



**THE
MOUNT
VERNON
SCHOOL**

STUDENT AND FAMILY HANDBOOK

2020-2021 ADDENDUM

The Mount Vernon School Student & Family Handbook 2020-2021 Addendum outlines Health & Well-Being Protocols and Procedures to mitigate the risk of exposure or spread of COVID-19 in a fluid, shifting public health environment.

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is reported to be extremely contagious. The state of medical knowledge continues to evolve, but the virus is believed to spread via person-to-person contact and/or by contact with contaminated surfaces and objects, and even through airborne droplets. People reportedly can be infected and show no symptoms and therefore spread the disease. The exact methods of spread and contraction are unknown, and there is no known treatment, cure, or vaccine for COVID-19. Evidence has shown that COVID-19 can cause serious and potentially life-threatening illness and even death.

The Mount Vernon School (MV or School) cannot prevent employees, students, or other family members from becoming exposed to, contracting, or spreading COVID-19 while being on the Lower Campus, Upper Campus, or in any MV building, or using any MV vehicles or facilities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I understand that, as the School resumes on-site operations, the School has put in place preventative measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19. I am aware of and fully understand that the School cannot guarantee, even with the steps it is taking, that my child(ren) or myself will not be exposed to COVID-19. By voluntarily choosing to bring my child(ren) to campus, I acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and voluntarily assume the risk that my child(ren) or I could be exposed, infected, or re-infected by COVID-19 by attending School and participating in various School activities, and that such exposure or infection may result in severe illness, permanent disability, or death. I further acknowledge that the risk of becoming exposed to or infected by COVID-19 at School could result from the actions, omissions, or negligence of myself and others, including, but not limited to, other children and their families, School employees, volunteers, or other third parties. I recognize that there is still a risk of contracting the virus, particularly in group settings, even if I follow precautions designed to lower the risk of infection.

By sending my child(ren) to the School or if I come to School, I knowingly and voluntarily accept and assume the risk of potential exposure to, and infection of, COVID-19, and the associated risks set forth herein. I understand these risks and willingly choose to accept them.

I hereby forever release and waive my right to bring suit against The Mount Vernon School and Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church, and its owners, officers, directors, managers, officials, trustees, agents, employees, or other representatives in connection with exposure, infection, and/or spread of COVID-19

related to utilizing Mount Vernon's services and premises. I understand that this acknowledgment means I give up my right to bring any claims including for personal injuries, death, disease or property losses, or any other loss, including but not limited to claims of negligence and give up any claim I may have to seek damages, whether known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen.

Student and Family - I acknowledge that my student(s) is/are COVID-19 symptom-free, in accordance with CDC guidelines, and I also acknowledge that if my student(s) tests COVID-19 positive 14 days prior to Orientation, or at anytime during the school year, that I will report the results to the respective Division Office of the School immediately.

I have carefully read and fully understand all standards, protocols, and procedures outlined in the Employee and Student and Family 2020-2021 Handbook Addendum, and I freely and knowingly assume the risk and waive my rights concerning liability.

[Acknowledgment Form](#)



THE MOUNT VERNON SCHOOL

HEALTH & WELL-BEING PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES

GUIDING PRINCIPLES - 2020-2021

1 - MONITORING ILLNESS

We will be monitoring illness – screening and reporting – within our community, as well as tracing and attempting to contain the possible spread of COVID-19 impacting Mount Vernon. If an employee or student is sick, stay at home and seek medical attention to determine if COVID-19 is suspected based on the symptoms demonstrated.

Stay at Home

Employees and students should remain at home based on the following criteria:

- employee or student has fever ≥ 100.4 degrees
- employee or student feels sick
- employee or student has been diagnosed COVID-19 positive
- employee or student has had direct exposure with confirmed COVID-19 positive person

Symptoms

According to the CDC, people with COVID-19 have a wide range of symptoms, ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with any of these symptoms (not exhaustive) may have COVID-19:

- fever or chills
- cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- fatigue
- muscle or body aches
- headache
- new loss of taste or smell
- sore throat
- congestion or runny nose
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhea

The CDC encourages seeking emergency medical care immediately if someone is showing any of these signs (not exhaustive):

- trouble breathing
- persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- new confusion
- inability to wake or stay awake
- bluish lips or face

Daily Screening

The School will implement daily screenings to determine the health and exposure of students, faculty/staff, and anyone entering either the Lower Campus or the Upper Campus.

