



HPCS 2021-2022

COVID-19 FAQ

Our mission as a school is to partner with Christian parents in educating and discipling young people to be more like Jesus Christ. This means taking an interest in the head, heart, and hands of each student. We want to develop minds that seek and value truth, hearts of love for God and others, and hands of service—toward each other and our community.

We believe this mission is best accomplished in person, where godly relationships are cultivated between students and staff and among the students themselves. Child safety is therefore a high priority for us and vital to accomplishing our mission. Because of this, we are closely monitoring COVID cases among students and staff and continue to assess our plans and procedures accordingly. We continue to implement recommended sanitation procedures here on campus, we continue to leave masking and vaccinations up to individual families, and we continue to work hard to provide as normal a school experience as possible for our children here on campus.

For years our policy has been to keep sick children home. That is more important than ever right now. If your child has a fever, unusual cough, sudden loss of taste or smell, or is vomiting or showing other signs of contagious illness, as an act of love and service to other families, don't send them to school. If any of these symptoms occur, please notify the office right away so we can work with you on a plan for returning to school and keeping up with schoolwork. If someone in your household who isn't an HPCS student contracts COVID, again, please notify the office right away so we can work with you on a reasonable quarantine period for your student who's been exposed to COVID.

This FAQ is not exhaustive, as we recognize each situation comes with its own set of complexities. Please feel free to reach out to Andrea Cansler (COVID Coordinator),

Kevin Priest (School Administrator), or Patty Fitzgerald (Lower School Supervisor) with any specific questions.

Will you be providing in-person instruction this year? Yes! We're firmly committed to in-person instruction five days per week, with normal start and end times to the school day, from the published start date to the published end date of the school year. This is what our parents want, what our teachers want, and what numerous medical and educational professionals advocate.

What steps are you taking to keep children safe during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Instruction and increased opportunity and reminders for students in proper **handwashing** and **hygiene**.
- **Disinfection** of surfaces using hospital-grade products proven to kill coronavirus.
- Adjustments to the HVAC systems to increase fresh **air flow** and circulation and utilizing **outdoor spaces** as much as possible for instruction and activities.

What happens if a student shows symptoms of COVID-19? Parents are the first line of defense against an outbreak in our school. The best possible action parents can take to love and serve other parents and staff is to keep children home if they show symptoms of being sick. If your child has a fever, dry cough, lack of taste or smell, or other known COVID symptoms, you need to keep your child home until tested for the virus or symptom free for 72 hours. If a child shows symptoms at school, staff will take the child's temperature using a touchless thermometer, and if fever or other COVID symptoms are present, the child will be isolated with staff supervision and parents will be notified to pick up their child as quickly as possible.

What happens if a student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19? Will the school shut down? Will quarantine measures be taken? If someone on our campus is diagnosed with COVID-19, that student or staff member will be required to stay home until symptom free for 72 hours (or only 24 hours if negative from a COVID-19 test). Parents of the sick student's classmates will be notified (without divulging identity), but those students will not be quarantined from campus. In-person instruction will continue for all students. We will not close campus or switch to online instruction if we have a COVID diagnosis within the student body or staff. As we've always done with sick students, faculty will creatively help those students catch up with schoolwork when the students feel up to it.

What if a family member of a student is diagnosed with COVID-19? If the family member of a student is suspected to have contracted COVID-19, we're asking that student to remain home from school until a negative diagnosis is received or if positive, until the family member and student have been symptom free for 72 hours.

What if there is a COVID-19 outbreak on campus? We hope never to see an outbreak of COVID-19 on our campus, but if it happens, we will defer to DHEC guidelines until the outbreak is over. The best possible way to prevent an outbreak starts at home, with families taking precautions to keep sick children at home. In the past, we've taken "days of rest" (similar to snow days) when the number of cases of flu reached a certain percentage of the student body/staff, in order to allow them to recover and mitigate the spread. In an outbreak situation, we may take a short break from school in order for people to get well and stop the spread; in this situation, we would not plan to continue educating from a distance (if people are sick, they need to recover and not try to keep up with schoolwork anyway). Days of rest would be limited, and in-person instruction would resume right after.

Will my child be required to wear a mask on campus or get the vaccine? No, these decisions are up to parents. Some families will require their children to wear face coverings; some won't. Some will get vaccinated; some won't. These will be personal decisions on the part of each family, and we want all students to feel comfortable with the decision their family makes. Faculty are also allowed to choose whether or not to wear a mask or face shield during the school day and whether or not to get the vaccine.

Will student/staff temperatures be taken upon arrival to school each day? No, the effectiveness of taking temperatures upon arrival is questionable and requires manpower that is better utilized in other ways. Parents are the first line of defense when it comes to preventing COVID from coming to campus. Parents are strongly encouraged to check for temperatures and other COVID symptoms before bringing children to school. Children should never be medicated to mask fever or other symptoms in order to come to school. Please love and serve other families enough to take precautions at home.

Will drop-off and pick-up be any different? Will you still provide early stay and late stay? Drop off in the morning will remain the same, as will pick-up in the afternoon. Early stay will be provided. Late stay will also be provided, but parents are strongly encouraged not to utilize late stay unless work prevents them from arriving at normal pick-up.

Where and how will students eat lunch? Hot lunches will be provided for purchase by all students, or students are welcome to bring lunches from home. Kitchen staff will take appropriate food safety measures when preparing and serving hot lunches.

Can parents visit campus? Can parents eat lunch with their children? Parents are always welcome to drop by the office for assistance, but they won't be allowed to enter classroom areas for the time being. Parents can eat lunch with their own children at designated tables in the lunchroom.

What about events like Thanksgiving lunch and the Christmas programs? We are making plans for these events. More details will be provided as we get closer to each event.

What about field trips and athletic team travel on buses? We'll continue with field trips as able. Some annual field trips may not be able to occur this year depending on availability of sites. Athletic travel will continue to use school busing for away games but with more air circulation on buses.

What about water fountains on campus? We don't plan to disable campus water fountains, but parents are encouraged to send a water bottle to school with each child for hydration throughout the day if they so desire.

What are your sanitation and disinfection procedures? We'll continue to use the hospital-grade disinfectant we've been using (certified to kill coronavirus) to sanitize surfaces throughout campus on a regular basis.

What resources/research have you consulted to prepare for school? We regularly consult CDC guidelines and data as well as DHEC information on COVID in South Carolina and our local area. We also consult a myriad of other reputable sources for current research on the virus and recommendations for how to mitigate its spread in schools, including a number of local health professionals we have relationships with. We work hard not to be headline-driven or caught up in social media debate or politicization of the virus.