



GREAT FALLS  
**CENTRAL**  

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**CATHOLIC**  
HIGH SCHOOL

2021-2022

School Opening Guidelines

SAFE OPEN,  
STAY OPEN  
Great Falls  
Central Catholic  
High School's  
COVID plan for  
the 2021-2022  
School Year

Submitted by  
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## GFCCHS Safe Open, Stay Open

### COVID-19 Return to School Planning Document

Great Falls Central Catholic is committed to academic excellence and a healthy and safe environment for our staff and students. We had hoped that this year we would not need safety protocols, but we have not yet reached that point in our community. We are committed to in-person learning and for that, we know we need to continue to be flexible. Thank you for patience as we considered the regularly changing guidance for schools before releasing our plan.

This year we are facing new challenges in our attempts to keep school open and accessible to our families. The guidance we have received for this year has changed a bit for those vaccinated and unvaccinated, the symptoms of COVID are different, and options for our students and teachers are different. As you all are aware, vaccinations have been approved for all students and adults attending our school. Our Bishop has indicated his support for vaccinations, but we realize that not all families are comfortable with this vaccine yet. We understand that decisions we make for the school may not meet the desires of all our community, but we ask that you please understand that we are making the best decisions with the safety of Great Falls Central students and staff in mind.

Our leadership team is relying on four main resources to guide our decisions: the CDC, our local health department, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Health. We are continuing the practices from last year that seemed to make the most impact on our exceptional health outcomes. **Please understand that this is a rapid and constantly changing health crisis, and we may need to adjust our plan based on new information or guidance.**

First, we want to share that we will be working with DPHHS to offer rapid COVID tests at the school so we can more quickly and effectively determine if we are dealing with a virus outbreak or simply allergies or a cold. Parent permission will be obtained prior to administering these. Second, we will be opening under the Blue Phase.

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<b>Color</b>	<b>Risk assessment</b>	<b>School status</b>
Blue-Lower risk	Low local community spread and/or isolated cases at school.	Open as usual with high sanitation, high air quality, social distancing in classes of 3', masking encouraged, extracurricular without restriction, masking required on buses, per federal guidelines. Visitors limited during school-hours.
Yellow-moderate risk	Consistent community spread with increased in-school exposure and confirmed cases	Open school, masks required for all in the building, possible changes in extracurricular activities and community attendance. Visitors limited during school-hours.
Red-high risk	High and extraordinary community spread, significant school exposure and spread leading to high staff or student absenteeism	Remote learning and hybrid for the Remote Learning Group, limited extracurricular activities with no community attendance

**Please note that at any time our plan could be modified based upon guidance from the Bishop or other governing entities.**

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**Social Distancing**

We will be utilizing best practices to reduce risk for contracting COVID-19 or for spreading it in our community. Those practices include utilizing 3' social distancing in classes, at lunch, at Mass, and in locker rooms as much as feasible. These are times when students are in contact more than 15 minutes with others. Our passing times between classes are 3 minutes and medical personnel indicate that time frame and virus load are the two factors to consider for virus infection. We will continue to discourage congregating in larger groups.

Students waiting for rides after school will be asked to wait outside, weather permitting. Students will not be allowed to congregate inside before school.

**Air Flow**

Increasing air exchanges in classrooms is also a recommended protocol and to do that we will continue to use Q13 HEPA air filters for all classrooms and restrooms. These will support our own air filtration system in the building by clearing the air in the rooms faster.

**Face Coverings**

In keeping with the latest recommendations from the APA, CDC, and the health department, GFCC encourages all to consider wearing a face covering indoors when social distancing isn't feasible. We are not mandating those when in the Blue Phase. Students may wear face coverings of their choosing if they are appropriate. Unacceptable face coverings include references to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sexual innuendo, or political statements. Face coverings must fully cover the nose and mouth and be secured to the head or around the ears with straps or ties. Bandanas and gaiters are not considered face coverings.

The CDC has given this guidance for schools:

In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinically compatible illness](#)) if both the infected

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student and the exposed student(s) [correctly and consistently](#) wore well-fitting [masks](#) the entire time.

This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact>

#### **Sanitization**

Sanitization is a critical part of keeping communicable infections at bay. We will continue to ask all students to utilize alcohol based hand-sanitizer each period when entering a classroom. We are also sanitizing all desk surfaces each evening with food-safe sanitizer. We are continuing our high-touch cleaning through the day. Our engineer/custodial staffing is shorter this year than last year, and we do not have late cleaning scheduled for the building.

At this time, we do not believe we can accommodate students in the building before 7:30 am or after 3:30 pm due to staffing. We are encouraging parents to contact the office if there is a need for before/after school supervision, so we can assess how we might assist. We will continue using the athletic entrance after school for sports, at this time.

#### **Symptom Check**

Symptom screening students and staff for other COVID-19 symptoms will require all of us to work together. We will be asking staff to self check each day. We are also going to request parents check student symptoms before school as well. We want everyone to stay home if they have cold-like symptoms. Teachers will have remote options available for students if there is a long-term absence. We will work with students to accommodate medical absences this year so they do not impact credit.

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**Rapid Testing**

In conjunction with DPHHS and CCHD, trained Great Falls Central staff will be offering BinaxNOW rapid Covid tests during school hours. These tests will be offered to staff and students, with written parental permission. They will only be offered if someone is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or confirmed positive exposure. In addition to written permission, the school will call for a second verbal permission prior to administering the test. If testing is declined, parents will be asked to pick up their child and keep them home until symptoms clear for 24 hours without medication, or they have a negative PCR COVID test. Students with symptoms of illness will be isolated in a safe area until parents can pick them up.

If rapid testing is requested, it will be offered on a case-by-case basis, depending on trained staff availability and school resources.

Parents can watch the video explaining the test we will use here:

<https://www.globalpointofcare.abbott/en/support/product-installation-training/navica-brand/navica-binaxnow-ag-training.html>

**Contact Tracing/Positive Cases**

GFCC will work closely with the health department to follow the guidance for positive cases in the school setting. If a student or staff member is confirmed positive for COVID-19, we ask that the administration be contacted immediately, so we can slow the spread of the virus in school.

GFCC administration will work with the local health department to contact trace and quarantine as it is appropriate. This process will be very similar to the previous year with phone contact made with parents followed up by an email with specifics about dates.

**Virtual Classroom/Remote Access**

Students who are quarantined and are not actually ill can remote into a class, with notification to the office so we can prepare teachers. They have to set up

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equipment to do this, so need advance notice. Students who are absent for non-COVID illness should log into their Google Classroom to access any information the teacher has posted for the day to stay as current as possible and will follow normal absence protocols. Remote students will be expected to log in at the time of their classes and stay for the entire class each period of the day. Remote access is only available with permission from the office and notice to the teachers. Remote access will not count against student absences

#### **Visitors**

Consistent with our efforts to keep the school open and limit student and staff exposure to COVID-19, we will be limiting non-essential visitors in the building during school hours and ask that you make an advance appointment, if possible. The building will remain locked during the day and the office will buzz visitors in.

#### **Athletics**

GFCC prioritizes student safety and health by asking all students to self-monitor and stay home from practices or games if they have cold-like symptoms, unless cleared by a COVID-19 test. Students will be practicing in pods as much as possible, using personal water bottles, and using hand sanitizer often. Sports equipment will be sanitized after each practice/game. Teams will again be using the weight room doors to enter for practice to allow for cleaning of the main lobby after school. Unlimited fans may attend games at the school with social distancing, hand sanitizing, and masking encouraged. We are not contact tracing sporting events. We will offer NFHS broadcasting of games for our home in-building games.