



# ALGOMA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

*"Helping Families Make Disciples" since 1981*

## ACS SAFE START PLANS

July 21, 2020

Updated March 12, 2021

### PHASE 1-4 PLAN SEE PHASE 5 PLAN.

### PHASE 5 PLAN

We will be requiring all parents to sign a waiver for each child attending ACS this fall, in which they indicate that they understand that school is an inherently high-risk environment. Nothing the school does will ever make ACS 100% safe from the spread of any disease; including COVID 19. The waiver absolves ACS of any responsibility should their child contract COVID in school, or at a school event. Families who feel that they cannot sign this waiver will have to seek another alternative for educating their child(ren). (ACS employees would be required to sign a similar waiver that applies to them.)

#### SCHOOL DAY

- Parents would be asked to take their children's temperature before school every day. Any student with a temperature over 100.4 degrees would not be able to attend school until it abates (more on this later in the plan).
- All entrances to ACS will display a CDC information poster that ACS is a "Mask Required Zone." We believe that masks, or face shields, are a family decision.
- Face shields have been purchased and will be provided to all students from 6th through 12th grade. Face shields, as well as masks, will be provided to all students and staff as a courtesy.
- Research shows that a face shield combined with an N95 mask will give the wearer excellent protection for themselves. This allows families to choose protection for THEIR family members. John Hopkins University and other medical institutions have their staff members wear this equipment when they are called upon to serve patients who are COVID positive.
- Busing will be handled the same way. Our bus will be posted with the same "Mask Recommend Zone" as the school (However, as already stated, masks are a family level decision). We will also do our best to practice "social distancing" on the bus as far as we are able to/or as desired by students/families.
- Any student heard ridiculing someone who chooses to wear a mask will face a stiff consequence. On the flip side, anyone heard chastising a student who is not wearing a mask, will also face that consequence. Each family has the right to determine what they are comfortable doing with no repercussions for that choice. An automatic one day in-school suspension will be the consequence for violating this rule.
- Classrooms will practice social distancing where it is practical. In classes where it isn't possible, teachers will inform students at the beginning of the year that face shields by themselves, or in combination with masks, might be a good idea.....but the level of protection is ALWAYS a family decision.
- If families wish teachers to help them monitor their protection decisions (i.e. They want their child(ren) to wear a mask/face shield, or both.), they need to contact the Team Level Administrators: Mr. White (7-12) and Mrs. Ellsworth (Pre-K-6). ACS staff will do our utmost to make sure that your child(ren) are following parent wishes once you have conveyed them to us.



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- Each secondary classroom will be sterilized by the teacher between classes with a UV wand. Elementary classrooms will be sterilized with a UV wand as often as the teacher sees fit. Wands have been purchased for all classrooms.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided for each classroom, plus there will be sanitizer in bottles placed in strategic locations throughout the school.
- ACS has also procured a spray hand sanitizer/surface sanitizer. We will be making sure that this is available for teachers to use.
- Drinking fountains will be used to fill water bottles only. Using the spigot to drink straight from them will not be an option, as they will be locked down. (The one exception to this would be the gym fountain during certain designated times.)
- Students eating lunch will practice social distancing. Again, students (families) may choose what they feel comfortable with. We will continue to use the gym for secondary lunch. Mr. Quinlan monitors that area. Elementary students eat their lunches in their rooms.
- ACS will also have a “sneeze shield” in place at the lunch/concessions windows, inside and outside.

## WEEKNIGHTS

- WeeKnights will occupy the area just west of Mrs. Ellsworth's room and just west of the corner of the elementary and WeeKnight's hallway. All WeeKnights rules will apply west of that line.
- WeeKnights will be asked to comply with the health rules that apply to them.
- It should be noted that WeeKnights is not considered a “Public Area” according to the governor's standards, since it is a daycare.

