



Dear Monongalia County Schools' Community,

We look forward to greeting students on their first day back to school next Tuesday, August 24th. Administrators and staff are working diligently to ensure a safe and nurturing learning environment for all.

This year, Monongalia County Schools will offer in-person instruction, five days per week. The K-12 school day will return to pre-pandemic schedules, and all teachers will be in-person, in classrooms.

Earlier this month, the Monongalia County Board of Education announced that masks would be required indoors for all students and staff for the start of the 2021-2022 school year.

The mask requirement, developed in consultation with the Monongalia County Health Department, is a fluid protocol that will take into consideration emerging guidance and recommendations from state and local health officials.

To ensure the best protection from the COVID-19 variants, state and federal health agencies continue to encourage everyone ages 12 years and older to get vaccinated.

Monongalia County Schools will continue to hold in-school vaccination clinics for all eligible students who have not received the vaccine. Check your school's website for times and locations or contact your school nurse.

In addition, students and staff will continue to follow safety protocols and adhere to COVID-19 School Guidance which is subject to change based on emerging information.

We are grateful that over the past two academic years, students were kept safe by the adherence of administrators and staff to the safety protocols implemented throughout all schools, buses and facilities.

Despite the changes in our academic environments, I am happy to announce that Monongalia County Schools received the best summative scores in the state for the 2020-21 school year. Though there is much work to do, we now know that **our results speak volumes and together, we will continue to make progress while employing our safety measures.**

We are optimistic about the coming year and the many learning and socialization opportunities of in-person classes. Thank you for sharing your children with us.

Respectfully,

Eddie R. Campbell, Jr., Ed.D.

Superintendent, Monongalia County Schools



MCS 2021-2022 COVID-19 FAQs

Where will face-coverings be required to be worn during the school day?

- Face-coverings will be required on all buses and inside all school buildings, including in locker rooms.

What if my child tests positive for COVID-19?

- Student absences due to COVID-19 will be considered excused absences.
- MCS teachers will provide educational support to students quarantined due to school-based COVID-19 exposure.
- Quarantined students engaging with their teachers and completing assignments by due dates will be considered present.
- All schools will continue to limit visitors and/or volunteers and fieldtrips.

What will social distancing look like at my child's school?

- MCS will make every effort to maintain social distancing to the extent possible.

Will MCS report numbers for new positive COVID-19 cases and newly-quarantined persons?

- Yes: the previous week's numbers will be posted to the MCS website each Monday.

What does it mean to be in "isolation" or "quarantined"?

- **Isolation:** Students and employees testing positive for COVID-19 are required to isolate for 10 days from the date of the COVID positive test.
- **Quarantine:** Students and employees identified through contact tracing as a close contact with someone testing positive for COVID-19 are required to quarantine for 14 days. If vaccinated and non-symptomatic, no quarantine is necessary. ***CDC does recommend wearing a mask for 14 days and testing for COVID 4-5 days from date of last contact with the COVID positive person.***

When does Test to Stay (TTS) apply?

- Test to Stay (TTS) strategy, whereby unvaccinated students, teachers, and staff members with certain school-related COVID-19 exposures could remain in school and participate in school-related extracurricular activities.
- Eligibility to participate in TTS required the following conditions to be met: 1) the exposure occurred while both the person with COVID-19 and the close contact were masked; 2) the close contact remained asymptomatic, practiced consistent mask wearing, and maintained physical distancing; and 3) the close contact undergoes testing for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) on days 1, 3, 5, and 7 after exposure to the Positive COVID Person. 4) Testing cost would be the responsibility of the close contact.

How is MCS enhancing ventilation mitigation in its schools and offices?

- Replacing buildings' ventilation system filters more frequently and increasing the flow of fresh, filtered air into its buildings helped MCS control widespread COVID outbreaks in its buildings last year. MCS will continue this stepped-up regimen throughout the 2021-2022 school year.

What other mitigation strategies will MCS employ to minimize COVID's spread within the schools?

- District-wide cleaning and disinfecting protocol will continue.
- Hand hygiene and coughing/sneezing etiquette and protocols will be reinforced.

What are MCS' current safety protocols for indoor sports?

- Athletes engaged in vigorous, high-intensity activities will not be required to wear face-coverings.
- Athletes will be encouraged to social distance.

What are the safety protocols for MCS bus transportation?

