



MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL FOR
MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

**2021-2022
COVID
OPERATING
PLAN**

Revised October 6, 2021

INTRODUCTION

Though we were hoping we would be operating under much less restrictive guidelines, we still find ourselves in a pandemic, and we have been forced to re-institute mask-wearing and social distancing mandates to mitigate spread. In addition, we must continue identifying possible cases, isolate positive cases, and conduct contact tracing in collaboration with the Mississippi Department of Health (MSDH).

As we did last year, we are working diligently to maintain a plan with two major priorities. First, we seek to create and maintain a safe and secure environment. Second, we attempt to provide learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom that promote scholarship, service, creativity, and community to the fullest extent possible. In balancing the two, we have decided to bring all students to campus this year and offer face-to-face instruction. To help us in our efforts to maintain a safe environment for everyone, all members of the MSMS community are expected to:

- Comply with current COVID-19 protocols while on campus.
- Keep their MSMS ID's with them at all times.
- Continue practicing preventative measures including symptom monitoring, personal safety practices, physical distancing, and cleaning and disinfection.

Inside this document, you will find general information. Please note that we are still hopeful that we will be able to return to normal at some point in the near future. We have attempted to address all questions we have encountered. If you still have questions, please feel free to contact the appropriate departments.

Wishing you safety and prosperity,

MSMS Administrators

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HEALTH AND SAFETY

Vaccination

Free vaccinations are available to all members of the campus community. If you are interested in receiving a **free COVID-19 vaccine** on campus at our Health Center, please contact the Office of Student Affairs at 662-329-7766.

For more information and if you have questions, please visit MSDH's site at: https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/14,0,420,976.html

For more information related to vaccine effectiveness, please review https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/effectiveness.html?s_cid=10464:vaccine%20effectiveness:sem.ga:p:RG:GM:gen:PTN:FY21

Daily Symptom Checking

All members of the MSMS community should perform a self-assessment of possible COVID-19 symptoms daily. See list of symptoms below. Any resident experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (or any other illness) should not interact with others and should be tested for COVID-19. They should immediately contact their health care provider and the Campus Health Center (662-329-7289).

Symptoms of COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Face Coverings

Face coverings are required for everyone indoors, regardless of vaccination status, and must be worn covering the nose and mouth. Due to the recent increase in the of COVID-19 cases and aligned with recommendations made by the Mississippi Department of Health, MSMS and MUW

require face coverings indoors (except when alone in a personal space) on campus regardless of vaccination-status. Face coverings are not required when outdoors unless you within three (3) feet of others.

This policy will be re-evaluated as needed.

Physical Distancing

Please remember that wearing face coverings is no substitute for social distancing. The most effective distance is at least six (6) feet. However, we urge everyone to maintain at least three (3) feet of distance at all times. Elevators in the academic buildings should remain single occupancy, and residential hall elevators can accommodate **four (4)** individuals.

Physical Distancing in the Classroom

Classroom seating for students will be at least 3 feet apart with 6 feet of distance between students and the lecturer or presenter. Teachers may walk around to observe student responses, which means they may be within 3 feet for briefs moments. Some subjects such as world languages are more effectively taught when students can see the teachers' lips as they pronounce words. In these cases, teachers are allowed to stand eight (8) feet from students behind a plastic, clear screen.

Sanitization

Sanitizing wipes and hand sanitizer will be available in buildings across campus. Individuals are asked to take personal responsibility for their personal spaces and other spaces they utilize by wiping down surfaces before and after use.

Campus Health Center

The Campus Health Center is staffed Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. except for university holidays. Nurse practitioners are available to see MUW and MSMS students and employees along with their dependents age three and over. The cost of the visit for students and employees is free. Dependents are charged a \$15 fee. The health center charges a nominal fee to cover the cost of any medication or supplies used and for complete physical exams that require lab testing.

Contact Tracing

The Campus Health Center will continue to perform contact tracing duties for the campus community. Anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or who has been exposed to someone who tested positive should contact the health center regardless of vaccination status. The Campus Health Center number is 662-329-7289.

Quarantine

Individuals not fully vaccinated and identified as close contacts will be required to quarantine at home for up to ten days after exposure to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 and should contact the Campus Health Center for quarantine protocol and contact tracing (662-329-7289).