## VISITORS

- All visitors to ACS (with the exception of WeeKnights parents, grandparents, etc.) will need to enter the school through the main entrance by the gym and then report to the main office. Main office staff will handle transfer of lunches, etc., to students and they will also get students and bring them back to the office to meet with whomever is there to get them. Elementary parents will need to enter through the secondary entrance during the school day.
- Drop off for the beginning of the school day, and Pick-up at the end of the school day will continue as normal.

## CUSTODIAL

- ACS custodial staff will be asked to wear a face shield, either by itself, or in combination with a mask. However, this is the individual's decision.
- Custodians will be provided a UV wand to help them with sterilization of surfaces that they are asked to clean as part of their job. We are asking the custodians to clean surfaces as normal AND utilize the wand, thus ensuring that the school receives the deepest possible clean on an ongoing basis.
- The custodial staff would also be asked to sterilize, using the UV wand, students' face shields that are left (in a location to be determined), at day's end.
- Custodians would also need to be prepared to sterilize any area a COVID positive student, or teacher, may have come into contact with if they had to leave during the day because of COVID symptoms. In this scenario, the custodian would be required to wear a face shield and mask.



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## SPORTING EVENTS

- Sports seasons will proceed as normal for the teams. If you choose to let your child play sports you are choosing a more "high risk" environment. That is the nature of sports.
- Student athletes will be required to have their own water bottles. Drinking from fountains will be highly discouraged.
- The sports seasons might well be shorter (fewer games) than in previous years. Christian school opponents will likely still play, but public school opponents might cancel games, either at the beginning of a season, or unexpectedly during the season. We will need to be flexible in our expectations and understanding of the problems Mr. Delgado will face as he (and Mr. Quinlan) deal with this situation.
- Spectators will be informed by posted signs that at our athletic facilities are "Face Shield/Mask Required" zones. Again, we stress, face shields/masks are a family level decision. Spectators will also be asked to practice social distancing as much as they are able.

## PROTOCOLS FOR SICK STUDENTS/STAFF

- Students who are retained at home by parents due to illness will need to be 24 hours fever free before returning to school. Communication between parents/teacher, or student/teachers will be required to figure out the homework situation (In other words, this will proceed as it has in the past.....the student is sick.....talk to the teacher about work.)
- Students who are retained at home by parents and are CONFIRMED to have COVID by a healthcare professional will be required to remain quarantined for 14 days (this is according to the Kent County Health Department.....see following paragraph) AFTER the healthcare professional provides written confirmation that they are symptom free. Parents are asked to practice a limited quarantine within their home by attempting to isolate the patient as much as possible.
- Currently ACS reports immunological information to the Kent County Health Department. Recent information provided by MACS (Michigan Association of Christian Schools) would seem to indicate that this is a courtesy, not a requirement. KCHD is "requiring" us to report confirmed COVID cases to the KCHD.
- Students who are confined to home because of COVID, will be switched to distance learning as soon as they feel well enough to start working on curriculum again. (See Distance Learning Plan - Attached)
- Teachers will all be using Google services to communicate with homebound children. This is not to say that all teachers will be on Google Classroom, etc., it is just to say that Google will be the vector for any video conferencing, etc.
- The school and parents will have to be in communication about getting the student needed support materials, and homework pick up/drop off times will need to be established for paperwork, projects, etc.
- A student who begins displaying symptoms during the school day will immediately be isolated. The school has set aside a room with a cot near the office so that a student displaying COVID symptoms can be safe, secure, and monitored by office personnel. This room will be by the secondary office, and it will be utilized for both elementary and secondary students.
- Parents will be required to immediately come to school to get a symptomatic student.
- If student attendance as a whole drops below 80%, school will be suspended until numbers are back to acceptable levels of attendance. This is the case with any disease outbreak. In this



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situation, “snow day learning” would kick in schoolwide. If the situation doesn’t resolve itself within a week’s time, the distance learning plan would then be implemented (See Distance Learning Plan - Attached).

- Symptomatic staff members would immediately be sent home. Mrs. Russell would be required to find a sub, either within the building, or externally. Quarantine rules would be the same for staff as they are for students.
- Normal attendance rules would need to be flexed and we would consider absences on a "case by case" basis. This would also apply to staff "sick leave."



