



Parent/Guardian FAQ's

Revised 9.4.2020

Document Assumptions:

- "Family," "parents," and/or "guardians" will be referred to as "parents" in this document.
- We are under the guidance of the Hancock County Health Department, who is under the guidance of the Indiana State Health Department and other national agencies.

ILLNESS PROTOCOLS

- **When can I expect my child to be sent home for an illness?**

Students will be sent home for COVID comparable symptoms. These symptoms include:

- Temperature 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. (This accounts for a +/- 0.4 degree measurement error for the measuring device.)
- Sore throat
- New uncontrolled cough that may cause difficulty breathing or a change in a chronic cough's baseline.
- Diarrhea, nausea or vomiting, abdominal pain
- New onset of severe headache, especially with fever
- New loss of taste or smell

- **When can my child return due to an illness?**

Students can return after completing one of the following requirements:

- Provide a doctor's note explaining symptoms are due to an alternative diagnosis and non-COVID related. Note must clearly state a return to school date.
- Remain home for at least 10 days since the first symptoms began AND are fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24hrs AND **improvement** of symptoms.
- Provide proof of a negative test COVID-19 test (not antibody) and be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications AND **improvement** of symptoms.

- **How long can I expect my child to be quarantined?**

The Hancock County Health Department will advise MVCSC on a case by case basis. Definitions frequently used for identifying cases are:

- Close Contact: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a close contact is a person who spends greater than 15 minutes within six feet of a positive COVID-19 person from the 48 hours prior to the positive person's symptom onset or positive test collection date if asymptomatic. While mask use decreases the risk of infection, at this time it does not

change recommendations for quarantine. Close contacts need to quarantine at home for 14 days after the date of their last exposure.

- **Isolation:** A positive student or staff member with symptoms must isolate at home for 10 days from onset and be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and have a reduction in symptoms. A positive student/staff member without symptoms must isolate at home for 10 days after the date the positive specimen was collected.
- **Quarantine:** Close contacts who have been exposed should quarantine at home for 14 days after the last date of exposure to the positive student/staff member.

- **If my child tests positive, why do they have to isolate for 10 days but members of the same household are to quarantine for 14 days?**

The 14 days from exposure for the quarantined individuals is based upon the 2-14 days it typically takes for an individual to develop symptoms after exposure. The 10 days for a positive case is because the science behind their positive case means they were exposed anywhere from 2-14 days prior.

- **Should my child and their siblings stay home if they are waiting for test results?**

Yes. We ask for students, staff or household members that share a household with a person that is pending tests results to self-isolate until the results are available. We understand that time frames vary for test results.

- **My child gets migraines and vomits; will they be asked to go home?**

If the child is sent home, they will need a doctor's note that his symptoms are non-COVID-19 related or submit a negative test result to return. Remember, students and family members must quarantine while results are pending.

- **How will I be notified when my child is identified as a close contact with a positive case?**

Timely notification is key when your child may be identified as a close contact. This is important when it involves pick-up for your student that is in-person. Various communication methods may include: ParentSquare, phone call, or email.

- **Who should I notify if my child has symptoms, is diagnosed, is awaiting test results or has been exposed to someone with a confirmed case or symptoms?**

We ask that staff and families call the child's school attendance secretary or the health clinic. We will ask what symptoms are being experienced, when they started, when you were last exposed or the date of the test results.

- **If someone has COVID-19 symptoms, what will happen?**

Students with symptoms will be in an isolation room to keep exposure to a minimum and will be sent home ASAP.

- **If my child is sent home for COVID-19 compatible symptoms, do their siblings have to stay home as well?**

No. Updated state guidelines (09/04/2020) DO NOT require members of the shared household to quarantine when a member exhibits COVID compatible symptoms. Please keep in mind that if the person exhibiting symptoms gets tested, all shared household members will then be required to quarantine until a negative test result is received. If positive, we ask you to notify the school immediately.

- **If one of my children is identified as a close contact, does my entire family have to quarantine for 14 days?**

According to state and local guidelines, at this time, no other family members are required to quarantine when a family member is considered a close/direct contact. We ask that the person identified as the close/direct contact be quarantined to minimize exposure and easily identify the last exposure date to the person in the shared household. This includes, if possible, quarantining the individual identified in a room to themselves, no shared bathrooms or dining spaces, masking both parties when items or food is delivered and cleaning any common objects or spaces that may have been shared.

