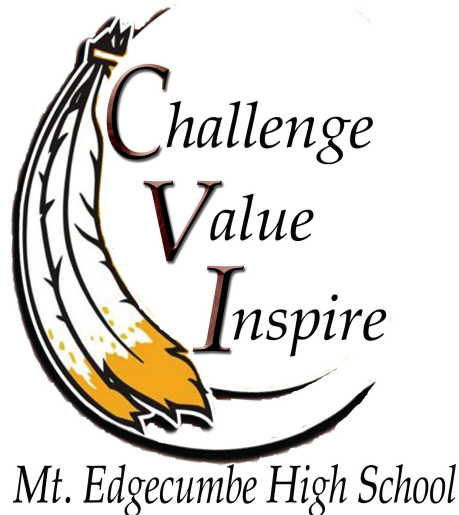


# MEHS COVID Mitigation Plan for 2022-2023

This plan represents the MEHS plan to operate in a safe manner in response to COVID-19



The plan has been developed to align with the Alaska Smart Start Framework and organized under the categories of:

**Conditions of Learning**

**Continuity of Learning**

**Capacity of Learning**

MEHS is proud to have conducted school in person for both of the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years. We were able to revise the plan throughout each year to ease up on mitigations as guidance is provided and vaccinations become increasingly available. The start of the 2022-2023 school year saw the greatest easing of Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, which shifts the responsibility of COVID mitigation from the school institutions to the individual and families that attend.

As a residential school, Mt. Edgecumbe High School has responsibility for the health and safety of our students 24 hours a day, 7 days of the week while school is in session. Residential schools are classified as a low-risk congregate setting, with the recommendation to follow the generation population guidelines for isolation, management of exposures, and recommendations under COVID-19 community levels. In specific circumstances where the student population may be at risk for getting very sick with COVID-19, schools may opt to follow isolation and quarantine guidance for high-risk congregate settings, which includes recommendations of a 10-day period for isolation. Schools and ECE programs should balance the potential benefits of following that guidance with the impact these actions would have on student well-being, such as the ability to participate in in-person instruction, food service access, and social interactions.

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# Introduction

We have created this plan to provide a safe environment for the operation of Mt. Edgecumbe High School during the COVID-19 pandemic. Information about the virus and best practices to prevent and mitigate the virus will be monitored to keep this plan aligned to current recommendations. This plan will be adjusted with additional information or recommendations by the State of Alaska or the Center for Disease Control. MEHS has learned a lot through the first two years of operation during COVID-19, being able to respond to specific situations and make decisions. We certainly invite parents and other stakeholders to contact us with any questions.

## Guiding Principles

In moving forward in the uncertain times of Covid-19, we have identified three guiding principles that will serve as priorities as decisions are made. These are aligned with the values of MEHS.

### **Relationships**

### **Learning**

### **Safety**

Throughout our response to this pandemic, we will be committed to maintaining relationships with our students and families, providing quality learning opportunities for our students, and maintaining a safe environment for students and staff.

## Mitigation Plan Implementation

A core administrative team will continuously consult with public health and MEHS/SEARHC health providers to consider the risks and benefits of implemented mitigations. Adjustments may be made to mitigations with this consultation under a few conditions:

1. An individual situation that is extenuating and can be mitigated for safety outside of the plan,
2. When data suggests current mitigation efforts are not producing the intended results, and
3. When guidance changes.

Safety will always be a top priority, but the team will also consider the benefit of an activity for students. The goal will be to implement procedures and practices that support safety and allow for an environment conducive to quality learning and a healthy residential setting.

## Health Access

Mt. Edgecumbe High School is very pleased to have a working partnership with Southeast Alaska Health Corporation (SEARHC). Through this partnership, MEHS has a clinic on campus dedicated to serving students. The MEHS clinic is staffed with SEARHC health care providers and is open from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm each day. The full service hospital is next door and

referrals are seamless between the clinic and the full system. This relationship is key in the health and safety plan during the COVID-19 time. SEARHC will provide assistance and consultation in covid testing, screening, providing care for any student under suspicion, and making any necessary referrals. They are also involved in the full plan and consult on all prevention measures.