The School is arranging for kiosks which will be designed to check employee temperatures or administrators with infrared thermometers, as they enter the School. If an employee has a fever of 100.4 degrees or greater and/or has any of the stated symptoms, the employee will be prohibited from working at the School that day.

Daily screening for Preschool through Middle School students will occur in carpool. Students will remain in the vehicle until the student's temperature is checked and screening questions are asked; however, the Early PreSchool students will be screened at the PreSchool building main entrance, under the awning - parents will then bring children to their classrooms and exit via the back hallway exit. If a student has a fever of 100.4 degrees or greater and/or has any of the stated symptoms, the student will be prohibited from attending the School. The nurse or administrator will contact the student's family to determine next steps until returning to the School.

Upon exiting the vehicle, students will maintain physical distance and will enter through the designated building and will not be able to congregate in large groups in advance of the school day.

Upon entering through the Upper School parking lot entrance, Upper School students will be required to utilize the temperature check kiosk and will answer a symptom questionnaire by a Mount Vernon staff member. If a student has a fever greater than 100.4 degrees and/or has any of the stated symptoms, the student will be prohibited from attending school and will follow COVID-19 Confirmed Diagnosis and Exposure guidelines. Once the daily screening is complete, students will be directed to a designated area. The nurse or administrator will contact the family to determine next steps until returning to the School.

Screenings will be administered with care and in a non-discriminatory way. Respecting the privacy and confidentiality of the employee or student, any results will be shared only with essential members of the School leadership team.

Note: All students checking-in to the School after the designated start time for each division will receive a temperature and symptom check by a Mount Vernon staff member.

COVID-19 Confirmed Diagnosis and Exposure

The School will adhere to the following protocol:

- if employee or student with COVID-19 symptoms or confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis
- if employee or student with no COVID-19 symptoms with COVID-19 positive diagnosis
- if direct exposure to employee or student with COVID-19 positive diagnosis
- If an employee or student has a fever or develop COVID-like symptoms while at Mount Vernon

Return to School: Employee or Student with COVID-19 Symptoms or Confirmed COVID-19 Diagnosis

If an employee or student has a fever and/or develops COVID-like symptoms during the School day, the Mount Vernon Response Team (MV staff members) has been trained to follow CDC procedures:

- The student or employee wearing face covering will be sent to a designated isolated area separate from the Clinic (supervised by an adult)
- School will establish a plan to arrange transportation to return home
- School will encourage parents or legal guardian to contact primary care physician and make parents or legal guardian aware of isolation requirements and strategies

Currently, according to the CDC, students or employees with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 have two options during isolation:

- symptom-based strategy--persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:
 - at least 1 day (24 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath); and
 - at least 14 days have passed since symptoms first appeared
- test-based strategy--persons who have COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:
 - 14 days after confirmed COVID-19 Test date, and
 - resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and
 - improvement in respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) and
 - negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected more than 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens)

If COVID-19 is not confirmed through either symptom-based strategy or test-based strategy, the student or employee returns to School when recovered (no longer has fever or symptoms) and has fulfilled CDC home isolation requirements stated.

