

Happy Valley School COVID 19 Mitigation Policy

Guided by the Maricopa County Department of Public Health

Revised 02-28-22

All policies are subject to change. Changes will be posted on the School's website.



K-12 School Guidance for COVID-19 (Updated 02-28-2022)

This guidance from our MCDPH outlines prevention recommendations for K-12 schools to prepare for and respond to community spread of coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) and aligns with CDC prevention strategies. Please reference <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-hildcare/index.html> for additional information.

Guiding principles specific to Maricopa County include the following for Happy Valley School:

- The latest guidance emphasizes the importance of in-person learning and focuses on strategies to keep students safely in our school.
- Vaccination is recognized as the leading public health prevention strategy to prevent transmission of COVID-19 and is practiced by most individuals in our school.
- The guidance acknowledges that since individuals under 5 years-old are not currently eligible for COVID-19 vaccines, other prevention strategies are necessary in a layered approach to protect students and staff at HVS.
- Prevention strategies include screening testing, ventilation, hand washing, respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick (with COVID-19 testing), contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation according to public health guidance, and cleaning and disinfection.
- In addition to monitoring community transmission using case rates and percent positivity, our school will monitor vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies.

The operational strategy outlined here includes these essential components:

- Consistent implementation of prevention strategies to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2 at HVS
- Ventilation
- Hand washing (both with soap and water and alcohol-based hand sanitizer) and respiratory etiquette
- Staying home when sick and getting tested
- Cleaning and disinfection

Prevention Strategies to Reduce Transmission of SARS-COV-2 in Schools

- **Promoting Vaccination, where applicable**

At HVS, many staff have been vaccinated to promote safe in-person operations.

- Inform teachers, staff, and families locations to get vaccinated, as requested.
- Provide students and families flexible options for excused absence to receive a COVID-19 vaccination and for possible side effects after vaccination.

- **Mask Use**

- o Masks are optional on the school campus.

- Masks are no longer required on school transportation. It remains optional for families to wear a mask on school transportation.

- **Physical Distancing**

- The school has decreased nonessential in-person interactions among teachers, staff and parents during meetings, lunches, and other situations that could lead to adult-to-adult transmission.
- Efforts are made to follow the minimum distances of 3 feet between students.

- **Ventilation**

We have improved ventilation on campus to decrease the number of virus particles that may be in the air. Increasing fresh outdoor air being brought into a building will decrease the concentration of virus particles in a space if there is an infected person there. Strategies include:

- Opening doors and windows when/where possible.
- Use child-safe fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows,
- Changing the filters to air filtration systems.

- **Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

- We teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students, teachers, and staff. If handwashing is not possible, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol is used.
- Encourage students and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and immediately wash their hands after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing.

- **Staying home when sick and getting tested**

- Students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as influenza (flu) or [COVID-19](#), are expected to stay home and refer to their healthcare provider for testing and care. We have offered at-home COVID-19 tests (provided by public health) to parents of children with mild illness.
- If a student becomes sick at school, we isolate the child and call the parent for pick up.
- Everyone with COVID-19 should stay home and [isolate](#) away from other people for at least 5 full days (day 0 is the first day of symptoms or the day of the positive viral test for asymptomatic persons). They should wear a well-fitting mask when around others at home and in public for an additional 5 days. People who have symptoms can end isolation after 5 full days only if they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and if other symptoms have improved. They should continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others at home and in public for 5 additional days.

- **Conduct contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine in collaboration with MCDPH**

- **HVS follows the guidelines of the MCDPH and reinforces staying home when appropriate:** Reinforce that students, staff, and teachers should not report to school when **ill**.
- We educate teachers, staff, and families about when to stay home including following isolation and quarantine guidelines

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities

- HVS cleans and disinfects once a day to remove potential virus that may be on surfaces and reduce any risk of spreading infection.
- If a classroom has a sick individual or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, we clean and disinfect the space.

• Visitors

- HVS limits nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations.

• Food Service and School Meals

- Our School cleans frequently touched surfaces. Surfaces that come in contact with food are washed, rinsed, and sanitized before and after meals.
- We promote hand washing before, after, and during shifts, before and after eating, after using the toilet, and after handling garbage, dirty dishes, or removing gloves.

Additional Public Health Considerations

Disabilities or Other Health Care Needs

Consistent with applicable laws, provide accommodations, modifications, and assistance for students, teachers, and staff with disabilities and other health care needs when implementing COVID-19 safety protocols:

- Work with families to better understand the individual needs of students with disabilities.
- Remain accessible for students with disabilities:
 - Help provide access for [direct service providers](#) (DSP) (paraprofessionals, therapists, early intervention specialists, mental health and healthcare consultants, and others). If DSPs who are not fully vaccinated provide services at more than one location, ask whether any of their other service locations have had COVID-19 cases.
 - Ensure access to services for students with disabilities when developing cohorts.
- Adjust strategies as needed
 - Be aware that physical distancing and wearing masks can be difficult for young children and people with certain disabilities (for example, visual or hearing impairments) or for those with sensory or cognitive issues.
 - Use behavioral techniques (such as modeling and reinforcing desired behaviors and using picture schedules, timers, visual cues, and positive reinforcement) to help all students adjust to transitions or changes in routines.

Our School takes the following actions to control transmission:

- Investigate cases and trace contacts
- Work with MCDPH to carefully investigate each case, including conducting interviews with students, teachers, parents, and/or school staff.
- Encourage compliance with isolation for people who test positive.
- Work with MCDPH to trace in-school close contacts in accordance with applicable federal and state privacy laws of all cases and refer in-school close contacts for diagnostic testing.
- Per MCDPH, and in accordance with CDC and ADHS guidance, close contacts who are not fully vaccinated or have not tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days are to quarantine (stay) at home for up to 5 days. This includes being excluded from in-person school and extracurricular activities.

Unplanned school closures

Our classroom/s or school that experiences uncontrolled spread of COVID-19 may temporarily close for in- person learning with consultation from MCDPH and the Arizona Department of Health Services. If the school is experiencing uncontrolled spread, school leaders will immediately notify MCDPH and collaborate to facilitate increased testing and contact tracing, as necessary.

Diagnostic Testing

- Our school advises students, teachers, and staff to remain home if sick and/or quarantine if they have had close contact with a COVID-19 case. If they are fully vaccinated, an asymptomatic close contact does not need to quarantine.
- If a student, teacher, or staff member becomes sick at school or reports a new COVID-19 diagnosis, our school notifies parents and staff.
- [At home or school rapid antigen self-tests](#) are available to test symptomatic individuals or contacts in quarantine to reduce the time spent in isolation or quarantine. For example, an ill individual who tests positive for COVID-19 needs to follow the AZ Department of Health services isolation and quarantine guidance for schools.

Symptoms to consider for referral for COVID-19 diagnostic testing include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue (not as a sole symptom in the school setting)
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea