

HCS COVID-19 Mitigation Plan

Plan modified 3/15/2021

In our response to COVID-19 at Hampden Christian School, we seek to minimize the spread of the virus by implementing current recommendations and best practices in a way that is sustainable for our patrons, students, and staff. Some of our practices go above and beyond what is required by current state regulations. Our plan reflects many CDC recommendations as well as your input from the survey we had sent out earlier. We have also been in contact with the Baltimore Health Department as we developed this plan.

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Whole School Plan (Infant – 7th grade)

Daily Symptoms Check and Questions

At check-in, we will record temperatures for staff and students, and ask about COVID symptoms in the past 14 days or contact with someone with symptoms.

Our screening questions:

1. What is your child's temperature?
2. Has your child had symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., fever of 100.4 or higher, sore throat, nasal congestion, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, fatigue/malaise, headaches, body aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of taste or smell) since last visit to HCS*?
3. Has your child had close, prolonged contact with anyone known to have COVID-19 or who has symptoms of COVID-19 since last visit to HCS*?

*Or in past 14 days if new or returning from absence

If a person would have a fever, a combination of symptoms, or close contact with a person with symptoms, we will ask them to stay at home. If appropriate, we will contact the health department for their recommended course of action.

Face Masks

Parents and staff will continue to wear masks at check-in/checkout. Teachers and staff are wearing masks inside the building. They are also wearing them outside when social distancing is not possible.

In response to recent city and state orders, students 2 and up in both daycare and elementary will be wearing masks when "developmentally appropriate." It is unlikely that 2-year olds are developmentally ready for masks, so we don't expect that age group to be wearing them much. Students will be wearing them if it is working for them. Masks will not be worn while eating, napping, or playing outside. Other exceptions to mask wearing may be created as we learn how this works for our kids.

HVAC Systems/Air flow

More evidence is pointing to the coronavirus being an aerosol and traveling freely in the air, versus mainly being contained in respiratory droplets. Heating and air-conditioning systems become carriers of the virus if it is an aerosol.

We are fortunate at HCS to have 7 separate HVAC systems. These systems roughly correspond to the class groupings, so that most students will be in rooms that either have their own system or share a system with a class they are grouped with. We are using antiviral filters in our air systems. If you would like more details on how our systems are configured, feel free to ask.

We will be opening windows in classrooms throughout the day as possible to increase ventilation. On colder days, windows will be open while the children are outside.

Limited Building Visitors

We will continue to limit visitors to our building. We will continue to check in/check out all children at the door, and generally not permit parents to enter the building.

Our auditorium and upstairs classrooms are used by the Hampden Mennonite Church on Sundays. HMC or HCS may also use the auditorium for occasional evening events. During this time the lower section of the building is gated off, preventing access to the rear half of the main hallway and the four downstairs classrooms. The auditorium is on a separate HVAC system from the rest of the building. Surfaces, especially those in the common entry area, are sanitized after use.

Plan Changes

We expect to use the plan as we are presenting it, but we know that some changes and adjustments are inevitable. We plan to communicate changes to you on at least a monthly basis.

Reporting and Health Department Coordination

We will report any COVID cases to the Health Department and to our licensing agency. They will recommend a course of action, which will likely include a temporary closure. A closure would not likely be longer than 14 days. So far, we have not been aware of any COVID cases at HCS.

Social Distancing

When possible, we will maintain a greater than normal space between kids sitting at tables. When standing or walking in lines, we will attempt to maintain distance between kids using fun strategies like “airplane arms” and “elephant trunks.”

At the outside check-in/checkout area, we encourage parents to maintain at least six feet of separation between families.

Tuition Refunds

For closures 1-14 days long, we do not plan to issue refunds. For closures longer than 14 calendar days, we plan to refund 50% tuition for the period starting on day 15.

Travel

Our staff are encouraged to observe the following guidelines while travelling:

- a. Practice social distancing
- b. Wear mask when appropriate
- c. Limit contact with large groups
- d. Avoid contact with people with symptoms

Daycare-specific Items (Infant – 4's)

Consistent Classroom Groupings (Cohorts)

We plan to keep student interaction limited to the following groups, with no more than 12 students per group.

1. Infants and Toddlers (9 students)
2. 2's (12)
3. 3's (10)
4. 4's (10)

The infant and toddler classroom will be separate much of the day but may be together at beginning and end of day.

For the 2's, 3's, and 4's, some students are part-time, coming only 2 or 3 days per week. This increases the total number of students attending weekly, but only slightly. This year, most kids are full-time, so the total number attending per week is only 1-2 more per class than what is listed here.

When students come to school, they will go directly to their classroom, and will not intermingle in the art room as they had previously.

