

2020-21 MCS School Opening and Procedure Plan



Guidance provided by
SAU 70 Reopening Plan 2020-21,
written by SAU 70 Reopening Task Force
and

*A STRONG AND HEALTHY START: Safety and Health Guidance for
Reopening Schools, Fall 2020*,
written by the Vermont AOE and Department of Health

For most current information please go to [SAU reopening page](#).

Link to SAU 70 Re Entry Plan: <https://www.sau70.org/resources/fall-2020>

Link to Vermont Strong and Healthy Schools

<https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-vdh-guidance-strong-healthy-start-school-health-updated-8-11.pdf>

Dear Parents, Guardians, students,

Can you believe that mid March was the last time MCS had students wandering the halls and learning in the indoor and outdoor spaces? We are excited to welcome students back to school on September 8th. Students will come back to the same rich curriculum and caring staff that they left in March.

Over the summer the SAU 70 leadership joined by teacher representatives, local medical professionals, our school nurses, and other volunteers formed the SAU 70 Reopening Task Force. This group spent numerous hours engaged in developing a plan that would bring our schools back into session. From there an MCS Task Force was formed. We took the guidance given by the State of Vermont and the SAU 70 Task Force and created a plan specific to the needs of our school.

The importance of a strong team has been evident this summer. It has been comforting to have a dedicated team of MCS staff working alongside me to develop a plan. **A huge shout out to Katie Cormier, Ginny Moore, Beth Haney, Becky French, Courtney Kylander, Pam Hausler, Jessica Liddy, Bethany Thompson, Ania White, Jen Newberry, Karen Woodard, Patrick Gordon, Matt Buck, Greg Bagnato and honorary MCS staff member Brie Swenson.** They have given numerous hours over the past few weeks and are much appreciated.

The information in this handbook is meant to help families and staff navigate our new normal. There are many changes in our typical procedures that would never have come about if not for COVID-19. We look forward to the day when this handbook is no longer necessary and we return to all procedures that we know and love. Until that time, you can help keep all of us healthy by giving this handbook a thorough read and being prepared to follow what we have outlined. As always, if you have questions please do not hesitate to contact a member of the MCS team.

On a personal note, I am excited for students to bring back life to the Marion Cross School. It has been a lonely six months in an empty building. September 8th will be an exciting day, even with masks, physical distancing, strict hygiene procedures, and limited groupings. There will still be smiles, laughing, and much joy as old and new friends come together.

Warmly,
Mr. Gonyaw, Mr. Bagnato, and the MCS Staff

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Weekly Schedule and Definitions

Weekly Schedule: Whether your family chooses in-person or remote learning, please plan on following the school calendar and being “in school” Monday through Friday.

Definitions

In-person Learning: In-person instruction will be led by a classroom teacher within class parliaments (we cleverly decided to use this term which refers to a group of owls, our school mascot). To limit the potential spread of disease and to make contact tracing easier, all students from one class and their teachers will be kept together for the entire day and will be limited from interacting with other classes. These groups of students and teachers will be referred to as a “parliament.” We will be following all health procedures, cleaning recommendations, and safety guidelines as documented in the SAU 70 REOPENING PLAN 2020-21 and A STRONG AND HEALTHY START by the Vermont Agency of Education and the Vermont Department of Health.

Remote Learning:

Families can choose to learn exclusively online this school year. Students participating in this option will not be participating at school in-person. Students will learn from home in a separate online classroom with other MCS Remote Learning students and a designated remote classroom teacher. This commitment will be for the first trimester and can be extended. These students will remain in this virtual classroom group regardless of whether in-person learning continues or we transition to state-mandated remote learning. Upon committing to the MCS Remote Learning option, parents will be asked to sign the SAU 70 Parent Remote Learning Contract, making them closer partners in their child’s education and demonstrating that they understand the responsibilities involved in that commitment.