## Vaccination Availability

Vaccination is a very effective mitigation. MEHS makes vaccination available to all students whose parents give permission through the partnership with SEARHC and communicates opportunities to staff.

Eligible students are provided specialized vaccination clinics to keep up with CDC recommendations. A special clinic will be set when CDC guidelines recommend updated vaccinations, but requests will be honored throughout the year with MEHS Health Clinic connecting requesting students to community vaccination clinics.

## COVID Testing and Quarantine

MEHS will have COVID-19 testing capacity on campus. For the 2022-2023 school year, students will be tested at the start of the year and only when presenting with COVID or respiratory symptoms. The testing protocol may be adjusted with continued medical information and guidance.

**Entry and initial two weeks:** Students will be encouraged to self-test at home within 3 days of coming to campus. Students will take a COVID-19 test immediately upon arrival and again 5 days after arrival.

Mask wearing will be optional but encouraged during the first two weeks of school. We do not plan to limit students to crews (cohorts). It is important for all students and staff to respect individuals' choices to wear or refrain from wearing masks.

**Routine Testing:** Throughout the school year, MEHS will not plan to conduct COVID-19 routine screening testing. A schedule for initiating routine testing will be determined through recommendations by COVID Response team that includes health care provider input, as needed.

**As needed Testing:** Any student with concerning symptoms or potential contact with an infected person may be required to take a test.

**Quarantine accompanying testing:** Students with presented symptoms who test positive for COVID-19 will be moved into a designated quarantine room for at least 5 days. When the student is fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication, the student may

leave quarantine but is expected to wear a mask in public for the remainder of the 10-day quarantine period (usually 5 days).

## COVID Screening and Health Hotline

Each year, regardless of COVID, MEHS students participate in a health screening to help MEHS and SEARHC identify opportunities to support students to meet their physical and mental health needs. This screening will continue and support services beyond COVID will be set up to provide students access to health providers. The information below is specific to COVID-19.

**Health Hotline** A student with symptoms or concerns may call the health hotline to get further direction from the MEHS health clinic. A staff member may also call the health hotline for guidance on whether they may safely serve in the work environment. If the provider feels the staff member needs further assessment, they will be referred or recommended to stay home.

**COVID Assessment Station:** Any student who has suspicious symptoms or may have been exposed to the COVID virus will be directed to a special COVID Station and met by a health care provider for assessment. This station is set away from the regular health clinic to avoid any contact with students accessing the health clinic to access non-covid care and get regular medication.

### Self Screening Covid Questions

Screening questions related to COVID-19 symptoms or potential exposure including:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore Throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees fahrenheit
- Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19

## COVID Prevention Measures

Prevention measures will be encouraged by all students and staff. Key prevention measures will include: (1) mask wearing for mitigation, (2) social distancing, (3) increased cleaning and handwashing, and (4) ventilation strategies.

## Masks as layered Mitigation

We are not requiring universal masking as we begin the school year. We will be supporting the use of masks by those who choose this layer of protection.

- Students who test positive for covid will be required to isolate for a minimum of 5 days.
  - If after 5 days they have been fever-free for 24 hours and symptoms are improving, students may be released from isolation.
  - Once released from isolation, students will be required to wear a mask around others through Day 10.
- Students will not be required to quarantine if they are considered a close contact but will be asked to wear a mask for 10 days and will be tested 5 days after exposure, sooner if symptoms.

## Social Distancing, Handwashing & Respiratory Etiquette

We will not require universal social distancing practices on campus for the 2022-2023 school year. It is important for all students and staff to respect individuals' varying levels of comfort with physical proximity to others. The guidance may be adjusted based on circumstances, new information, or new guidance.

Quarantine- Cafeteria food will be delivered to rooms for any student in quarantine. Additional snacks will be provided to quarantine students.

