

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the main mitigation strategies that SACS has implemented to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19?

Partnership - Sharing responsibility for the health of our students and staff - agreeing to stay home when not feeling well or showing symptoms of illness

Space - Each student will have an individual workstation with 6 feet of space

Focus on Hygiene - Teaching students to wash hands, cover coughs, wear masks and be responsible for their health

Increased Cleaning - Scheduled cleaning and sanitizing on frequently touched surfaces throughout the school day

Small Exposure Circle - Keeping small groups of students together and not intermixing groups

What will a school day look like this fall?

Preschool

Our preschool team is focused on creating rich educational experiences for our students. Preschool parents will walk their child to the school door (instead of the classroom door) where the child will have his/her temperature taken. When the temperature is confirmed normal, the child will say good-bye to mom/dad and be walked to the classroom by a teacher or para-professional. The child will wash his/her hands, go through the arrival routine, and then choose an activity to play. The school day for preschool students will look much the same as it has in the past. Preschool students will be allowed to play with one another because play is considered their "learning work". Preschoolers will participate in gym, music and library. Preschoolers are not required to wear masks, but the teachers will wear either a mask or a face shield. Students will be encouraged to spread out in the classroom to allow more personal space. During carpet time or circle time, students will have spots that provide for additional personal space.

Elementary

Our elementary teachers are focused on educating the whole child. Teachers will respond to academic, social, emotional and spiritual needs. Students will come to school, have their temperature taken at the school entrance, and walk to their classroom. Teachers will greet students and help them prepare for the day. Each student will have their own workstation (desk and chair) spaced six feet away from others. Teachers will design lessons to engage students and find creative ways for students to collaborate. Students and staff will wear masks. Teachers will work patiently with students on mask etiquette and provide mask-wearing breaks. Students will have outside recess at least once per day. Students do not need to wear masks at recess. Teachers are encouraged to take students outside for lessons that are conducive to outdoor learning. Students will participate in gym, music, and library. Lunch choices will be: hot lunch of the day, pre-made salad bar order, or lunch from home. Students will rotate weekly between eating in their classroom and eating in the cafeteria. We will have less students at a time in the cafeteria in order to maintain 6 feet of

space. Students will still be able to eat and talk with friends. When weather permits, students may eat outside.

Middle School

Our middle school teachers are focused on providing excellent academic and spiritual growth opportunities while developing responsibility, independence, confidence and leadership. Students will come to school, have their temperature taken at the school entrance, and walk to their classroom. We have altered our middle school schedule to a Block Schedule, which means instead of 8 classes per day, students will have 4 classes per day for a longer period of time (80 minutes vs. 40 minutes). Additionally, instead of students moving between classrooms, teachers will move to their next class, greatly reducing the amount of possible exposure. SACS has considered switching to block scheduling in the past as researched benefits include; more time for teachers to guide individual practice and sustained time to delve deeper into curriculum materials (think more critically). This schedule will allow students to cover the same number of classes per year as our previous schedule - just in a new way. As in the past, teachers will greet students upon arrival and answer questions. Each student will have their own workstation (desk and chair) spaced six feet away from others. Teachers will design lessons to engage students and find creative ways for students to collaborate. Students and staff will wear masks. Teachers will work patiently with students on mask etiquette and provide mask-wearing breaks. Teachers are encouraged to take students outside for lessons that are conducive to outdoor learning. Students will participate in exploratory classes each week including; physical education, health, music, STEM, library, art, and more. Lunch choices will be: hot lunch of the day, pre-made salad bar order, or lunch from home. Students will rotate weekly between eating in their classroom and eating in the cafeteria. We will have less students at a time in the cafeteria in order to maintain 6 feet of space. Students will still be able to eat and talk with friends. If weather permits students may eat outside.

What happens when a student/staff member tests positive for COVID-19?

SACS has been working with School Nurse, Rose Link, District Lead Nurse, Peggy Nerdahl, and County Public Health Nurse, Candice Rotert to put a plan in place that follows the guidelines of the Minnesota Department of Health. At this time, I understand the process to be: when a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the school will be contacted and asked what other individuals were within six feet of the person who tested positive for 15 minutes or more. The school will provide the information and families who have students who were in close contact will be contacted individually and told to quarantine and watch for symptoms. Those who were not in close contact will not be contacted individually. SACS will send general notification (group email) to families whose children are in a class with a person who tests positive for COVID-19 so that the family can be vigilant in looking for signs and symptoms. These students who were in the same class, but not within six feet are not required to quarantine. We continue to work with our Nursing Consult Team to make sure we are following the correct protocols.

What will Distance Learning look like this year?

SACS is working diligently to provide an excellent distance learning option for our students. I believe this will be especially important as the year progresses. We want students to be able to move fluidly between at-school learning and distance learning throughout the year as needed. We have dedicated significant resources to ensure this can happen. There are many reasons why you may use distance learning at times throughout the year. Some reasons why your child may utilize distance learning:

- your child has a risk factor,
- a family member has a risk factor,
- your child is sick with something other than COVID, but not well enough to go to school,
- A sibling may have COVID-19.

If your child is at home for any of these or other reasons and feels healthy enough to participate in school, we want him/her to have a way to do so.

Even those students electing to begin the year with distance learning will be assigned a teacher, a class, and have a workstation with six feet of space reserved for him/her in the classroom. We want our distance learners to be connected to a teacher and classmates.

Both in-school learners and distance learners will get a weekly calendar (similar to last spring, but improved). The calendar will give an overview of the week ahead with lessons, assignments and links to tune-in to live lessons. The classroom teacher will turn on the Google meet link when teaching a direct lesson to the class so that students at home can tune in. In this manner students will be able to participate with the class, see the teacher, ask questions and be connected to his/her classmates during direct instruction each day. Our gifted and talented specialist, Nici Schwartz, will be acting as Distance Learning Coordinator this year. This means she will help teachers and be a point of contact for distance learners.