

HRA COVID GUIDELINES for FALL 2021\*

\*Revised, September 23, 2021 | Memorial of Saint Pius of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio)

***General Pandemic Norms***

The remainder of the Fall 2021 semester will bring some ongoing challenges as society continues to battle the Covid-19 pandemic. Our aim is to plot a prudent path forward that helps to ensure that students are able to be in class and in person as much as possible. The Delta Variant and higher case rates in Alaska and Anchorage will continue to have an impact on our school community. Here are some basic principles and protocols that we will have in place in support of these goals:

* At the onset of ANY potential Covid symptom, parents should not self-diagnose. Please contact the School Office prior to visiting campus if you or your child suddenly presents with: **sore throat, cough, fever, chills, respiratory illness, headache, difficulty breathing, muscle pain, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting,** or **loss of taste or smell**. Many Covid patients never have any fever, or have only the mildest symptoms while still being quite contagious, so it is important that you be on the lookout for ANY potential Covid symptom.
* Classes will be held in person and in regular classrooms to the extent possible. We ask for all parents’ patience and understanding about implementation time for a mode change for students on a short-term quarantine, since this may involve the creation of a student workbook or packet, or other supports.
* In keeping with current ***Centers for Disease Control*** guidelines, face coverings are encouraged for all families who would like their children to wear them. Faculty and staff will partner with and support parents who indicate that they want their child to consistently wear a face covering, correctly placed. There is no requirement for any student to receive a Covid-19 shot. Transportation companies of a host center may have their own guidelines for face coverings that we may be obligated to observe for a trip or event off campus. We will continue to monitor CDC guidelines and Anchorage Municipal regulations, as conditions may change in the future.
* We will continue with additional surface disinfecting, handwashing, and use of special cleansers for sanitizing classrooms each night.
* We will inform the classroom community when a positive Covid-19 case emerges, and we will tell those families whose child had direct contact with that individual. The identity and role of the individual who tested positive is a confidential matter, and we cannot and will not share those details with families. HRA will support parents who are partnering with the school in the prudential steps that they may wish to take following such an announcement. Students who test positive for Covid-19 may return to classes following a 10-day quarantine if their symptoms have improved significantly. Please contact the School Office for guidance before bringing a child or siblings to campus at the end of a quarantine period for Covid-19.
* We will inform the entire community when a second positive Covid-19 case emerges for a given class and tell those families whose child had direct contact with that individual. The identity and role of the individual who tested positive is a confidential matter, and we cannot and will not share those details with families. We will pivot that group of students to remote instruction without delay.
* Because the risk of surface transfer of Covid-19 is comparatively small, students will make regular use of cubbies and lockers this year. To prevent overcrowding of students in these spaces, they may occasionally be asked to visit cubbies and lockers in groups that have been selected to provide for sufficient social spacing.
* We will not conduct regular temperature screenings of students, but may do a reading for students visiting the School Office who state that they are not feeling well in general, if there was no specific event (e.g. a fall, bumping into a schoolmate on the playground) to trigger symptoms of malaise.
* Please do everything you can to protect the community: **keep symptomatic children at home until you can thoroughly assess the situation**. **Parents are strongly encouraged to keep all siblings home until there is more context on symptoms for a sick child. Please call the School Office for guidance at the first onset of symptoms and prior to coming to campus.** If a conversation with the School Office results in a visit to a pediatrician for more information, please remember that it will be important to establish that the originating condition is not Covid-19. The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services therefore recommends that parents ask their doctor: **a) what the cause is of symptoms** (e.g., Covid, seasonal allergies, strep throat, etc.); and **b) whether the originating condition is deemed to be currently contagious**.
* Our plan is to continue our regular format and schedule for Mass at school.
* Students will be strongly discouraged from sharing materials (e.g., calculators, pencils, pens, paper) at school, to reduce the risk of potential germ transfer through close contact with peers throughout the day.
* We are moving forward with plans for our regular field trips and events for students. It is possible that venues and transportation companies will have requirements in place that are more stringent than those of the School for face coverings, social spacing, etc. In these cases, HRA will honor the policies of the host organization if the benefits of the student experience outweigh temporary inconveniences. Parents will be notified in advance of the trip parameters, so that they have the choice of opting out or arranging alternate transportation, as they choose.

