

INTRODUCTION

“Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.” – St. Teresa of Calcutta (2020 School theme)

This plan is created so that MTCES students, employees and families feel safe in our reopening. Safety and learning guided our decisions. We worked to mitigate risk in our policies and procedures. Thank you to the members of the committee: Mr. Timothy Driscoll (chair), Mrs. Kathy Gilkey (admin), Mrs. Aideen Briggs (principal), Mr. Matthew Bailey (technology teacher and coordinator), Mrs. Jennie Reed (nurse practitioner), and Mrs. Meredith Meyer (finance manager). We consulted with Butler County ESC, the Butler County Health Department, other schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, and documents provided by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and the Butler County Health Department. Please know that this document is subject to change as guidelines and information change. The school administration reserves the right to enforce and adjust these procedures.

We are fortunate that we have a large campus with basically three separate wings that enable us to examine our procedures by dividing our students/faculty into three groups: the kindergarten wing, the primary wing (1st through 4th grade), and the middle school/junior high wing (5th -8th grade). Keeping these three groups as separate from each other as possible reduces the risk to our students and faculty.

Our priorities are:

1. Safety: We will reduce the risk of COVID-19 in returning to school for in-person learning. Understanding that there is inherent risk in returning to school while in a pandemic, we also understand that there is risk for our children and families in not returning to school.
 - a. We will use a combination of physical distancing and cohorts to minimize the spread.
 - b. We will use the sinks in our classrooms for much more frequent hand washing, and increasing our cleaning practices during the day.
- c. Distance options:

(1) Medical exception: If a student or their family member is in a higher risk group, we will give them the option of continuing with remote learning similar to a student experiencing an extended absence due to sickness. It will **not** be a full remote option as our teachers cannot prepare for fully in-person learning and fully remote learning at the same time. This option will require a meeting with administration, the teacher team involved, and medical documentation.

(2) Full remote learning option: We are currently exploring a full remote learning platform as we have had several families indicate an interest recently. With this option, families would need to sign up for a certain period of time, most likely at least one trimester. We will share more information about this as soon as possible.

2. Presence: Our plan entails a regular school day five days a week. We do not want to burden parents with challenging schedules that require them to stay home and out of work. We want our students at school in their cohort for the full day.

3. Learning: Our students will continue their spiritual, academic and social progress at grade level.

This document will be updated as we continue to review our procedures to enhance safety while respecting the needs of learners.

Part I: GENERAL PROTOCOLS

MTCES has instituted several changes to improve safety for the 2020-2021 school year.

1. MTCES has hired a school nurse for the 2020-2021 school year.
2. We will begin a 1:1 chromebook program for grades 5-8. Students in 5 and 6 will be getting a new chromebook which will result in a \$100 technology fee per student with ownership of the device upon graduation. Students in grades 7/8 will

be assigned a used chromebook, and will not own the device upon graduation.

Students in grades 7/8 will have a \$25 technology fee. (A Frequently Asked Questions document is in a separate document).

3. No all-school gatherings will take place. Morning prayer and lunch will take place in individual classrooms.

4. Only a digital efolder will be sent out on Tuesdays.

5. Mask guidelines were sent out in a separate communication. Per Governor's DeWine's decree, all students K-8 will be required to wear masks. They will have mask breaks throughout the day. When they are having a mask break, they will practice physical distancing.

6. An additional cleaning will take place during the school day.

7. No field trips will take place through December, 2020.

8. Mass will increase to once a week this year so that more students can attend. One grade will be able to attend each week. Physical distancing of six feet between students will be followed. No visitors will be able to attend mass through December, 2020.

9. Teachers will travel rather than students when possible.

10. Recess times have been adjusted so that students are at recess only with students in their wing. At recess, they will be separated according to their class.
11. Students should bring water bottles as they will only be permitted to use the water bottle filler stations.
12. Each student will need to bring their own pair of (wired) headphones to be stored in their backpack in a plastic bag and labeled with their name on them.
13. Only grades 5-8 will wear gym uniforms. On gym days, they will come to school in their gym uniforms, and stay in them for the remainder of the day.
14. Please purchase shoes with Velcro for students who struggle with tying their shoes. This will help maintain physical distancing from faculty/staff.