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Tracey Pitts

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Association of Christian Schools International  
2001 W Plano Parkway, Suite 3600  
Plano, TX 75075

Tracey,

In order for Michigan schools to operate during the 2020-21 school year, schools are required to develop and adopt a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. Our administrator, Mr. Quinlan, asked me to send Algoma Christian School's Preparedness (Safe Start) Plan to you. We have been recommended by MACS (Michigan Association of Christian Schools) and the Great Lakes Justice Center to submit our Preparedness Plan to our governing authority. Because we are accredited through ACSI, we have been told to submit our plan to ACSI for it to be filed. I have attached our Preparedness (Safe Start) Plan.

Please let myself or Mr. Quinlan know if you need further information or have any questions.

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"Helping Families Make Disciples"  
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August 12, 2020

Algoma Christian School, in accordance with Governor Whitmore’s Executive Orders, has submitted the Algoma Christian School’s Preparedness (Safe Start) Plan (ACS - SSP) to our governing authority, Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) on August 5, 2020.

ACSI has accepted the ACS-SSP. Algoma Christian School has received the following responses from ACSI via email:

*“Thank you, Tessa. I have saved it in your school’s folder.”*

**TRACEY R PITTS**

Administrative Assistant, Accreditation | ACSI Mid-America Region

[ACSI Coronavirus Resources](#)

[ACSI Coronavirus Resources \(Legal and Legislative\)](#)

*“This is great! Thank you for sending it to us. If we have schools ask, are we free to share it with them?”*

**Bobbie Kelly, M.Ed.**

Accreditation Director | ACSI Mid-America Region

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## Gatherings and Face Mask Order

The Algoma Christian School Board’s Policy as it relates to the MDHHS order “Gatherings and Face Mask Order.” The ACS school board, in conjunction with school administration, will continue to keep its doors open for 9th - 12th grades.

We will continue to follow our plan as outlined in the Algoma Christian School Safe Start Plan and approved by our governing authority, ACSI.

The ACS school board is disappointed that the MDHHS has issued a one-size-fits-all order. Algoma Christian is a small, one building, Christian school located in northern Kent County. The school has implemented a host of strategies to combat the spread of COVID 19. These strategies are consistent with the Safe Start protocols as outlined by Governor Whitmer for a school in Phase 5 of her plans for returning to normal. The school continued to follow these guidelines, even after the Governor’s EOs were deemed unconstitutional, because the Algoma Safe Start Plan made sense.....each school was able to come up with a plan that fit its unique situation.

Algoma’s plan has worked VERY well. At this point only 3 staff members have tested positive for COVID 19, all of which have recovered and since returned to work after following the quarantine procedures recommended. These staff members have reported their sickness to their respective counties PER SCHOOL DIRECTIVE. The school continues to have NO CONFIRMED COVID cases in the student population. For this we are thankful to the Lord and to His wisdom in guiding our planning.

The MDHHS Order fails to account for schools like ACS in a couple of ways. The order fails to recognize that schools, by federal definition, are institutes of “public health.” 3-c of the Order says **“Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the use of these facilities for public health or other emergency purposes.”** Yet, in the **“*US National Library of Medicines, National Institutes of Health*,”** there is an article entitled: Education Improves Public Health and Promotes Health Equity. Linked here:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4691207/> This article clearly states that the Federal Government, CDC, and the WHO recognize schools as agents of public health. By the MDHHS' own declaration, in section 3-c, we must keep our building open and stay in school. So, we have a basic contradiction in the order.

Also, the CDC has issued statistics that show that 99.997% of people under the age of 20 will recover from COVID 19. See linked article:

<https://imprimis.hillsdale.edu/sensible-compassionate-anti-covid-strategy/>

This article in "Imprimis" from Hillsdale College clearly lays out the arguments for no lockdowns and the importance of the young in defeating this virus.