**Hands:** Students and staff will be taught and reminded to wash their hands effectively and to do so frequently. This involves 20 seconds of vigorous handwashing with the use of running water. Students and staff will be reminded to keep their hands to themselves as much as possible and limit handling shared materials. As a campus we will adopt elbow bumps and waves to replace handshakes.

**Face:** Students and staff will be taught about how the virus spreads through your breath. They will be reminded to not touch the face and to cover the mouth with a face mask whenever feasible. Students and staff will be taught and reminded to cough or sneeze into a tissue, elbow, mask, or other measure of mitigating the spread of germs. If resorting to the use of their hands, students and staff will follow effective handwashing procedures.

**Feet:** Students and staff will be taught about social distancing and provided the guidance of 6 feet when possible, 3 feet when 6 is not possible. New Zealand calls it a "moist breath zone". "If you can smell the tuna fish sandwich on their breath, you are too close." While this no longer serves as the universal expectation, students and staff are encouraged to utilize this mitigation measure during cold and flu season and honor any individual's desire to maintain their use of this norm.

## Cleaning and Sanitizing

Cleanliness and safety has always been central to the operating procedures at MEHS. To best prevent the spread of COVID, cleaning protocols were previously enhanced to follow recommended CDC guidelines and increased in frequency. For the 2022-2023 school year, we will shift back into our original cleaning procedures while maintaining ample stock of cleaning supplies, so staff and students can continue with extra cleaning, as desired.

**Dorm Cleaning:** Cleaning protocols were revised with COVID in mind. These protocols provide frequent cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces, shared areas, and dorm rooms. Ample cleaning supplies will be kept in stock, so this level of cleaning will continue as needed.

**Classroom Cleaning:** In addition to classrooms being cleaned daily, teachers established a cleaning routine for the last few minutes of each class in which desks, door knobs, and shared surfaces in the classroom are wiped down to prepare for the next group of students. While this will not be the daily expectation, ample cleaning supplies will be kept in stock, so this level of cleaning can continue as desired.

**Vehicle Cleaning:** MEHS students are often transported in MEHS vans. These vans will be routinely cleaned using CDC guidelines.

**Readily available cleaning supplies:** Cleaning and self-protection supplies will be readily available in both dorm and academic areas.

**Hand sanitizer:** Washing hands with soap and water is the best method of preparation and students will be encouraged to do this frequently. Additionally, hand sanitizer will be made available in every classroom and throughout the dorm environment.

**Cleaning supplies:** Cleaning supplies will be available in every classroom and will be available in the dorm setting. Cleaning supplies will be available to staff for use during the cleaning protocols upon request.

**Gloves:** Gloves will be available for cleaning duties.

**Student training:** Students will be trained in CDC recommended prevention measures as well as all cleaning protocols and new campus procedures to minimize Covid spread. Students will be taught information about the virus and new recommendations as more information is released. Messaging will be consistent across the campus and frequent to maintain a healthy focus on prevention measures.

## Ventilation Strategies

MEHS maintenance has evaluated the ventilation on campus in light of COVID-19. They have increased airflow to the extent possible and have followed recommendations for changing filters.



Most of the MEHS campus is not serviced by a central HVAC system. The campus does have a lot of windows and the ability to create cross breeze in most spaces. Teachers, staff and students are invited to open windows and create spaces with a lot of fresh air. Air circulation units were purchased for classrooms and office spaces.

Maintenance will continue to keep up-to-date on current ventilation information regarding COVID and will follow guidance appropriate to our physical buildings.

## Prevention Information & Training

All staff will be trained in the prevention measures put into place for COVID. Staff will be trained in all new procedures and provided methods for consistently messaging prevention expectations to students. A select core of dormitory workers will be trained how to safely supervise students who are in the isolation and quarantine rooms by health care providers. These workers will be provided all recommended PPE.

Students will also be trained in prevention measures and provided consistent messaging for prevention expectations.

