

Greetings Episcopal Collegiate School Families,

Our effective management of on-campus schooling during the Covid-19 pandemic is a testament to our shared commitment in providing the safest possible learning environment for our children. Throughout the first quarter, this was most evident in the community's strict adherence to our protocols and mitigation strategies, as well as our exceptionally high rate of vaccination. We started the school year with 100% of our faculty and staff vaccinated, and I am pleased to share that well over 110 members of our team voluntarily received their booster shots through an on campus clinic on October 12th. Given this posture, and understanding both the importance and benefits of students seeing their teacher's face and facial expressions, we are modifying our protocols so that teachers of all grade levels may pull their masks down while teaching from the front of the room with appropriate physical separation. They will, of course, be required to pull their masks up properly when engaging more closely with students.

Additionally, 95% of our eligible students in grades 7-12 are fully vaccinated. Despite the late summer surge of active Covid cases in the broader region, I am pleased to report that we have had zero confirmed Covid cases in grades 7-12 this year. In concert with the continued decline of active cases in Little Rock, we feel it is both safe and appropriate to transition grades 7-12 to a *modified* version of our level II protocols *effective Tuesday, October 26*. Those adaptations are pasted below and posted to our website. It is important to note that our Veracross database subtly identifies the vaccination status of students when teachers take attendance so that protocols can be appropriately enforced in our classrooms.

We are also anticipating the FDA's emergency use authorization of pediatric doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 and are working to schedule a vaccine clinic at school if/when that approval becomes official. When eligible, we highly encourage families to vaccinate their child(ren) against Covid-19 and also recommend that you consult your child's primary care physician with any questions or concerns regarding the vaccine and your child(ren)'s health. It is our intent, assuming a continued decline in regional cases, to extend the modified level II protocols to students in 6th grade and our lower school as that eligible student population reaches a sufficient rate of vaccination.

Please note that at this time our protocols governing visitors and parent access/programming will remain the same. We ask that parents continue to wear masks regardless of vaccination status when entering and transiting through school buildings for scheduled appointments during the school day.

Of course, we will continue to monitor the health of our school community on a daily basis. If circumstances require us to be more restrictive with our mitigation strategies, we will adjust them as appropriate. Similarly, if the environment evolves such that it is prudent to be less restrictive, we will make those adjustments as well.

Please continue to report all absences, close-contact exposures, and covid testing/results through the link provided on our school's community health webpage. I can't thank you enough for all of your support and demonstrated commitment in adhering to our community's expectations as we do our best to navigate schooling in the Covid era. It has enabled us to safely provide a full offering of our curriculum and co-curricular activities with minimal distractions or disruption. Furthermore, it speaks volumes of our Episcopal Collegiate School community of which I am so proud and grateful to be a member.

Very Respectfully,

Jamie Griffin
Head of School

MODIFIED LEVEL II MITIGATION STRATEGIES FOR GRADES 7-12

Mask Policies

We ask that all students continue to bring a clean mask to school with them every day in the event they are engaged in learning activities where maximum physical distancing cannot be maintained and they are directed to wear a mask by the facilitating teacher. *It is our expectation that all community members will wear masks if experiencing any cold-like symptoms regardless of vaccination status.*

- Masks are required to be worn by all individuals who are not fully vaccinated when indoors.
- Masks are recommended (i.e., optional) for daily use for those fully vaccinated and/or concerned about a pre-existing health condition.
- No mask needed for outdoor activities (regardless of vaccination status) in grades 7-12 unless specifically directed.
- Masks are required for bus trips.

Note: We are also adjusting protocols for our indoor athletic events. We highly recommend, but will not require, fully vaccinated students and parents to wear a mask at indoor events.

Community Gatherings and Cohorts

We will continue to conduct Middle and Upper School Chapel by rotating daily attendance by grade level. The other grade levels will participate remotely through the school's youtube channel. The addition of an additional grade level(s) to physically attend daily chapel will be made at the discretion of the Chaplain in concert with the Middle and Upper School Division Heads.

The sixth grade will continue to navigate the day as a cohort and will continue with their current practices as they relate to masking, chapel, and lunch.

Exposure Guidelines and Quarantine Requirements

For Unvaccinated People:

- Stay home and quarantine for 14 days after your last close contact exposure with a person who has Covid-19.
- Quarantine may be shortened once the exposure is no longer occurring:
 - After Day 10 (returning to regular activities on Day11) without testing if the contact does not have symptoms.

- After Day 7 (returning to regular activities on Day 8) with no symptoms and a negative PCR test result (Note: the test must be occur on Day 6 or later)

For Vaccinated People:

- You do not have to quarantine at this time. However, if at any time you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, you should be tested right away and follow up with your family physician.
- You are required to test for COVID-19 in 5-7 days from the last close contact.
- You are required to wear a mask in public until test results are known.
- You should maintain proper cleaning and disinfecting guidelines.

In all cases of close contact, you should regularly monitor your symptoms for a duration of 14 days.