In addition, as mentioned above, the order fails to consider the one-building school. In the case of ACS, and other one building schools, the older siblings, in many cases, have younger siblings that still attend the school and go home at night to the same families (household). One can quickly see the problem with the MDHHS' proposed strategy. The (one-building school's) high school students will still be getting exposed at home and unless we keep them from any (ALL) gatherings (very dangerous to their health at their age) it follows that they cannot be protected from the virus by taking only them to distance learning in a one-building setting.

Also, in the case of ACS, one staff member (of the 10 secondary teachers) teaches only high schoolers. The other 9 people that teach secondary students teach 7 - 12. This essentially means that the MDHHS requires ACS to hire new staff members to plug the inevitable holes that will result in the schedule, or that the current staff would have to work longer hours to accomplish the same teaching assignments. Neither solution is financially viable. Both require funds that have not been allocated in this year's budget, which by state law, must balance. ACS does not possess the fund equity that would enable us to implement such a plan. Additionally there is the hurdle of who those new hires would be. The state already has a substitute teacher shortage. Finally, ACS faces staff "burnout if it uses staff for both purposes." It is unreasonable to expect





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the 9 teachers that are impacted to work extra time to accomplish the education of students (even if ACS could afford to pay them).

The Algoma Christian School Board will continue to monitor the situation and its ever changing dynamics. We ask for continued prayer and discernment over our approach to the COVID 19 pandemic.

Please see the attached letter from Mr. Quinlan (ACS Head of School) explaining the school board’s take on this issue.



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November 20, 2020

Hail Knights!

I wanted to fill you in on some of what happened at last night's school board meeting. The school board undertook the discussion of what to do about the latest rounds of mandated closures to various groups around the state, including 9 - 12th graders (going to distance learning). There was a lot of discussion from all sides, but in the end, the school board decided to remain open, continuing to follow our safe start plan. I believe this is the correct decision and I applaud our school board for making it. I would be happy to talk with anyone (willing to identify themselves) who would like to discuss the philosophy behind this decision. I will say a big part of this, from my perspective, is that the last time school was closed for "3 weeks to flatten the curve," that turned into 4 months of closed school. I think this bears pointing out.

Once again, I ask you to stand behind the school board and I, with prayer and support. As I have often cautioned in the past, be careful what you say on social media. I do not ask you to be deceitful and hide things, but I do ask that you exercise responsible restraint. I thank you for this. I feel there is a lot of accumulated wisdom behind this decision and I would like to point out that God has protected us and blessed us in our decision making so far. This isn't a rash move based on rebellion, it is a considered decision, based on the fact that we have not been ravaged by COVID 19 (no confirmed student cases and only 3 confirmed staff cases.....all recovered). Our staff members have reported their positive tests to their counties, with our encouragement to be honest about where they work and their personal information, and we continue to pursue a policy of cooperation with the KCHD if student COVID cases are confirmed.

We should also consider that the CDC has released data that shows that 99.997% of individuals 20 and younger will recover from COVID 19. Any mathematician will tell you that this figure rounds to 100% and to all intents and purposes it is 100%. As we know the percentages drop as folks get older, but even at the oldest, the CDC figure is a roughly 97% recovery rate. These numbers are just that, numbers, and they do not reveal the human face on the deaths, but they are the statistics that we have, and the ones we must be basing our decisions on for ALL stakeholders. Having lost a son recently, I grieve for those of you that may have lost family and friends. However, death will always be with us in some form, it is a part of the world since sin came into it. I do not say this tritely, I would give anything to hold TJ in my arms one more time, but I do take comfort and hope from the fact that he is with the Lord and we all share this hope through Christ Jesus.

Moving on, the Christmas program was also discussed. This one is my call, but, again, I value the board's insight. After getting their various opinions, I believe we should go forward with this program. The church is already set up for social distancing and I highly recommend you wear a mask, especially if you are in a high risk age bracket. As stated before, we are asking for a limit of 2 people/family, (with the exception of our VIP seating purchasers.). We will be opening the dress rehearsal under the same rules so more folks can see their kids and grand kids. I have also been told we are planning on taping the program for those who would just prefer to

stay home. The band concert will proceed here at school in a similar way (more details on that later).