Vaccinated individuals (with proof of vaccination) and identified as close contacts will not be asked to engage in a full quarantine, but will be asked to adhere to the following for 3 to 5 days:

1. Follow strict distancing rules (maintain six feet of distance from others at all times).
2. Move to an open room for 3 to 5 days to determine if symptoms will develop or not. (Students)
3. Receive a rapid test on day 3 after exposure.
4. Comply with meal guidelines: Eat at a table without other students inside or get food to go from the cafeteria.

Employees should contact the MSMS Executive Director's Office for leave information (662-329-7674) and their supervisors.

COVID Testing

The Campus Health Center will continue to offer PCR and rapid COVID testing for individuals exhibiting any sign or symptom of COVID-19. The rapid test is offered **free of charge**. Students who are not vaccinated will be included in random testing, which is conducted weekly.

Mental Health

For Employees:

MSMS and MUW benefits-eligible employees and members of their households are covered under the Humana Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and Work-Life Services Benefit at no cost to the employee. The services provided are available to help you and your household members manage everyday life issues that can affect you at home and work. They offer assistance and counseling in person or by telephone, a variety of resources for health and wellness as well as numerous referral services and it's all confidential. Follow the link for Humana's contact information and to learn more about this benefit:

<https://www.muw.edu/hr/employees/benefits#EAPWL>

For Students:

Our Professional School Counselors will continue to provide guidance for students related to college and careers. They will still meet one on one throughout the year with students and in small groups as needed either face to face or virtually.

MSMS is committed to continuing to support student mental health through counseling and related services, especially given all the challenges students will continue to face as a result of the health crisis. MSMS contracts with two mental health counselors to provide counseling sessions. To schedule a counseling appointment or for any other questions, students are encouraged to contact Ms. Shelle Bates or Dr. Heath Stevens.

Consequences for Violating COVID Protocols

Violation of COVID protocols for students falls under "Disrespect/Noncompliance" and will be treated as a Level 2 infraction (Offense #2: Disrespect/Noncompliance). As stated in the Student Handbook, the consequence for the first infraction is a Weekend Hall Restriction, and the second violation of COVID protocols will result in a seven-day in-hall restriction. The third infraction will necessitate a three-day suspension, and a fourth violation will result in dismissal.

Employees violating COVID protocols will receive a written warning for the first infraction, and they will be suspended without pay for the second violation. The third violation could result in termination.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Academic Continuity

This year, we returned to our normal schedule, which consists of eight (8) classes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and five (5) classes on Tuesday and Thursday. This schedule allows more flexibility for students to meet throughout the week with teachers. We are also reinstating our weekly tutorials Monday through Wednesday nights from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Since we expect students to be out at times due to quarantine, instructors will make arrangements for students to view classes in real time. To keep this privilege from being abused, students absent for other reasons should not expect real-time class viewing but are encouraged to contact their teachers to plan to make up any work missed when they return. In addition to helping students view live classes, teachers will schedule individual or in small group virtual meetings as needed. Although instructors will work with students while students are absent due to quarantine, students are responsible for contacting instructors as soon as they are aware of the need to quarantine.

Due to the fragile nature of this pandemic, teachers have been asked to be prepared to shift to virtual instruction if the sudden need arises. To assist with this possible transition, MSMS will continue to utilize the learning management platform: Canvas.

Athletics

MSMS will follow the guidelines set forth by MHSAA

Clubs and Organizations

Student clubs and organizations will continue to operate during the school year in person. Individual clubs may choose to meet virtually. Guidelines are in place to ensure social distancing and maintaining a safe environment if meetings are held face to face. Club sponsors are responsible for scheduling physical or virtual spaces for meetings.

Travel

Unless traveling to an area with a travel restriction, travel procedures will return to normal, and individuals traveling should be aware of the conditions that exist at their destination. Travelers should adhere to international travel guidelines published by the CDC and contact the Campus Health Center if there are questions.

Housing and Residence Life

Providing a healthy living environment for residential students is a top priority for MSMS Residence Life. To maintain wellness within the congregate housing setting of residence halls, additional policies and procedures should be expected by residents as follows:

1. All who enter the building will be required to wear a mask.
2. Upon entrance, each student, guest, or staff member must sanitize hands. A wall mounted sanitizer dispenser will be available to the right of both front entrances.
3. Students are encouraged to supply their own writing utensils for the purpose of signing in and out.
4. Students are encouraged to wash their hands frequently.
5. Students are encouraged to sanitize their door handles to their rooms and bathrooms daily.
6. General hygiene is a must. Students are STRONGLY encouraged to shower daily.
7. Thorough cleaning is expected in student rooms.
8. No furniture will be allowed to leave the student's room.
9. **No more than four (4) students should be in a room at one time. Doors must remain open, masks must be worn, and students must still practice social distancing.**
10. Students are not required to wear masks in their rooms with roommates **and suitemates**. However, masks must be put on when a guest enters the room.
11. Elevators in the residence halls will be limited to **four (4)** people at one time.