Low-Density Partial Remote (Hybrid):

Partial Remote may become necessary for in-person students when recommended by the State of Vermont/New Hampshire or when health concerns within the building arise that require lower building capacity. If this were to occur, students would receive in-person learning for a fraction of the time and receive enrichment/support remotely on the other days. Classroom teachers would plan and instruct this hybrid model. Students that start the year remotely will remain in their virtual classroom group regardless of whether partial remote learning continues or we transition to full remote learning or back to in-person learning.

Full Remote Learning:

Remote Learning may become necessary for all students when recommended by the State of Vermont/New Hampshire or when health concerns within the building arise. If this were to occur, in-person students will use pre-established platforms and online routines to shift into remote learning. Their in-person classroom teacher would also be their remote learning teacher. Students that start the year remotely will remain in their virtual classroom group regardless of whether full remote learning continues or we transition to partial remote learning or in-person learning.

In-Person Learning Outline

Overview:

- In-person instruction lead by classroom teacher within class parliaments
- Attendance for in-person students will be 5 days a week (M,T, Th, F 8:10-3:10 and W 8:10-2:10) and will be recorded in the office. Times may vary depending on drop off and pick up schedules.
- If a student who is signed up for in-person learning needs to be absent from school for an extended period of time, education support will be provided remotely until the student is ready to come back to school in person.
- At school, we will be following all health procedures, cleaning recommendations, and safety guidelines as documented in the SAU 70 REOPENING PLAN 2020-21 and A STRONG AND HEALTHY START by the Vermont Agency of Education and the Vermont Department of Health.

Other Details:

- We will be increasing the use of outdoor learning spaces.
- Students will have access to the MCS content and curriculum.
- Teacher emphasis will be on maintaining classroom spaces as welcoming environments for all while still adhering to all health and safety guidelines.
- Teachers will make use of Responsive Classroom, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and other social emotional programs within the school day.
- 504 and IEP supports will be provided at school.
- Specials will “push-in” to the class parliaments, with an emphasis on outdoor learning when possible.
- There will be moderate use of virtual platforms (Google Classroom) when in-person in order to build fluency and comfort with online applications.
- Students will be held accountable for school work and assessments. There will be opportunities during the school day for conferencing, academic coaching, and other forms of support.

Remote Learning Outline

Overview:

- Remote learning will be done at home and led by a designated remote learning teacher.
- Attendance for remote learning students will be 5 days a week, taken through video meetings and recorded in the office.
- Parents must sign the SAU 70 Parent Remote Learning Contract which explains specific responsibilities involved. Students will remain in their virtual classroom for the trimester. This can be extended.
- The number of Remote Learning teachers will depend on the number of students enrolled in the Remote Learning option. This may mean that a remote classroom will be highly differentiated to accommodate students from more than one grade.

Other Details:

- Remote Learning teachers will work with in-person teachers to construct remote curriculum.
- Content and curriculum will be similar, to the extent possible, to what grade level in-person peers are experiencing.
- The school will make 1:1 devices accessible for remote learners at all grade levels.
- Responsive Classroom morning meetings will be held remotely.
- 504 and IEP supports will be provided at home, in virtual classrooms, and/or, at request and discussion with the case managers, at school.
- Specials teachers will work with remote teachers to provide content.
- Instruction will rely heavily on online applications. The technology platform will be Google Classroom for all students.
- Students and families will be held accountable for school work and assessments. There will be opportunities for video conferencing, academic coaching and support.

Summary: In-person and Remote Learning

Commitment to either in-person instruction or Remote Learning will continue through the first trimester.

In-Person Learning	Remote Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use of outdoor learning spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote Learning teachers work with in-person teachers to construct remote curriculum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student access to the MCS content and curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content and curriculum similar, to the extent possible, to what grade level in-person peers are experiencing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher emphasis on maintaining classroom spaces as welcoming environments while still adhering to all health and safety guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school will make 1:1 devices accessible for remote learners at all grade levels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Responsive Classroom, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and other social emotional programs within the school day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive Classroom morning meetings will be held remotely.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 504 and IEP supports in place at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 504 and IEP supports at home, in virtual classrooms, and/or, at request and discussion with the case managers, at school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialty area teachers will use a “push-in” model when possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialty area teachers to work with remote teachers to provide content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate use of virtual platforms (Google Classroom) when in-person in order to build fluency and comfort with online apps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction will rely heavily on online apps. Technology platform will be Google Classroom for all students.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be held accountable for school work and assessments. There will be opportunities for conferencing, academic coaching and support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and families will be held accountable for school work and assessments. There will be opportunities for video conferencing, academic coaching and support.

