in 2023-2024.

Staff and professional learning team schedules will be established and posted to the internal KPCS meeting schedule using Google calendar.

### **Teacher Evaluations (Charlotte Danielson)**

Licensed Teaching staff employee performance reviews are conducted annually. The performance review is a time to recognize where the employee has met or exceeded expectations, address areas in which the employee may need to improve and set new goals for performance and continued skill building.

Kato Public Charter School expects all employees to prepare for these reviews carefully and participate in them fully. All teaching staff is expected to participate and develop a professional development plan.

A more specific plan for the staff observations process will be presented to the teachers during preservice and then to the school board at the October 2023 Board meeting.

### **Staff Evaluations**

Non-teaching staff employee performance reviews are conducted annually. The performance review is a time to recognize where the employee has met or exceeded expectations, address areas in which the employee may need to improve and set new goals for performance and continued skill building.

Kato Public Charter School expects all employees to prepare for these reviews carefully and participate in them fully. All staff is expected to participate and develop a professional development plan.

## **V. Transportation**

KPCS Transportation will be provided by District 77 to all students identified in the district policy, including specialized transportation due to IEP requirements. Parents will be required to complete the District 77 bussing transportation even if providing their own transportation for their students.

Kato Public Charter School will continue to implement and remain compliant with any special transportation requirements as detailed by Individualized Education Plans, 504 plans, or homelessness designation.

## **VI. Food Service**

### **In-Person:**

Kato Public Charter School will follow workplace health and safety protocols outlined in the **Preparedness Plan for Kato Public Charter School School**. Specific Procedures and practices will continually be updated throughout the 2023-2024 school year.

### **Hybrid:**

During the hybrid learning model, Kato Public Charter School will continue to provide meals for students in attendance according to MDE policy.

Kato Public Charter School will provide healthy snacks for students who forget meals, or otherwise need food for the day.

### **Precautions:**

- When eating at school, students will remain as socially distanced as possible.
- Students will be able to eat outside supervised by staff, weather permitting.
- Handwashing facilities and hand sanitizer will be available at all times.
- Water bottle filling stations are available, and lidded cups are available to students who forget to bring a refillable bottle from home.
- If a student needs utensils or napkins, those will be provided individually.
- Microwaves will be available to students who bring their own food from home.

### **Distance Learning:**

Kato Public Charter School will provide meals for pickup to families that request meals on a daily basis Monday through Friday from 11am to 2pm. All families may order lunches and bagged breakfasts for students and any other children under the age of 18 in the household. Educational materials and items may also be made available for pick up at that time.

Families will be notified via multiple avenues, email, newsletter and website with contact information and additional resources. Additional Resources will be included on our website.



## **VII. Equity**

Equity is essential to the engagement and access of educational programming and opportunities for all of our students. Kato Public Charter School will ensure that all students have access to resources, materials, equipment, and support that is needed to engage daily in their instruction, classroom participation, and success towards academic achievement. This includes, but is not limited to technology, community resources, school support staff, classroom materials, etc.

## **VIII. Daily Procedures (In-Person & Hybrid Learning Models)**

### **Daily Procedures and Building Access (In-Person & Hybrid)**

Kato Public Charter School is focused on working collaboratively with families and the community to ensure that students and staff are safe while at school. There are many processes and procedures that will be added to the steps identified for entering the building to help ensure the safety and health of all individuals within the school building. These are consistent with guidelines identified by many different states and national organizations, including the [CDC](#). As a result, the district has set forth the following steps to support the efforts of maintaining cleanliness and safety in the school buildings.

Please note the following procedures will be in place for preventing sick persons from entering the building:

If staff, students, or visitors are determined to have health concerns/symptoms related to COVID-19, then they will not be allowed to enter the building or asked to leave the building ASAP. If the individual must wait for someone to assist them in leaving the building, then they will be asked to remain either outside of the building (students with supervision) if the weather is appropriate, or in the isolation room within the building. Students, staff, and visitors/parents should not come to Kato Public Charter School if they are feeling ill or experiencing any of the following symptoms:

Signs will be posted at the entries that note people with symptoms should not enter the building. Kato Public Charter School staff will follow this flow chart for guidelines:

[MDH Covid-19 flowchart](#)

### **Symptoms Checklist**

#### **Common Symptoms:**

*Loss of taste or smell*

*Fever or chills*

*Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing*

*Cough, Congestion, and/or runny nose*

## **Less Common Symptoms:**

*Headache*

*Sore throat*

*Diarrhea*

*Fatigue*

*Nausea or vomiting*

*Muscle or body aches*

## **Workplace Social Distancing**

### **Indoors:**

Social distancing will be maintained to the greatest extent possible between staff, students, and visitors in the workplace.

