



Dear MCS' Staff & Community,

The character and progress that our school communities have exhibited during this first semester is very impressive, to say the least. Staff and students from the age of five continue to wear face coverings and roll up their sleeves to receive vaccines to help keep themselves and others from becoming seriously ill.

While the progress report for a healthy school system so far this year is **OUTSTANDING**, we must remain diligent to keep students in classrooms and receiving the consistent instruction and services they rely on each day for educational success.

The current COVID-19 guidelines, which include indoor masking and other mitigation efforts, have shown to keep the virus at bay and our students and staff out of mass quarantines. Cooperative efforts allow for the maximum number of students to stay in classrooms with minimal interruptions to their learning environments.

Since August, as we realized the success of our protocol, we began to incorporate the following into our schools: full-capacity audiences at sporting events, music concerts, and other school functions; select field trips; community outreach efforts.

We are continually integrating activities into school schedules with safety and health measures in place, and closely monitored.

To keep a healthy momentum, Monongalia County Schools' COVID-19 protocol will remain the same for the return to school in January. Face coverings will be required for all employees, students, visitors and vendors entering buildings until further notice.

As with the fall guidance, no face coverings will be required while outdoors. Athletes engaged in high intensity indoor sports will not be required to wear a face covering while actively participating. All unengaged athletes must wear face coverings while indoors and traveling on buses.

As I have stated since the pandemic began, we will lift face coverings and other requirements when it is deemed safe by state and local health officials. Please review the updated 2022 school guidance linked on our district and school websites for more details.

Monongalia County Schools continues to strongly recommend that all who are eligible, ages five years and older, receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Boosters are now available to those ages 16 and older. Participation is important in efforts to keep yourself and one another as safe as possible, and to help quell uncertainty about potential threats of virus variants.

I look forward to an exceptionally healthy 2022 as we continue to comply with protocols that benefit our personal health and safety, and that of the Monongalia County Schools' community.

Best wishes for happy holidays and a well-deserved break.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "E. Campbell, Jr.", is positioned above the typed name.

Eddie Campbell, Jr., Ed.D.  
Superintendent

## MCS 2021-2022 COVID-19 FAQs

### Where will face-coverings be required to be worn during the school day?

- Face-coverings will be required on all buses and inside all school buildings, including in locker rooms.

### What if my child tests positive for COVID-19?

- Student absences due to COVID-19 will be considered excused absences.
- MCS teachers will provide educational support to students quarantined due to school-based COVID-19 exposure.
- Quarantined students engaging with their teachers and completing assignments by due dates will be considered present.
- All schools will continue to limit visitors and/or volunteers and fieldtrips.

### What will social distancing look like at my child's school?

- MCS will make every effort to maintain 3-foot distancing to the extent possible.

### Will MCS report numbers for new positive COVID-19 cases and newly-quarantined persons?

- Yes: the previous week's numbers will be posted to the MCS website each Monday.

### What does it mean to be in "isolation" or "quarantined"?

- **Isolation:** Students and employees testing positive for COVID-19 are required to isolate for 10 days from date of COVID positive test.
- **Quarantine:** Students and employees identified through contact tracing as a close contact with someone testing positive for COVID-19 are required to quarantine for 14 days. If vaccinated and non-symptomatic, no quarantine is necessary. The CDC recommends wearing a mask for 14 days and testing for COVID between 4-5 days from date of last contact with the COVID positive person.

### When does Test to Stay (TTS) apply?

- Test to Stay (TTS) strategy, whereby unvaccinated students, teachers, and staff members with certain school-related COVID-19 exposures could remain in school and participate in school-related extracurricular activities.
- Eligibility to participate in TTS required the following conditions to be met: 1) the exposure occurred while both the person with COVID-19 and the close contact were masked; 2) the close contact remained asymptomatic, practiced consistent mask wearing, and maintained physical distancing; and 3) the close contact undergoes testing for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) on days 1, 3, 5, and 7 after exposure to the Positive COVID Person. 4) Testing cost would be the responsibility of the close contact.

### How is MCS enhancing ventilation mitigation in its schools and offices?

- Replacing buildings' ventilation system filters more frequently and increasing the flow of fresh, filtered air into its buildings helped MCS control widespread COVID outbreaks in its buildings last year. MCS will continue this stepped-up regimen throughout the 2021-2022 school year.

### What other mitigation strategies will MCS employ to minimize COVID's spread within the schools?

- District-wide cleaning and disinfecting protocol will continue.
- Hand hygiene and coughing/sneezing etiquette and protocols will be reinforced.

