



Smart, Healthy, Holy:

A Home & School Partnership

Guidelines for Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School - August 2021

INTRODUCTION

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic School exists to provide a “holistic Catholic Christian environment that serves the soul, mind and body of each child.” This is best accomplished when children are present in the classroom, having full access to not only the physical and educational resources available, but having the opportunity to interact with other members of the community who can impact their faith formation and lead them to “an encounter with the Living Christ”.

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. Arizona has experienced two separate surges in cases of infection (June 2020 and January 2021). Overall, the number of new COVID-19 cases reported daily, hospitalizations and deaths have decreased significantly since January 2021. In mid-July, case rates began to rise owing to the circulation of the highly communicable Delta variant. This variant accounted for 3% of new cases in Arizona in May 2021 and 29% of new cases in June and July 2021 ([AZ COVID-19 Sequencing Dashboard](#)).

Maricopa County remains in the category of “substantial” spread, as do the communities that surround Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School. In the absence of medications to effectively treat illness caused by the SARS-Co-V-2 (COVID) and current age parameters for vaccine eligibility, strategies to limit spread of infection must continue to be employed. No single action, or set of actions, will completely eliminate the risk of illness. The implementation of several coordinated interventions will allow for the healthiest environment possible.

These Guidelines are intended for the opening of school on August 10, 2021 and will be amended in accordance with public health guidance.

MONITORING of HEALTH INDICATORS

Updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) specifically for schools, emphasizes the need for monitoring of the local “community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies (e.g., physical distancing, screening testing)” ([Updated Guidance for Schools 07/09/21](#)).

MONITORING of HEALTH INDICATORS (continued)

1. **Community Data** -The Maricopa County Schools Dashboard monitors case counts of COVID-19 and the percent positivity for a given zip code, city, school and school district. Additionally, Maricopa County Public Health has developed and launched a Dashboard that tracks vaccine administration within communities and by demographics.
 - Geographical areas that contribute to making up the OLMC school community were determined prior to beginning the 2020-21 school year. These remain relatively stable.
 - 45% of the student population represent the Tempe cohort.
 - 18.1% of the student population represent the Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert cohort.

2. **OLMC Data** - Analysis of attendance records, specifically absences due to illness, for school years 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 have been completed.
 - From September 2020 - February 2021 there was a **45.4% decrease** in absenteeism due to illness in comparison to September 2019 - February 2020.
 - There is a 42% drop in absenteeism due to illness when compared to the 2018-19 school year.
 - Students on quarantine were not considered “ill”. From August 2020 - May 2021, 136 students were placed in quarantine.
 - 83% of quarantines were due to contact with someone who was COVID+ outside of school.
 - 17% of quarantines were due to contact with someone at school who was COVID+.
 - There were **0 cases of transmission of illness from a school exposure.**

ACTION PLAN

1. All activities associated with the “normal” operation of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic School will be resumed (Mass attendance, sports, extracurricular clubs, etc.)

2. The Maricopa County Department of Public Health will continue to provide guidance and recommendations in accordance with CDC guidelines. Those practices identified by healthcare professionals with expertise in public/community health as being “best practices” for limiting the spread of respiratory illness, and based on what is reasonable, practical, and feasible for our community, will be implemented.

ACTION PLAN (continued)

3. Routine cleaning of classrooms, restrooms, common areas will continue, using EPA approved products, throughout the school year. Classrooms, restrooms and common areas will be disinfected weekly.
4. Upgrades to the HVAC systems in 2020 included needlepoint bipolar ionization (NPBI), new filters, and the sanitization and treatment of all coils.
5. Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Being vaccinated is the best way to stop the spread of infection and the evolution of variants.
 - a. Vaccination is strongly encouraged for those eligible, but is not required.
 - b. Currently, only those 12 years of age and older are eligible to receive a vaccine. 19.2% of OLMC students are vaccine eligible. Though it is not required, parents may submit documentation of their students receiving COVID vaccine with other immunization records. The student's individual electronic health record will be updated accordingly.
 - c. The percentage of teachers and staff fully vaccinated is high.
6. Practices that have been identified as being vitally important in controlling spread of respiratory illnesses are: **Hand and respiratory hygiene, physical distancing, and limiting contact with those who are sick.**
 - Hand Hygiene
 - a. There will be a continued emphasis on hand hygiene and handwashing throughout the school year.
 - b. More frequent and deliberate washing of hands among students, staff and visitors will continue to be encouraged.
 - c. Hand washing at the stations on the south side of the field bathrooms will be used for supervised handwashing following recess periods.
 - d. A video demonstrating good handwashing technique is available on OLMC's YouTube Channel:  Hand Washing

ACTION PLAN (continued)

- Hygiene/MasksRespiratory
 - a. Masks are **not necessary** for anyone when **outdoors**, engaged in physical movement activities, eating, or drinking .
 - b. Masks **will be necessary** when **indoors**, in close proximity to one another (**less than 3 feet**), engaged in “face-to-face” play, or close conversations.
 - c. Good respiratory hygiene includes the covering of coughs and sneezes with a tissue, when not wearing a mask, and immediately washing hands after blowing the nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - d. Visitors will wear masks when in classrooms and interacting with students.
 - e. Masks are optional when attending all-school Mass.
 - f. Parents may choose to have their student (any age) wear a face covering for the duration of each school day. If a parent chooses this, the parent must work their child, at home, to practice wearing the mask for extended periods of time.
 - g. Parents are asked to notify the School Nurse if their child has a medical condition which precludes mask wearing.
 - h. An educational video is available on OLMC’s YouTube Channel demonstrating proper mask etiquette: [How to use your mask](#) .

