



Main Campus (K-8), 600 Tyler Street, Hastings, MN 55033 p: 651-437-3098 f: 651-438-3377
ECC Preschool Campus, 2035-15th Street, Hastings MN 55033 p: 651-438-3223 f: 651-438-2948

seas-school.org

A Ministry of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School COVID-19 Update 10/8/21

Amount of positive COVID cases present in the building, students or staff: 0

Amount of students or staff currently quarantined: 0

Those numbers above are the result of our mitigation efforts at school and your diligence at home. We have had a number of students quarantined due to a close contact at home and some of those students have even contracted COVID, but none were present in the building at the time. Thankfully, no one has been seriously ill or hospitalized.

Our goal is to keep students in school, where learning happens best. Together, we are making that happen. Thank you for your continued support. Below are a few other updates.

SEAS now has take home antigen tests for students. These tests are made available to K-8 schools, one time, from the state through a federal grant. We received a total of 234 BinaxNOW COVID-19 Antigen Self-Tests that can *only be used to test students at home*. A few things about these test:

- We cannot administer the test at school.
- Per state and federal guidelines, these tests are only available for students enrolled in our school in grades K-8.
- If you have a student sent home with symptoms, this test kit will be offered to you. It is **OPTIONAL** for families, not required.
- The tests are not accepted for travel or places that require a negative test or a vaccine.
- Each box contains two tests for one student. As stated in the directions, they are meant to be used on the same student the day it goes home and then 36 hours later.
- The MDH decision tree will be followed for close contacts, regardless of the test results.
- Please inform the office or health office of test results:
 - If the result of the take home test is positive, a lab confirmed test is recommended. Contact the health office about the quarantine timeline.
 - If the result of the take home test is negative, take it again in 36 hours. If symptoms persist, a lab confirmed test is recommended.
- These tests are also available in stores and online. They retail for about \$15.

DHS has issued mandates for preschools, but we were already meeting those requirements. There were three updates- reporting of cases, contact tracing, and quarantining. Our preschool program has been doing all three since last fall, so there are no changes to our preschool PPRP.

Masking. Since the start of the school year we have said that we will monitor other districts and schools who have similar and different masking policies. Below is the October 7th community transmission rates for Hastings, surrounding districts, and New Prague, which is similar to Hastings in size and currently does not require masks. Information on face covering status was found on each district's website. A number of districts have moved to "required" for at least part of their population after starting the year with masks only recommended. Like SEAS, most



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districts are basing their masking requirements on whether community transmission rates are in the high/severe/moderate/low range.

| District | 7-day case rate per 100,000 | Masks Policy |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Hastings | 280 | Required for all starting 10/11 |
| South Washington | 229 | Required K-8 |
| Stillwater | 234 | Required K-8 |
| Inver Grove Height | 264 | Required for all |
| Red Wing | 265 | Required K-6 |
| Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan | 272 | Required for all |
| Randolph | 275 | Recommended |
| Farmington | 320 | Recommended |
| Cannon Falls | 329 | Recommended |
| New Prague | 413 | Recommended |

Source: https://wolfson.shinyapps.io/school_openings/

How are Catholic schools doing? There is no data like this available for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese, but I was on a video conference with a number of Catholic school principals this week, some with mask requirements and some without. Those with masks have fewer positive cases in the building and fewer quarantines. In fact, a number have contacted me to discuss what we are doing that is working because they are struggling. Fr. Dave has also received calls from other pastors about the success we have had so far this year.

I am very appreciative of our office staff, health office, SAC, and Fr. Dave for working with me to help provide the best possible plan we can to keep our kids safe and in schools. It has not been easy and I know some disagree with our measures, but I would argue that, in partnership with families, what we are doing is working well and I am looking forward to the day when these updates will no longer be necessary!

What can you do to help? Pray for an end to this pandemic, stay home if you are not feeling well, wash hands often, maintain social distance when possible, wear a mask outside of the home, and , if you haven't already, consider getting one of the vaccines.

God bless you all,

Mr. Sullivan

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.