- All Monongalia County Transportation staff and students will be required to wear face-coverings on the bus.
- Disposable masks will be available at the bus entrance for students who have forgotten theirs.
- All buses will be stocked with hand sanitizer for student/staff use.
- Each bus will be sanitized after both its A.M. and P.M. runs.

For in-depth answers to these and other MCS/COVID FAQs, please see the complete 2021-2022 MCS COVID School Guidance document.

Monongalia County Schools

COVID-19 School Guidance

August 18, 2021

Monongalia County Schools has worked diligently to prepare protocols and provide supplies, both educational and safety related to ensure our schools, students, and employees stay safe while still providing an optimal learning environment.

Throughout the 2021-2022 school year Monongalia County Schools will continue to provide this same support to ensure students are offered exemplary educational opportunities as we continue to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic.

School specific protocols are unique to each school and teacher. Communication with your child's teacher and school will alleviate most of the anxiety that you may encounter.

Thank you for your confidence, trust and support in our schools.

Student Well Being

Before students can learn, students' basic needs must first be addressed. Students come to school with varying life experiences and levels of needs. Monongalia County Schools implements a multi-tiered system of supports to ensure that all students receive the personalized supports that are most appropriate for their academic growth and emotional development.

All students have access to an array of student services personnel dedicated to their school buildings. These individuals include School Counselors, Nurses, School Psychologists, Outreach Facilitators, IEP specialists, and Attendance supports. All students receive a developmentally appropriate Learning curriculum that is evidence-based and addresses key areas such as personal management, goal setting, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Curriculums implemented in Monongalia County Schools include SecondStep and Teamology.

To help inform District, School, and individual student needs, Monongalia County utilizes Panorama education. Panorama runs student surveys periodically throughout the year on topics of supportive relationships, teacher-student relationships, emotion regulation, self-management, grit, and valuing of school. Schools will use the results of the surveys to address individual school needs and provide individual support for students who need additional support and interventions.

For students who might benefit from more specific assistance, school student services' teams collaborate with families to create personalized supports. These supports might include more frequent interaction with the School Counselor in individual or group settings, supports from the Outreach Facilitators who provide a link between schools and community, interventions from Attendance personnel to help students and families engage with school, and/or collaboration with community agencies that provide mental health services in the schools or community.

Monongalia County Schools is committed to a culture of student success that begins first with ensuring that all students are safe and supported.

Attendance

- Any student who is ill with COVID-19 will be recorded as an excused absence.
- All students who are quarantined as a result of a school COVID-19 exposure will receive educational support that will be provided by MCS teachers through a distance platform.
- All students who are quarantined will be counted present if they contact and engage with their designated teachers and complete their assignments by the due date set by their teacher/school.

Visitors

All schools will continue to limit visitors and/or volunteers to ensure that all protocols are being observed and that we may ascertain the success of our mitigations.

School Meals

- Hot Breakfast, Grab and Go Breakfast and Hot lunches that meet all USDA Meal pattern requirements will be offered to all students for FREE at all Monongalia County Schools. Scrumptious breakfasts will offer whole grain options such as sandwiches, egg burritos and popular cereals with a variety of fruit and milk.
- Our nutritious lunch options offer creative meals with whole grains and fresh fruit and vegetable cup choices in a food court setting in many of our schools. Favorites meals like Chicken and waffles, Taco salad, General Tso chicken and homemade pizza are offered daily.
- Milk will not be sold for cold lunches and extra milk purchases will not be offered at this time.
- Free snacks are provided every day at our afterschool programs.
- Special dietary needs will be accommodated when a doctor's note is provided.

- Any questions may be directed to the office of Child Nutrition at 304-291-9210 x 1521.

Transportation

Protocols for MCS bus transportation:

- All Monongalia County Transportation Staff and Students will be required to wear a face-covering while on the school bus.
- If someone forgets their face-covering, there will be a disposable mask available at the entrance of the school bus.
- School buses will have hand sanitizer on them for use by anyone on the school bus.
- Each bus will be sanitized after the A.M. runs and after the P.M runs.
- Pre-K and Head Start will be seated at the front of the school bus.

