



Pacem School

Celebrating Curiosity - Igniting Passions

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Dear Pacem Community,

I am writing to you to outline our COVID policies for this fall. I know that many of us had hoped last spring that we would be able to have “school as normal” this fall, but sadly, with the rise of the delta variant, and the huge uptick of cases in Vermont, this is not currently possible. Despite this setback, I have great faith in this community that we will all keep each other safe and maintain our close connections with each other despite the circumstances. In the absence of guidance from the State of Vermont we are basing our policies on guidance from the CDC in conjunction with epidemiologists from Dartmouth. As this disease is evolving, our guidelines will no doubt evolve as well. For more information on the delta variant (including slightly different symptoms) please see:

[https://www.healthline.com/health-news/what-does-the-delta-variant-look-like-in-kids#What-are-the-top-symptoms-of-the-Delta-variant-in-children?](https://www.healthline.com/health-news/what-does-the-delta-variant-look-like-in-kids#What-are-the-top-symptoms-of-the-Delta-variant-in-children?hpid=hp-top-news-story%3Ahomepage%2Fstory)

In order to maintain as normal a school year as possible and to minimize the number of days missed by students and teachers, **it is essential that every member of our school community commits to keep one another safe and healthy.**

At this time, here is what you should expect at the start of the school year:

What to expect at school:

- We will hold all our classes as indicated on the weekly schedule indoors in our regular classrooms.
- Our classroom ventilation system will be on whenever anyone is in the building allowing for a complete exchange of air over 3 times per hour.
- Students will be allowed to sit where they choose in the classroom on a daily basis but will be expected to maintain a distance of three to four feet from each other most of the time. (Spacing may be greater in classrooms with our youngest students who are mostly not vaccinated.)
- We will require universal masking of everyone when they are inside the building.
- We will not require masking outside unless we are doing an activity that requires us to be close together.
- We will eat outside at least during the fall.
- Weekly COVID testing will be conducted at school, provided free by the state of Vermont. We expect all unvaccinated students to participate if at all possible (testing will take place on Mondays), and strongly encourage other students and faculty to participate as well.

What our teachers will do:

- All adults (teachers, volunteers, and part-time instructors) who are working with students in the building will be fully vaccinated.
- Teachers are committed to practicing mitigation measures outside of work hours – this includes masking indoors in public places and avoiding high risk situations.
- Teachers will stay home when sick and be tested if symptomatic.

What we are asking of our students and families:

- All families must inform us of their children's vaccination status using this form: <https://forms.gle/taL99MjHbUX79Xft5> (This information will be kept confidential but will help us to plan.)
- We strongly encourage all students to be vaccinated as soon as they are eligible. This is the single best way that we can ensure the health of every member of this community.
- Read about the Vermont COVID testing program at <https://www.cic-health.com/consent/vt> and use the link on that page to give (or withhold) consent for your child to be tested at school.
- We ask that all families do what they can to minimize their exposure to COVID-19. This is especially important as there is now "substantial" community transmission in Washington County as defined by the CDC. Specific things you can do to keep us all healthy include:
 - Only attending large gatherings that are outside
 - Having all members of your family mask in indoor public spaces
 - Keeping your child home if they are sick. (We will not be doing health checks, however if students have visible symptoms at school, they will be asked to go home. If you are unsure if your child is sick, please consult with your healthcare provider. In addition, the Vermont pediatric flowchart is very helpful. You can find it here: http://contentmanager.med.uvm.edu/docs/uvmch_covidpediatric_flowchart_04_19_21/vchip-documents/uvmch_covidpediatric_flowchart_04_19_21.pdf?sfvrsn=9a922d7c_2)
 - Avoid gathering with anyone who has symptoms of illness
 - Keeping your child at home if anyone in your family is quarantined because they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
 - Minimizing out-of-state travel to areas with high COVID transmission rates.
- Consider having your children use high quality and better fitting masks. (See, for example, <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/02/03/962197192/5-hacks-to-make-your-face-mask-more-protective>)

I cannot foretell the future, and thus do not know how long we will need to continue these mitigation measures. Throughout the school year, we will make the best choices we can based

on the case rates in Vermont, and the vaccination rates both in Vermont as a whole and in our Pacem community.

I know that this is not how any of us hoped that we would start this school year, but I think our lives at school will feel substantially more normal than last year. I'm looking forward to teaching students seated around a (more spread out) table, Croissant (our library dragon) is looking forward to welcoming students back to the library (and the library comfy chairs!), and our makerspace will be open for our use. I think we will all enjoy a greater freedom of movement in our space. In addition, I know that we will all do our part to keep everyone healthy and safe. Our Pacem community is deeply committed to caring and compassion for each other as every one of us has demonstrated over the last year and a half. I am confident that those attributes will continue to see us through these challenging times.

We are asking that every guardian read over these guidelines with their children and agree to abide by them by completing this form: <https://form.jotform.com/212295278173056>

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any concerns or questions.

Warmly,

Lexi Shear