

Dear MCPS Families:

Welcome back! Everyone at MCPS is very excited to welcome students and families back to full-time, in-person learning this fall, as well as continuing to work with students through the Missoula Online Academy. We would like to share with you the progress we have made, the challenges overcome, and the knowledge gained over the past year and a half.

I am sure many of you have read or heard about increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases and some school closures across the country. We would like to share some measures that we are taking, as well as what families can do outside of school to help minimize COVID-19 transmission in our schools and programs, and thus limit disruptions to learning as much as possible.

One of the most important measures is having staff and students stay home if they are experiencing symptoms. Please screen your students daily, and if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID, please keep them home and seek testing. MCPS will offer rapid testing, as staffing allows but may be limited at times. Please call MCPS Health Services 406-240-4721 to check availability and request a test. You may also seek testing through the health department by calling 406-258-INFO or seek other community [testing sites](#), listed in the link. Please do not delay testing, if MCPS is not immediately available.

A link for the consent for testing is provided below, if the need arises. [Student consent for Covid Testing Covid 2021-2022](#)

Other helpful mitigation strategies to consider, which have been outlined by the CDC and Missoula City-County Health Department, include the following:

1. Maintain consistent and small social groups. Socialize outdoors, if possible.
2. Mask in all public indoor spaces, on public transportation, and in crowded outdoor events where distancing is not possible
3. Frequently wash and/or sanitize hands.
4. Stay home and seek testing if exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID within 2 days prior to 10 days after they became ill.
5. Consider getting the COVID-19 vaccine, if it is right for your family. The Pfizer vaccine has been granted full approval for those 16 years and older and is available through an emergency use authorization (EUA) for those 12-15 years old. Vaccine information can be found on the county health department website: <https://www.missoulainfo.com/>

In addition to the above, MCPS is layering multiple mitigation strategies, which include

1. Maintaining ventilation systems
2. Requiring universal masking indoors. Please read the [MCPS Face Covering Guidelines](#) that were approved by the Board of Trustees on August 10.

3. Regular cleaning and disinfection
4. Providing opportunities and supplies for frequent hand-washing/sanitizing.
5. Contact tracing in collaboration with Missoula City-County Health Department.

NOTE: If your student is identified as a close contact while at school or at school-related activities, we will notify you with guidance and dates of exposure via text, phone, and/or email using our automated notification system. You may also be notified by the health department.

Thank you so much for all your help and support this last year and a half in reducing the impact of this pandemic on our MCPS community. We recognize the burden many of these strategies place on families.

We are looking forward to a great school year.

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