- A. Entering the building: All individuals will be allowed to wait outside of the building without being screened. Kato Public Charter School would ask that these individuals still honor social-distancing guidelines. All individuals (staff and students) wanting to enter the building will be reminded of the symptoms checklist with signs. Those experiencing symptoms should not enter the building. If there are health concerns /symptoms related to COVID-19 students/staff will be sent home. **Masks:** *Will be optional for all staff that have been vaccinated. Masks or shields will be required for all unvaccinated staff. Masks will be provided and optional for all students and visitors.*
- B. Any person who enters the building will be asked to use hand sanitizer upon entering the building. If an individual does not have their own Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Kato Public Charter School will provide it to them to use during the school day.
- C. Classroom access: All students will follow the directed paths in the building hallways, maintain a safe distance from any other person and report directly to the classroom. Once entering the classroom, all students will report directly to their assigned personal work space in the classroom (desk, table, etc.).
- D. Personal Items: All students will be allowed to keep their personal items (coat, back-pack, purses, etc.) with them at their personal work space. KPCS does not have general use lockers or cubbies for students. If students need a bag or container to place their things in for use during the school day, one will be provided to them by the school. School rules and expectations around electronics, technology, appropriate dress, and use of personal items still remain in effect and will be enforced.
- E. Transitioning: All movement throughout the building will be directed by staff members. Students may be allowed to move independently throughout the building, as permitted by staff, but all students are expected to follow the social-distance guidelines as they are moving throughout the building. It is expected that the health and safety of staff and students be at the forefront of these decisions.
- F. All classrooms will follow the guidance established by the Minnesota Department of Education and the classrooms will arrange the individual student work spaces as far apart as possible given the space allowed.
- G. Social Distancing will be followed throughout the school day when possible.
- H. Only one student is allowed to leave a classroom for a bathroom break at a time; to help maintain health and safety guidelines.
- I. Visitors/parents: All visitors will also be reminded to leave the building if they are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms as displayed on the signs in the entry. Visitors

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will have minimal access to the building and not be allowed into the classrooms if we are in an active COVID-19 pandemic.

- J. Parent meetings: Kato Public Charter School will have a designated location for parent/family meetings and conferences to be held. It will be encouraged, whenever possible, to hold these meetings in person during the 2023-2024 school year. Parents may still request to meet virtually. Visitors will be escorted to the designated screening location and required to participate in all screening and safety measures to be in the building. The designated meeting space will be cleaned following each meeting.

### **Outdoor Activities:**

Kato Public Charter School will provide outside activities for students. Students and staff will still not be expected to wear masks during outside activities. Students and staff will be expected to practice social distancing outdoors when possible, and limiting close contact to short periods of time.

## **IX. Building Use and Maintenance**

Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at Kato Public Charter School at all times. Staff and students are instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water throughout the day, but especially at the beginning of the school day, prior to any mealtimes and after using the restroom.

All Persons are required to wash or sanitize their hands prior to or immediately upon entering the facility. Hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) are at entrances and various locations in the workplace so they can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled.

Kato Public Charter School will follow cleaning guidelines that are recommended by the following organizations:

EPA Approved Cleaning List:

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>

Human Friendly Cleaning List:

[https://osha.washington.edu/sites/default/files/documents/Updated%20Safer%20Disinfectants%20List\\_March%2026%2C%202020.pdf](https://osha.washington.edu/sites/default/files/documents/Updated%20Safer%20Disinfectants%20List_March%2026%2C%202020.pdf)

Cleaning Guidance:

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/ReOpening\\_America\\_Cleaning\\_Disinfection\\_Decision\\_Tool.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/ReOpening_America_Cleaning_Disinfection_Decision_Tool.pdf)

Classrooms, including each student's individual work space, will be cleaned daily, using the approved cleaning solutions identified above. Classroom teachers will support the cleaning of their classrooms and the items used during the day by the students.

Shared areas within the buildings (cafeteria, library, special classrooms, etc.) will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the school day, after each use, and prior to the next cohort of students accessing the area.

Frequently used areas (building entrances, building offices, bathrooms, etc.) will be cleaned at the end of each school day.

If there is an identified potential exposure, then that area within the building will be isolated and cleaning to disinfect the area will commence immediately to reduce the potential of further spread or exposure to others.

#### **Lockers and Cubbies:**

KPCS does not have general use lockers/cubbies available for student use. Students will be allowed to bring backpacks, purses, bags, etc. to school with them. Those items will remain with them in their personal workspace and then return home with them at the end of each day.

#### **Bathrooms:**

Bathrooms will be available for staff, students, and KPCS visitors to use only. The bathrooms will be monitored to ensure that the appropriate number of individuals are allowed inside of the bathroom at all times to observe social-distancing guidelines. One student will be permitted to use each bathroom at a time and must have a classroom bathroom pass.

### **X. Student Health and Wellness**

Kato Public Charter School strives to ensure that a variety of resources and supports are available to students and families to assist with any needs or challenges that may arise.

Kato Public Charter School has access to several mental health professionals that can provide consultation, direct support, or resources to students and their families. Kato Public Charter School staff will not provide any medical or mental health recommendations. Kato Public Charter School has additional support identified and available on Kato Public Charter School's website. In addition, there are suggestions and resources identified by the [Minnesota Department of Education](#) to support students and families during this time. All of the support, resources, and consultation remain in place and offered to all students and families regardless of the educational programming scenario that is implemented for the 2023-24 school year.

### **XI. Employee Health**

In the event that a student or employee tests positive, persons within that class setting will be notified to the greatest extent possible without revealing any confidential student or staff information. Student and staff information will remain confidential as required by law. While it is possible the class may be required to quarantine, the class may not necessarily be required to quarantine. In the event a staff member tests positive for COVID-19, they will notify a Regional Program Coordinator and follow the directions given. Staff members who test positive must

obtain one negative COVID-19 test result before returning to work. If required, Kato Public Charter School will also host COVID-19 testing on site for staff.

**What if an individual/employee has been exposed to someone else with COVID-19?**

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/case.pdf>

**[Link to Community/Public Comment](#)**