Low-Density Partial Remote

(Hybrid and Full Remote Learning Outlines)

Overview:

Partial Remote or Full Remote Learning may become necessary for all in-person students when recommended by the State of Vermont or New Hampshire or when health concerns within the building arise. In-person students will use pre-established apps and online routines to shift into Partial Remote or Full Remote Learning as needed. Their in-person classroom teacher will also be their Partial Remote or Full Remote Learning teacher.

Other Details:

- Students that started the year in-person would transition to partial or full remote learning with their classroom teachers.
- Students that started the year remotely will continue with their remote learning teachers.
- Attendance is expected 5 days a week and will be done through class online meetings and recorded in the office.
- Virtual platform will be Google Classroom
- Regular academic assignments with specific expectations and feedback will be given by the teacher.
- Students and families will be held accountable for school work and will have opportunities for conferencing, academic coaching and support.
- Content and curriculum will be planned by teachers.
- Students will have access to a technology device as needed.
- Participation in Partial Remote or Full Remote Learning will continue until re-entry to In-Person Learning is possible.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken 5 days a week for both In-Person and Remote Learning. Students who attend classes live via Zoom are to be considered as present. If a student is going to be absent, both the classroom teacher and the office should be alerted. If the reason is medical, the nurse must also be copied on the notification. Accommodations and support will be provided by the classroom teacher and other school staff, as necessary, if a student needs to be absent from school for an extended period of time.

Students returning from a scheduled appointment must complete another Daily Health Check.

TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF THE UPPER VALLEY

Please follow the [Vermont Department of Health's](#) travel guidance and check the [Agency for Commerce and Community Development updated website](#) regarding COVID-19 prevalence at the county level. This website is updated weekly on Fridays and shows areas that require quarantine.

Volunteers, Visitors, and Field Trips

To maintain the integrity of our parliaments, it is vital that we limit the number of people in our school building to those whose presence is essential.

Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be no volunteers (parent or otherwise) in the building for the 20/21 school year.
Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All visitors must have pre-approved appointments and follow PPE guidelines in order to be allowed in the building. There will be a designated location for parents to drop off forgotten items that allows students to have what they need, while not allowing visitors inside. Until further notice, outside groups will not be allowed to use the school building. Pre-K only: Parents will be allowed to drop off/pick up at the exterior Pre-K classroom door only. If parents feel their child is especially anxious and needs a parent's presence at drop-off in the classroom, please coordinate with the school counselor, Katie Cormier, ahead of time.
Field Trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual field trips are strongly encouraged. In-person field trips to non-school buildings and/or requiring transportation will not occur. At this time, we will continue to enjoy walking field trips to the wealth of outdoor spaces in the Norwich community.

Daily Health Check

At home:

Each morning parents and/or guardians of Marion Cross School students are required to ask the following health check questions at home:

1. Have you been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
2. Do you show any symptoms consistent with COVID-19? (cough, fever of 100.4°F or higher, shortness of breath, chills, fatigue, muscle pain or body aches, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea)

If the answer is yes to either question, the student should not come to school. Please contact the classroom teacher, the office, and the nurse.

Notes:

- Students with a confirmed diagnosis and a medical treatment plan for well-controlled asthma or environmental allergies, who do not have a temperature, may attend school with some expected mild coughing and clear nasal discharge.
- It is helpful to get in the habit of having children wash their hands before putting on their masks. Parents should also ensure that the mask fits properly (snug on sides, covering nose and mouth, and secure under chin).

