



# **WEST SIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL HEALTH & SAFETY PLAN**

**2021-2022**

# 2021-2022 HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN

This document shall serve as the health and safety guidance for West Side Christian School (WSCS) for the 2021-2022 school year. This guidance is based upon our belief that all students deserve equal access to in-person learning and is guided by our increased understanding of COVID-19, its limited spread in our mitigated school settings, current national and local data and research, and increased vaccination rates. Preschool and childcare programs that operate in our licensed facilities are required to adhere to LARA regulations. The guidance provided in this document may be updated at any time if revisions are made to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) guidance for schools.

To support school throughout the school year, WSCS will provide general parameters and guidance concerning quarantine and isolation activities for positive COVID-19 cases and close contacts, testing, and other health and safety-related issues. Our primary goal is to ensure a safe and responsible approach to full in-person learning while providing parents with the tools they need to navigate and appropriately prepare for the school year.

WSCS recognizes that COVID-19 is not fully behind us and that it will likely remain a reportable communicable disease throughout the coming school year. However, the landscape of the coming school year is a bit different than last year. Some emergency orders and mandates have been lifted and are replaced with recommendations. We also have a vaccine offering protection to those 12 years of age and older. Consequently, many of the protocols instituted last year remain essential to protect students and staff and to ensure that our school operates at full capacity and without outbreaks that could disrupt in-person education.





## **The current recommendations from various local, state, and federal health agencies are as follows:**

- ➡ The CDC has placed a strong emphasis on layered mitigation strategies.
- ➡ MDHHS has informed school administrators to consider multiple factors when making decisions about implementing layered strategies, including the level of community COVID-19 transmission and data on the percentage of COVID-19 vaccination within a specific region.
- ➡ Kent County has a higher vaccination rate than the state as a whole, which provides a base protection layer that reduces the spread of COVID in our community.
- ➡ The Kent County Health Department (KCHD) issued a Public Health Order with new masking requirements for schools, effective immediately.

## **Based on the most recent information we have obtained from the CDC, MDHHS, and KCHD, the mitigation strategies West Side Christian School will implement for the start of the 2021-2022 school year are found below.**

We will implement the following Health and Safety Protocols as outlined in this document. We will continue to be in close communication with KCHD about the metrics in our community, monitor all orders and guidance issued by MDHHS, and review CDC COVID-19 prevention strategies. Factors that will be regularly monitored include:

- ➡ Level of community transmission of COVID-19
- ➡ COVID-19 vaccination coverage in the community and among eligible students and staff
- ➡ COVID-19 outbreaks of increasing threats at school and the surrounding community.

**Note:** Preschool and Little Sprouts (before and aftercare) programs that operate in licensed facilities are required to adhere to LARA regulations. The strategies listed above may change if new guidance or public health orders are issued. We will communicate any updates to you as they become available over the next weeks and months.

# Hygiene

WSCS will continue teaching handwashing, respiratory etiquette, and good hygiene habits.

- ➔ Hand hygiene and disinfection are foundational public health tools that have historically prevented the spread of communicable diseases. WSCS will provide supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors.
- ➔ Faculty and staff will teach and reinforce proper handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Staff and students will be educated on how to cough and sneeze into their elbows or to cover with a tissue. Used tissues will be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately using proper hand hygiene techniques.

## Cleaning & Ventilation

- ➔ WSCS will clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces including student work tables and desks daily.
- ➔ Teachers and staff will open doors and windows, use child-safe fans in classrooms, and open or crack windows in buses to improve air circulation as long as doing so does not pose a safety risk.
- ➔ WSCS, through the help of RiteWay, has improved our whole ventilation system. This has been a two year process.



# Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



The CDC recommends that all vaccinated and non-vaccinated people wear masks to reduce exposure to COVID-19. The Administrative Health Officer of the Kent County Health Department (KCHD) issued a Public Health Order with new masking requirements for schools, effective immediately. All Educational Institutions (public, private, charter) and all Persons in Educational Settings must adhere to the following rules:

1. The Educational Institutions shall ensure that people in pre-kindergarten through grade six consistently and properly wear a facial covering while inside any enclosed building or structure of the institution.
2. The Educational Institutions shall ensure that all persons, regardless of vaccination status, providing service to any persons in pre-kindergarten through grade six properly and consistently wear a facial covering while inside any enclosed building or structure of the institution.