Athletics will be going on a bit of a break.....this can't be helped, since our opponents are mostly MHSAA and have chosen (in most cases) to follow the MHSAA guidelines. The current MHSAA plan (I spent an hour on the phone yesterday with Mark Uhl, MHSAA, Executive Director) is to follow the MDHHS directives, but to hand the governor's office statistics that clearly show that high school classes and sports are not spreading COVID. I am told if the MDHHS does not relent and at least enter into a discussion with the MHSAA, the MHSAA will go public with its data in a effort to bring sports, and along with it classroom instruction, back for good in this situation.

Continue to pray for this election.....regardless of who won (and we won't know that until electors are seated).....it is clear that this election is tearing the country apart. Perhaps that is inevitable, but I can tell you war is not a good cradle for education. So, continue to pray for our school and its leadership!

I love my Knights!

Timothy M. Quinlan II, HOS, ACS

# ATTENTION

## ACS Athletic Event Participants & Spectators

### CDC RECOMMENDATIONS

- PPE
- Social Distancing
- Wash Hands Often

### ACS EVENT REQUIREMENTS

- **PPE and Social Distancing are required**
  - ACS assumes no responsibility if your attendance/participation exposes you to COVID-19 or any other infectious disease.

***\*\*According to the CDC, masks SHOULD NOT be worn by children less than 2 years old, anyone who has a documented medical condition preventing them from doing so, trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the masks without assistance.***

*Please wear a mask and social distance unless you fall under one of the above categories - however, in congruence with further government regulations, the HIPAA Privacy Rule protects the disclosure of individuals' health information.*

*Thank you!*

**\*\*[In staying congruent with our school board's [Safe Start Phase 5 Plan](#), whether or not an ACS or visiting team athlete, coach, or spectator wears a mask during athletic events that are hosted at Algoma Christian remain a family level decision - in short, it is recommended but not required. Visiting teams are encouraged to abide by any mandates or directives given by their school administration when competing at Algoma Christian - ACS teams will abide by the mandates of any opposing school when visiting their facilities]\*\***

## VISITING TEAMS

- Visiting Teams will have their own designated changing/locker room if desired and will no longer use any classroom or locker room that are designated for ACS Athletic Teams.
- Visiting Teams are encouraged to bring their own water bottles/drinks, as communal water jugs will not be available.
- Visiting Teams' spectators will be directed to sit in the "visitors" section of the gymnasium bleachers only.

## VOLUNTEERS

- Masks currently required by all volunteers
- Admissions: Hand sanitizer will be available at the admissions table for volunteer use - can choose to wear gloves (provided by the

kitchen) or use hand sanitizer as frequently as seen fit.

- Concessions: Gloves (provided by the kitchen) and hair covering/hat still required per usual. A Plexiglass sneeze guard will be used at the concession stand window.
  - *Defer to Kim Macy on concession volunteer requirements per the local Health Department*
- All other volunteers adhere to the general ACS Recommendations as stated above

### Athletes Confirmed COVID-19 Positive

- ACS Athletes will adhere to the [ACS Safe Start Phase 5 Plan](#) as laid out on page 3 under subsection “Protocols for Sick Students/Staff”

- Game cancellations may be the result of any confirmed COVID-19 positive diagnosis on any ACS athletic team or opponent of any ACS athletic team
  - \*It is expected that any opponent of any ACS athletic team notify the ACS Athletic Director and/or ACS coach of any confirmed positives on their team

## MISCELLANEOUS

- \*Masks will be available for \$1.00 at the admissions table and/or concessions stand for any spectator who would feel most comfortable having one and does not have one with them at the time
- \*\*For the complete **Algoma Christian School Safe Start Phase 5 plan**, refer to the hyperlinks above.