***Parent Partners***

In ongoing efforts to slow the spread of Covid-19 and other communicable respiratory infections, you—parents and guardians—are our greatest ally. All Knights must stand and fight together to safeguard our HRA family. The rising tide of research shows that in-person education is the best thing we can do for our children in these uncertain times. Because viruses are not going away any time soon, we have to develop ways to function as we face them together. We are therefore asking all families to observe the following guidelines, and to work them into your daily routine. You may want to create a checklist, so that these steps become second nature for you and your family to go over each morning:

* Bringing your child to campus is a pledge of honor that he or she meets the following conditions: a) has not had any potential Covid symptoms in the last 10 days; b) has only such symptoms as are characteristic for him or her (if your child has chronic asthma, for example, he or she may regularly have a light cough or periodic shortness of breath); or c) such symptoms have been clarified by a negative Covid test with lack of symptoms for 72 hours, and you have had a conversation with the School Office prior to arrival on campus. Potential Covid symptoms are: **sore throat, cough, fever, chills, respiratory illness, headache, difficulty breathing, muscle pain, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting**, or **loss of taste or smell**. Many Covid patients never have any fever, or have only the mildest symptoms while still being quite contagious, so it is important that you be on the lookout for ANY potential Covid symptom. The burden is on the school to show that no one is knowingly on campus or in instructional spaces that may be carrying the Covid-19 virus, so we are most grateful for everyone's help and vigilance.
* Please do not visit campus if you or any family member has been ill, particularly with fever, in the last 72 hours. **Anyone coming to campus should have been fever free for at least 72 hours WITHOUT the use of any fever reducing medication**. The 72-hour rule for fever was in place long before the Covid-19 pandemic and is helpful in slowing the transmission of influenza and strep throat, among other communicable respiratory conditions.
* Do not visit campus if someone in your family currently has symptoms suggestive of Covid-19 or if you have had recent, close contact with someone who has symptoms consistent with Covid-19.
* Please do not visit campus if you or any family member has been recently exposed to someone known to have Covid-19. The current medical definition of exposure is 15 cumulative minutes of close contact—that is, conversation or being near to that person—with less than three feet of social spacing and no face coverings in place. Exposure can also occur if a person with Covid-19 or who has symptoms suggestive of the virus sneezes or coughs directly on another person, regardless of distance or time factors.
* If possible, try to ensure that students gargle with mouthwash before getting in the car for school. Research shows that viral concentrations in respiratory droplets may be substantially reduced for significant intervals of time by regular throat rinsing.
* Please get your children fed and their face and hands washed prior to entering your car for the trip to school. Snacking between home and school transfers germs from mouth to hands.
* Since face coverings are at the discretion of parents at HRA during the fall 2021 semester, if it is important to you that your child wear a face covering at school, please make sure that he or she always has at least a papers mask with them. Some research suggests that thicker cloth masks are slightly more effective for certain time intervals at containing moisture droplets from exhalation. A pull-up or “gaiter” type face covering is acceptable, if it is in a solid color, and has no distracting text on it. **Please ask faculty and staff to remind your child about his or her face covering throughout the course of the day, if you would like your child to wear it consistently while at school**.
* Demonstrate proper handwashing technique for your children, and explain why, for a time, we must embrace some extra precautions. **Talk to your children about the feelings they may be processing at this time with respect to the pandemic**.
* Encourage your children not to share food or materials with others.
* **Commit to being available at a moment’s notice to pick up your child from school if he or she should exhibit Covid-like symptoms**