

**Cheswick Christian Academy**  
**Covid Plan for Start of School Year 2021-22**  
**8/25/21**

**The safety of our students and staff is the primary goal of this plan.**

**We will obey all federal, state, and local regulations. We have no authority over what those may be or how/when they may change. As guidelines change, we will re-visit our plan.**

**As we return for this new year, the second year in the COVID era, we sought to re-develop our plan with two primary goals in mind :**

- 1. A return to a school day that more closely resembles a “normal” day from the past**
- 2. To maintain a high likelihood of being able to have the vast majority of our student body attend school in-person 5 days per week, while minimizing the likelihood of students being forced into quarantines at home.**

Last year, although we did have some known positive cases in students/staff, we were fortunate to have no known transmissions occur in school from one person to another.

Some government guidelines have changed over the past year, while others remain the same. It is important for people to understand that while the distancing guidelines have changed to some degree to allow students to be spaced 3 feet apart (to allow larger districts to return to school), the quarantine guidelines have not changed much. At this point in time, any person within 6 feet of a positive case for 15 minutes in a day is considered a “direct contact,” which forces quarantines. The only way that 3-to-6 foot distancing between a positive case and another person can avoid being counted as a “direct contact,” and the only way to avoid quarantine when spaced within 6 feet, is if both people are masked during their contact.

Our biggest challenge was to seek to avoid a seating situation like this (Imagine 9 students in the 9 seats below, and assume student X is a positive COVID case):

1	2	3
4	X	5
6	7	8

If those students are spaced 6 feet apart, only student X needs to quarantine from school for 7-14 days. That is our best case scenario. In this scenario with 6 foot distance, masking does not matter in determining the need to quarantine.

If those students are spaced under 6 feet apart, if student X is unmasked, all 9 of those students are forced into quarantine for 7-14 days. Even if student X is masked, any of the other 8 that are unmasked are still forced into quarantine. Even worse, if student X is in 2 different classrooms in a day with 2 different groups, that could be 17 people in quarantine (or 3 groups could cause 25...as high as possible in the high school in an 8 period day that 1 student in 8 groups could cause 65 quarantines). Needless to say, that is a nightmare scenario that we need to avoid. Nobody should be willing to be student X, or have their child be that person, someone who forces 8 others (let alone 65 others) to be forced to

quarantine from school. The only way to prevent this type of situation with mass quarantines is with mutual masking in situations where distancing is not possible.

No solution is flawless, and no plan exists where a group of people will 100% agree with everything, but we have to believe that one of our most important mutual goals is for students to be in school in person at a maximum level. To that end, here are the 4 main tools in our collective toolbox:

1. Proper hygiene, which we will practice to a maximum as that is a completely positive thing to do, with no negative side effects. There is no reason not to do this. Only a madman would try to reject proper hygiene.
2. 6 foot distancing, which we will pursue at a maximum level, as the downside to this is negligible. At times when 6 foot distancing is possible, quarantines are a non-factor, and therefore masks will be recommended (not required) during those portions of the day (estimated 90% of the day for an average student). Unfortunately, that type of 6 foot distance is not possible to maintain for 100% of a “normal” school day
3. Masking, which is where things start to sometimes become divisive (or worse). We will be requiring masking only at times of the day where 6 foot distancing is not possible. We realize some may not want to mask at all, but there are times (like chapel, or some high school study halls or academic classes with populations over 20 students) where distancing just can’t be done. We estimate this might be about 10% of the day for an average student (some may be a little more, some may be less - even close to 0, depending on class sizes and schedules). As last year, if a medical condition prevents the wearing of a mask, then we request a face shield covering the nose and mouth to be used, unless a medical excuse is produced preventing even that. Each student must have a mask with them each day.
4. Vaccination, which is a whole other divisive issue, but one that is completely out of our hands. If you choose to be vaccinated, it can reduce the impact of COVID on your school attendance. If you are vaccinated and are willing to tell us that you are, feel free, as that can be helpful for us to know in case of exposure; but we are not going to ask anybody for health information they do not wish to share. At no point would we as an organization consider requiring vaccination on our own, with the obvious exception that if PA added that to their list of mandatory school vaccinations then we would have no power over that choice.

So again, the bottom line for the main question on people’s minds, which is “Are we masking?”:

During the 90% or so of our school day that we can maintain a 6 foot distance, masking will be recommended.

During the 10% or so of our school day that we cannot maintain a 6 foot distance, masking will be required.

