



MERCYMOUNT COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL'S

Reopening Plan 2021-2022



Faithful to Catholic educational tradition, Mercymount Country Day School, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, ensures the development of strong academic skills, nurtures creative abilities, creates a sense of community and promotes social responsibility. In the spirit of Catherine McAuley, we affirm that each child is a unique gift of a loving God, open to God's presence in others and in all creation.

Once again, we find ourselves in an uncertain and challenging reality due to the impact of COVID-19. Two months ago, the vast majority of us would have imagined a more typical beginning to this school year. Yet, once again, we have had to develop COVID-19 protocols. In doing so, we had two major goals in mind and at heart: to keep everyone in our school community, especially our children, safe and healthy; and to keep our students in school for optimal learning. We wrote these protocols knowing that the current situation is an ever-evolving one and hoping that it will improve such that many of these protocols can be "relaxed." Therefore, Mercymount's administration will continue to closely monitor ongoing guidance and state leadership. The following is a synopsis of our 2021-2022 opening plan. You will notice that some of the protocols we put into place last year will remain (pick-up and drop off times, a stress on cleanliness and hand hygiene, maintaining more stable groups...) while some protocols have been normalized (return to specials' classes, lockers, cafeteria, unmasking outdoors...).

Once again, it is with humility that I present an ever-evolving plan to you. Mercymount Country Day School's plan has been created in consultation with and feedback from the Catholic School Office of the Providence Diocese, administrators from Rhode Island's independent schools, principals from the Diocese of Providence, our school nurses, teachers, maintenance personnel, and parents. We continue to carefully watch all information coming from the RI Department of Education, the RI Department of Health, the CDC, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Last year confirmed that we are stronger together and that, together, we can ensure the health, safety and education of our children. I am most grateful for your patience, support, and continued feedback throughout. We will continue to rely on your participation and collaboration as we reopen.

May God continue to bless each one of you and your families.

Sr. Rayleen

Student & Staff Screening

- It is essential for the well-being of our school community that students, faculty and staff stay home when they are not feeling well.
- Students, staff and faculty will complete a screening at home. If a member of the staff or faculty or a student fails the screening, she/he needs to stay home.
- Staff and parents are required to notify school if they travel out of the country. Should travel restrictions be implemented by the state of RI, requirements regarding these notifications will change.
- Classroom teacher and/or nurses may do temperature checks as needed.

MERCYMOUNT COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL
COVID-19 SCREENING TOOL

SYMPTOMS

	Yes	No
Has/Have your student(s) had any of the following symptoms in the past three days that are not explained by allergies or non-infectious cause?		
Cough		
Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing		
Fever or Chills: this also includes giving NO fever reducing medication such as Ibuprofen or acetaminophen prior to drop off at school		
Muscle or Body Aches		
Sore Throat		
Headache		
Nausea or Vomiting		
Diarrhea		
Runny Nose or Stuffy Nose		
Fatigue		
Recent Loss of Taste or Smell		

RISK FACTORS

	Yes	No
Has/Have your student(s) been in close contact (less than six feet) with anyone with COVID-19?		
Has/Have your student(s) traveled anywhere outside the 50 United States or to a state that is considered a "hot spot" within the last 14 days?		
Has/Have your student(s) been directed to quarantine or isolate by the Rhode Island Department of Health or a healthcare provider in the past 14 days?		

IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED "YES" TO ANY OF THE QUESTIONS ABOVE, AND YOU CANNOT EXPLAIN THESE SYMPTOMS BY KNOWN ALLERGIES OR NON-INFECTIOUS ILLNESS, THEN YOUR STUDENT(S) CANNOT ENTER THE SCHOOL FOR THE SAFETY OF OTHERS.

Parent/Guardian signature or initials _____
Date _____

Student & Staff Health Protocols

Face coverings

- While students are present, vaccinated and unvaccinated students, faculty, staff, and visitors will wear approved face coverings that cover both the nose and mouth while inside the school.
- While outside, students, faculty, staff, and visitors may refrain from wearing a face covering as long as a 3-foot distance can be maintained.

Hygiene and Hand Washing

- As we know, hygiene is of critical importance in slowing the transmission of the virus.
- Frequent hand washing is highly recommended.
- Staff and students will be strongly encouraged to wash and/or sanitize their hands upon entry to classrooms, before & after lunch and recess, or whenever students leave the classrooms, as well as intermittently throughout the day.