At school:

The following procedures will be in place for morning arrival:

- All students, staff, and bus drivers are required to wear an approved facial mask. There will be opportunities for mask breaks when physical distancing measures are in place.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be located at every entrance point to ensure staff and students can properly sanitize hands upon entry.
- Staggered arrival and drop off times/locations will be assigned to families based on the first letter of their last name.
- Students should go directly to their assigned classroom once they have completed all required screening.
- All staff are needed during morning arrival and may not be available to speak with individual parents/caregivers. If needed, arrangements should be made in advance with the staff member.
- All students and staff must have their temperature taken at the first point of contact. A bus monitor (for those students riding the bus) or a school monitor (for those with private transport, walking, or biking) will check the temperature of each child prior to entering the bus or school grounds. Any student with a temperature of 100.4°F or higher will be excluded from entering the school/bus. A parent or caregiver should follow up with a health care provider for any student that is excluded from school.

Morning Arrival at School

<i>Bus Transportation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sick students should not get on the bus. See “Stay Home When Sick” for more detail. ● Windows of the bus will be left open so students should wear appropriate clothing in the event of cold or drizzly weather. ● Bus drivers, monitors, and students are required to wear an approved facial mask while on the bus. ● Students will be assigned seats ● The bus monitor will ensure Daily Health Check questions have been answered and will take student temperature readings. ● Students who have not completed the questions or have a temperature greater than or equal to 100.4°F will not be allowed to attend school and will be required to return home.
<i>Private Vehicle Transportation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students arriving by car are expected to wear an approved facial mask for the Daily Health Check. Parents and passengers are strongly encouraged to wear a mask as well. ● When the parent pulls up to school, the student should stay inside the car, seated next to the window closest to school. The monitor will approach the car, confirm that their Daily Health Check questions have been answered, and take a temperature reading of each student. ● Students will then be directed to their designated entrance (based on parliament). ● Students who have not completed the questions or have a temperature greater than or equal to 100.4°F will not be allowed to attend school and will be required to return home.
<i>Walkers/Bikers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students arriving on foot or bicycle must be accompanied by an adult. ● Each student should proceed to the designated area for walkers and bikers to confirm that their Daily Health Check questions have been answered and to have their temperature checked by the monitor. ● Students will then be directed to their designated entrance (based on parliament.) ● Students who have not completed the questions or have a temperature greater than or equal to 100.4°F will not be allowed to attend school and will be required to return home.

Dismissal After School

After homeroom closing circles, bussers, students being picked up by parents, and walkers/bikers will be dismissed via intercom at separate times.

<i>Bus Transportation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bussers will be dismissed from their classroom last. ● Students should wear appropriate clothing in the event of cold or drizzly weather, especially since windows will be left open. ● Students will exit the same door they entered school. ● Bus drivers, monitors, and students are required to wear facial coverings while on the bus. ● Students will be assigned seats these should be the same seat as when they came to school.
<i>Private Vehicle Transportation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students being picked up by parents will be dismissed after walkers/bikers. ● Students with their last name starting with letters A-N will be picked up first. Exact time and location is still to be determined. ● Students with their last name starting with letters M-Z will be picked up second. Exact time and location is still to be determined. ● Students will exit the same door they entered school. ● Students and parents are required to wear masks while on school grounds.
<i>Walkers/Bikers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Walkers and bikers will be dismissed first. ● Students will exit the same door they entered school. ● Students and parents are required to wear masks while on school grounds.

This section will be updated and you will be notified when we are able to determine specific locations and times.