PREVENTION & ASKS OF FAMILY

- **What will be asked of the family/parents/guardians?**

Keeping students safe and healthy requires all families to participate in prevention. We ask parents to screen their child every morning at home for COVID-19 symptoms, label their mask, and wash their cloth masks regularly. Before school starts, we ask that parents have their child practice wearing a mask, covering sneezes and coughs, and review proper hand washing with their child before school starts.

- **Do I have to have my child use the masks provided by MVCSC?**

You do not have to use the masks we provide, and you can opt-out of that fee by letting your school treasurer know.

- **How are teachers being trained with the importance of proper hand washing, rather than always using/relying on hand sanitizer?**

Our corporation nurse is developing a campaign with signs/posters to manage coughs, sneezes, and how to wash hands. There will be mandatory hand washing with teacher supervision, especially for the younger ages.

SOCIAL DISTANCING, TRANSITIONS, & MASK USAGE

CLASSROOM & TEACHING

- **How will preschool and kindergarten classroom work in regards to social distancing and masks since some pediatricians are recommending little ones do not wear masks?**

We have a focus on our littlest students and are working with their teachers in regards to cleaning and washing their hands. Our staff is committed to help provide the healthiest environment for all. Smaller cohorts of students will also help mitigate contagion.

- **Will the middle school still change classes and have eight transitions?**

We have some opportunities to transition less and all principals are working on adjusting schedules to minimize transitions. The high school is on a hybrid schedule and the middle school is on a four block schedule.

- **How will band and choir be handled at the middle school and high school?**

At the middle school, the band students will practice in Marauder Hall to provide social distancing and go outside when possible. At the high school, the band and choir may be in a larger location to accommodate better social distancing. We anticipate that all choir students will be wearing their face shields during class.

- **What will the classrooms look like in the schools?**

Each principal and staff are focused on developing classrooms to provide social distancing, including the elementaries where we previously had four to six students at a table. We have purchased some partitions and made other room configuration adjustments. We are fortunate to have relatively low class sizes and some students that will be working from home. Students will be able to remove their masks when the staff supervisor says it is safe to do so.

- **What will a typical transition look like for my student in regards to their mask and sanitizing?**

Students will come into class wearing their mask, they will sanitize their area/desk, then sit down, and if they are six feet away from everyone they can take off their mask. We expect that many of the rooms, especially elementary and middle school, will allow for social distancing and a break from wearing masks.

- **What about students' backpacks in hallways/classrooms?**

The schools that have lockers are making those decisions and will be communicating that information.

MASK/FACE SHIELD USAGE

- **Will Mt. Vernon provide my child with a mask and face shield?**

Yes, each student/staff will receive an adjustable mask that can be hung around their neck when not in use. All students/staff will also receive a face shield. Parents need to label the mask and face shield and wash frequently.

- **How often will students have to wear masks?**

Masks have scientifically been proven effective to prevent contagion and they are recommended by the Hancock County Health Department, who uses the Indiana Department of Health and the CDC's guidance. Students/staff will be required to wear them during transitions and on the bus, at a minimum. There are other classes where social distancing may not be possible, e.g. larger classes at the high school, choir, etc., and students will be required to wear masks for those classes.

SPECIFIC TO STAFF

- **We serve young students, some with disabilities. With us being in the same classroom all day (even aftercare,) are masks required?**

Staff will be expected to wear a mask when closer than six feet to a student.

- **Will teachers be required to wear a mask during instruction?**

If the teacher can socially distance themselves six feet away from students they do not need to wear a mask. We are encouraging teachers to use their face shields when possible.

- **We have an Instructional Assistant and another family who cannot hear and are deaf. Our Instructional Assistant communicates with children through lip reading. How will she do this with a mask?**

They will be asked to wear a face shield with the student when they are closer than six feet to each other.

PLAYGROUND, SPECIALS, LUNCHES

- **What will playground rules look like?**

A grade level will be allowed to play together for less than 15 minutes. Teachers will be creative on spacing students (e.g. playing kickball).

- **How will specials (art, music, PE) be handled?**

Specials will be handled at the building level; it will depend if there is time to sanitize each specials' room in between each class, so in some cases the specials teacher will come to the student's classroom. We will make sure students don't share supplies and will follow the Hancock County Health Department's recommendations.