If a student or employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, the School intends to follow CDC guidelines:

- notify local health officials of a confirmed COVID-19 case and defer to health officials to determine a course of action and potential closure of the School, campus, or building
- close off areas used by any infected person and do not use them until they have been disinfected
- notify parents and faculty/staff members of a confirmed COVID-19 case while maintaining privacy and confidentiality
- inform anyone exposed to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to follow CDC home isolation guidelines based on CDC contact tracing criteria:
 - 6 feet -- determine who has worked within 6 feet of the infected person
 - 15 minutes -- determine if anyone remained within that proximity of the sick person for 15 minutes or more
 - 48 hours -- determine direct exposure for a prolonged period of time during the 48 hours before the infected student or employee exhibited symptoms later
- require anyone identified to stay at home for 14 days after last exposure, maintain physical distancing from others at all times, monitor symptoms aggressively, follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop, and seek medical attention if necessary

In addition, it will be important for the School to have knowledge if a student or employee resides with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, and/or has come in direct contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the prior 14-day period. Tracing diagnosed cases within our community allows us to have a better understanding of the overall school-wide health condition, localized to campus, building, and classroom. In accordance with our contagious disease reporting policy, we ask parents and employees to report such direct exposures or positive tests to the School.

Return to School: Employee or Student with No COVID-19 Symptoms with COVID-19 Positive Diagnosis

According to the CDC, persons who have not had COVID-19 symptoms but tested positive have two options -- a time-based strategy or a test-based strategy -- in order to return to the School:

- Time-based strategy: persons with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions: at least 14 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test. If they develop symptoms, then the symptom-based strategy or test-based strategy should be used.
- Test-based strategy: persons with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue home isolation under the following conditions: 14 days after confirmed COVID-19 test date; negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA or other CDC approved test from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected more than 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens).

Return to School: Direct Exposure to Employee or Student with COVID-19 Positive Diagnosis

If an employee or student is directly exposed to a person with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, the School will follow CDC Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure based on contact tracing criteria.

Generally, exposure criteria according to the CDC is based on 6 feet, 15 minutes, and 48 hours rule:

- 6 feet -- determine who has worked within 6 feet of the infected person
- 15 minutes -- determine if anyone remained within that proximity of the sick person for 15 minutes or more
- 48 hours -- determine direct exposure for a prolonged period of time during the 48 hours before the infected employee or student exhibited symptoms

For Preschool and Lower School classrooms, the School will attempt to have students and employees in self-contained classrooms remain together in a "bubble" for prolonged periods of time throughout the School day with rigorous health and safety protocols and procedures. Therefore, we anticipate any employee or student in the same class with an employee or student who tests positive for COVID-19 will be considered to have had exposure and all employees and students within the self-contained classroom will be required to adhere to the 14-day home isolation guidelines while monitoring symptoms and continuing the program of study virtually. While doing our best to maintain privacy and confidentiality, all parents within a grade-level will be notified, but only employees and students in the specific classroom with direct exposure will have to return home.

In Middle School and Upper School, where the "bubble" of employees and students naturally expands beyond self-contained classrooms and increased movement exists, any employee or student within 6-10 feet for an extended period of time of an employee or student with a COVID-19 positive diagnosis will be considered to have had direct exposure. All Middle School and Upper School students will receive assigned seats, regardless of period and class, to contact trace direct exposure in the most efficient and limited way possible. Therefore, any employee or student identified with direct exposure will adhere to the 14-day home isolation guidelines while monitoring symptoms and continuing the program of study virtually. The School will maintain privacy and confidentiality for any employee or student testing positive for COVID-19.

Symptoms at School: If an employee or student has a fever or develops COVID-like symptoms while at Mount Vernon, employee or student must follow one of three options:

- Contact your local medical provider to provide documentation, identifying your symptoms as non-COVID-19 related, to return to the School, or
- Remain at home for 10 days, or
- Seek testing with negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected more than 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens)
 - If a family chooses this option, documentation (2 tests) will need to be provided to the School. If documentation is not directly provided to Sheldon Staples, the documentation will need to be shared with her
 - If a student tests positive, the student will need to be quarantined for 14 days based on the day of testing

2 - PROMOTING DAILY HYGIENE

Practicing prevention, reinforced through training and signs posted throughout both campuses, hygiene practices will be promoted consistently throughout the day.