Two things we sought to avoid were to separate students based on being masked/unmasked or based on being vaccinated/unvaccinated. We are not interested in pursuing those types of policies.

One thing we will insist on is that everybody be courteous toward others, regardless of difference of opinions on the issues of masking or vaccinating. Different people make different decisions for different reasons, but we all need to be respectful of each other. We do not know what the circumstances are that others face, and we need to be respectful of that. We want to maintain a spirit of unity and be considerate of each other.

**If you read nothing else in this plan, know these 5 things:**

1. **Temperatures will no longer be taken at arrival. Students can enter directly into their building.**

2. **All students must bring a water bottle to school with them to last them the school day. Mark the bottle with the student's name. For now, any type of water bottle (solid or clear) may be used, but it may only contain water. For those who forget bottles, water bottles will be supplied at a cost of \$1/bottle.**
3. **Parents must be available for a quick pick up if a child begins showing symptoms.**
4. **Masking on school buses is required, based on federal guidelines.**
5. **All students should have a mask with them. Teachers will tell them when to put them on according to these guidelines.**

**Before departing for school:**

Perform a health screening at home. To eliminate the hardship for all involved, we request that each parent do a quick self-screening at home before sending students to school. Take your child's temperature and ask them how they are feeling each day before sending them to school.

**Busing:**

All bus companies within our districts will be busing our students to and from school, even if that district is starting at a different time or doing a hybrid schedule where their own students are not bused. Federal guidelines mandate masking on all public transportation, including school buses. We expect 100% cooperation from our bus riders on this point and on all other bus rules.

**Travelling to school:**

If it is possible, to be of assistance to the bus companies, consider driving your child to school. If you decide to do that, please inform the bus company and us.

**Arrival at school:**

We are no longer checking temperatures at the door. Elementary students will enter the elementary building and go directly to his/her classroom. Secondary students will not enter the elementary building and will go directly to the high school building to his/her homeroom. Do not mingle with others in hallways or bathrooms.

**Only students/staff will be permitted in the building.** Like last year, if you come to the school to pay tuition, for instance, just buzz at the high school front door and someone will come down to receive it.

**If a student arrives with a fever, or if a fever/symptoms develop through the day:**

That student will be isolated and then must be picked up immediately. Please list at least 3 contacts who would be able to pick the student up in under an hour on the FAMILY CONTACT INFORMATION AND POLICY CARD which you will receive on the first day of school. If a student is exhibiting cold symptoms, they should mask.

**School day:**

Unless a worsening COVID situation forces it, we will no longer have high school students remain in one classroom. We will have students changing rooms as in pre-Covid years.

**High school dismissal:**

There will be a small amount of staggered dismissal times from high school gym classes and study halls, but most students will dismiss at 3:16-3:20.

**Elementary dismissal:**

Elementary dismissal will be the same as last year.

**Lunch and recess for elementary:**

Elementary students will eat and then have recess in 2 different shifts. Students should be masked when arriving and departing the gym for lunch and while in the lunch line. Masks will be removed to eat, but social distance will be maintained as much as possible. Lunch line workers will be masked.

**Lunch for high school:**

High school students will be eating in their classrooms in the room of their 6<sup>th</sup> period class. The high school students who order lunch for the day will go through the lunch line to get their lunch, and then go to the appropriate classroom to eat.

**Phys ed:**

Unless a worsening COVID situation forces us to do otherwise, we will do phys ed as we have in pre-Covid years. Masks are not required during phys ed, whether it is indoors or outside.

**Elementary computer class:**

As last year, elementary computer classes will occur in the classroom, using tablets. The computer lab will still be closed.

**Elementary music class:**

Elementary music class is “to be determined,” as that position is still unfilled. If we can hire a teacher, class would be in each elementary classroom. If not, we will do computer class twice instead of once per week.

**Elementary art:**

Elementary art class will be held in the classroom, like it has in past years.

**Illness Guidelines:**

According to DOH & PDE guidelines, please follow this chart:

STUDENT SHOULD STAY HOME if he/she has... One or more symptoms in Group A **OR**  
Two or more symptoms in Group B **OR**  
Is taking fever reducing medication

<b><u>GROUP A</u></b>
Fever (100.4 or higher)
Cough (consistent)
Shortness of breath
Difficulty breathing
Nausea or Vomiting
Diarrhea
New lack of smell or taste

<b><u>GROUP B</u></b>
Sore throat
Runny nose / congestion
Chills
Body aches - muscle pain
Headache

A) If you have Covid symptoms, stay home until symptoms are completely gone or until cleared by a physician (either by a negative test or by being diagnosed with a non-Covid illness).