Integrity of the Parliament

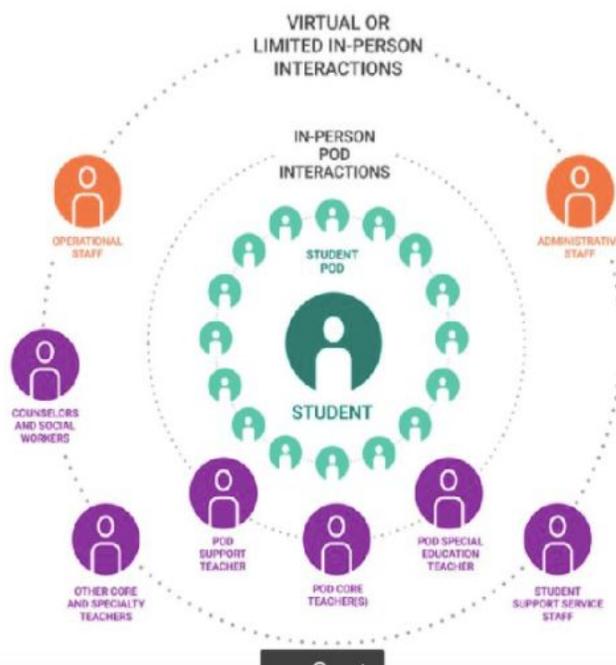
A group of owls is a parliament. At MCS, a parliament is a group of students at the same grade level that will spend the day together. It is known that mask wearing and physical distancing reduce the frequency of close contact between individuals and are (along with hand hygiene) the most effective ways to slow the spread of COVID-19. To limit the potential spread of disease and to make contact tracing easier, all students from one class and their teachers will be kept together for the entire day and will be limited from interacting with other classes. This group of students and teachers, will be referred to as a “parliament”. Each parliament will have one classroom teacher. The parliaments will be determined by the number of students returning to school at each grade level with an effort to create balanced groups. The goal of the parliament structure is to minimize contact between multiple groups of students, and limit interactions with other adults in the school.

Each parliament will stay in one designated classroom in addition to designated outdoor spaces.

Each group of grade level parliaments will be a larger group that will share a bathroom (disinfected and sanitized per protocol). Each grade level group of parliaments will have a designated space where students from individual parliaments can receive specialized instruction and intervention services. These shared spaces will be cleaned and sanitized frequently (per pending schedule). Movement in and out of the building as well as within the grade level parliaments will be determined during August Inservice.

Each Special (Library, Music, PE, Tech, Art, and French) will spend two weeks with a grade level group of parliaments. Each Special will collaborate with the grade level to establish daily specials instruction as well as providing the class with additional instruction and support.

Each parliament will have a designated set of recess equipment that will travel in and out of the building with that parliament. Each parliament will have a designated territory outside for recess.



Other Considerations:

- Lunch will take place in each parliament's classroom.
- Barriers will be installed in classrooms and workspaces where the environment does not allow for physical distancing.
- Students' belongings will be separated in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas. Belongings will be stored in the classrooms. Used items will be taken home each day and should be cleaned.
- Adequate supplies will be provided to limit sharing of high touch materials (art supplies such as paint brushes, paints, etc., science equipment, and technology). These tools will either be assigned to each student or will be collected and disinfected between student uses. Please see individual teacher supply lists for specific details on what your student will need for school. As always, please contact the school if you need help purchasing or supplying what's asked. We are happy to help.
- We will not be sharing electronic devices, toys, books, musical instruments, games, or learning manipulatives.
- Students will not be allowed to bring non-academic items (toys, stuffed animals, etc.) to school.
- Seating arrangements and desks will be kept between three and six feet apart.
- We will not be gathering on the playground before school. Students will, after screening, go directly to their classrooms.
- At recess time(s) during the day, students will first wash their hands and then go outdoors to their parliament's designated area on the grounds. These areas will include a variety of activities/spaces.
- Students will then return to their classrooms, follow hand hygiene, and transition to the next activity.

Food Service

Students are welcome to bring their own snack and lunch. (Please adhere to any classroom food allergy requests.) All food and meals will be eaten in the classroom during designated times.

Meals from Cafe Services will be pre-ordered on a weekly basis from a set menu. In order to comply with physical distancing protocols and to deliver meals and milk in a timely manner, students will receive deliveries and consume meals in their parliaments. Meals will be packed in single-serve containers; we will make every attempt possible to use environmentally friendly products.

We encourage you to complete the application for [Free School Milk](#) and submit it to Greg Bagnato, Student Service Coordinator. For qualifying families, this application allows for free milk, snacks, and lunch. During school meal times, we will make sure that no food is shared between individuals.