## **Exceptions to these orders include:**

- Persons in the act of eating or drinking. Water breaks, snacks and lunch are all a part of the daily routine at WSCS. Students will have frequent times to take a break at their desk.
- Persons under the age of four years; however, supervised masking is recommended for children who are at least two years of age. Our 3s preschool students are strongly encouraged to wear masks, but are not required to wear them. 4s and Nature-based preschool students must wear a mask when inside the building.
- Persons with developmental conditions of any age attending school for whom it has been demonstrated that the use of a face covering would inhibit the person's access to education. These are limited to persons with an Individualized Education Plan, Section 504 Plan, Individualized Healthcare Plan or equivalent. If your child has a diagnosed developmental condition, including an IEP for speech or other services, your child meets this exemption.
- Vaccinated teachers who are working with children who are hard of hearing or students with developmental conditions who benefit from facial cues. Several of our classes meet this exemption, and therefore our teachers will be able to be unmasked while teaching your students from a safe distance.

# Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



- Persons who have a medical reason confirmed in writing from a Medical Doctor (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) currently licensed to practice medicine in the State of Michigan. Here is the waiver you can have your MD or DO fill out for your child(ren)'s exemption.
- This order does not include our 7th and 8th grade students. At this time, we will strongly recommend that these students mask up but not require it. We will communicate any changes due to a mandate or if our school's numbers in these grade levels spike.

**The order will remain in effect until 60 days past the date:**

1. The COVID-19 vaccine is authorized or approved by the FDA and available to persons in pre-kindergarten through grade six, or
2. Community transmission for Kent County is categorized as "Low" by the CDC for at least seven consecutive days, or
3. Until further notice from the Administrative Health Officer.

## Vaccinations



- ➡ Vaccination against COVID-19 is not required, but West Side Christian School encourages vaccination for eligible students and staff.
- ➡ The expectations of length of quarantine differ for vaccinated vs. unvaccinated individuals. Therefore, an employee or student may be required to provide proof of their vaccination status to determine appropriate quarantine if they are in close contact with a positive case of COVID-19.
- ➡ According to the CDC, vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy in battling the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ➡ The CDC and MDHHS state that one way to protect the health of children is to ensure that all eligible populations in a household are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.



# Spacing, Movement & Access



The CDC recommends maintaining a range of 3–6 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms.

- ➡ As we did last year, WSCS is committed to maintaining at least 3 and up to 6 feet between students wherever possible.
- ➡ Teachers will maintain seating charts with assigned student seats as much as possible to assist with contact tracing when necessary.
- ➡ We will be limiting our visitors into our school building. A log of all visitors will be kept.
- ➡ We are committed to our outdoor education initiative. Students will have multiple opportunities to do learning outside.

## Gatherings & Extracurricular Activities



- ➡ Chapels will be held outdoors or in the gymnasium to provide appropriate spacing.
- ➡ Field trips may resume.



# Screening Students and Staff & Testing Protocols



- While the daily health screener is no longer required for students and staff, it is vitally important that parents/guardians monitor their children for symptoms of infectious illness every day through home-based symptom screening. This approach relies on students and their caregivers to identify when the student might have symptoms of infectious illness.
- Students who are sick or displaying symptoms of infectious illness should not attend school and seek medical care when necessary.
- Staff members should monitor their health for symptoms of infectious illness every day.
- Staff who are sick or displaying symptoms of infectious illness should remain home and seek medical care when necessary.

## Responding to Positive COVID-19 Cases & Close Contacts



- WSCS will continue to report positive cases to KCHD and collaborate with them to identify and trace close contacts to a COVID-19 positive individual.
- Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 regardless of vaccination status must quarantine.
- WSCS will communicate with families of the presence of any laboratory positive or clinically diagnosed cases of COVID-19 to encourage closer observation for any symptoms at home.



# Busing

- ➔ Per the order issued by the CDC on January 29, 2021, masks are required to be worn by all people while on public transportation, which includes school buses, both public and private. Therefore students will be required to wear masks when riding WSCS buses.
- ➔ There are no capacity restrictions for school transportation for the 2021-2022 school year.
- ➔ Bus personnel should continue to maintain seating charts with assigned student seats as much as possible to assist with case investigation and contact tracing when needed.
- ➔ Bus windows should be opened to improve ventilation when it does not create a safety hazard.

# Mental & Social-Emotional Health

- ➔ WSCS will foster an environment of Christian charity and respect for others' decisions regarding vaccination status and the use of masks.
- ➔ WSCS personnel will continue to monitor the mental, social, academic, emotional, and spiritual well-being of all students and staff, providing intervention, assistance, and support when needed.
- ➔ WSCS has invested in an additional day for our school counselor to be on our campus to serve and support our families and staff.