- B) If you have severe enough symptoms to be tested, live as if the test is positive until you hear otherwise: self-quarantine until the test result comes back negative. Additionally, all members of your household should do the same. If your test comes back positive, follow guideline D, and notify us.
- C) 1) If you have a direct exposure to a positive case of Covid (under 6 feet, unmasked, for more than 15 minutes), live in a similar way as B: self-quarantine for 14 days or until a test result comes back negative, whichever comes first, and notify us.
- 2) Fully vaccinated people who have come into close contact with someone with Covid should be tested 3-5 days following the date of their exposure and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result. They should isolate if they test positive.
- D) If you have a positive test, stay home until cleared by a doctor, and notify us.
- Stay home until symptom free for 24 hours.

**Attendance:**

Continue to write excuses within 3 school days of student's return to school for both tardies and absences, as always. All of the attendance policies that went on hold last year are now back in effect. Covid-based exceptions to attendance policies will be at the discretion of the principal.

**Homebound students:**

If students become homebound, we will work case-by-case to continue to educate those students while they are at home. If a high school student at home wants to connect virtually in real time to class at school, the burden of making that contact falls to the student or parent, who could contact the office, the classroom teacher, or a peer in the classroom to create that connection. The peer would need to be contacted "before 8:55," because after that time no cell phones are allowed to be on. If we do not hear from a homebound student, we will operate under the assumption that they do not wish to connect to classes for that day.

**Hybrid instruction:**

We have no plans at this time to pursue any hybrid plans where students are partially at school and partially at home. The only way we envision that could come into play would be by government mandate.

**Frequently touched surfaces:**

Where possible, we will try to avoid having surfaces be frequently touched (leaving interior doors open, for example). We will be encouraging the children to wash their hands frequently and use hand sanitizer periodically throughout the day. Teachers will not be cleaning surfaces all day on changeovers as they did last year.

**Lockers:**

Students should not linger at lockers in crowds, but we will not be doing "1 at a time" locker policies like we did last year.

**Bathrooms:**

Bathrooms will be cleaned once daily. Bathrooms have an occupancy limit, so students should limit trips to the bathroom to essential trips only to reduce possible waiting to enter. Obey the posted signs about occupancy.

**Hygiene:**

There are a lot of simple things we can all do to protect our health, whether it is from Covid or anything else. One is to realize that regardless of what we are exposed to, we have an immune system to help us fight disease. A healthy lifestyle helps your immune system function more efficiently. Here are some things that we can all do to make it more likely we can remain healthy:

- Get adequate sleep.
- Eat a healthy diet, high in fruits and vegetables and whole grain.
- Drink an adequate amount of water.
- Exercise regularly.
- Don't smoke, vape, drink alcohol, do drugs, or experiment with any other substances.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Take steps to avoid infection, such as washing your hands frequently. Also avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Try to minimize stress – spend some time in prayer.

With Covid in particular, the main recommendations have continually been these main points:

- Maintain social distance, ideally 6 feet or more.
- Wear a mask or other face covering.
- Be aware of hand hygiene.

At school, the staff has set up the physical setup of the building to promote distancing. We just need students to be mindful to maintain that distancing and to mask in the rare times that it is required.

On the topic of hand hygiene, students should take responsibility for that. Again, avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth. When moving from one area to another, students should make use of the hand sanitizer in all rooms, either leaving or arriving.

The most important times for hand hygiene are probably at lunchtime and in the bathroom.

- Always wash your hands before eating.
- After using the bathroom, students should always wash their hands and then try to avoid touching anything in the bathroom afterwards – ex. leave the water running until after hands are dried with a paper towel, then turn the water off using the paper towel. When exiting the bathroom, since our doors open out, gently (emphasis on gently) push the door open with your foot, or back out to exit.

**Sports:**

At this time, as it is during school, masking is only required during times that distancing is impossible, which means during transportation to/from games in vehicles with others and during any indoor team meetings with a group too large to distance in the space used. Masks are not required during game play or during active times of practice.

**Hallways:**

As in all years, students and faculty are to obey the “up” and “down” stairs signs to create one-way traffic. In the elementary school, obey teacher instructions to have one-way traffic.

As always, this plan remains fluid as circumstances change.