Addressing the Social/Emotional Needs of Students

Marion Cross Elementary School places high value on educating the whole child, which includes addressing the social/emotional needs of all students. We understand that members of our community may have had vastly different experiences during the last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this increased time of stress and upheaval in many aspects of “normal” life, addressing the social-emotional well-being of the students and their families is especially important to us. We will work to help support all MCS students and families as they cope with this difficult time and connect them to the necessary resources to ensure that their needs are met.

Katie Cormier, our School Counselor, and Greg Bagnato, our Coordinator of Student Support Services, work together with all members of the MCS faculty and staff to help address the social/emotional needs of students. Katie is available to support students with weekly classroom lessons focused on social/emotional skills, individual and group counseling, and consultation with teachers. She is also able to provide parent support, provide families with counseling referrals to community agencies, and to connect families with resources (ie; food, clothing, housing, etc.) Classroom teachers and other staff work to establish routines, clear expectations, and opportunities for social interaction throughout the school day, all of which help build social/emotional competence. Our use of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and daily morning meetings help underpin development of social/emotional skills for all students.

Once school is back in session, our school counselor will assess MCS students’ social/emotional needs through our weekly grade level educational support team meetings and provide the appropriate support for students and families in need of assistance, either in school or in collaboration with community agencies.

The referral process is designed to be as user-friendly as possible. Families or students can refer themselves or be referred by school staff. In order to access support, students, staff, or families should contact Katie Cormier to share their concerns. Requests for support can be made via email, phone, or in person. Once Katie has received a request for services, we will work with the family to determine the best way to proceed. Depending on the needs of the individual student and family, we may partner with other mental health professionals to further assist the child and family.

We encourage all families who have questions or concerns to reach out to Katie or Greg, We are always happy to hear from you! Katie Cormier: 649-1703, katiecormier@marioncross.org or Greg Bagnato: 649-1703 gregbagnato@marioncross.org

Special Education, 504, or Health Needs

The psychological, physical, and emotional safety of all students is a priority at the Marion Cross School. This also means considering the risks for our most vulnerable students and the staff that support them. These vulnerable students include, but are not limited to, students with compromised immune systems, impulse control issues, or other developmental or behavioral issues or disabilities who cannot follow public health guidance. We will engage in thoughtful planning with individual families and their care teams around specific students' needs.

In these cases, the focus will be on what is reasonable and appropriate in the school building, including

- It may be necessary to plan for transitioning students between options of remote learning, blended learning, virtual learning, and/or alternating parallel waves of each.
- Any plan must reflect special education regulatory guidance, health guidance, federal and state guidance, and school operations.
- We will prioritize mental health and social/emotional support for vulnerable students.
- All students, regardless of ability, will have access to facilities required for safety (i.e. hand washing/sanitizing stations).

A team-based approach will be employed to assess the individual risks to our most vulnerable students. This team will include the student's parents/caregivers, IEP or 504 team members, teachers, school nurse, healthcare provider, and paraprofessionals, as appropriate to each situation. Shared goals will be created to achieve an education that is safe, effective, student-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable. The school nurse will provide any continuity of care between students and their medical providers.

Hand Hygiene

Students, staff, and contracted service providers entering the Marion Cross School building will practice hand hygiene (hand washing with soap and water, and/or use of hand sanitizer). MCS is fortunate to have sinks for hand washing in our classrooms. Hand sanitizer dispensers are installed at every exterior door, at each indoor space that does not have a sink, and in each classroom. Hand washing will happen at the following times:

- Upon entering the building
- After changing settings: Staff will perform hand hygiene upon entering and before leaving each classroom. Students will perform hand hygiene any time they leave or enter their classroom.
- Before and after preparing food or drinks, eating, handling food, or feeding students
- Before and after handling any medication
- After using or helping a student to use the bathroom
- After any contact with bodily fluid.
- Before and after handling face coverings, masks, or shields
- After handling any animals or handling any animal waste
- After being outdoors having recess
- Before and after engaging in sensory play with sand, putty, etc.
- After handling garbage
- Before and after cleaning
- After assisting others with hand washing and/or providing hand over assistance to others

At each of the above transitions, students and staff will wash their hands for at least twenty seconds with soap and water, following the Center for Disease Control and Vermont Department of Health hand washing recommended technique. If soap and water are not available, and hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol may be used.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Special attention will be given to ensuring our school, particularly high touch surfaces and shared spaces, remain clean. MCS will engage in frequent thorough cleaning each day. All staff will be trained in proper cleaning and disinfecting. At a minimum, common spaces and frequently touched surfaces and doors will be cleaned and disinfected at the beginning, middle and end of each day. MCS will continue to follow regulations regarding cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting.

