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RCLS



Rochester Central Lutheran School
PRESCHOOL-GRADE 8

COVID
*RISK-
MITIGATION
PLAN*



2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

August 2022

RCLS'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

March 2020: RCLS implemented a contingency plan that would a) minimize the risk of COVID-19 for students and staff and b) allow the continuation of the best possible education for our students. Per the governor's order, RCLS was closed and a remote learning plan was implemented. This was a challenging endeavor, but we are pleased to say that our teachers and students still met the year's learning standards. Not a single learning goal was missed.

September 2020: We returned to in-person learning in the classroom. Stringent cleaning, social distancing, and masking strategies were utilized to minimize risk. Gratefully, we were in school in-person for all but three weeks of the school year and, to our knowledge, we had NO transmission of the virus in school, in spite of a handful of positive COVID-19 cases in our school community.

May 2021: As we dismissed at the end of the school year, vaccinations were available to everyone 12 and older. We all enjoyed a return to near-normal pre-pandemic conditions as the risk of COVID-19 decreased early in the summer.

August 2021: The risk presented by COVID-19 increased in summer and fall 2021 with the widespread Delta variant. In response to the rising numbers of COVID-19 cases, to the apparent increased risk to children, and on the advice of state and local health officials, RCLS again adopted some risk mitigation strategies for the 21-22 school year.

March 2022: As public health guidelines changed and some level of immunity to COVID-19 became more widespread, RCLS adopted the CDC's Covid Community Level metric as a means for determining a masking requirement and our adherence to other established mitigation measures. We began to congregate more comfortably in large groups and, per Olmsted County's "low" and "medium" Covid Community Level for most of the spring, masks were optional but strongly recommended for much of March, April, and May.

August 2022: FDA approval of COVID-19 vaccinations for children 6 months and older means that all RCLS students are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. This, together with wider COVID-19 treatment options, has decreased the risk that COVID-19 presents to students, staff, and their families. Still informed by published guidelines but also with the guidance of members of a newly formed "Health & Hygiene Committee," RCLS continues to return to normal activities with some mitigation measures in place.

RCLS has had two priorities throughout this COVID-19 pandemic:

1. to encourage the health of our students and staff and
2. to keep students learning in person.

Now, as we begin the 22-23 school year, we maintain the same goals. As in past years, the present COVID-19 mitigation plan is informed by published public health guidelines, but it also reflects a de-escalation of previous practices as a greater percentage of our students are vaccinated and COVID-19 testing and therapeutics are more widely available.

The COVID-19 virus and pandemic still necessitates some amount of flexibility and "real-time" responses. To that end, a Health & Hygiene Committee serves an advisory role as school administration adapts and adopts practices that may impact our dual priorities of student and staff health and in-person learning. In other words, while this COVID-19 Contingency Plan forms the outline of RCLS's strategies to encourage health and in-person learning, practices may change as acute conditions necessitate those changes.

Regardless of public health conditions and related risk-mitigation strategies, we maintain our mission to provide Rochester's premier Christian education experience. Thank you for partnering with us to keep our staff and students healthy and, as much as possible, learning in the classroom.

For Grace, Faith, and Learning for Life,
Matt Meier, Principal

Health & Hygiene Committee

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*Questions about the 22-23 COVID-19 Risk-Mitigation Plan or COVID-19 or vaccines, generally?
Email appropriate members of the advisory committee directly.*

Covid Risk-Mitigation Plan At-a-Glance

▶ What?

RCLS will practice or provide:

- Optional but strongly recommended masking when the COVID-19 Community Level is published at "High"
- Handwashing & respiratory etiquette.
- Increased ventilation due to improvements in HVAC system.
- Attention to physical distancing to avoid crowding
- Daily cleaning

RCLS will encourage:

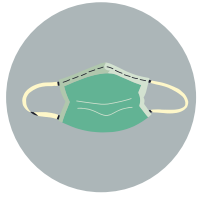
- COVID-19 vaccinations for all eligible students, staff, and parents.
- Health screenings for all students, staff, and visitors prior to campus visits.
- Students to stay home if symptoms of COVID-19 are present or if exposed to COVID-19. Current CDC/MDH guidelines will apply.