Winter and Spring Sports

Basketball

Wrestling

Swimming

Cheerleading

Softball

Track

Lacrosse

Baseball

Winter and Spring Sports will continue as scheduled with no face covering mandates for all outside events. Athletes that are engaged in high intensity vigorous activity will not be required to wear a face covering. Athletes will be encouraged to wash their hands on a regular basis and use their own water bottles. Athletes will be encouraged to social distance when possible. Face covering will be mandated when traveling on a bus and in the locker room areas. Face coverings will be encouraged for anyone who chooses to wear one.

Technology

Monongalia County students and staff are 1:1 with a Chromebook device. Having this device allows students to work online, both inside and outside of the school. Chromebooks also allow working 'offline' – meaning that they have to download assignments and can work on them without Internet. When they come back to WIFI all their assignments sync. But they have additional ways available to them to connect to the Internet (if they do not have it at home). They can connect to the Internet from outside of their school (via KidsConnect or the school WIFI), strategically parked school buses (with WIFI), public libraries, and community partners. Having both the device and Internet connection will allow students to make connections with their teachers virtually. Elementary schools utilize Google Classroom and Google Meet to reach out and engage students. Middle and high schools use Schoology as their learning platform and Google Meet or Microsoft TEAMS to connect and engage with their students. GoGuardian is another tool that all grades have access to, that will let teachers 'see' what students are doing on their Chromebook screen, as well as engage with them. Pear Deck is another tool that teachers have to interact with students both in the classroom and out. It is an interactive presentation tool used to actively engage students in individual and group learning. Teachers create presentations using Google Slides. Students log into the presentation with unique access codes and interact with questions while teachers monitor student and whole-class progress. Each school has an edtech

leader who is there to support students and staff! Each edtech leader is responsible for making sure all students and staff have working devices, helping co-teach with classroom teachers, plan with the teachers, and address any technology issues/needs. The edtech leader has a few basic troubleshooting tips for when things aren't working and if that doesn't work, they put in technology workorders and those are addressed by county-level technicians and resolved. The school edtech leader and county-level technicians are a team with the goal of supporting the staff and students.

Heating, Ventilation, & Air Conditioning

We were successful last year at controlling any widespread outbreaks within our system by applying increased due diligence and following the basic rules. This will again be our mission for this fall.

Let's start with filters. All filters used for HVAC fit into a chart which has a MERV rating. The scale for this chart runs from 1 to 20 with 20 being the most efficient filter capable of removing the smallest fibers / particles. Most of the filters that are found in our schools have a rating around a MERV 8. These filters are capable of trapping particle sizes from 3.0 - 10.0 and an arrestance of Particulates that this filter routinely captures include textile fibers, sanding dust, spray paint dust, pollen, and mold spores. We will continue the increased frequency of filter changes this year as we closely monitor the equipment performance. This protocol was initiated last year to ensure that all HVAC filters function effectively.

The MERV rating for a filter capable of removing a sneeze particle is a MERV 13. These filters are better but, to use them you would need a superior HVAC system capable of moving a high velocity and volume of air. Our equipment cannot handle this type of filter. HEPA filters require an even more specialized system.

Regarding HVAC equipment, each room in the building is heated and cooled by a zoned system. This system may be a heat pump, forced air unit, or a rooftop unit. Some facilities have a combination of these types. The zones are local to a room or rooms or some other defined area. It is very uncommon to have a system serve several rooms or more than a single zone. This design feature helps to limit the same air from being spread throughout a facility. Where heat pumps exist, the air in a classroom is not circulated to and from other classrooms in the building it is generally re-circulated within the same space with additional equipment providing regular air exchanges into these re-circulated areas. Rooftop forced air systems work in a similar way within their zones except that these units also bring in fresh air.

We will continue to incorporate as many air exchanges as possible this year. Increased air exchanges will create some inconsistency in air temperature and humidity. Many of you have asked questions regarding the opening of windows to provide fresh air. Please remember that anytime warm / moist air is introduced into a cooled environment, mold can form in a very short period of time. We monitor the rooms closely to prevent this from happening. Open windows can lead to coughing and sneezing with children that have an allergy or an Asthma when unfiltered air enters the room.

There are NO miracle solutions/ answers. We have considered the issues and we will be taking whatever actions we can to make everyone as comfortable as possible while we stay as healthy as possible.

We were confident with our strategies last year and are secure with them as we open our 2021-22 school year.