Physical Distancing:

Physical distancing is an effective way to prevent potential infection. Employees and students should practice staying 6 feet from others and eliminating contact with others whenever possible. In our classrooms, physical distancing will depend on the size of the classroom, the number of students, and the size of the students. Enhanced physical distancing at MTCES means 2-3 feet of space between two individuals. Physical distancing of 6 feet will be adhered to when possible.

- Car riders/bus riders in grades K-4 will go directly to their classrooms in the morning and wash their hands in the classroom sink. Car riders/bus riders in 7-8 will go to the two classrooms with sinks to wash their hands.
- Car riders/bus riders in 5-6 will go directly to the bathroom nearest the front office to wash their hands upon arrival. There will be taped marking on the floor outside of the bathrooms to maintain physical distancing. There will only be as many students in the restroom at a time as there are sinks.
- Students in grades 5-8 are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer as their access to sinks is more limited.

Student Cohorts: Cohorting forms groups of students, and sometimes teachers or staff, that stay together throughout the school day to minimize exposure for students, teachers, and staff across the school environment.

Ideally, students and staff within a cohort would only have physical proximity with others in the same cohort. This practice may help prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, by limiting cross-over of students, teachers, and staff to the extent possible, thus:

- decreasing opportunities for exposure to or transmission of SARS-CoV-2,
- facilitating more efficient contact tracing in the event of a positive case, and
- allowing for targeted testing, quarantine, and isolation of a single cohort instead of school-wide measures in the event of a positive case or cluster of cases. (CDC)
 - Students will remain with their classmates at all times, including recess.

- All teachers and students are not to visit another classroom outside of their wing during the school day with the exception of specials/intervention as needed. Besides library and PE, all kindergarten specials will take place in the kindergarten classrooms.
- Students will use restrooms at designated times, and no more students will be admitted into a restroom at a time than there are sinks in the restrooms. Students will be restricted to the restrooms in their wings.

IN THE BUILDING

- Families will need to review the COVID-19 checklist each morning and take their child(ren)'s temperature. If a student has a temperature of 100°F or higher, they need to stay home from school.
- If a student is coughing, running a fever of 100°F or higher, or is feeling ill in any way, he/she **MUST** stay home. Students must be fever free and symptom free for 72 hours before returning to school. If a child comes to school sick, they will need to be picked up within an hour from the first initial phone call as this puts others in jeopardy of getting sick.
- Report all absences to the attendance line: **attendance@mtces.org**.

- Students will NOT be permitted in the building prior to 7:20 a.m. as bus riders and **7:30 as car riders**. Students must stay on the bus or in their cars until directed by the staff member/volunteer to enter the building.
 - Families will pull into the circle as usual, stop at the mailbox, and children will then walk to and enter the entrance assigned to them.
 - Kindergarten car riders will enter through the kindergarten entrance.
 - 1-4 car riders will enter through the gym (Student Center) entrance.
 - 5-8 car riders will enter through the main school entrance to the 5-8 wing.
 - Bus riders will use the regular bus entrance, but go directly to their classrooms to wash their hands (with the exception of 5-6 who will use the bathrooms in the front of the building to wash their hands.)
- Students must have masks on before entering the building.
- Homeroom teachers will conduct a check-in with each student upon arrival regarding their checklist and temperature check at home, and ensuring that they wash their hands properly.
- PE classes will be held outside, weather permitting, and students will not wear masks during PE class. Please provide a plastic bag labeled with the student's name to keep the mask when outside for PE.

- The number of students permitted to use the restrooms at a time is dependent on the number of sinks in the restroom.
- Students will wash their hands upon arrival, before snack, lunch, and after recess.
- When teachers are providing direct instruction on their “teacher stage,” and students are more than 6 feet away, they may take off their masks and wear face shields only. If they move closer than 6 feet, they need to put their masks back on.
- Class or school library books will be sprayed with disinfectant and set aside for at least 3 days before another student is permitted to check out the books.
- Arrival and dismissal will take longer this year. Please be patient with us as we work out the logistics of using multiple entrances/exits.
- We are fortunate to have the stereo system in our classes so that students can hear teachers no matter where they are in the classroom. More teachers might be using this microphone system in the classroom this year so that students can understand them even when they are wearing a mask.

Part II: PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

These practices and procedures supersede the Parent/Student Handbook during a pandemic.