### What are MCS' current safety protocols for indoor and outdoor sports?

- Athletes engaged in vigorous, high-intensity activities will not be required to wear face-coverings.
- Athletes will be encouraged to social distance.

### What are the safety protocols for MCS bus transportation?

- All Monongalia County Transportation staff and students will be required to wear face-coverings on the bus.
- Disposable masks will be available at the bus entrance for students who have forgotten theirs.
- All buses will be stocked with hand sanitizer for anyone traveling on the bus.
- Each bus will be sanitized after both its A.M. and P.M. runs.

# Monongalia County Schools

## COVID-19 School Guidance

**August 18, 2021** *(UPDATED 12-21-2021)*

Monongalia County Schools has worked diligently to prepare protocols and provide supplies, both educational and safety-related to ensure our schools, students, and employees stay safe while still providing an optimal learning environment.

Throughout the 2021-2022 school year Monongalia County Schools will continue to provide this same support to ensure students are offered exemplary educational opportunities as we continue to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic.

School specific protocols are unique to each school and teacher. Communication with your child's teacher and school will alleviate most of the anxiety that you may encounter.

Thank you for your confidence, trust and support of our schools.

### STUDENT WELL-BEING

Before students can learn, student basic needs must first be addressed. Students come to school with varying life experiences and levels of needs. Monongalia County Schools implements a multi-tiered system of supports to ensure that all students receive the personalized supports that are most appropriate for their academic growth and emotional development.

All students have access to an array of student services personnel dedicated to their school buildings. These individuals include School Counselors, Nurses, School Psychologists, Outreach Facilitators, IEP specialists, and Attendance supports. All students receive a developmentally appropriate Learning curriculum that is evidence-based and addresses key areas such as personal management, goal setting, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Curriculums implemented in Monongalia County Schools include SecondStep and Teamology.

To help inform District, School, and individual student needs, Monongalia County utilizes Panorama education. Panorama runs student surveys periodically throughout the year on topics of supportive relationships, teacher-student relationships, emotion regulation, self-management, grit, and valuing of school. Schools will use the results of the surveys to address individual school needs and provide individual support for students who need additional support and interventions.

For students who might benefit from more specific assistance, school student services' teams collaborate with families to create personalized supports. These supports might include more frequent interaction with the School Counselor in individual or group settings, supports from the Outreach Facilitators who provide a link between schools and community, interventions from Attendance personnel to help students and families engage with school, and/or collaboration with community agencies that provide mental health services in the schools or community.

Monongalia County Schools is committed to a culture of student success that begins first with ensuring that all students are safe and supported.

## ATTENDANCE

- Any student who is ill with COVID-19 will be recorded as an excused absence.
- All students who are quarantined as a result of a school COVID-19 exposure will receive educational support that will be provided by MCS teachers through a distance platform.
- All students who are quarantined will be counted present if they contact and engage with their designated teachers and complete their assignments by the due date set by their teacher/school.

## VISITORS

- All schools will continue to limit visitors to ensure that all protocols are being observed and that we may ascertain the success of our mitigations.

## SCHOOL MEALS

- Hot Breakfast, Grab and Go Breakfast and Hot lunches that meet all USDA Meal pattern requirements will be offered to all students for FREE at all Monongalia County Schools. Scrumptious breakfasts will offer whole grain options such as sandwiches, egg burritos and popular cereals with a variety of fruit and milk. *Food options are subject to availability.*
- Our nutritious lunch options offer creative meals with whole grains and fresh fruit and vegetable cup choices in a food court setting in many of our schools. Favorites meals like Chicken and waffles, Taco salad, General Tso chicken and homemade pizza are offered on a daily basis.
- Milk will not be sold for cold lunches and extra milk purchases will not be offered at this time.
- Free snacks are provided every day at our afterschool programs.
- Special dietary needs will be accommodated when a doctor's note is provided.
- Any questions may be directed to the office of Child Nutrition at 304-291-9210 x 1521.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Protocols for MCS bus transportation:

- All Monongalia County Transportation staff and students will be required to wear a mask/double layered face-covering while on the school bus.
- If someone does not have a face-covering, disposable masks are available at the entrance of all school buses.
- All school buses will have hand sanitizer for use by anyone on the school bus.
- Each bus will be sanitized after the A.M. runs and again after the P.M runs.
- Pre-K and Head Start students will be seated at the front of the school bus.