Consistent Teachers and 9 Hour Blocks

Currently, HCS is open 7:00 – 5:30, a 10.5 hour period. Our teacher shifts are 9 hours long, so each classroom requires a shift change near the end of each day.

Because we want to minimize the number of different people each class is exposed to, we want to do as much as possible to keep the same teachers with the same class all day long. In order to make this work, we need approximately half of our patrons to sign up for childcare from 7:00 – 4:00 (or possibly 7:30 – 4:30) and the other half to sign up for 8:30 – 5:30 (or possibly 8:00 – 5:00). This would allow us to keep our teacher-student ratio numbers correct at all times and minimize the need for staff to interact with more than one group of students.

Staggering 9-hour blocks in this way would also cut down on congestion during check-in and check-out, allowing more effective social distancing during that time.

When substitutes are needed, we will attempt to utilize substitutes that are designated for that classroom, in order to minimize the crossing of substitutes from one classroom to another.

Sanitation

We will continue to sanitize playground toys between uses. We will attempt to provide individual art supplies and individual trays/bins for sensory play. We will continue to regularly sanitize frequently touched surfaces inside the building.

Elementary-specific Items (Kindergarten – 7th)

We hope for a 5-day a week, full-time school year, keeping in mind the real possibility of temporary closures.

We are working to develop a remote learning plan that emphasizes the basics and has more teacher involvement than last spring.

Aftercare

The elementary school day begins at 8:45 and ends at 3:15. Students may arrive at 8:30. The elementary will not be mixed with the daycare classrooms in before/after care.

Attendance and Screening

Students are asked to stay home when sick or when having been in close prolonged contact with someone who is sick. This includes having a fever of 100.4 or higher or having a combination of symptoms. We will not be giving perfect attendance awards this year. Though we will keep track of absences due to sickness, we will not be counting them against students.

Students are to be screened each day before attending. Parents will check their temperature at home and record it virtually on the HCS recording form. They will also answer questions concerning symptoms or contact.

Parents are not allowed past the entrance except by appointment and while wearing a mask.

Hygiene/Spacing

Students and teachers will wash their hands frequently (i.e. upon arrival, before eating, after eating, after recesses, etc).

Students will be taught proper handwashing procedures and other sanitation measures (i.e. coughing into elbow, keep hands away from face, etc.) Reminders will be posted with information about spreading germs and handwashing. We will periodically make mention of good health practices in our bulletins, newsletters, and classrooms.

To avoid congestion in the hallways, students will not have personal lockers. Grades 3 - 4 will use the cubbies outside of the door. Grades K – 2 and 6 – 7 will keep their belongings in their classroom.

Teachers will attempt to distance students from each other in the classroom/hallway and other areas in the building. Examples could include:

- Have desks faced in one direction—or around the edge of the room.
- Space students as much as possible on the carpet—consider having some students remain in their seats during carpet time.
- Have a barrier between closely seated students.
- Space children in the hallway.

Students do not go to a cafeteria to eat their snacks/lunch; they eat in their respective classrooms.

If the elementary meets as a group, we will either meet outside or by social distancing by classrooms in the auditorium. Singing as a large group will be done outside as weather permits or with children spaced throughout the auditorium.

Recess

We will continue to use Roosevelt Park for two of our daily recesses. We will use the track and open fields. In the special event that we would use the public playground set, we will disinfect it prior to use. Students will also be able to use the field in the back of the school.

K – 2 and Grades 3 – 7 will have separate recesses. Restroom breaks and recess dismissals will be staggered to avoid congestion.

Update 3/15/2021: For our short morning elementary recess, we plan to combine our gr. k-2 cohort with our gr. 3-7 cohort. This will only be done when recess is outside and under 15 minutes long. For games involving tagging other students, pool noodles will be used to minimize contact.

Sanitation/Air flow

We will sanitize desks daily. We will clean/sanitize heavily-used surfaces daily or more often: restrooms, doorknobs, light switches, water fountain. Students will only use the water bottle filling option on the water fountain; we will teach students how to fill water bottles without spreading germs. We will have a supply of hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), cleaning supplies, disinfectant, touch-free trash cans, tissues, and thermometers readily available. As feasible, we will open windows and doors to promote better air flow.

Children will regularly use their own sets of crayons, markers, scissors, etc., instead of classroom sets. Dull pencils that are used by the group will be sanitized before being sharpened for the next day. We will discourage children from sharing personal items and supplies with each other.

Sickness

In the event of a child getting sick at school, we would place the child in the office and contact the parents for immediate pick-up. We would sanitize the child's desk/chair area and either remove or sanitize what the child has been using.