TEACHING STUDENTS HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES: It will be important for PARENTS to talk to and work with their child(ren) prior to starting school on the following practices:

The health and safety guidelines issued by the CDC, ODH, ODE, and the Butler County Health Department for school reopening are prescribed to protect students. Successful implementation of new routine practices and safety measures will include teaching and reinforcing behavior both at school and at home through a partnership between parents and MTCES. The ODE recommends the instruction and ongoing reinforcement of:

- Handwashing for 20 seconds. Have your child sing the Hail Mary, Our Father, or the alphabet song while washing their hands.
- Physical distancing – show your child the length of 6 feet and practice with them on keeping this distance, especially during play time.
- Appropriate use of face masks – how to wear the face mask properly and practice wearing it for extended periods at home. Further information about this is farther down the document.
- Cough and sneeze etiquette
- Importance of staying home when sick or displaying symptoms

- Explanations and printed materials promoting safety measures will be displayed in the school and reinforced by teachers. Point out these signs to your child when you are in public places. Explain what these signs mean and why they are important to follow.
- Please click on this link for CDC Handwashing instructions:

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

LIMITING VISITORS: Visitors to MTCES will be limited to substitute teachers, outside teachers who provide student services, parents who are picking up students for early dismissal or due to illness. Parents will stay in the foyer area between the two front doors during this time. If you need to drop off something in the office, you need to come **after 7:50** so that all students are already in the building. Parents will not be allowed to accompany their child(ren) into the building. Visitors will be required to wear a mask. We are developing a core group of parent volunteers who are able to come on a regular basis of 3-5 times a week, particularly between 10:30 – 1:00 to help with lunch and recess. This volunteer cadre would have certain check in procedures and training, and would volunteer in the same wing each time they came to school. Please contact Michelle Hinton, the new assistant principal, at mhinton@mtces.org, if you are interested in being a part of this group. Mrs. Danielle Gingrich is kindly working with Mrs. Hinton to organize this group.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES TO STRENGTHEN HEALTH AND SAFETY

OUTCOMES

- All parents will conduct daily health checks of their child(ren) prior to going to school. This will include taking their child's temperature. See Appendix A.
- Students must stay home if they are sick. This includes if they are running a fever of 100°F or over the night before.

SYMPTOMS TO LOOK FOR: COVID-19 symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Some COVID-19 symptoms are:

Fever (100°F) or child	New loss of taste or smell	Fatigue	Muscle or body aches
Headache	Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	Sore throat	Congestion or runny nose
Nausea or vomiting	Diarrhea		

School Closure

- If MTCES has a positive case of COVID-19, the school will determine the need for class level, grade level, wing level, or school wide closure/quarantine and communication will be sent alerting the school parents using the Option C parent alerts.
- If the school must close because of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the school building, school may be closed for 2-14 days in consultation with the CDC and the Butler County Health Department.
- Remote learning will be conducted through Google Classroom/Zoom and Seesaw (kindergarten).
- The building will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected by guidelines from the CDC and the Butler County Health Department.
- School will resume by the recommendation of the CDC and the Butler County Health Department.

LIMIT SHARING:

- Students should bring their own school supplies/snacks and will not share those supplies/food with other students.
- Students should bring their own water bottles. The students will not be permitted to use the drinking fountains.

FACE MASKS POLICY: We recommend you purchase a break-away lanyard for easy mask maintenance. Each student will need a plastic bag with their name on it to hold their mask when they aren't wearing the mask.

We are requiring masks for students in grades K-8, per Governor DeWine's mandate. MTCES will provide one reusable mask per student. They are double-layered cotton, and as I have been using a sample for a couple weeks now, pretty comfortable compared to others I have used.

We are aware that students will not wear the masks perfectly, but understand that even 75% compliance is a significant reduction in risk. We also know that there will be some students who may not be able to wear masks due to sensory issues or other medical conditions.

Students may wear a mask of their own choosing as long as it properly covers their nose and mouth, and is school appropriate. As a convenience to our families, please click on this link to order additional MTCES masks (\$5.00 each) that will be charged to your account:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19MBLk93EGYkGW_TIKpQLoHwkoW7yPxJ_BwpL23cFCX8/viewform?ts=5f0cb6d8&edit_requested=true

Wear your Face Covering Correctly:

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering.
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face.
- Make sure you can breathe easily.