Drop off & Pick up

- With the one exception of not using both cafeteria doors in the morning, building entrances and exits will remain the same as last year.
- In addition, drop off and pick up times will continue to reflect the changes made to accommodate traffic flow (additional information will be included in our first PIE memo).
- Buses in our region are running. Students riding buses must wear masks (this is a Federal mandate) and sit in assigned seats.



Physical Infrastructure

Classroom Layout

- There will continue to be a focus on creating and maintaining stable groups indoors per the Department of Health/RIDE guidelines. RI Department of Health suggests that class sizes are no more than 30 students – Mercymount’s classrooms are well below this number.
- Our classrooms look more conventional than last year, but maintain at least 3 feet social distancing.
- There will be assigned seating in classrooms and the cafeteria.

General Spacing and Movement

- All grades will utilize special classrooms with movement between classrooms closely monitored.
- When more than one grade/pod is present in the hallway, students will be asked to walk in a single line to limit close proximity and interaction between pods.
- Shared objects will be wiped down between uses.

Ventilation

- The CDC indicates that a well-ventilated room is a key mitigation factor in slowing the spread of COVID.
- As much as possible, windows will be open in the classrooms.
- In addition to the school’s built-in ventilation system, classrooms are equipped with a HEPA filter.

Bathrooms

- As with last year, certain grades will be assigned specific bathroom spaces.
- Bathrooms are regularly cleaned and disinfected.

Cleaning Protocols

- Additional and consistent cleaning procedures will be employed; staff has been added to address daily cleaning throughout the school.



Lunch

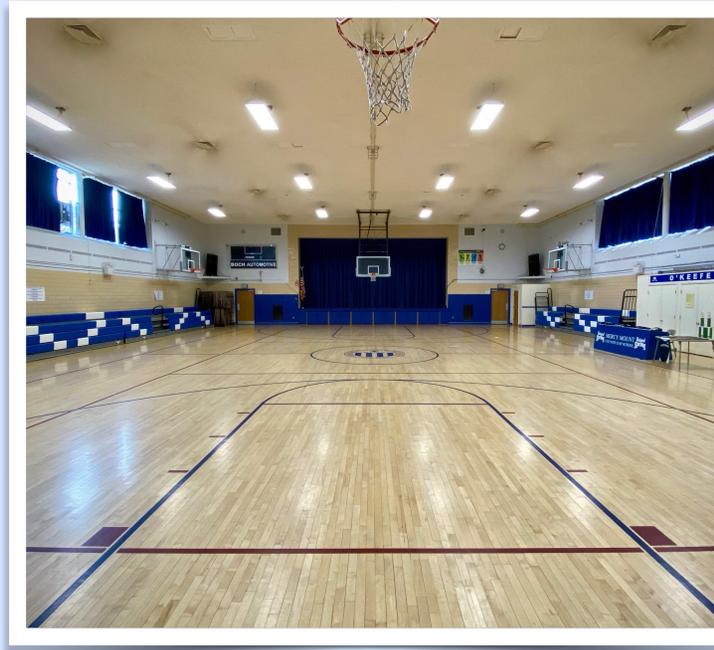
- Unlike last year, a four-lunch schedule has been created so that grades K to 8 can use the cafeteria for lunch. Emphasis will be keeping stable groups and assigned seating with students seated a minimum of 4 feet away from others.
- All lunch areas will be cleaned after each use.

Recess & Outdoor Time

- Mercymount students will have recess daily. The children will not be required to wear face coverings; however, if parents prefer that their child(ren) wear a mask, we will do all that we can to support you in your decision.
- Students will be asked to wash or sanitize their hands before and after recess.
- Using outdoor space for classes and mask breaks will continue to be encouraged.
- The use of breaks and movement throughout the day while following safety guidelines will continue to be encouraged.

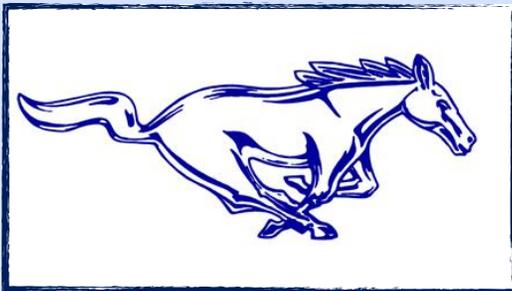
Athletics & School Activities

- At this time, all sports should operate as in the past. Registrations for cross-country and tennis are presently being accepted. Further guidelines from the Catholic Athletic League will be forthcoming.
- Masks need to be worn by all students when participating in a carpool. When possible, car windows should be kept open for additional ventilation.
- Hand sanitizer, disinfectant, and additional masks for these activities will be provided by the school.
- It is our hope that these protocols will enable ALL clubs and activities to take place.