▶ Why?

- Decreased likelihood that students or staff will transmit what has been determined a highly contagious variant of COVID-19.
- Increased likelihood of in-person learning for more students.

RCLS risk-mitigation strategies are based on current recommendations by state and local health officials and will be modified as those recommendations change and as Health & Hygiene advisory members determine is appropriate.

School Risk-mitigation Strategies



Masking will be optional but strongly recommended when Olmsted County's Covid Community Level is rated as *High*, as the CDC calculates and reports that level.

We will, however, require masks for students and staff in the following cases:

- ...a student or staff member has been positive for COVID-19. Upon return to school after a 5-day isolation, student or staff member will be required to wear a mask at school (except for eating and outdoor recess) for 5 additional days.
- ...it is determined that there is an "outbreak" of COVID-19 in a particular classroom. An "outbreak" is when 2 or more individuals are positive in a homeroom classroom in a 5-day period and have been in the classroom during a potentially infectious period. In this case, staff and students in the classroom will be required to wear a mask at school for 5 days. All parents in the class will be notified by email.
- ...a student or staff member has a household member positive for COVID-19. Because of the high risk of this exposure, students/staff members are advised to test for COVID-19 5 days post-exposure and asked to wear a mask at school for at least that 5-day duration.

Students are asked to keep at least 5 masks, preferably disposable, at school.

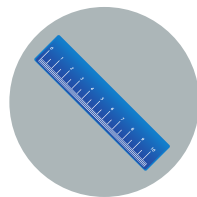


In September 2020, bi-polar ionization technology was integrated into RCLS's HVAC system. This technology improves **ventilation and air quality** by deactivating airborne mold, bacteria, allergens, and viruses and by mitigating the risk of aerosols and dust particles that transport virus. This is an active process that exchanges air in a space several times an hour, thereby improving air quality and mitigating risk throughout the school building. Air ventilation and good indoor air quality "reduce the risk of germs and contaminants spreading through the air" ([CDC, May 27, 2022](#)).



Handwashing and respiratory etiquette will be taught, encouraged, and reinforced throughout the day.

- Hand-sanitizing stations will be set up throughout the building.
- Covering coughs & sneezes will be taught and modeled.



RCLS will **minimize crowding** to the extent possible when Covid Community Level is High.

- This may mean different strategies in different contexts and will inform classroom and all-school gatherings as Covid Community Level and COVID-19 breakouts warrant.
- Students will eat in the lunchroom in grade-level groups. Seats will not be assigned to start the year, but this may be a mitigation strategy that is adopted in the case of an outbreak or increasing case counts of COVID-19.



The virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly spread by respiratory droplets, so current recommendations suggest that **daily cleaning** is enough to sufficiently remove potential virus that may be on surfaces. High-touch surfaces such as tables, desks, chairs, drinking fountains (used only to fill water bottles), sinks, and lockers and door handles will be cleaned each day.

Family/Student Strategies for Mitigating Risks of COVID-19



Get a COVID-19 vaccination

Vaccination for all eligible students and faculty, staff, and family/household members is the most essential strategy to help schools safely resume all normal procedures. Health officials recommend that all eligible persons receive a vaccine. Please talk with your medical provider, then visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find locations in the community to get the COVID vaccine. Questions about available vaccines? RCLS's Health & Hygiene medical members would love to answer them. Email them directly.



Perform health screening each day

All students and adults entering RCLS are asked to perform a complete health screening prior to each entry onto campus. A screening tool is attached to this document and posted on the [Covid Risk Mitigation page under Current Families at rcls.net](#).



Stay home if COVID symptoms are present

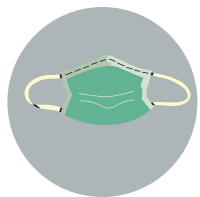
Students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness should stay home and seek counsel from their healthcare provider for testing and care, regardless of vaccination status. Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keeping COVID-19 infections out of schools.