If your child is worried about wearing a mask, there are a few strategies you can use:

- Parents should wear masks too so children don't feel alone.
- While wearing masks, look in the mirror and talk about it.
- Put a mask on a favorite stuffed animal.
- Decorate a mask so it's more personalized and fun.
- Parents might ask students to wear masks now in order to have screen time, so that they become better adjusted to it.
- Parents can explain that germs are special to our own bodies and we need to make sure they stay within our own bodies. The face coverings help keep our own germs to ourselves. Some germs are good, some are bad, and we can't always tell which are good or bad, which is why we need to wear a mask.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE MONITORING: In accordance with the ODH guidelines, schools must monitor daily absences of students and staff for trends. If a student is absent because he/she is experiencing high risk symptoms for COVID-19, quarantine due to positive diagnosis, suspected diagnosis, or exposure to someone who has been diagnosed with or presumed to have COVID-19, the school **MUST BE NOTIFIED** and additional monitoring questions may be required per the Butler County Health Department and/or the ODH. If there is a positive COVID case reported in our school, we are required to contact ODH COVID hotline and/or the Butler County Health Department

for guidance and tracing. The need for closure will be evaluated in conjunction with these departments.

MEDICAL ADMINISTRATION: In some instances, students may need to take medication at school. Parents are asked to make every effort to identify ways that medications may be taken at home, instead of during school hours in order to reduce the chance of exposure to illness. There are sustained released (SR) medications that may be considered for use instead of fast-acting medication.

QUARANTINE FOR INDIVIDUALS DIAGNOSED OR EXPOSED TO

COVID-19: Parents/guardians must contact the school immediately to inform of illness or quarantine.

When students will be required to quarantine:

CDC Guidelines for Quarantine

- Students with symptoms of COVID-19, MIS-C, or temperature of 100 °F or over prior to school should not come to school. Health care provider should be contacted.
- Students with symptoms of COVID-19, MIS-C, or temperature of 100°F or over. If symptoms develop while at school, he/she will be picked up by a

parent/guardian as soon as possible, but within one hour. Health care provider should be contacted, and Butler County Health Department will be notified.

- Students with known exposure to someone with diagnosed or presumed COVID-19 must self-quarantine at home for 14 days.
- Follow ODH guidelines for getting testing for COVID-19: Contact your health care provider.
- Continue to self-check symptoms.
- If test is positive or if any symptoms develop, contact MTCES and your health care provider, and follow all directives of the public health department.
- If MTCES has a positive case of COVID-19, the school will determine the need for a class level, grade level, wing level, or school-wide closure/quarantine, and remote learning will be implemented in a timely manner.
- It is recommended that students who travel to a location out of state and with known community spread may choose to self-quarantine at home for 14 days.
- When traveling during the school year, ask that you consider the safety of our students and staff.

WHEN TO RETURN TO SCHOOL

Non-COVID-19 Diagnosed conditions: If a student or staff member is diagnosed by their health care provider with a non-COVID-19 condition, they may return to school after the first 24 hours of various antibiotic treatments (example: strep throat, pink eye, etc.) and **must provide a provider's return to school note** with or without restriction.

Exposure to someone with COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19:

- Students with known exposure to someone with diagnosed or presumed COVID-19 must self-quarantine at home for 14 days.
- If COVID-19 positive, he/she may return to school when cleared by health care provider, and public health department.

Confirmed or Presumed COVID-19: Students with confirmed or presumed COVID-19 MUST meet conditions prescribed by the Butler County Health Department prior to returning to school. Communication must be followed up with the school, and "Return to School" notes must be provided by the health care provider. Without the medical note from the health care provider, the students may NOT return to school. The following guidelines are currently in place as directed by CDC, ODH, and the Butler County Health Department.

Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to quarantine at home may return to school under the following conditions:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since *recovery* defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in symptoms; **and**
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Persons with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:

- At least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test. If they develop symptoms, then the symptom-based or test-based strategy should be used. Note: because symptoms cannot be used to gauge where these individuals are in the course of their illness, it is possible that the duration of viral shedding could be longer or shorter than 10 days after their first positive test.

Resources:

The Butler County Health Department.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/>

Ohio Department of Health. COVID-19 Health and Prevention Guidance Ohio K-12 Schools.

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/K-12-Schools-Guidance.pdf>

Reset and Restart Education. Ohio Department of Education. Planning Guide for Ohio Schools and Districts. <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Reset-and-Restart>