## SPORTS

### Winter & Spring Sports: Basketball, Wrestling, Swimming, Cheerleading, Softball, Track, Lacrosse, Baseball

- Winter and spring sports will continue as scheduled with no face covering mandates for outdoor events.
- Indoor winter sports' venues will require all spectators to wear masks/double layered face coverings.
- Non-engaged athletes are required to wear masks/double layered face coverings. Athletes who are engaged in high intensity, vigorous activity will not be required to wear a face covering.
- Athletes will be encouraged to wash their hands on a regular basis and use their own water bottles.
- Athletes will be encouraged to social distance when possible.
- Face coverings are required when traveling on a bus and in all locker room areas and indoor facilities.
- Face coverings will be encouraged for anyone who chooses to wear one at any time during sport activities.

## TECHNOLOGY

Monongalia County students and staff are 1:1 while utilizing a Chromebook device. Use of this device allows students to work online, both inside and outside of the classroom. Chromebook devices also allow students to work 'offline' – meaning students download assignments and can work on them without Internet service. When devices eventually connect to WIFI, all assignments will sync.

If students don't have access to internet at home, there are additional ways available to for them to connect. The most accessible internet services are located in the following places:

- just outside of their school via **KidsConnect** or the School WIFI
- strategically parked school buses equipped with WIFI
- public libraries and community partners.

Having access to both the Chromebook device and an Internet connection will allow students to make virtual connections with their teachers. Elementary schools utilize **Google Classroom** and **Google Meet** to reach out and engage students. Middle and high schools use **Schoology** as their learning platform and **Google Meet** or **Microsoft TEAMS** to connect and engage with their students. **GoGuardian** is another tool that all grades have access to that allows teachers 'see' what students are doing on their Chromebook screens, as well as, engage with them. **Pear Deck** is an interactive presentation tool used to actively engage students in individual and group learning inside or outside of the classroom. Teachers create presentations using **Google Slides**. Students can log into the presentation with unique access codes and interact with questions while teachers monitor student and whole-class progress.

Each school is assigned an edtech leader who supports students and staff. Each edtech leader is responsible to: ensure that all students and staff have working devices, help co-teach with classroom teachers, plan with the teachers, and address technology issues/needs. The edtech leader can provide basic troubleshooting tips for when things aren't working. They can also issue a technology workorder to be addressed and resolved by county-level technicians. School edtech leaders and county-level technicians are a team with the shared goal of supporting all staff and students.

## **HEATING, VENTILATION & AIR CONDITIONING**

**We were successful last year at controlling any widespread outbreaks within our system by applying increased due diligence and following the basic rules. This will again be our mission for this fall.**

Let's start with filters. All filters used for HVAC fit into a chart which has a MERV rating. The scale for this chart runs from 1 to 20 with 20 being the most efficient filter capable of removing the smallest fibers / particles. Most of the filters that are found in our schools have a rating around a MERV 8. These filters are capable of trapping particle sizes from 3.0 - 10.0 and an arrestance of Particulates that this filter routinely captures include textile fibers, sanding dust, spray paint dust, pollen, and mold spores. We will continue the increased frequency of filter changes this year as we closely monitor the equipment performance. This protocol was initiated last year to ensure that all HVAC filters function effectively.

The MERV rating for a filter capable of removing a sneeze particle is a MERV 13. These filters are better but, to use them you would need a superior HVAC system capable of moving a high velocity and volume of air. Our equipment cannot handle this type of a filter. HEPA filters require an even more specialized system.

Regarding HVAC equipment, each room in the building is heated and cooled by a zoned system. This system may be a heat pump, forced air unit, or a rooftop unit. Some facilities have a combination of these types. The zones are local to a room or rooms or some other defined area. It is very uncommon to have a system serve several rooms or more than a single zone. This design feature helps to limit the same air from being spread throughout a facility. Where heat pumps exist, the air in a classroom is not circulated to and from other classrooms in the building it is generally re-circulated within the same space with additional equipment providing regular air exchanges into these re-circulated areas. Rooftop forced air systems work in a similar way within their zones except that these units also bring in fresh air.

We will continue to incorporate as many air exchanges as possible this year. Increased air exchanges will create some inconsistency in air temperature and humidity. Many of you have asked questions regarding the opening of windows to provide fresh air. Please remember that anytime warm / moist air is introduced into a cooled environment, mold can form in a very short period of time. We monitor the rooms closely to prevent this from happening. Open windows can lead to coughing and sneezing with children that have an allergy or an Asthma when unfiltered air enters the room.

There are NO miracle solutions/ answers. We have considered the issues and we will be taking whatever actions we can to make everyone as comfortable as possible while we stay as healthy as possible.

We were confident with our strategies last year and are secure with them as we open our 2021-22 school year.