Respiratory Etiquette

Respiratory etiquette includes covering coughs and sneezes with tissues or elbows. No-touch trash cans will be readily available to discard tissues.

Handwashing

Upon entering and exiting each building on the Lower Campus and the Upper Campus, students, faculty/staff, and parents will be required to utilize sanitizing stations provided by the School. In addition, when entering and exiting classrooms or restrooms, students and faculty/staff members will be encouraged to use hand sanitizer. Before and after recess, lunch, and other outside activities, all MV community members should wash their hands upon entering any building. Recommended by the CDC, "handwashing strategies include washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the restroom; before eating; and after blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing."

Classrooms

While facility team members will deep clean spaces after hours as well as wipe down door handles and hard surfaces during the day, students will partner with faculty/staff to prioritize regular cleaning practices for desks, equipment, writing utensils, and other classroom materials. Physical Education equipment and Frontier (playground) equipment will be disinfected before classes depart.

Face Coverings

Another element of daily hygiene is face coverings or masks. CDC advises the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. The School will require all students (except age 2 and under) and employees to have a face covering, mask, or face shield at the School at all times. The School has secured MV branded face coverings for every employee and student at Mount Vernon. In addition, the School has secured a face shield for every employee. However, an employee or student may bring their own face covering (solid colors or patterns only -- no graphics, lettering or words permitted).

Lower Campus (Preschool and Lower School) Face Covering Guidelines

- All employees will be required to wear a face covering throughout the school day.

- All students (except age 2 and under) will be required to wear a face covering throughout the day except for independent work, lunch, physical education, recess, and other activities where physical distancing should be maintained. The administration and faculty and staff will make final determination.

Upper Campus (Middle School and Upper School) Face Covering Guidelines

- All employees will be required to wear a face covering throughout the school day.
- Based on the expanded “bubble” and increased movement throughout the day, all Middle School and Upper School students will be required to wear face coverings throughout the day except for independent work, lunch, physical education, recess, or other activities where physical distancing should be maintained. The administration and faculty and staff will make final determination.

Compliance with face coverings and physical distancing will assist the School in mitigating the spread and prevent a larger number of students and employees from being sent home due to direct exposure (see exposure criteria above).

Additional Information

- all students are expected to bring a water bottle each day
- lockers will not be utilized, so students will use backpacks for necessary items
- all students will eat snacks and lunch in smaller groups in designated areas
- self-serve lunch will not be permitted; however, a variety of boxed-lunches will be provided by FLIK each day or students may be allowed to bring their own lunch (see allergy policies in general Student and Family Handbook, 2020-2021)
- students may not share any food or drink with others
- tablets, laptops, smartphones, and earbuds may not be shared

3 - MAINTAINING PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Mount Vernon will adhere to physical distancing guidelines in order to maintain a safe learning environment. According to the CDC, “keeping space between you and others is one of the best tools we have to avoid being exposed to the virus.” Adhering to CDC guidelines and others, to practice physical distancing (not exhaustive list):

- stay at least 6 feet from other people or two arm lengths between workstations
- do not gather in large groups (lunch, chapel, playground, and recess will be reimagined)
- rearrange furniture and seating spaces to maximize space between students, facing the same direction or separated by plexiglass partitions
- follow visual aids in lobbies, hallways, and stairwells that reflect traffic flow
- allow no more than 2-3 students in communal restrooms at one time
- prohibit lockers to be utilized by students on the Upper Campus (Grades 6-12)
- separate Lower Campus (PS-Grade 5) student supplies, containers, and cubbies

4 - EVALUATING RESTRICTIONS

For the 2020-2021 school year, Mount Vernon has established certain restrictions to assist in mitigating exposure and reducing the risk of COVID-19 community spread.

Cafeterias

Cafeterias on both campuses will only be used for preparing and cooking rather than serving food in order to control the health and safety of the environment. Therefore, the distribution of food and delivery of meals to students will take place in a methodical manner. Students will be allowed to bring their own lunch for the 2020-2021 school year but must adhere to the peanut allergy protocol on both campuses.