KEY MITIGATIONS

Mitigation strategies effectively implemented are shown to decrease incidents of virus spread. Monongalia County Schools is following the mitigation strategies below relevant to the latest Governor's Executive Orders, CDC guidance, and county board of education requirements.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Monongalia County Schools is using COVID-19 killing materials and supply chains for cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, and preventing spread of disease.
- Monongalia County Schools have developed COVID-19 protocols regarding cleaning and disinfecting to ensure consistency. This also ensures proper cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces on a regular basis.
- COVID-19 cleaning teams have been developed, with enhanced training for cleaning areas where positive COVID-19 persons have been at school and disinfection is needed.
- Monongalia County Schools provides adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors (e.g., paper towels, tissues, soap, and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol) for safe use by staff and older children.
- Monongalia County Schools purchased individual objects for each student, when feasible, that normally would have been shared. Protocols were established for the disinfecting of these items.
- Monongalia County Schools ensures safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfecting products.

Hand Hygiene and Coughing/Sneezing Etiquette

Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

- Before
 - Eating or preparing food
 - Touching your face
- After
 - Using the restroom
 - Coughing, sneezing, or blowing nose
 - Changing a diaper
 - Caring for someone sick
 - Touching animals
- Encourage staff and students to cough and sneeze into their elbows, or to cover with a tissue.
- Ensure that used tissues are thrown in the trash and hands are washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or cleaned with hand sanitizer.

Large Gatherings Outside of Classrooms/Core Groups

- Monongalia County Schools collaborates with and takes direction from state and local officials including WVDE and Monongalia County Health Department regarding large gatherings outside of the classrooms. Examples: graduation protocols and sporting events.

Face Coverings

- Monongalia County Schools are requiring all students and employees to wear a face covering (mask, gator-no face shields in place of a mask or gator) while in Monongalia County School building and school buses.
- Students who are unable to wear a face covering due to a medical or mental health reason need to provide a physician note to support not wearing a mask to your School Nurse or supervisor.
- Mask breaks provide students with a short period of time without a mask. Mask breaks are recommended multiple times throughout the day. Mask breaks will be unique to each location. Please consider the age and developmental level of the students as well as the location conditions when providing a mask break. While on a mask break social distancing is required as with all recommended COVID protocols. Mask breaks may be for an individual, small group or entire class. All mask break requests should be honored.

Social Distancing

- Monongalia County Schools will maintain social distancing to the extent possible.
- Monongalia County Schools will evaluate for social distancing based on current CDC and state and local health official recommendations on a continual basis.

Daily COVID-19 Screening

- Monongalia County School's parents and employees are being asked to monitor their children and themselves for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to coming to school/work each day.
- Parents, students and staff are responsible for monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms.
- The signs and symptoms to monitor include:
 - Fever >100.4 or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Fatigue (along with 1 additional symptom)
 - Muscle or body aches (along with 1 additional symptom)
 - Headache (along with 1 additional symptom)
 - Sore throat (along with 1 additional symptom)
 - Nausea or vomiting (along with 1 additional symptom)
 - Diarrhea (along with 1 additional symptom)

If these symptoms occur DO NOT come to school/work. Call your PHYSICIAN and then your school nurse and they will direct you to what to do next.

- Parents and students are being asked to report any COVID-19 Positive testing to their School Nurse.
- MCS employees are being asked to report any COVID-19 Positive testing to Susan Haslebacher, RN Supervisor of School Health at shasleba@k12.wv.us

A Positive COVID-19 Test

Isolation

- Students and employees who test positive for COVID-19 will need to Isolate for 10 days.
 - Day 1 of isolation is the day you tested positive for COVID (not the date you received your results). Employee/student may return to work/school on the 11th day.
- When employees or students are required to isolate, instructions will be given by the Monongalia County Health Department or the School Nurse on best practices of isolation that may include:
 - Going home and staying home for the duration of the isolation
 - Confining yourself to a room away from others and pets.
 - Don't share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils
 - When possible, the isolated person should utilize a bathroom that only the isolated person uses. If this cannot be done, then disinfect the bathroom after the isolated person uses it.
 - If you must be around others, maintain a 6-foot distance and wear a mask.

