



Updated COVID Protocols

August 11, 2021

Dear Paideia Families,

I wanted to share a word with you as well as the updated Covid protocols for the school:

Given the ongoing nature of the world that we live in, especially as it relates to Covid-19, I wanted to begin by reviewing our theme for the year, *Seek First*. As we continue to grow as a community, I want to remind everyone that we are called to seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness and not to be anxious. As we see the numbers of Covid rising around us, it is tempting to become anxious. I will admit, there is a strong possibility that we will see a number of people in our community contract Covid in the coming weeks, but God instructs us not to be anxious.

As we discuss the new Covid policy that was proposed by the Covid Task force this last Friday and approved by the Board of Trustees yesterday, we are not anxious. The truth is that we want to give you, the parents, the opportunity to make wise choices for your children. The heart of the new policies is built around that reality. I will also admit that there is no possible way to create policies that will feel right for everyone, sometimes even most people, but we are striving to do what we feel is best for the school and for you as families.

What I ask is that regardless of how we each feel about the policy, it is important that we all treat each other as students, employees, parents and families with love and respect. Scripture teaches us that we should think of others as better than ourselves. My hope is that as we go through what will likely be an uncertain time together that we would seek to honor one another in love. On campus, we will seek to correct behavior that is unkind as it relates to family choices regarding mask wearing, quarantining, distance learning, or otherwise and would ask for you to encourage the same in your own homes. Additionally, as these decisions were made with the best interest of our students at heart, I am reminded that we are called to live without fear.

The good news is, that regardless of the variant, young people seem to be the least affected by Covid, for which we can be grateful. Personally I am continuing to monitor data almost daily and our task force and board are committed to providing policies that will offer a safe place for your students to learn. Our goal in the end is not to eradicate something that will not be eradicated by our human means, but rather to Seek First God's kingdom and his righteousness and to live lives set apart for his glory and for the good of the world in which we live. Glory be to the Father, Glory be to the Son, Glory be to the Spirit, Three in One. As it was in the beginning, it will be forever, amen.


Mark Hamilton, Headmaster

PAIDEIA
ACADEMY

We commit to monitor closely the happenings in our community and to revisit/change these recommendations as needed.

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The Task Force Recommendation

The COVID Taskforce met on Friday afternoon (8/6/2021) to discuss masking, school activities, and quarantining procedures.

Last year, the decision was made to rely on the CDC when making our policies and procedures. Due to the fact that CDC has shown to be largely variable and uncertain in their recommendations, the Taskforce is recommending that we employ our own minds to do exactly what we teach our upper schoolers to do in decision making.

We wish to be students of the data ourselves and use logic and the Holy Spirit's guidance to form our own conclusions for how we can best lead our students and families in safety as well as upholding the values and virtues that our school seeks. We realize the science is hard to follow and that many choose studies and statistics to fit the narrative that they wish to perpetuate. We seek to be different. We commit to monitor closely the happenings in our community and to revisit/change these recommendations as needed.

Most of all, we realize that there are opinions at each end of the spectrum and many in between. It will prove hard to provide guidance and policy that will please everyone. However, we seek to please Christ alone as we suggest recommendations that we feel will both keep our children and families safe, while being able to proceed with the traditions, activities, and routines that are foundational to our school.

Please see the following pages for our recommendations.

Blessings,

The COVID Taskforce



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Masking

We propose to be a mask-optional campus. We feel that this decision, like many others, should be left up to each individual family and not mandated.

Assemblies, lunches, and other large gatherings

We propose to continue on with these gatherings as in years past. Last year, the decision was made to forgo these gatherings in pursuit of safety. An overarching feeling of isolation and disconnection was apparent from students, staff, and families alike. During these gatherings, **every effort is made to keep classrooms together** which will decrease excessive co-mingling of groups. When able, we feel it is reasonable to **move these larger gatherings to an outside location.** However, we wish to keep on with them as planned as well as other hall events unless we see substantial community evidence that would suggest otherwise.

Quarantining

Last year, per the CDC guidelines, we quarantined sick as well as exposed/asymptomatic individuals – some more than once. **While we agree unanimously in continuing to quarantine symptomatic and COVID positive individuals, we disagree that we should continue in doing the same with asymptomatic ones.**

It would be our recommendation that we would dismiss the quarantining of exposed individuals unless the exposure is from their direct household. In the event that someone would have an indirect exposure (outside of their household) they will be advised to monitor for symptoms and to return to school as normal unless symptoms arise. Any family who is uncomfortable with this and seeks to quarantine will be allowed to do so for the recommended time by the CDC and will continue their education as able on the OWL.

For a direct exposure (someone in the home): In this circumstance, we would still advise a 10 day quarantine (7 with a negative test) if they are unable to remain distant from the contact. If there can be distance from the contact in the home the students would monitor for symptoms and return to school as usual.

We acknowledge that this is in disagreement with the current CDC guidelines. **We commit to strict monitoring of individuals at school to make sure that illness is not present.** Children sent to the clinic for symptoms will be evaluated and sent home promptly if felt necessary. We believe that this will help us to maintain continuity of learning as well as removing burden to families in keeping children home unnecessarily.



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Final Thoughts

In addition to these policies, **we remain committed to cleaning the school regularly** and plan to use methods, including spraying rooms with hypochlorous acid (the same resource used last year), in order to help with any airborne particles after school each day.

Additionally, we believe one of the primary reasons we were successful last year as a school in not missing any days was **your commitment as families to keep sick children home**. We believe this commitment to serve each other with love made an enormous difference for our school, so thank you all for your help in this way.

Finally, **we will communicate about positive Covid cases anonymously within classrooms, grades, or divisions of the school as they occur** in an effort to give you the opportunity to watch your own children.

As always, your questions or concerns are welcome. Please bring them directly to Mr. Hamilton in regards to this policy.

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