- **Are lunches being served in the cafeteria or in the classroom, and will we be providing hot lunches?**

We will be providing hot lunches. We will continue to plan for social distancing when eating and have a touchless purchase. Students may be eating in many locations throughout their school including the cafeteria.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

- **Do you anticipate less students to ride the bus?**

Yes, we have over 200 fewer students riding the bus this year compared to last year. We are creating additional routes as well.

DROP-OFF & PICK-UP

- **What will drop off and pick up look like for all schools?**

We are looking at new methods and systems to be the most efficient while maintaining social distancing. Students/staff will wear their mask if they are not social distancing. Waiting for pick-up will look different as students will have assigned seats in the hallway for the purposes of contact tracing. We will start pick up a little earlier because we can't have groups at the door.

VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION VS. IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION

VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION

- **My kids struggled with the eLearning structure; will the structure this year be better?**
This semester, virtual instruction will be different. There will be more rigorous content for all five days to all students. Teachers will have built virtual introductory content for nine weeks ahead of time and will be teaching from the same page for more student support.
- **Will they be assigned to a regular classroom, or assigned to a virtual classroom?**
Each student will be assigned a teacher and schedule. Most classrooms/sections will have students who are virtual rostered with in-person students. Some schools are able to increase efficiency due to the numbers of students electing virtual learning in a grade level/course. Regardless, each student will be assigned a teacher for each class/course.
- **Will virtual students be using an outside teaching source or will it be an Mt. Vernon teacher?**
It will be MV teachers teaching MV curriculum to MV students.
- **Will virtual students be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities?**
Yes, the IHSAA released new guidance that allows virtual students to participate in extracurricular activities.
- **We have a child with an IEP who is medically fragile, will she receive the support she needs (because virtual was challenging for her)?**
Yes, plans are being made to accommodate all students with special needs. Individual needs will be taken into account and support will be provided as needed. Many adjustments in a child's IEP will be made during a case conference meeting.
- **How will virtual students contact teachers?**
Virtual will be expected to complete assignments on the same day assigned unless they reach out to their teacher for extra support. That will be communicated by the teacher.

ALL CURRICULUM/TEACHING

- **Will there be more computer time this year for students?**
There will be more introductory/work time, and teachers will be providing more flipped classroom and engaging blended instruction with personal attention.
- **What do you think the main differences will be between virtual and in-person instruction?**
The Introductory materials will not look different, however the follow-up will. Teachers are able to record quick instructional videos for virtual students.

- **Will standardized testing happen this year?**

If we are required to have standardized testing by the Indiana Department of Education, we will meet those requirements. NWEA testing (this is local testing) is a helpful tool for teachers to assess students; that or other local testing may occur.

SWITCHING BETWEEN IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION & VIRTUAL

- **Can I switch my child from in-person to virtual or virtual to in-person mid-semester?**

A parent can change what they submitted by contacting the school directly by the end of the day on Monday, August 3. We know sometimes in-school students may be sent home for a period of time (e.g. due to contact tracing, COVID-19 case in their classroom, exhibiting symptoms, etc.). In attendance, these students will be marked as “TV” for “temporarily virtual.” However, it will be very difficult for a virtual student to switch to learning in-person due to planning for social distancing in the classroom space. These requests for switching will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis but will be much more challenging to approve.

- **If the parent’s work requires them to go into the office and no longer work from home can they start their child virtual and switch to in-person?**

We want parents to stay in one lane (virtual/in-person) for at least the semester; however, a family event such as this would be taken into consideration for a change from virtual to in-person.

VISITORS, VOLUNTEERS & EVENTS

- **Can our school’s PTO still volunteer in the school and are you allowing other volunteers?**

We would likely be able to allow that, however, there will be procedures like self-screening and those people would need to be principal-approved. We recognize that a handful of parent volunteers help to keep the school machine working.

- **Are you allowing other schools, clubs, organizations or sports groups to rent our facilities?**

We have closed all facility rental through at least the first semester.

- **Are book fairs, grandparents day, etc, happening first semester?**

No, we will not be having group events.

- **What will you do for visitors in regards to prevention?**

We have generously received many medical, disposable masks from Healthy 365 (Hancock Health), and we also have 500 cloth masks donated from Sew to Serve. We will use these donated masks for any substitute teachers, visitors, students that forget their mask at home, etc. and for others approved to be inside the building. We are very grateful for their support!