## Virus Containment

MEHS has a plan to respond to any suspected or confirmed virus on campus immediately and isolate to limit potential exposure to others.

## Virus Identification & Testing

**Health Hotline:** An health hotline phone number will be monitored by a Health Provider through the MEHS clinic from 7:00am- 11:00pm each day and by an RA overnight. If a student has any symptoms or any concerns, they should call the hotline for further directions. The health care provider will ask screening questions and determine if the student needs to be further assessed. If the concern is COVID related, the student will be directed to go to the COVID assessment office and not to the health clinic. Staff members may also call the hotline if they are unsure if a situation or their own symptoms suggest they may pose a risk if they came onto campus. The health care provider will walk through the screening questions and may recommend the staff member not report to work and suggest further medical attention.

**COVID Assessment Office:** MEHS has sectioned off an office with a separate entrance to be used for any initial assessment of potential COVID symptoms. If a student is directed to this area, a health professional will be there to assess the student following all health guidelines and required PPE. A test will be administered as appropriate.

## Quarantine and Isolation

The apartments in Ivy Hall and Heritage Hall as well as several rooms in Ivy have been left unassigned to serve as isolation & quarantine spaces. These apartments and rooms have a dedicated bathroom. Apartments can be accessed from entrances separate from the main dorm area. These spaces will be used for:

- Any student who has tested positive for COVID 19 or other contagious illness
- Overflow sick bay rooms if sick bay is filled to capacity

Students in the isolation and quarantine rooms will be monitored at least daily by a health care provider and more frequently by personnel fully trained in appropriate PPE and procedures. Student must remain in isolation until all four of these criteria are met, as recommended by the CDC, and are subject to change as guidelines change:

1. At least 24 hours have passed since recovery (no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and
2. Other symptoms have improved
3. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first occurred\*.
  - a. \*students may be released after 5 days if all other conditions have been met, and
  - b. Students agree to wear a mask for the remainder of 10 days (or 5 days)
4. A health care provider approves re-entrance into the general population

Students in isolation or quarantine will be provided room service for meals. All staff working with students in the isolation or quarantine rooms will be provided special training and be fitted and provided necessary PPE.

**Mass Containment:** In the event of a large breakout that cannot be managed in the isolation spaces dedicated, MEHS will work with SEARHC as our local health providers to either clear a dorm building to be used exclusively for virus containment or set up the MEHS Gym and locker room areas for emergency virus containment locations. Both scenarios have been planned out as contingency plans with coordination with the SEARHC as the local health service.

## Contact Tracing

MEHS has existing protocols for students to check in and check out of locations as part of our dormitory procedures. To make this data easy and more available for potential contact tracing, MEHS will be using the REACH dormitory software for tracking this information as well.

MEHS staff will be in direct contact with Public Health for full collaboration. MEHS response team will use class schedules, dorm activity check-ins, and interviews to identify potential close contacts.

Close contacts will be required to follow current guidelines from public health for quarantine requirements. These requirements may be different for vaccinated individuals and unvaccinated

individuals. Sometimes there are special circumstances in congregate housing settings that require stricter quarantine measures. MEHS will follow the guidelines from Public Health.

## Staff with virus

If a staff member is identified as positive for the COVID virus they will be instructed to stay home. If a staff member becomes ill at work they may be asked to leave work and go either home or to the nearest health center. If a staff member has been diagnosed with COVID19\*, they may return to work when all three of the following criteria are met:

1. At least 24 hours have passed since recovery (no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and
2. Other symptoms have improved
3. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first occurred\*.

*\*Staff members may return to work after 5 days if the other criteria have been met with the expectation that they will be required to wear a mask around others through Day 10.*

## Community Collaboration

In all cases of confirmed virus, MEHS will collaborate with SEARHC, Public Health, and the Sitka Unified Command in appropriate contact tracing, communication, and containment measures, as recommended by the CDC.

## COVID Communication Plan

### Routine Communication & Available Information:

Covid plans and information will be sent out through the school messenger system. Plans and other documents will be available on the website.