COVID-19 Contact Tracing

Quarantine

- **Close Contact of a NOT masked person who has COVID-19**
 - Monongalia County Schools will review seating charts and confirm with teachers and only quarantine students who were not masked and within three feet of a not masked COVID-19 positive person.
 - Students who have completed the COVID-vaccination series and are 14 days post their last vaccine, will not be quarantined unless they are exhibiting or begin to exhibit signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- The CDC recommends even if vaccinated for COVID-19, vaccinated people who have been exposed ***should wear a mask for 14 days and be*** tested for COVID-19 **4-5** days after their exposure, even if they don't have symptoms.

Close Contact of a MASKED person who has COVID-19

- Test to Stay (TTS) practices may be used.
 - Test to Stay (TTS) strategy, whereby unvaccinated students, teachers, and staff members with certain school-related COVID-19 exposures could remain in school and participate in school-related extracurricular activities.
 - Eligibility to participate in TTS required the following conditions to be met:
 - 1) the exposure occurred while both the person with COVID-19 and the close contact were masked;
 - 2) the close contact remained asymptomatic, practiced consistent mask wearing, and maintained physical distancing; and

3) the close contact undergoes testing for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) on days 1, 3, 5, and 7 after exposure to the Positive COVID Person.

4) Testing cost would be the responsibility of the close contact.

- When an employee or student needs to quarantine, the quarantine will be for 14 days from the last contact of the COVID-19 positive person.
 - Day 1 of the quarantine is the first day following the last exposure to the COVID-19 positive person and the employee/student may return to work/school on the 15th day.
- When employees or students are required to quarantine, instructions will be given by the Monongalia County Health Department or the School Nurse on best practices of quarantine that may include:
 - Going home and staying home for the duration of the quarantine.
 - Confining yourself to a room away from others when possible and when not possible maintaining a 6-foot distance from others in the household as well as pets and wearing a mask.
 - Don't share person household items, like cups, towels, and utensils.
 - When possible, utilizing a bathroom that only the quarantined person uses. If this cannot be done, then disinfect the bathroom after the quarantined person uses it.
 - Continually monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and if present, contact your physician and your School Nurse or Supervisor.
 - If you are quarantining and decide to test for COVID-19, it is advisable to wait 3-5 days after school exposure. IMPORTANT: Even if the test results are negative you will need to complete the 14-day quarantine.

Monitoring and Handling of Presumptive, Suspected, and Confirmed Cases

Monongalia County Schools is required to:

- Educate staff, students, and their families about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, when they should stay home, and when they can return to school.
- Establish a space for symptomatic individuals that will not be used for other purposes.
 - Immediately isolate symptomatic individuals and send them home to isolate/quarantine.
 - Ensure symptomatic students are isolated for a short period of time, in a non-threatening manner and under the visual supervision of a staff member who is socially distanced to the greatest extent possible while wearing appropriate PPE.

Monongalia County Schools Reporting of Positive and Quarantined Students & Employees

Monongalia County Schools will be posting to its web page on Monday all new positive COVID-19 cases and new quarantined persons from the previous week.

- This data will be listed by individual schools and include employees and students as well as the district results.

Monongalia County Schools Travel Policy During COVID

Traveling Outside of the United States

- If you are unvaccinated, you will be required to quarantine for 14 days when you return to the US. Day 1 is the day after you return to the US and you may return to school/work on day 15.
- If you are fully vaccinated (2 vaccines), you are not required to quarantine but must provide a COVID test result that was collected 48 hours prior to returning to school/work.

VACCINATION INFORMATION

Health officials are administering the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines in West Virginia to help protect against COVID-19.

Vaccines are important to:

- Protect population against virus spread, especially the most vulnerable.
- Reduce deaths and hospitalizations; and
- Maintain critical services and acute care.

Designated as a high priority by Governor Jim Justice, school employees received the vaccine ahead of most of the general population to assist in the return of in-person instruction. Monongalia County Schools in conjunction with a local pharmacy vaccinated 1588 employees January 2021 through June 2021.

There are three vaccines authorized in the U.S. and administered in West Virginia: Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson. Both Moderna and Pfizer require two rounds of shots while the Johnson & Johnson is a single dose.

It is not possible to get COVID-19 from the vaccine because it does not contain a live virus. Instead, it causes the body to produce antibodies against the virus.

Upon receiving the second dose, immunity usually occurs after 10 to 14 days. It is possible for an individual to be infected until full immunity occurs.

For complete vaccine information provided by the DHHR, visit <https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx> or contact the COVID-19 Vaccine Info Line at 1-833-734-0965 with questions.

