



COVID-19 FAQ

What is the process when a positive case of COVID-19 has been reported to SACS?

When a parent reports that their child has tested positive for COVID-19, the school principal contacts the superintendent of school, Mr. Breen, our pastor, Father Robert, and our liaison from the Department of Health (DOH). Based on guidance received, a decision is made about quarantining on a case-by-case basis. The decision to quarantine one family, cohort, or initiate a temporary school closure is made in complete consultation with the two entities above. Following these steps, the entire school community is notified of the positive case and the actions being taken to keep everyone safe.

Who is considered a "Close Contact" by the DOH?

The Department of Health identifies a "close contact" as any individual that has had face-to-face contact with a COVID-19 positive individual for longer than 15 minutes without a face covering less than 6ft apart.

How do we "Contact Trace"?

Our teachers contact trace on a daily basis using a Google Form to track individuals who would be considered a "close contact" as defined above.

When an individual has tested positive for COVID-19, the DOH asks the school to provide a list of the "close contacts" of the positive individual for the two days prior to the onset of symptoms as that is when a person becomes contagious to others.

How do we prevent exposure to other cohorts?

Cohorts are kept isolated from one another at recess, lunch, and bathroom breaks. The entire staff uses walkie-talkies to alert other classrooms when either a class or individual is moving in the hallways. This prevents cohorts from crossing paths with one another.

Many of you have asked why the specials teachers do not pose a risk for spreading COVID-19 to another cohort. That is a great question and one that many of us had when we had news of our first case. Our liaison at the DOH, says that the likelihood of spreading COVID-19 is very low when both staff and students are wearing a mask. During specials classes, mask breaks are never taken. Additionally some of our specials teachers wear both a mask and shield for extra protection.

Do we know what happened during this outbreak?

The short answer to this question is yes and no. We know the first person who was diagnosed with Coronavirus but we do not know the source of exposure for that person. As soon as the individual began symptoms, they stayed home from school, notified the office, and sought medical attention for a rapid COVID-19 test.

We know that cases in Franklin Co are on the rapid rise since Labor Day. Our liaison at the DOH wanted everyone to be aware is that there are still so many unknowns about how long the virus can remain airborne. That is why we should stress the importance of social distancing and wearing PPE at public outings and social gatherings. School remains one of the safest places for your children; however, it will only remain as safe as our actions outside of school.

What will we do differently in the future?

We will continue to follow our already established health and safety plan with minimal improvements.

Mask breaks seem pose the biggest risk for the possibility of a potential spread. Because of that, students will now only take mask breaks at recess or in a larger space of the building such as the gymnasium or music room. Lunchtime seems to pose the biggest risk for exposure since it is the longest time period without wearing a mask. To try and add an extra layer of protection while eating, we are looking to purchase sneeze guards for every student desk in the building.

In this case, we have seen that the our cohort system does work. We will take additional steps to ensure that the cohorts are completely isolated from other groups in the building including but not limited to school Mass and recess. In the event we have future cases, we can continue to rely of the isolation of the cohort system to keep the greater school community healthy.