- Physical Distancing
 - a. A physical distance between students of at least 3 feet will be maintained within classrooms.
 - b. All persons on campus will be encouraged to maintain physical distancing to the extent possible.

ILLNESS SURVEILLANCE

1. The School Nurse is the designated point of contact for Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School and can be reached at (480) 967-5567 X1
2. The School Nurse will be responsible for daily tracking of attendance and monitoring for trends.
3. Home is the first point of screening for illness. All members of the OLMC school community are expected to monitor for signs of illness and **STAY HOME** if they are sick.

ILLNESS SURVEILLANCE (continued)

- This would include checking for fever (temperature greater than 99.9°) and/or symptoms like cough, congestion, runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, or

other indications of illness, prior to coming to school. The “**Daily Screening Tool**” (p. 7) should be used for this purpose.

- A parent/caregiver who is not able to screen their child prior to bringing him/her to school, may request the School Nurse perform the assessment. Please call the Nurse’s Office for guidance and direction as to where to bring the student. A parent/caregiver will need to wait with the student until the student is cleared.
 - It is understood that when a parent, or designated caretaker, brings a child to school, they are assuring the child is well and fit for school.
4. Families/staff should self-report to the School Nurse if they, or their student, have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or through contact tracing, were exposed to someone with COVID-19. The School Nurse will notify Maricopa County Department of Public Health in accordance with Guidelines for School Reporting.
 5. Those identified as a “close contact” of a COVID+ person will need to follow the quarantine guidelines (as established by MCDPH) in place at that time.
 6. Screening of staff, students, visitors and others coming to the school campus, for fever and symptoms, may be instituted in accordance with current public health recommendations and based upon community prevalence of illness.

MANAGEMENT OF ILLNESS

1. Any teacher, staff member or student who becomes ill at school with any respiratory symptom that is not known to be part of a chronic condition (i.e. asthma, allergies) will be separated from other staff/children and excluded from the school as soon as the parent/guardian can pick them up. Parents/guardians are expected to pick up an ill child within 30 - 45 minutes of notification.
2. A person displaying symptoms associated with COVID will be referred to their primary care provider for assessment.
3. A resource list for PCR testing for COVID will be provided.
4. A person who tests positive for COVID should follow current Maricopa County Department of Public Health Guidelines: [Home Isolation Guidance](#)

MANAGEMENT OF ILLNESS (continued)

5. In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, the School Nurse and Administration will notify school families if there is an exposure at school while

maintaining confidentiality.

6. Care of ill students and staff will be guided by **Guidelines for Infection Surveillance and Control During 2020 Pandemic (COVID) for Healthcare Staff/Care of Students and Staff that Become Ill at School or Arrive Sick**
 - a. Any person who displays symptoms of respiratory illness: **Cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell** or other symptoms identified as being associated with COVID will immediately be separated and placed in a designated “sick room” (isolation). _____
 - b. Establishment of a Sick Room
 - The Nurse’s Office will be used as a sick room as it is self contained, has a single door which can be closed, has furnishings that can be easily disinfected, and allows for the relative separation of the ill person from those who are not ill.
 - A sign will be placed on the outer door to clearly communicate the use of room for care of a sick person. Sick Room Sign
 - c. The use of facemasks for persons with respiratory symptoms and fever over 100.4 is strongly recommended. A single-use, disposable facemask will be used if it is developmentally appropriate and not medically contraindicated.
 - d. One bathroom in the office, across from the Nurse’s Office has been designated to be used by the nurse for a person who is in the sick room.
 - e. The nurse will wear a facemask, eye protection and gloves while providing care for the ill person. PPE has been secured through MCDPH.
 - f. While providing care for a person in a sick room (isolation), the School Nurse will limit interaction with other students or staff. All non-urgent, routine visits to the Health Office must be halted. If necessary, the medical needs of other students may temporarily be met by another member of the school staff as designated by the Principal.
 - g. When exiting the building, the ill person will use a path which limits exposure to other people, through the back door of the office and out to the parking lot.
7. Upon notification of a positive test, the School Nurse will begin contact tracing and notify the Maricopa County Department of Public Health in accordance with current protocols. MCDPH will continue the case investigation and provide guidance and recommendations for further action.

Smart, Healthy & Holy

Daily Screening Tool for Students

Good Morning! How are you feeling today?



Do you have:

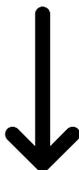
- *A New Cough?**
- *Congestion/Runny Nose?**
- *Chills/Fever (temp is 99.9° or above)?**
- *Headache?**
- *Body Aches?**
- *Vomiting or Diarrhea?**
- *Can't Smell or Taste?**
- *Someone you live with that has COVID?**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>



NO symptoms/Feeling GOOD

YES symptoms/Feeling BAD



Head to School!



STAY HOME!



Call the Nurse's Office at (480) 967-5567 X1