



**MCDONELL AREA
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

Est. 1882

Education for Life

Back to School: MACS ComeBack

Parent & Student Guide

MACS COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery 2021-22

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Guided by the Holy Spirit, MACS will continue to serve its students and mission throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery.

We promise to:

- (1) Communicate openly with our MACS Community, including maintaining our COVID-19 Resources webpage
- (2) Monitor school and local transmission of COVID-19 and variants in collaboration with Chippewa County Department of Public Health (CCDPH)
- (3) Most importantly: support the physical, mental, and spiritual health of our staff and students

Daily recourse to our Catholic Christian faith is the framework for hope and strength. “Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth” (Psalm 124:8). A growing body of research confirms that the very best atmosphere for our students is to be in the classroom. It is our core belief that our children need to be connected to teachers, support staff, coaches, and our MACS community. The below guidelines are subject to change depending on school and local conditions, with ongoing review by the MACS Pandemic Committee, which will continue to meet on a regular basis.

Primary prevention strategies: (1) Vaccine information; (2) Hand washing & respiratory etiquette; (3) Healthy spaces; (4) Staying home when sick

Secondary prevention strategies: (1) Class/cohort grouping (primarily in grades K-5); (2) Physical distancing (primarily in grades K-5); (3) Contact tracing (as required by public health); (4) masks optional (but recommended for unvaccinated individuals)

By relying on the Lord in prayer, listening to our community, and reflecting on lessons learned, our approach to the 2021-22 school year is to welcome students back to school in a normal learning environment, with continued vigilance.

	RECOVERY: THRIVING IN MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT
Back to School	<p>McDonell Area Catholic Schools will return to five(5)-day (full-time) in-person instruction during the 2021-2022 school year. The plan is to provide a quality Catholic Liberal Arts Education in the safest and most appropriate manner.</p> <p>Learning and Praying</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Direct face-to-face in classroom instruction is the primary learning modality for all students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As part of MACS standard practice, teachers will focus on building relationships and establishing routines. ○ Students will have opportunities for physical movement and outdoor learning. ● Students who are under a county-mandated quarantine will receive access to instructional video and/or other support materials, lesson materials, technology, and check-ins with the teacher for questions and/or feedback. ● Mass, prayer, youth lounge, and co-curricular youth/campus ministry activities will resume as normal.

	<p>Response to Student Learning Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use of spring assessments, teacher input, and fall pre-assessments to determine any below grade level gaps. ● Develop and implement instructional plans/strategies for whole class instruction as well as for students with individual success plans to help accelerate students for academic success.
<p>Community: Extracurricular Activities, Field Trips, and Facilities Use</p>	<p>Extracurriculars include MACS system-wide events including athletics, campus ministry, music and fine arts, student ambassadors, and fundraising events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extracurricular activities will return as normal with the option for individuals to wear masks. There will not be screening and physical distancing will not be required. (This is subject to change dependent on health department recommendations, WIAA/conference/league requirements, or venue rules.) ● Extracurricular activities are a privilege and students are required to attend in-person instruction in order to participate. Quarantines must be verified and documented by the local health department. ● The WIAA strongly encourages all eligible high school student-athletes to be vaccinated to avoid missing practice and competition due to illness or quarantine. This is a parental decision. ● At this time, MACS facilities and extracurricular activities will be open to visitors and spectators as normal at 100% capacity; however, please note that attendance is at your own risk and disease transmission is possible. ● Field trips will generally be permitted, but may be limited at the discretion of the principals, taking into account current public health recommendations. Rules and restrictions of field trip venues will be respected.
<p>Health Services: Mental, Social, and Emotional Health</p>	<p>MACS principals, counselors, and student support staff are active in processes that facilitate the identification of, and services related to, the mental health well-being of students, staff and families. Outside partnerships are utilized as necessary to enhance our programming. The pandemic health services committee meets regularly to evaluate processes and procedures related to mental health awareness and needs. Staff will continue training on mental health and social and emotional considerations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MACS has designated space for counseling services at all MACS facilities. ● MACS will address the social and emotional needs of students by utilizing evidence based resources. ● Any staff member can recommend services of a student to the principal, counselor or student support staff member. ● MACS partners with OakLeaf Clinics to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An Employee and Student Assistance Program (ESAP) for teachers, staff, and students. ○ Other services including group work and crisis support. ● Awareness of external community and on-line mental health resources for students, staff, and families. ● MACS utilizes Gaggle - a resource to manage student safety and well-being on school-provided technology.