Generally:

- Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used, including items such as soft toys, dress-up clothes and puppets.
- Students' books, art supplies, and other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered high-risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.
- Hand-sanitizing dispensers have been installed inside the building at all exit doors to be used at entry. Also, classrooms and hallways have been equipped with hand-sanitizing dispensers.
- Sharing of materials will be limited.
 - Student belongings will be separated from others' and in individually-labeled containers, cubbies or areas. Used items should be taken home each day and cleaned.
 - Adequate supplies will be on hand to minimize sharing of high-touch materials (art supplies, lab equipment, computer equipment, etc. assigned to a single student) or supplies will be limited to use by one parliament at a time with adequate time to clean and disinfect between usage.
 - Library books may be safely returned to circulation after three (3) days since last use.

Communal Spaces, Public Use of School, and Group Activities/Meetings

- Outdoor spaces where students can keep physical distance will be open.
- Activities with the potential to significantly spread respiratory droplets and aerosols will be avoided. This includes the use of woodwind and brass instruments. Singing may be done outdoors, six feet apart, wearing masks.
- Staff will continue to reinforce social distancing guidelines during free and outdoor play.
- Hand hygiene will be performed before and after going out to play.
- The grounds of Marion Cross School will be available for public or group use. The building, including the bathrooms, will not be available to groups using the outdoor spaces. Signs will be posted on the grounds to remind the public about the use of masks and the importance of social distancing.
- Water fountains will be closed, with the exception of the water bottle filling stations. Students will be encouraged to bring water bottles from home and to return them home for cleaning nightly. Cups will be available for those who forget or do not have access to a water bottle.
- We will work hard to minimize students traveling in the hallways more than absolutely necessary. If students are in the hallways, they will maintain travel in a line, socially distanced, on the right side of the hallway.
- We will be limiting school-sponsored gatherings and events to those that can support social distancing guidelines and gathering limits. Emphasis will be placed on ensuring social distancing and hand hygiene.
- There will be an increase in outdoor activities, including an increased use of outdoor facilities. Students and staff will be expected to have appropriate gear for all weather.
- Meetings with staff and families will be held virtually whenever possible.
- Every effort will be made to continue the traditions of Marion Cross School, but those traditions may look very different this year, as there will not be any large group assemblies or gatherings.

Stay Home When Sick: Sick Day Guidance

Below are some specific instructions from the School Health Office that are intended to help you navigate these “Stay Home When Sick” requirements.

Staff and students will not be permitted to attend from in-person school activities if they answered yes to any of the Daily Health Check questions and/or have a fever of or greater than 100.4°F.

Keep in mind that a temperature reading is only one piece of a COVID-19 health assessment. While a child’s temperature may be in the normal range, they may have other symptoms that warrant staying home and/or seeing a healthcare provider. A doctor’s note will be required for returning to school. Please note that this requirement may be changed based on recommendations from the Vermont Department of Health.

We appreciate your help to keep everyone in our school community well and our students ready to learn.

When you call the school to report your child’s absence, please specify what type of symptoms they have: fever, cough, issues with breathing, stomachache, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, or other. This will support our efforts to monitor the frequency and number of illnesses. We thank you in advance for your assistance with this important aspect of school health.

If any of the symptoms of COVID-19 begin while at school, the student or staff member will be sent home as soon as possible. Sick students will be kept separate from well students and will have limited contact with staff. Please make sure you have updated PowerSchool so that your child has contacts available who can pick them up (ideally within 30 minutes of the call).