## KEY MITIGATIONS

Mitigation strategies effectively implemented are shown to decrease incidents of virus spread. Monongalia County Schools is following the mitigation strategies below relevant to the latest Governor's Executive Orders, CDC guidance, and county board of education requirements.

### Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Monongalia County Schools is using COVID-19 killing materials and supply chains for cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, and preventing spread of disease.
- Monongalia County Schools' officials have developed a COVID-19 protocol to ensure cleaning and disinfecting consistency. The protocol also ensures proper cleansing and disinfection of high-touch surfaces on a regular basis.
- COVID-19 cleaning teams have been developed, with enhanced training to cleanse areas where positive COVID-19 persons have been at school and disinfection is needed.
- Monongalia County Schools provides adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors (e.g., paper towels, tissues, soap, and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol) for safe use by staff and older children.
- Monongalia County Schools purchased individual necessary objects for each student, when feasible, which normally would have been shared. Protocols are established for disinfecting these items.
- Monongalia County Schools ensures safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfecting products.

### Hand Hygiene and Coughing/Sneezing Etiquette

- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
  - Before
    - Eating or preparing food
    - Touching your face
  - After
    - Using the restroom
    - Coughing, sneezing, or blowing nose
    - Changing a diaper
    - Caring for someone sick
    - Touching animals
- Encourage staff and students to cough and sneeze into their elbows, or to cover with a tissue.
- Ensure that used tissues are thrown in the trash and hands are washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or cleaned with hand sanitizer.

## **Large Gatherings Outside of Classrooms/Core Groups**

- Monongalia County Schools collaborates with and takes direction from state and local officials including WVDE and Monongalia County Health Department regarding large gatherings outside of the classrooms. Examples: graduation and sporting events.

## **Face Coverings**

- Monongalia County Schools are requiring all students and employees to wear a face covering (mask/gaiter. Note that face shields may not be worn in place of a mask or gaiter) while inside Monongalia County School buildings and school buses.
- Students who are unable to wear a face covering due to a medical or mental health reason need to provide a physician's note to support not wearing a mask to your School Nurse or supervisor.
- Mask breaks provide students with a short period of time without a mask. Mask breaks are recommended multiple times throughout the day. Mask breaks will be unique to each location. Please consider the age and developmental level of the students as well as the location conditions when providing a mask break. While on a mask break social distancing is required as with all recommended COVID protocols. Mask breaks may be for an individual, small group or entire class. All mask break requests should be honored.

## **Social Distancing**

- Monongalia County Schools will maintain a social distancing to the extent possible.
- Monongalia County Schools will evaluate for social distancing based on current CDC and state and local health official recommendations on a continual basis.

## **Daily COVID-19 Screening**

- Monongalia County Schools' parents and employees are being asked to monitor their children and themselves for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to coming to school/work each day.
- Parents, students and staff are responsible for monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms.
- The signs and symptoms to monitor for include:
  - Fever >100.4 or chills
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Fatigue (along with 1 additional symptom)
  - Muscle or body aches (along with 1 additional symptom)
  - Headache (along with 1 additional symptom)
  - Sore throat (along with 1 additional symptom)

- Nausea or vomiting (along with 1 additional symptom)
- Diarrhea (along with 1 additional symptom)

**If these symptoms occur, DO NOT come to school/work. Call your PHYSICIAN and then your school nurse and they will direct you on next steps.**

- Parents and students are being asked to report any COVID-19 Positive testing to their School Nurse.
- MCS employees are being asked to report any COVID-19 Positive testing to Susan Haslebacher, RN Supervisor of School Health at [shasleba@k12.wv.us](mailto:shasleba@k12.wv.us)

## **A Positive COVID-19 Test**

### **Isolation**

- Students and employees who test positive for COVID-19 are required to Isolate for 10 days.
  - Day 1 of isolation is the day you tested positive for COVID (not the date you received your results). Employee/student may return to work/school on the 11<sup>th</sup> day.
- When employees or students are required to isolate, instructions will be given by the Monongalia County Health Department or the School Nurse on best practices for isolation that may include:
  - Going home and staying home for the duration of the isolation
  - Confining yourself to a room away from others and pets
  - Not sharing personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils
  - When possible, the isolated person should utilize a bathroom that only the isolated person uses. If this measure is not possible, disinfect the bathroom after each use of the isolated person
  - If you must be around others, maintain a 6-foot distance and wear a double layered mask

## **COVID-19 CONTACT TRACING**

### **QUARANTINE**

#### **Close Contact of a NOT masked person who has COVID-19**

- Monongalia County Schools will review seating charts and confirm with teachers and only quarantine students who were not masked and within three feet of a not masked COVID-19 positive person.
- Students who have completed the COVID-vaccination series and are 14 days post their last vaccine, will not be quarantined unless they are exhibiting or begin to exhibit signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

- The CDC recommends even if vaccinated for COVID-19, vaccinated people who have been exposed should wear a mask for 14 days and be tested for COVID-19 4-5 days after their exposure, even if they don't have symptoms.