PRIMARY PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Vaccine Information

- COVID-19 vaccination for eligible persons is considered the most critical strategy for schools to provide a safe learning environment - go to [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) for more information.
- Fully vaccinated people are at lower risk of serious infection and are less likely to transmit COVID-19 to others. Areas with higher vaccination rates have lower rates of positivity and hospitalization.
- At this time, vaccines are not available to students under age 12, which means layered prevention strategies of cohorting and physical distancing while indoors will continue at grades K-5.
- The [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has issued a statement](#) regarding ethical concerns.

Hand Washing & Respiratory Etiquette

- Model and practice these three simple steps: Wash your hands, cover your cough, and don't touch your face!
- Hand sanitizing stations will be located in every classroom, entrance, and commonly used area.
- Signage posted showing how to stop the spread of germs, including proper hand washing/sanitizing.
- Students and staff should wash or sanitize hands before and after meals and snacks (washing preferred).

Healthy Spaces: Cleaning and Disinfection

- Cleaning processes have been designed based on industry best practices and CDC guidance.
- Custodial staff will clean classrooms, desktops, bathrooms and common areas daily, including handrails, door knobs and other common touch points.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be available in classrooms and at building entrances.
- If a student or staff is diagnosed with a case of COVID and were in our buildings, the area will be isolated, deep cleaned, and disinfected.
- MACS-operated busses, shuttle vans, and shuttle bus will be cleaned and disinfected daily.

Healthy Students: Checking In and Staying Home When Sick

- Parents/guardians should continue to screen their children for symptoms of COVID-19 before school each day and keep them home when sick.
- Rather than a formal screening process at school, school staff will instead informally check in with each student as they arrive at school. Additional screening such as temping may be required if concerns are noted.
- For students who become ill during the school day, isolation areas will be available in each building and will be cleaned/disinfected between uses.

	SECONDARY PREVENTION STRATEGIES
Sticking Together: Class/Cohort Grouping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Class/cohort grouping helps to control exposures and keep them to a minimum. ● PreK - Grade 5: Students and staff will spend most of their time together as a homeroom class (cohort group) as they move through their normal school day. ● At the middle and high school, seating charts and assigned seats will be used whenever possible.
Personal Space: Physical Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keep unnecessary direct physical contact to a minimum. Normal social interaction is to be expected. ● Grades K-5: Indoor classrooms and common areas, including lunch and Mass, will be arranged to allow for physical distancing of at least three (3) feet between seats. ● Plexiglass barriers may be used strategically for additional protection within classrooms. ● For unvaccinated persons, CDC generally recommends a physical distance of three (3) feet while masked and six (6) feet while unmasked. This is recommended, but will not be required.
What If: Contact Tracing and Quarantine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the event of a positive COVID-19 case or close contact exposure (e.g., diagnosis of a student's family member) in one or more of our MACS schools, we will follow the guidelines of the CCDPH in effect at that time. We will keep families informed if quarantine rules are revised. CCDPH will be responsible to determine return date and vaccine status. ● We ask that our families and staff fully cooperate with the Chippewa County Public Health Department in the event of a diagnosed case, as we rely on their expertise to determine risk level and conduct contact tracing. ● If a student or employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, the county of residence will provide the school with a return date. We will provide continuity of learning to students who are in mandatory quarantine.
Face Covering/Masks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Face coverings/masks are optional. We encourage families to be aware of CDC and public health recommendations and plan accordingly. ● All students, staff, and visitors should have a clean mask readily available (e.g. in their locker, backpack, or desk) just in case it would be needed. For example, field trip venues or public school busses may require masks, or if a student becomes ill, they may be asked to wear a mask until they are picked up. ● Non-medical face masks are available to all MACS staff and students upon request. If personal masks are worn, designs should be in the spirit of the MACS dress code (e.g. no offensive/distracting wording or graphics). If used, face coverings/masks should be <u>properly used and cleaned</u>. ● Face masks should <u>never</u> be worn by individuals two (2) years of age or younger or by anyone who is having trouble breathing, is unconscious, or incapacitated.