

October 2020

Guidelines on what actions and precautions are being taken to make our school safe and minimize risk of disease transmission.

The new coronavirus which causes COVID-19 disease remains widespread in our community, and we must take appropriate precautions to keep our students and staff safe.

Expectations for Parents: While our school will have precautions in place to keep students safe when they are at school, the health of each student begins at home. Therefore, it will be expected that parents take the following actions to support a healthy school community:

- **Screen children for COVID-19 symptoms each morning.** Please see the CDC guidelines attached for screening students at home.
- **Keep children at home who have even mild symptoms consistent with COVID-19**
- **Keep children at home if they have had recent close contact (within the last 14 days) with a person with COVID-19 or have been notified by the health department to quarantine due to exposure to a person with COVID-19**
- **Have your children wash hands before leaving for school, and remind them to wash hands several times during the school day.** Frequently washing your hands for at least 20 seconds (roughly the time it takes to sing the happy birthday song twice) is one of the best known ways to prevent the spread of illness. Make sure your child is in the habit of frequent handwashing after using the restroom, before eating, and when their hands are otherwise soiled. If handwashing is not available, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol is a good alternative.
- **Give your student a mask to wear while at school.** When we breathe, talk, sing, or yell, our mouths and nose give off tiny droplets, which can spread illness. Masks help prevent the spread of these droplets, which can in turn keep others safe. Masks are required when students are within 6 feet of others for longer than 15 minutes or whenever asked to wear one by a teacher or adult supervisor. Masks should be washed daily and a backup provided in case their mask gets soiled.
- **Outside food for classroom wide distribution is prohibited.** If you would like your child to celebrate his/her birthday with the class we suggest ordering ice cream or cookies (both nut free) from the kitchen. The cost is \$20 per class. Please let Mrs. Beall know at least one day in advance. You could also come in and read to your child's class or give goodie bags for them to take home.

School Precautions: The following strategies will be in place to prevent person to person spread of illness at Holy Cross Academy. Since many people who have COVID-19 do not experience any symptoms, it is important that everyone at our school practice these precautions at all times:

- **Social distancing:** Maintaining 3- 6 feet of distance between yourself and others is one of the key strategies for reducing your risk for COVID-19. We understand this will be challenging for both students and teachers who may be used to a learning environment with things like group activities and high fives. We will do our best to support students through this transition, and have implemented CDC practices such as spacing desks and having all students face in the same direction. Our hope is that these environmental changes will help serve as a reminder that we need to keep physical distance from one another.
- **Symptom checks:** Faculty and staff will also be completing a self-check for symptoms every morning prior to entering the building.
- **Masks:** Wearing of masks is required for all staff and visitors to the school. Teachers are required to wear masks when they are within 6 feet of students.
- **Handwashing:** Frequent handwashing will be reinforced at school.
- **Cleaning:** We follow CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting the building and playground equipment.

Probable cases of COVID-19: COVID-19 continues to spread throughout our community. Because our school brings so many people together, we need to assume we will see cases of COVID-19 in our school community over the course of the academic year until a vaccine is available. While the practices above outline measures to prevent the spread of illness, the following protocols will be in place in the event an individual in our school develops symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day:

1. Teachers have received additional training to identify symptoms of COVID-19. If a student is identified as symptomatic, they will be escorted to a designated room in our school where they can be kept separate from others.
2. The student will be given a surgical mask to wear, and the school nurse will ask them about their symptoms. If the student is exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19, parents or guardians will be called to come pick the child up. **A parent or trusted adult identified on the student's contact information form is required to pick the student up within 1 hour of receiving a phone call.** Siblings and other household members will also be required to go home at this time, due to likely close contact.
3. Upon arrival to the school, the parent will call to notify the school that they are in the parking lot. The student and other household members will then be escorted to the car by a staff member.
4. The student must submit a Doctor's clearance before returning to school.

School and classroom-wide notifications: We understand our whole community may have a lot of questions if a case of COVID-19 is identified in the school. Given this, we have outlined the procedures we will follow in the event of a case:

- If a student or teacher has a confirmed positive case of COVID-19, all members of that classroom will be notified with a letter sent home with students. Students identified to have medium to high risk of exposure **will be required to quarantine at home beginning**

the following day after exposure. Parents will need to plan accordingly for childcare needs in the event your student needs to be home unexpectedly.










- The Rappahannock Area Health District will contact families by phone to provide instructions for quarantining. .
- The families of all students in the school will be notified that a confirmed case of COVID-19 has been identified in the school. Most likely a majority of students and staff school wide will be considered low risk due to the social distancing, use of masks and handwashing in the school. Some students who may be identified as a close contact by a health department investigation of the individual may be required to quarantine for 14 days. Families will be provided with information on how to monitor for symptoms and a reminder of the precautions to prevent the spread of disease.
- In certain circumstances, such as a large outbreak of cases, the school may have to return to an online learning environment for a period of time. Families should have contingency plans in place should the school need to close for several weeks.

Students and staff at risk for severe COVID-19 disease

Children and staff with underlying medical conditions are at higher risk for severe cases of COVID-19 disease. Underlying medical conditions include:

- Severe Asthma, including those on daily medication for asthma or who have had an ER visit in the last year for asthma
- Chronic kidney disease, including those being treated with dialysis, hypertension, kidney transplant and immune suppressant drugs, attacks on the kidney tissue by disease or the immune system (glomerulonephritis), the growth of cysts on the kidneys (polycystic kidney disease), damage due to backward flow of urine into the kidneys (reflux nephropathy),
- Chronic lung disease such as cystic fibrosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or pulmonary fibrosis
- Diabetes
- Hemoglobin Disorders: Hemoglobin disorders such as sickle cell disease (SCD) and thalassemia
- Immunocompromised including individuals undergoing cancer treatment, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, HIV with a low CD4 cell count or not on HIV treatment, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications.
- Liver disease such as liver cancer, chronic hepatitis or liver cirrhosis
- Autoimmune disease or cancer treatment
- Serious heart conditions including heart failure, coronary artery disease, congenital heart disease, cardiomyopathies, and pulmonary hypertension.
- Severe obesity: BMI of 40 or greater

As shown in this infographic, transmission risk is highest for individuals who are unmasked and in close proximity (less than 6 feet). Transmission risk decreases when individuals are masked or practicing social distancing. Individuals quarantined at home have virtually no risk of COVID-19 transmission to asymptomatic carriers, other than household members.

Chance of Transmission	Asymptomatic COVID-19 Carrier	Uninfected Person
67% Very high		
33% High		
17% Medium		
6% Low		
Very low		
Virtually none	