



# COVID-19: Mitigating Risk in the 2022-23 School Year

August 2022

The  
**Miquon**  
School



# 2021-22 Successes

- No identified COVID spread on campus
- No outbreaks—no need to quarantine an entire class
- Capital improvements to HVAC completed
- Wide access to rapid tests for all
- 100% participation in weekly pooled testing
- Student vaccination rate of over 90%; Staff vaxx rate 100%

# Goals for 2022-23

- Prevent COVID outbreaks at Miquon to keep students learning in person
- Find the right balance of risk mitigation precautions
- Protect the most vulnerable members of our community

How to meet these goals:

- Continue to follow the data and changing policies
- Communicate about what is and isn't working
- Address COVID fatigue & fear
- Understand and respect different levels of risk tolerance
- Act as members of a community

# COVID Philosophy

- COVID is not a big deal for some people and still a very big deal for others.
- We are responsible for the children in our care, and infectious diseases transcend/cross school boundaries.
- We are all very tired and ready for this to be over; calculating risk on a daily basis is exhausting.
- It's important that kids be able to still be kids.
- It's important to respect each others' values, and we need to acknowledge that for some people COVID is a life-threatening or debilitating condition.
- We are a diverse community with many different needs and concerns.

# Mitigation overview - some changes this year

- No more daily health survey on PikMyKid—instead, self monitor for symptoms & communicate quickly if necessary. **There is now nothing for you to do on PikMyKid each morning unless you need to change your child's pickup mode.**
- We are masking inside to start the year; we are working toward unmasking inside and will be re-evaluating whether this is desirable frequently. Unmasking will always be optional.

We are continuing:

- Weekly pooled PCR testing of all students and staff (survey next week)
- Easy access to rapid testing

# What we are and are not mandating anymore

Now OK based on your risk tolerance:

- Sleepovers
- Trips abroad; flying in general
- Indoor unmasked play dates
- Carpooling unmasking

We are requiring:

- Communication about symptoms/diagnoses
- Effective and well-fitting masks when required
- Compliance with quarantine and testing guidelines
- Vaccination (rare exemptions exist)

# Omicron variant overview

- It's hard to tell whether the BA.5 (an Omicron variant) surge we've experienced this summer is slowing. Not many at-home rapid tests are reported.
- The virus continues to mutate rapidly and scientists are trying to monitor other variants of concern.
- Between 400-500 people a day are dying of COVID in the US.
- The majority of COVID hospitalizations and deaths are still in unvaccinated people and elderly people, but not exclusively.
- Even if you have had COVID recently, if you've had Omicron BA.1 or BA.2, you can still be reinfected with BA.5
- We don't have good data on whether reinfection increases the risk of long COVID.

# Omicron variant precautions

- Manage indoor gatherings with masking and/or rapid testing
- Limit the circle of people you gather around without testing first
- PCR testing can still be valuable and there are free places to do it
  - CHOP returns results quickly, usually in 6-12 hours
  - Montgomery County is still operating five free testing sites
- Mask when entering indoor public places
- Mask when attending crowded outdoor events where you can't physically distance yourself (protests, concerts)
- Treat outings with a recognition that risk is cumulative

# Guidelines for families

- Self-check for symptoms each morning before coming to school. Don't assume that allergy symptoms are not COVID.
- If your child has an ongoing health issue like allergies or asthma and is experiencing symptoms, please communicate with Chris or Charlotte. All health information is confidential.
- Request a rapid test if needed, or administer one at home and email the results to [chrisr@miquon.org](mailto:chrisr@miquon.org).
- You can text or call Charlotte from 6:30-7:30 am and 3:30-8:00 pm daily with questions. From 7:30-3:30 you can contact Chris. 610-828-1231 ext. 217. **Email is best for faster response.**
- We are following the [MontCo OPH School Exclusion Guidelines](#).

# Guidelines: Vaccination

- A new Omicron-specific booster for ages 12+ will likely be available in October. If your child has not yet received a COVID booster, please talk to your pediatrician about timing.
- Please have your child vaccinated for influenza. The vaccine is available now.
- We have required COVID vaccination for children but are accepting some exemptions. The 12-18 vaccine recently won full FDA approval. We expect the 2-4 and 5-11 vaccines to receive it later this year.

# Guidelines: Masks

- Children and adults visiting campus should wear either surgical or KN95/KN94 high-filtration masks. Cloth masks are not effective against Omicron and its variants.
- **Anyone with any symptoms should mask inside, even with a negative COVID test.**
- If we unmask inside there may be periods of high case rates or after school breaks when we need to mask again inside. We hope to help manage this with testing.
- When we unmask inside, doing so will be optional. Unmasking outside is also optional, but we recommend it.

# Guidelines: Positive cases

- Please let Chris and Charlotte know as soon as possible if either your child or someone in your household tests positive for COVID.
- For household cases (not your Miquon child) we will implement test-to-stay.
- The household positive case should isolate from or wear a KN95 mask around the Miquon child at all time.
- If your child tests positive they will stay home for at least 5 days. They can return on day 6 but will mask inside **and outside** through day 10.
- Please continue rapid testing daily until the child tests negative.
- We are required to notify the MontCo Office of Public Health of all positive cases. They may contact you to follow up. Please cooperate.

# At-home learning

- If your child tests positive and is experiencing symptoms they should rest and feel better, not do schoolwork.
- If your child is feeling better but is still in the 5-day isolation period, their teachers can provide some activities for them to do at home.
- These may include joining the class for a short time via video to participate in a class activity.
- We are not able to accommodate real-time virtual learning for children at home.
- If an entire class needs to quarantine for some reason, of course we will reassess how virtual learning can help during this time.

# Monkeypox

- Monkeypox is not related to chickenpox. It is related to smallpox but is much less virulent. It spreads through close, often skin-to-skin contact or through fabric/surfaces and through contact with respiratory secretions.
- To date public health officials say the risk of cases in elementary schools is quite low.
- It's extremely unlikely to spread from a hard surface like a doorknob or toilet seat.
- 95% of cases to date are in male-identified people who have sex with men, but monkeypox is not an STD. Anyone can contract monkeypox. Vaccination for that population, but not for everyone is recommended right now.
- Monkeypox is rarely fatal, but is a serious health concern for people who are immune-compromised, elderly, or pregnant. It's also no fun and can be quite painful.
- **If you or your child develop a new rash, please consult a doctor immediately.**
- We'll continue to monitor this developing health emergency and pass on any new information.