Parents will be updated if covid cases warrant a change in masking, testing, social circles, or other mitigation factors.

### Positive Case and Close Contact Testing Communication

The general procedure for communication regarding students testing positive for COVID:

- COVID response team will be notified
- Student with positive result and parents will be contacted with a plan to immediately isolate positive student
- Students who are close contacts will be notified and interviewed, parents will also be contacted.

- General information about test results of close contacts or any other screening testing recommended based on the situation will be shared with parents and staff, but no identifying information.

Parents are always invited to contact MEHS or the MEHS Health Clinic with any specific concerns or questions.

## Communication Leads & Contacts

**Communication on Campus:** Recognizing the potential for plans to change and the flexible nature of the modules in the restart plan, MEHS will designate COVID Communicators to serve as a lead point of contact for COVID information.

These people will be responsible for making sure the communication to students and staff in their designated area is consistent and current with the MEHS Covid Command.

Residential: Alex Weissberg

Academic Campus: Jessica Deviche

Food Service and Dorm Contract Staff: Tracy Dupee

Athletics and Student Activities: Andrew Friske

Each of these individuals will also sit on the COVID task force along with:

MEHS Health Clinic (SEARHC) Coordinator: Kristen Homer

MEHS Superintendent: Suzzuk Huntington

MEHS Academic Principal: Miranda Bacha

**Outside Communication:** All communications with outside agencies or the press regarding COVID information or procedures will be directed to Suzzuk Huntington, Superintendent.

## Visitors and Check Outs

The option for visitors to campus and/or student's being checked out to go off campus with approved adults (Hosts) will be determined by community and campus risk levels.

Hosts must be approved by the family for this specific year, approvals from prior years will not carry forward. This ensures that parents may consider any COVID mitigation or risk specifically.

Hosts must complete a [host agreement](#) and agree to follow MEHS guidance for mitigation during check outs.

# Transportation, Travel, & Entrance

## Return To Campus/Start of School

### Entrance Travel:

All students are encouraged to self-test at home prior to travel. **Students who have layovers or get stuck in the hub towns should report to admissions immediately and work out a plan.**

MEHS chaperones will meet students in Anchorage. Students must check in with chaperones and stay with the student group during travel layovers in Anchorage. Students with overnight layovers may be checked out by family or relatives if prior permission was completed and authorized with the MEHS travel form. Supervising relatives are responsible for supervision of the student for the full duration of the layover and responsible for the safe return of the student to the airport and check-in with MEHS chaperones at least two hours prior to departure.

Charter planes will bring students to Sitka.

Students will be tested immediately in Sitka and again within a 5-7 day window.

## Student Personal Travel

In a normal year, some families choose to have their child return to their home community during school time or take vacations and have their child travel. We will not limit personal travel for covid mitigation at this time, but we encourage families to limit personal travel for family emergencies and health services to the extent possible. All students will go home at Christmas time.

If a parent/student is planning travel, they should contact a MEHS administrator at least 2 weeks prior to travel for approval and will be asked to complete a form. The administrator will work out the required re-entry plan. A re-entry plan may require a quarantine time.

MEHS may require testing, quarantining, and additional masking for students who have traveled.

## Staff Training

All staff will be trained in the prevention measures put into place for COVID. Staff will be trained in all new procedures and provided methods for consistently messaging prevention expectations

to students. A select core of dormitory workers will be trained how to safely supervise students who are in isolation or quarantine rooms by health care providers. These workers will be provided all recommended PPE.

## Continuity of Learning

### Special Needs

Individual needs for students with special needs will be met through consultation with their special education case manager, counselor, or principal. Accommodations will be provided on an individualized basis to meet the need of a student on an IEP or 504 plan to meet current health and safety policies. If remote learning is required, MEHS will work directly with home community school to consider in person learning or access to internet for high needs special education students.

