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# Madison Central School District

7303 State Route 20, Madison, NY 13402

315-893-1878 • 315-893-7111 Fax

madisoncentralny.org

August 20, 2021

Dear MCS Community-

I know we all entered the summer of 2021 hoping optimistically that COVID-19 infections would continue to decrease and that we would be able to enter the 2021-22 school year somewhat “back to normal.”

Unfortunately, as you know, the Delta variant has led to a surge in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations. In turn, MCS must continue many of the COVID-19 protocols that were in place during the 2020-21 school year. Below is a summary of the major COVID-19 protocols we will implement. You may review our comprehensive Reopening Plan for 2021-22 [here](#). Thank you to our Reopening Committee members for their input on this important plan.

For the most part, we will begin the 2021-22 school year the way we ended the 2020-21 school year. Here are the highlights:

- 5 days per week of in-person instruction for all students
  - We must remain flexible and may shift to other instructional models as determined by the transmission of COVID-19 in our community.
  - Remote learning will only be offered to students:
    - in the case of a school closure related to COVID-19 cases.
    - who have a documented medical history and a doctor’s recommendation to participate in remote learning.
    - who are required to quarantine or isolate because of an exposure or positive COVID-19 case.
    - who have a planned, long-term medical-related absence.
- Students, faculty and staff will be required to wear face coverings at all times except for while eating and during teacher-planned, socially-distanced mask breaks.
  - Face coverings will not be required while outside. Outside classwork is highly encouraged.
  - Face coverings are recommended for student-athletes during the fall sports practices and competitions as tolerated, especially for those who are unvaccinated. They are required for all during team huddles.
- Physical distancing of at least 3 feet will be in place. We will optimize physical distancing as much as possible.
  - Physical distancing of at least 6 feet will be in place for physical education, music classes and during lunch.

*Commitment to Excellence*

- Physical distancing is no longer recommended on school buses. We will, however, provide as much physical distancing as possible and will open windows and roof vents to increase ventilation.
- Daily screening questionnaires and temperature checks are no longer required for students, faculty and staff. Please continue to monitor your children and keep them home if they exhibit any symptoms of illness. Questionnaires will be required for visitors.
- Most hygiene, cleaning/disinfecting and ventilation practices will continue as they did in 2020-21.

Please understand that our plan follows recommendations set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the NY State Education Department (NYSED), the Madison County Board of Health, Oneida County and local health officials and physicians. Some of the documents we considered are:

- NYSED's [Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-2022 School Year](#)
- The Madison County Board of Health's [Letter to School Superintendents](#)
- Oneida County [School Reopening Guidelines: 2021-2022 School Year](#)
- Utica-area Pediatricians' [Letter to School and Community Leaders](#)
- Upstate Medical University [Letter to School Superintendents](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)

The COVID-19 health crisis is continuously changing as are the guidance and requirements we receive. As a result, our plan will remain flexible to accommodate potential changes and may be modified as needed. As adjustments are made throughout the coming school year, it will be our priority to keep you informed.

I know that not all members of our community will agree with the decision to follow CDC and local Department of Health guidance, but my sincere hope is that we will all support that decision and focus our collective energies on teaching and learning. Let's not allow these issues to divide our community as they have around the nation, state and region. Whatever your position on COVID-19 protocols in schools, I think it is important that we all remind ourselves that our common goal, what is best for our students, should unite us, not divide us.

Please plan to join us on either Wednesday, August 25th or Thursday, August 26th at 5:30pm for a virtual meeting during which time we will answer any questions you may have about our plan. Links for the meetings will be posted to our website shortly before the meeting each night.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with you to provide the best possible opportunities for our students.

With thanks,



Jason A. Mitchell  
Superintendent