Note: FLIK, the School's dining partner, has collaborated with Mount Vernon to establish strict kitchen protocols in advance of and throughout the 2020-2021 school year. FLIK staff will be required to wear full PPE prior to entering the kitchen area and wear it during food preparation. In addition, kitchen utensils and cooking equipment will be sanitized after each use, and all kitchen non-food deliveries will be sanitized in the Shipping & Receiving area.

Parents/Family Members/Guardians

Parents will not enter the building to check-in or check-out students before or during the school day. Exceptions: Check-in and check-out by Preschool parents will occur through the Kirk Center. Check-in and check-out by Lower School parents will take place through designated building areas. In addition, parents must schedule an appointment to enter any building. All communications with faculty or staff members should be managed by phone or email. Parent and student-led conferences will occur through a video conferencing platform.

Tutors

Based on general School procedures, tutors will be allowed to engage students on both campuses throughout the school day and year. On the Lower Campus, tutors will have to complete the School's daily screening process. Tutors will meet in designated areas specified by the Lower Campus administrative team. Face coverings will be worn and physical distancing should be maintained. On the Upper Campus, Middle School and Upper School students will engage with tutors through a video conferencing platform instead of meeting in person. Spaces will be designated by the Upper Campus administrative teams. The Academic Resource Services team will continue to coordinate time and locations for students and tutors where applicable and provide assistance to families.

Visitors

Protocols of screening and face coverings will be required for visitors entering either campus including substitutes, college representatives, vendors, or other external individuals to Mount Vernon.

Programs

Due to physical distancing requirements and large group restrictions, programs on both campuses such as chapel, Interim Term travel, retreats, class trips, expeditionary learning experiences, field trips, and dances will be reimagined for the 2020-2021 school year. In addition, the School will work in cooperation and coordination with the Georgia High School Association regarding athletic practices and competition. Performing arts rehearsals and performances will follow similar guidelines.

5 - PRIORITIZING FACILITY SPACES

Mount Vernon has established heightened deep-cleaning and disinfection protocols. The School has installed in the HVAC system, in each building, an ionization system intended to remove pathogens, including SARS-CoV-2. Utilizing EPA-certified products, the School will disinfect all buildings and equipment on the Lower Campus and Upper Campus prior to anyone returning to Mount Vernon in August. Once the 2020-2021 year begins, frequent sanitization of soft and hard surfaces, electronics, and equipment will be implemented. Also, the deep-cleaning and disinfection protocol will also include the safe disposal of daily clinical waste, sanitizing mail and packages as well as School vehicles.

More specifically, the School intends to follow the CDC, Georgia Department of Education, and Georgia Department of Public Health recommendations:

- Clean, sanitize, and disinfect frequently touched surfaces multiple times per day
- Avoid use of items that are not easily cleaned, sanitized, or disinfected
- Verify and maintain that all ventilation systems continue to operate properly
- Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep products away from students
- Provide hand soap and sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, paper towels, and no-touch trash cans in bathrooms, classrooms and/or frequently trafficked areas
- Disable all water fountains requiring touch and install touchless water fountains

6 - PROMOTING WELL-BEING

Equally important, the social, emotional, and spiritual health of our students, staff, and community is one of our highest priorities during this unprecedented, evolving situation. A daily school routine for connecting with teachers and students can increase feelings of safety and security, and therefore, the School will cultivate time and space for students and staff members to reflect, interact, and process their experiences throughout this journey. Mount Vernon's Counseling Services, Academic Resource Services, IDEA Department, and Spiritual Life teams on both campuses will be ready to serve and support our community during the 2020-2021 school year. While weekly Chapel will be reimaged under physical distancing guidelines, the School remains committed to the anchor of our mission statement, "Grounded in Christian values" -- grounded in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Nurturing these values through questions, stories, and building new relationships, may we continue to inspire one another through the work we undertake together to design a better world, to search for maximum impact, and to advance inclusion, diversity, and equity at the School.