



Parents,

The Return to School Taskforce met on Wednesday, August 11, for our regular evaluation of the Return to School policies. The Taskforce consists of Dr. Greg Carlyle, Dawn Dawkins, Sean Harrison, Dr. Kelly Trout, Dr. Susanne Cunningham, Dr. Andrea Morris, Pam Abrams, Pam Short, Chris Ball and Douglas Ford.

Due to the surge in cases of COVID-19 in both Lowndes County and the state of Mississippi, especially in pediatric patients, the decision was made to require masks for elementary (K4-6th grade) students. This decision was not made lightly, yet it is our duty and top priority to attempt to ensure for the physical well-being of our students, faculty, and staff. It was decided that because children under 12 years of age are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccination, masking, coupled with social distancing and other policies implemented by the Taskforce, is the best option to protect these students at this time. Implementing policies that allow school to be conducted as normally as possible, while simultaneously attempting to protect the health and well-being of the Heritage family during the ongoing pandemic, are top priorities for the Taskforce. As such, we will be reevaluating our policies frequently as circumstances change.

It was also decided that a change was needed in our exposure policy. Currently, any exposure should be handled by parents checking for symptoms. We have made a modification to this policy. If a household member of any student, faculty, or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, then that student, faculty, or staff member will not be allowed on campus until a note is received from that individual's primary care physician or licensed health care provider allowing them to return to school.

Below you will find this year's Return to School plan that reflects these updates. **These changes will go into effect on Monday, August 16, 2021.** Once again, this plan may change based on guidance or mandates from local, state, or federal government officials.

Thank you,

Sean Harrison
H.A. Taskforce Chair

Dr. Greg Carlyle
H.A. Headmaster



Heritage Academy Return to School

2021-22

Updated 8/13/21

Mask Policy:

Students in grades K4-6th grades will be required to wear masks while inside the building. Any visitors to the elementary will also be required to wear masks. Any student presenting a note from their primary care physician or licensed health care provider exempting them from wearing a mask will be required to wear a face shield.

Heritage Academy will recommend that students in grades 7-12 wear masks when inside the building. Teachers and staff will support mask wearing.

***Due to MUW policy, students enrolled in Dual Credit Biology during 4th period will be required to wear a mask.**

Exposure:

If a student or faculty member tests positive, a letter will be sent to the grade level and athletic teams that could have potentially been exposed. Parents will be urged to monitor their students for symptoms. Common symptoms include fever of 100.4 degrees and higher, a new cough, and loss of taste or smell. If a household member of any student, faculty, or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, then that student, faculty, or staff member will not be allowed on campus until a note is received from that individual's primary care physician or licensed health care provider allowing them to return to school.

Positive Tests:

Any student or teacher who receives a positive test for COVID-19 will be required to present a note from their primary care physician or licensed health care provider in order to return to school.

Distancing in the classroom:

In accordance with CDC recommendations, we will maintain three (3) feet of distancing whenever possible.

Screening:

The onus of screening will now fall on parents. Parents are strongly advised to check their students' temperatures at home and keep home any students with a temperature above 100.4 degrees.

Disinfecting:

Teachers will continue to disinfect desks between each class period with HOCL. This not only showed great success against COVID-19 last year, but we saw several other decreases in absences due to sicknesses such as Strep and Flu. Fogging during teacher off periods will also still be conducted.

Visitors to the School:

While still limited, parent volunteers (especially in the elementary) will be welcomed back to campus. Only volunteers that have been scheduled to come will be permitted. **Visitors to the elementary building will be required to wear a mask while inside the building.** Parents will not be allowed at this time to do things such as come eat lunch with their students.

Break and Lunch:

Heritage Academy will resume normal break and lunch in the SAB (high school) and in Fitzner Hall (elementary), keeping 3 feet distancing at all times and remaining in grade level groupings.

Vaccinations:

Heritage Academy encourages students and faculty to receive the vaccination for COVID-19, but will not require vaccination. Nor will the school inquire regarding the status of vaccination.

4th, 5th, and 6th Grade:

The elementary school will return to having the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades rotating classes as opposed to teachers rotating.

Elementary Specials:

Students will return to going to the art, music, and STEM classrooms for specials.

Assemblies:

The high school will return to hosting live assemblies in the gym. Grade levels will sit together and maintain three (3) feet of social distancing at all times.

Open House and Parent of Student Athlete Orientation:

The school will return to having these in person.

Field Trips:

The school will wait at least one month into the school year before deciding if field trips are a safe option for our students.