Students should perform a self-assessment of possible COVID-19 symptoms daily. Any resident experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (or any other illness) at any time during the day should not

interact with other residents and immediately contact a staff member. The staff/faculty member will then notify his or her department office, which in turn will notify the Campus Health Center.

Emergency Care Closet

The Emergency Care Closet was created by our Parents Lending United Support (PLUS) Officers as a safeguard for our students to provide necessities such as: shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant, feminine products, laundry detergent, etc. To decrease travel off campus, the Emergency Care Closet will be available for students who need items. Students can notify their respective Hall Directors for items they need.

MSMS SERVICES

Dining

MUW Dining is committed to creating an environment where MSMS Students feel safe to dine on campus during these unprecedented times. All dining locations will be open during all regular hours of operation; any changes in hours of operation will be communicated promptly. For the most up-to-date hours of operation or view the daily menu download the BITE by Sodexo from your favorite app store or visit the MUW Dining website at www.muw.sodexomyway.com.

Below are some of the preventive measures we are taking:

- Signage encouraging social distancing.
- Face masks are required for all MUW Dining Staff. Students, Faculty, and Patrons will be required to follow MUW campus policy on face masks.
- High-touch surfaces and utensils will be cleaned/switched out frequently.
- Self Service stations will have gloves available for those who don't feel comfortable touching utensils at these stations.
- To-Go container will be available upon request; students will be able to make their meal selection but must leave the dining hall after making their selection.

MUW Dining will maintain a designated area for MSMS Students only. The public, W Students, W Faculty & Staff, MUW Dining Staff, will be prohibited from using this area. If you have questions, comments, or concerns, please contact MUW Dining by calling 662-329-7411.

Stark Recreation

Our goal is to continue to help ensure a safe environment for everyone. While we no longer require booking a workout session, please see below for our most recent COVID-19 policies. These will continue to be monitored and adjusted accordingly.

We are open Monday - Friday, from 6:00am - 6:30pm

Currently Accessible:

- Strength & Conditioning Room
- Indoor Track
- Fitness Classes
- Tennis Courts
- Boot Camp Classes (Fee based)

MUW Campus Rec COVID-19 Policies

- Masks must be worn while around others even if fully vaccinated when entering the building and if NOT working out
- Masks are NOT required to be worn while working out
- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, entry will not be permitted
- Sanitize hands frequently
- Maintain appropriate social distance
- Wipe down equipment after each use

Your Health is Our Priority

We have implemented the following measures:

- Throughout each shift, all equipment is frequently sanitized by scheduled employees
- A sanitizing mister using a COVID-19 EPA approved solution will be used throughout the day
- Additional hand sanitizers have been placed around facility
- Equipment has been moved to allow for social distancing

Suspended Services

- No towel service
- No shower access
- No basketball gyms
- No racquetball courts
- No guest passes
- No Functional Fitness classes

Library

The library is operating its normal hours this year, and no additional COVID protocols outside of those of MUW are being instituted.

Frequently Asked Questions

Vaccinations

Q: Are Covid-19 vaccines required by MSMS?

A: No, vaccination is not required for students, faculty and staff. However, MSMS **strongly encourages** individuals to get vaccinated.

Q: Can I ask about an individual's vaccination status?

A: No, an individual's vaccination status is protected personal information, and faculty and staff should not ask individuals about their vaccination status.

Q: What should I do if someone asks me about my vaccination status?

A: Generally, you should not be asked about your vaccination status. Exceptions may include times when you are seeking medical treatment, during contact tracing, or in the execution of testing protocols. Otherwise, if you are asked, you can politely respond that you are not comfortable providing personal medical information.

Employees

Q: What leave is available for quarantine or isolation due to COVID-19? Can I telecommute while quarantined?

A: An employee will need to use personal leave, medical leave or leave without pay according to State law. Telecommuting may be an option and will be evaluated by the supervisor on an individual basis.

Q: Will MSMS supply PPE, cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer for offices/departments and how do I request supplies?

A: Yes, you may contact your department office to request supplies and refills.