### 12 Week Class Rotation

MEHS will be using a 12-week rotating class schedule beginning the school year 2020-21 to allow for additional instructional time in core content and flexibility as a response to COVID. We appreciate the efforts of teachers, staff, students, and families across Alaska throughout the pandemic. We know that learning continued during that very difficult time, yet we also know that it was not the same for everyone. In planning for the uncertain future of this next year, we desire to be very purposeful in addressing any learning gaps that may have resulted from the disruption last spring as well as plan to be as flexible as possible this year in case we must flex between education delivery models.

MEHS will utilize a 12 week rotation schedule. Classes will be in 80 minute blocks, but the year will be divided into three class rotations instead of two. During a single rotation, the students and staff will get through .5 credits of the core curriculum. This means that typical core courses, like Biology, will be taught in two rotations, Biology A and Biology B. Elective and typical .5 credit courses will be taught in one 12 week rotation. This allows for flexible support and enrichment classes while allowing for instructional time to cover core courses.

The first rotation of the year is purposefully scheduled to support students getting caught back up in math and reading. Students may be placed in reading or math support classes based on MAP scores and/or grades. These students will still be able to transition into a traditional reading and/or math class at the second rotation and continue with earning credits in the core courses on schedule.

Rotation Considerations:

- **Review & Catch up:** With the abrupt changes over the last two years, some students need options for review and catch-up time in core subjects. The first trimester will be scheduled to specifically focus on these student needs.
- **Adequate Time for Core Subjects:** If we need to flex to distance delivery either short-term or long term throughout this next year, it will be very difficult to maintain a curriculum pace that is faster than typical. If we stay with our same schedule, we may risk cutting students short in core curriculum areas. Having the additional time for core subjects is also of value if students remain in person all year.

MEHS will still have a five period day which allows for an extra class for those who wish to take one. Since MEHS currently has some classes that earn .5 credit in a semester and some that earn 1.0 credit in a semester, our credits available to students is variable. The trimester will more predictably allow for 6-7.5 credits in a year depending on if a student has a 5th period. In the current system, students typically earn between 6-8 credits a year.

## Class Platform- Google Classroom

Prior to COVID, MEHS adopted an online platform for housing information about class assignments and resources. MEHS adopted this platform when we went to a 1:1 Computer environment and had a goal of students being able to access this information in evening/morning tutoring sessions and evening study hour environments. This helps students access and share this information with residential and tutoring staff working to support their learning. Last spring, this platform was very helpful as students transitioned home.

All teachers will use google classroom. This will help us transition to a distance environment if needed, including if it is only needed for a few days for specific students who may need to be in the warm or hot zone.

## Family Night Dinners

Family night dinners will be reinstituted this year. The added layer of social connection and staff support that comes with family night dinners have been sorely missed during the height of the pandemic. We look forward to resuming this key component in building the sense of community and family that students feel when coming to Mt. Edgecumbe High School.

## Teacher Training

Teachers will be provided five days at the start of the school year in preparation for the school year and the first week of January to prepare for the second half of the school year. An emphasis will be placed on reinvigorating our Multi-Tiered System of Support.

# Capacity of Learning

## Teacher Training

Teachers will be provided five days at the start of the school year in preparation for the school year and the first week of January to prepare for the second half of the school year. An emphasis will be placed on reinvigorating our Multi-Tiered System of Support.

## Computer and Internet access

**1:1 Devices:** MEHS is a 1:1 learning environment, each student is provided a laptop computer. If MEHS must start or transition to online learning because of a shift in community risk, students will be allowed to bring these laptops home.

**Internet Connectivity:** If students are on campus but must isolate in the dorm for a time, internet access will be fully available. If MEHS has to shift to online learning and students return to home, MEHS will work with families without internet to identify a location to access internet at least one hour per day (school, tribal office etc).

## ASAA Sports and Activities

ASAA Sports have resumed pre-pandemic participation guidelines. Guidelines for covid mitigation on campus will be the same guidelines for our students while participating in ASAA sports and other activities.