Extended Day

- Morning and afternoon extended day will take place in the cafeteria.
- Although our afternoon extended care will be provided by AlphaBest, health and safety guidelines will be followed.
- Please refer to the additional information sent in the school year's first PIE memo for both before and after care options.



Responding to Illness

- The school will use the RIDOH Playbook (June 2021) and later updates for continued guidance. Parents are urged to view the RI Department of Health document in its entirety as it outlines all procedures, some of which will be highlighted below.
- Students need to be kept home if not feeling well. As noted above, this is a critical component to keeping all in our community healthy and safe.
- If a child gets ill in school, the nurse will be summoned to the classroom. If the student is showing any signs of COVID, they will be taken to the nurse's office and isolated. Parents must pick up the child within 1 hour.
- Parents may be instructed to seek additional medical advice before the student returns to school.





Isolation

- If a student exhibits COVID symptoms (CDC guidance), the student will be isolated in the nurse's room.
- The adult picking up the child will be asked to remain in the foyer and the child will be escorted to the foyer.

Close Contacts & Tracing

- The school, most likely the nurse(s) and the principal, will identify all persons who were within 3 feet of the positive case for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.
- The school will call the parents to inform them that their child is a close contact and may be infected.
- If directed, the student must stay home and be quarantined for at least 7 days (see "Quarantine" in the next section).

Quarantine

- Quarantine is for unvaccinated individuals who has known close contact to a positive case or an unvaccinated individual returning from international travel (should additional travel restrictions be implemented by the state of RI, additional travel guidelines will be issued).
- Per the Department of Health, a close contact (in a K to 12 setting) is an individual who maintains less than 3 feet of distance for a duration of 15 minutes in a 24 hour period in an indoor setting with another who tests positive for COVID-19.
- Students and/or staff who are quarantined can get a COVID test on Day 5 (Day 0 is the last day of contact). If negative, they may return to school on Day 8. Please monitor for symptoms right through Day 14
- If a student is positive for COVID, the student can return on Day 11.

Vaccination

- According to the CDC, there is no better way to stop the spread of COVID than by getting vaccinated.
- Currently, only those 12 years of age and older are eligible. We imagine that many of our 7th and 8th graders are vaccinated. Students who are vaccinated and are close contacts, or who travel internationally, will not have to quarantine.

Distance Learning

- Students who need to be home due to being COVID positive, or who need to quarantine will be provided with distance learning via Google Classroom.
- Other ill students who will miss more than 3 days of school will also be eligible for distance learning.
- Should a class or the entire school be home, we will return to remote learning via live stream, Zoom, Seesaw, Google classroom, etc.
- Distance learning is reserved for those who are ill.

Emotional Health

- We will take extra measures to consider the emotional needs of our students and faculty. Resiliency, relaxation, re-centering, stress management and other relative topics will become part of our daily instructional program.
- Parents are urged to share with teachers if their child is experiencing stress related or other social-emotional issues so we can work together to support all students.

Visitors

- Adult visitors and volunteers will be allowed. Each visitor and volunteer needs to wear an approved face covering over nose and mouth at all times even if vaccinated.
- Volunteers continue to be encouraged to assist at lunch, recess and other school activities.
- Anyone entering the building is required to sign in and attest to not having symptoms of COVID-19.

COVID-19 Resources and Updates

COVID-19 Information for Families: <https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1602272864/mercymountorg/jxcwvjhql6xrxgtdz4a/COVID19InformationforFamilies.pdf>

COVID-19 Test Scheduling Service & Vaccine Information for K to 12: https://portal.ri.gov/s/login/?language=en_US&startURL=%2Fs%2F&ec=302

Mask Guidance: <https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1603389889/mercymountorg/lxmkmt9ltjcnak3j6od/COVID19-Wear-A-Mask.pdf>

RIDOH Playbook (June 2021): <https://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/COVID19/OutbreakResponseProtocolsPK12.pdf?ver=2021-01-06-180221-893>

Symptom Screening: <https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1598658243/mercymountorg/hgqhwupbot3hhkdf8gxa/StudentScreeningToolforCOVID-19.pdf>