- **Will we still have substitute teachers?**

Yes, Kelly Services, our substitute service, is ramping up their numbers of available substitutes. All substitutes will undergo self-screening and procedures will be in place to make sure they are abiding by our same social distancing/mask guidelines.

SANITIZING/DISINFECTING SCHOOLS

- **I am concerned about the chemicals being used to clean/fog; what are the chemicals being used?**
 - The Covalent Clean Hand Sanitizer is a medical-grade. This product is 70% ethyl alcohol (antiseptic) and CDC recommends at least 60% ethyl alcohol. Ingredients: ethyl alcohol, water, glycerin, hydrogen peroxide, copolymer thickener.
 - The Ecosafe disinfectant & sanitizer is an organic, environmentally friendly, nontoxic, nonflammable, and completely biodegradable solution that is non-corrosive for all equipment and can be applied by wiping, spray or fogging.
 - It is used in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, dental offices, and other medical facilities.
 - Ecosafe disinfectant has a 2-year shelf life and kills bacteria, fungi, mold, and viruses. The ingredients are: water (99.77%), Hypochlorous Acid (.046%), hypochlorite ion (.00418%), ozone & ClO & chlorous acid (<.0003%) , and salt (.2%)
 - It is EPA registered
 - FDA approved
 - Certified organic by OMR
- **Will hallways/classrooms be cleaned in between transitions?**
All classrooms will have hand sanitizer and disinfectant for cleaning desk areas. Teachers/students will be trained to clean as well.
- **How are our air exchange rates for buildings?**
Our HVAC systems were identified last year as a need for improvement and we have been working on that. In our Stewardship Projects Plan we are spending \$16M on improving our HVAC & roofs, so HVAC should be improving as the year progresses.

ATTENDANCE, CONTACT TRACING & CLOSING CLASSROOMS/SCHOOLS

- **Will you be tracking cases by bus routes, extracurricular activities, car lines, classrooms?**
The Hancock County Health Department states when someone contracts COVID-19, contact investigation/tracing will be on a case-by-case basis. The Hancock County Health Department will guide the district with the contact tracing. We are working to ensure we can provide valid contact tracing when someone comes into contact with COVID-19. All areas will have assigned seating so MVCSC will have accurate exposure records with the Hancock County Health Department when someone contracts COVID-19. The assigned seats will help keep the fewest amount of students sent

home when someone contracts COVID-19. Maintaining smaller cohorts will also help mitigate contagion.

- **Has the state given guidance on when/if a district should close and is there a percentage concentration of cases that would trigger a closure?**

Yes, if we have 15% of our students absent due to illness, we will enact a hybrid model, only bringing about half of our in-person students to school up to two days per week. If we have 20% of our students ill, we will send all students home for a short time to participate in school virtually. Also, the Hancock County Health Department has shared that if five students or staff have COVID-19, that school will be shut down for a full deep clean. We will definitely need our parents to understand their child may be working from home at some points. We ask you to talk to your employers and have plans in place if your child needs to work from/be home.

- **If a student is identified from the Hancock County Health Department that they were exposed due to contact tracing, will they be asked to go home?**

Yes, they will be asked to work from home for a designated amount of days that the Hancock County Health Department dictates.

- **What are our attendance policies with this new situation?**

If a virtual student cannot do work and is sick, the parent needs to call the attendance office and alert the school they are sick. All students, both in-person and virtual, will have attendance recorded each day.

IMPACT TO SCHOOL FUNDING

- **Is there any impact to funding for schools for students who choose virtual and do those who choose virtual require a medical waiver?**

Virtual students have to attend virtually 51% or more of the school year to be legally a virtual student. Legislature just passed that allows schools to receive 100% of ADM funding for first semester virtual students. However we are asking legislators to fund 100% for virtual students for the entire year. This year, choosing virtual is a choice; no waiver is needed.

- **Does the school's ADM funding change for seniors who graduate early?**

Dr. Parker actively worked to change this legislative funding initiative through a bill introduced by Representative Cherry. The legislature passed through the House, however it failed in the Senate and did not move forward. So we currently do only receive 50% of the ADM for seniors who graduate mid-year, which is difficult because we will not only pay a teacher for only half the year and for many other operational reasons.