



Benilde-St. Margaret's

A Catholic, college preparatory school, grades 7 - 12

Dear BSM Families,

As has been widely reported, Minnesota is experiencing a significant increase in COVID cases. In the past two and one-half weeks, we have seen a similar increase in COVID among BSM students and faculty. This increase has resulted in many students having to learn remotely. It has also put a significant strain on our organization as we are not resourced to effectively manage contact tracing when numbers reach higher levels. Additionally, the shortage of substitute teachers, which is being felt by schools and districts around the Twin Cities, further complicates our ability to serve the needs of all BSM students.

As I shared with you before school started, our COVID-19 protocols for the 2021-22 school year were based on three core principles:

- Creating a learning experience for students that is as close to normal as possible
- Relying on school-specific transmission data to guide mitigation strategies
- Allowing for flexibility as circumstances change

Our COVID-19 response team has continued to work closely with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to monitor case data and on-campus transmission rates as the school year has progressed. (For more information on our current protocols and mitigation strategies visit the COVID Dashboard page of our website.)

This afternoon we received a call from MDH in which they expressed concern about increasing cases within our school and they instructed us to adjust our mask protocols to help lessen the spread and keep our students in school.

Therefore, beginning Thursday, November 18 through Friday, December 3, all students and adults will need to wear masks while in our school building. At the close of this period, we re-examine our data and circumstances to assess next steps. Doing so will help us eliminate close contacts and the need for contact tracing in the classroom, which in turn will allow us to return to our previous COVID protocols as soon as possible.

I fully understand that this change will be received differently by various members of our BSM community. I am asking for your patience, flexibility, understanding and partnership as we continue to work to deliver the best learning experience and environment for all of our students.

Sincerely,

Adam Ehrmantraut, Ed.D.
President

