

# FAQ

## Response to Covid-19 for 2021-2022 School Year

### **1. What are the factors informing our preparedness planning, and the basis for decisions being made?**

The Center for Disease Control, Minnesota Department of Health and the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis have each made it clear that the priority of in-person schooling is a guiding factor in all of our Covid mitigation efforts. We are employing the recommendations of these agencies in order to minimize risk of viral transmission and community spread, while always in a manner which also fosters the best educational outcome for students and the best overall quality of life for families, the school community, and the broader civic community.

This means that decisions being made now and into the future are based on an *effort to balance both the profound responsibility we have for the care of all members of our community, along with the respect we have for the share each person will take in that responsibility.*

### **2. In what ways can parents support the health and safety of the overall school community?**

- Get vaccinations for family members who are eligible and able to receive them, and recognize additional protections to be taken, for yourself and others, if you are unvaccinated;
- Make the appropriate decision for your family regarding when and where to use facial covering, and to support the decision others make; ensure that all students have a mask with them at school for times it may be required (bus trips, large gatherings, change of virus spread, etc);
- Guide your children in health and safety measures they can practice at home and at school;
- Cooperate with guidelines the school must implement, at times, and remain flexible about this – for the sake of the whole community;
- Retain your child(ren) at home whenever they are sick, and communicate with the school nurse about any health developments with your child.

### **3. In what ways can school personnel support the health and safety of each family?**

- Get vaccinated to the extent possible, and recognize additional protections to be taken for any who are unvaccinated;
- Support the decisions made by families regarding facial covering, and continuously monitor Covid protocol guidelines as local circumstances may change through the school year;
- Maintain practices throughout the school day which support good hygiene, appropriate distancing, judicious use of face coverings, healthy ventilation, frequent and regular utilization of outdoor times and spaces, and ongoing communication;
- Update families regarding any changes in protocols and/or any potential school exposure to Covid or other health concerns;
- Identify opportunities for restored parent involvement in school activities, and continue to monitor and adjust this as circumstances allow.

#### **4. Since masks are not mandated for everyone, in what circumstances will students, teachers and parents need to wear masks at school?**

While the only remaining legal mask requirement is for bus riders, it is clear that correctly worn face coverings are highly recommended and can effectively reduce the risk of viral transmission. Anyone who chooses to regularly wear a mask will, of course, be supported. In addition, we do need students and adults to have a mask available daily at school – and we need everyone to support the judgment made by teachers and school administrators at times when students may be in larger gatherings or may be interacting inside in closer proximity than usual. Of course, if the community statistics change and/or the authorities find it necessary to re-instate a general mask mandate, we will be prepared to increase the use of facial coverings. The use of masks is less disruptive than several other mitigation strategies.

#### **5. In what ways will parents be able to interact at school this year?**

Schools have been advised to still limit the number of volunteers, visitors and vendors interacting at school, especially during the school day. Faithful Shepherd will restore some parent volunteer roles in the Volunteer Room, and some classroom visits facilitated through HSA. In the case of adult visitors interacting in the classroom, at this time we will ask that they be masked. We are working on a plan for parents of the “host” grade level to attend Mass at school. As the school year unfolds, we will update parents about any opportunities to interact at school

#### **6. In what ways could we have larger gathered school community experiences?**

Plans for upcoming school events will be evaluated case-by-case, with a view to proceeding with as many of the customary community activities as possible. In every situation, we will need participants to be flexible with accommodations and with last minute changes. In early September we will publish some additional specific details for the first trimester.

#### **7. In what ways will we handle changes which may be warranted by viral spread in the community?**

School leaders are committed to diligently monitoring both individual and communal health and well-being, and to responding in prompt and sensitive ways as needed. Clearly the current circumstances could change dramatically, for better or for worse, even between now and the start of school. In fact, today’s update from Minnesota Department of Health does alert us to an increased level of concern for the Delta variant – [see the update here](#). Please be assured that an increased level of mitigation measures will be employed only when absolutely necessary for the common good.