## **Close Contact of a MASKED person who has COVID-19**

- Test to Stay (TTS) practices may be used.
  - Test to Stay (TTS) strategy, whereby unvaccinated students, teachers, and staff members with certain school-related COVID-19 exposures could remain in school and participate in school-related extracurricular activities.
  - **Eligibility to participate in TTS required the following conditions to be met:**
    - 1) the exposure occurred while both the person with COVID-19 and the close contact were masked;
    - 2) the close contact remained asymptomatic, practiced consistent mask wearing, and maintained physical distancing; and
    - 3) the close contact undergoes testing for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) on days 1, 3, 5, and 7 after exposure to the Positive COVID Person.
    - 4) Testing cost would be the responsibility of the close contact.
- When an employee or student needs to quarantine, the quarantine will be for 14 days from the last contact of the COVID-19 positive person.
  - Day 1 of the quarantine is the first day following the last exposure to the COVID-19 positive person and the employee/student may return to work/school on the 15<sup>th</sup> day.
- When employees or students are required to quarantine, instructions will be given by the Monongalia County Health Department or the School Nurse on best practices of quarantine that may include:
  - Going home and staying home for the duration of the quarantine.
  - Confining yourself to a room away from others when possible and when not possible maintaining a 6-foot distance from others in the household as well as pets and wearing a mask.
  - Don't share person household items, like cups, towels, and utensils.
  - When possible, utilizing a bathroom that only the quarantined person uses. If this cannot be done, then disinfect the bathroom after the quarantined person uses it.

- Continually monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and if present, contact your physician and your School Nurse or Supervisor.
- If you are quarantining and decide to test for COVID-19, it is advisable to wait 3-5 days after school exposure. IMPORTANT: Even if the test results are negative you will need to complete the 14-day quarantine.

## Monitoring and Handling of Presumptive, Suspected, and Confirmed Cases

### Monongalia County Schools is required to:

- Educate staff, students, and their families about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, when they should stay home, and when they can return to school.
- Establish a space for symptomatic individuals that will not be used for other purposes.
- Immediately isolate symptomatic individuals and send them home to isolate/quarantine.
- Ensure symptomatic students are isolated for a short period of time, in a non-threatening manner and under the visual supervision of a staff member who is socially distanced to the greatest extent possible while wearing appropriate PPE.

## Monongalia County Schools Reporting of Positive and Quarantined Students & Employees

Each Monday, Monongalia County Schools will post all new positive COVID-19 cases and new quarantined persons from the previous week.

- This data will be listed by individual schools and include employees and students as well as the district results.

## Monongalia County Schools Travel Policy During COVID

### Traveling Outside of the United States

- If you are unvaccinated, you will be required to quarantine for 14 days when you return to the US. Day 1 is the day after you return to the US and you may return to school/work on day 15.
- If you are fully vaccinated (2 vaccines), you are not required to quarantine but must provide a COVID test result that was collected 48 hours prior to returning to school/work.

## VACCINATION INFORMATION

Health officials are administering the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines in West Virginia to help protect against COVID-19.

Vaccines are important to:

- Protect the population against virus spread, especially the most vulnerable.
- Reduce deaths and hospitalizations; and
- Maintain critical services and acute care.

Designated as a high priority by Governor Jim Justice, school employees received the vaccine ahead of most of the general population to assist in the return of in-person instruction. Monongalia County Schools in conjunction with a local pharmacy vaccinated 1588 employees January 2021 through June 2021.

There are three vaccines authorized in the U.S. and administered in West Virginia: Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson. Both Moderna and Pfizer require two rounds of shots while the Johnson & Johnson is a single dose. Vaccine Booster doses are now available to all who are eligible for the additional doses.

It is not possible to contract COVID-19 from the vaccine because it does not contain a live virus. Instead, it causes the body to produce antibodies against the virus.

Upon receiving the second dose, immunity usually occurs after 10 to 14 days. It is possible for an individual to be infected until full immunity occurs.

For complete vaccine information provided by the DHHR, visit <https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx> or contact the COVID-19 Vaccine Info Line at 1-833-734-0965 with questions.