Notify school office if positive for COVID-19

The school office is to be notified if a student or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19. Students and staff must follow CDC/MDH's current recommendations for isolating in each case.

- [Guidelines if positive for COVID-19](#)

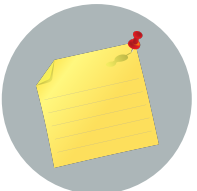


Wear a mask in particular high-risk situations...

1. ...for 5 days upon return to school after having COVID-19.
2. ...for 5 days during a classroom outbreak period (when 2+ members of homeroom class are positive for COVID-19 in 5-day period).
3. ...while living with a household member who has COVID-19 and for 5 days after final exposure to household member positive for COVID-19.

School Response to COVID-19 Cases & Additional Related School Protocols

School response if positive case in student or staff:


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1. RCLS will require isolation as those are outlined by the CDC and MDH.
 - Guidelines if positive for COVID-19 (CDC) or (MDH).

Students who are positive for COVID-19 may return to school after isolation period *and* after being fever-free for 24 hours.


**Note: As guidelines are updated, the CDC is often ahead of MDH in publishing those changes. CDC guidelines generally inform MDH's, so CDC's guidelines will be adopted in the case of temporary discrepancy.*

2. RCLS will maintain record of positive COVID-19 cases on an ongoing basis for the purpose of preventing and tracking a potential "outbreak" in the classroom.
 - a. All parents in a classroom with 2+ positive cases 5-day period will be notified.
 - b. Masks will be required in a homeroom classroom for 5 days when an outbreak is suspected (2+ cases in 5 days).
 - c. Testing is recommended for all exposed students and teachers on day 5 after exposure, so the school will recommend testing in this case.

Remote learning


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1. Remote learning *will not be* offered in grades PS-5 unless the entire school is required to temporarily move to this mode of learning. For individual students who must isolate or quarantine at home, teachers will post class work to Google classroom in grade levels that use it, send homework packets home, and/or extend deadlines for homework, just as they would do for any illness or planned absence.
 2. Remote learning *may be* offered in grades 6-8 as follows:
 - When 33% of a homeroom class--typically 6 students-- is positive for COVID-19 in a 5-day period, remote learning may be offered for up to 5 days for students positive for COVID-19 and for any student wishing to quarantine at home due to possible exposure in the classroom. This will be managed on an as-needed basis and, as remote learning has its own challenges, will hope to be avoided.
 - Otherwise, when individual students in grades 6-8 are isolating or quarantining at home, teachers will post class work to Google classroom or send homework packets home or extend deadlines, just as they would do for any illness or planned absence.

Drop-off and pick-up procedures minimize crowding in school hallways.



RCLS's car line and student drop-off/pick-up procedures encourage a smooth and timely start to students' day and also minimize crowding in school hallways. These procedures are posted under [Current Families>Calendars & Procedures at rcls.net](#).

After-school programming and special events will be offered.



After-school programs such as Athletics, Drama, Lego Club, and more will be offered as usual unless an outbreak prevents otherwise. Coaches, directors, and activity leaders will detail specific protocols as appropriate.



HOME-BASED COVID-19 SCREENING TOOL

A student, staff member, or potential school visitor experiencing any of the following symptoms should stay home from school and seek counsel from their healthcare provider for testing and care, regardless of vaccination status.

- ☐ Fever or chills
- ☐ Cough
- ☐ Fatigue or headache
- ☐ Loss of taste or smell
- ☐ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- ☐ Body aches
- ☐ Sore throat
- ☐ Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- ☐ Congestion or runny nose

Some of these symptoms may be considered less common or less severe than others and are also associated with diseases other than COVID-19. Others may warrant staying home from school, regardless of the presence of additional symptoms. In either case, the usual procedures for returning to school apply if additional symptoms do not develop and/or it has been determined the symptoms are not due to COVID-19. (e.g. A child with a fever must be free of fever for 24 hours before returning to school).