Additionally:

- Students and staff will not be permitted to return to school until they are no longer considered contagious.
- Students and staff with a fever greater than 100.4°F and no specific diagnosis should remain at home until they have had no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications (e.g. Advil, Tylenol, etc.).
- Materials, toys, and furniture touched by the student who is sent home will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Healthy students and staff with the following symptoms/conditions will be permitted to attend in-person school activities:

- Allergy symptoms (with no fever) that cause coughing and clear runny nose may stay if they have medically diagnosed allergies and follow medical treatment plans.
- Well-controlled asthma

The Health Department is currently drafting symptom and testing protocols to support return-to-school determinations for students with COVID-like symptoms. Once finalized, this will be posted on the Health Department website and used at MCS.

Health Office/Isolation Space

MCS will have a Health Office and an Isolation Room to serve the school. The purpose of an established isolation room is to decrease transmission of COVID-19 by accommodating symptomatic students and staff. Students with any COVID-19 symptoms will be isolated as soon as possible based on the nurse's assessment in the classroom. As the assessment warrants, students will be given a surgical mask and immediately escorted to the isolation room. Following an ill student or staff person being sent home, the student's class will go outdoors. The surfaces in the classroom will then be sanitized by custodial or maintenance personnel. Students will return to the classroom when the cleaning is complete.

The school health office will serve as the school's clean office space to accommodate medication administration, triage, health screenings, injuries, skilled nursing care and other nursing duties that do not involve potential or suspected infectious disease.

Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 in School

Anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, or in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, should self-isolate according to the guidelines of the Vermont Department of Health and their health care provider. If COVID-19 is confirmed in a student or staff member, MCS will:

- Open outside doors and windows, and use ventilating fans to increase air circulation in the areas.
- Close off all areas used by the sick person and not use these areas until cleaning and disinfecting is completed.
- Wait twenty-four hours, or as long as practical, before cleaning and disinfecting to allow droplets to settle.
- Clean and disinfect all areas
- Participate in contact tracing as requested by the VT Department of Health.
- Communicate with staff and parents/caregivers with general information about the situation, with care to maintain confidentiality.

Decisions about school closure will be made based on guidance from the Agency of Education and the Vermont Department of Health.

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing is a public health strategy used to determine the source of an infection and how it is spreading. Finding people who are close contacts to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, and therefore are at higher risk of becoming infected themselves, can help prevent further spread of the virus. A contact tracing team from the Vermont Department of Health calls anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19. They ask the patient questions about their activities within a certain timeframe – to help identify anyone they have had close contact with. (Close contact means being closer than 6 feet apart for more than about fifteen minutes while the person was infectious.) Those contacts might include family members, classmates or coworkers.

When there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school, a member of the contact tracing team will reach out to the positive person to identify close contacts. The contacting tracing team will also reach out to school administration to determine next steps regarding exposure to students and staff. If there is a cluster of cases in the school, the Health Department will work with school administrators to address and mitigate the situation.

Marion Cross School will be taking measures to assist the Vermont Department of Health in their Contact Tracing efforts. These measures include:

- Using assigned seating on busses and in classrooms.
- Taking attendance for every class, including any adults that may enter the classrooms.
- Adhering to sign-in practices for the building and any meetings that need to happen in person.
- Keeping accurate records of anyone other than students and staff (i.e. contractors, clinicians contracted to provide special education services, etc.) that entered the building, as well as their reason for being in the building, the names of people they came within six feet of, and the locations they went in the building.
- Encouraging staff to keep a daily log of people they come into close contact with. The Vermont Department of Health is encouraging all Vermonters to keep a similar “contact journal” as this will help with more accurate and easier contact tracing.

If a Marion Cross School student tests positive or has a family member test positive for COVID-19, please notify Pam Hausler, School Nurse at pam.hausler@marioncross.org or at 802-649-1703 between the hours of 8:00 am and 3:00 pm. Email and voicemail are available 24/7. This will help us to be more prepared in our response, as well as to expedite the Contact Tracing process.