



Mount Alvernia High School

**Planning for the 2020-2021 School Year and Reopening:
Academic Planning and COVID-19 Protocols**

July 31, 2020



Mount Alvernia High School

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Dear Mount Alvernia High School Community.

We hope your family is well and you are enjoying the summer. This is a summer like no other where teams are meeting to prepare for many possible scenarios for the fall.

We were thrilled to finally celebrate the Class of 2020 on Sunday, July 19th. It was reassuring for all of us to have students and families back on our campus.

Our goal has always been to return to 790 Centre Street. Our decisions are based on guidelines and recommendations from public health and state leaders. As of the date of this document, Massachusetts health indicators are trending favorably. We all share a cautious optimism that this continues but we are aware anything could change.

This document outlines our return to Mount Alvernia High School in a hybrid model. Our data is shared to support this decision. Much time and planning has gone into how we can meet the needs of our students both in classrooms and remote and maintain the health and safety of all. Changes and adaptations may be needed. Living our plan will allow us to better understand what challenges we may be presented with. The benefit of a small school is our ability to make those changes quickly as evidenced this spring.

Communication will continue throughout the summer calling to your attention any changes from what we have shared. A feedback survey accompanies this document and we look forward to hearing your thoughts.

I want to thank all those who have assisted in this work including our Distance Learning Committee (Mary Bridget Chick, Andy Davis, Sandra Giordano, Meaghan Holloran, Jaime Street), our School Nurse (Deb Brancato), Facilities Manager (Tom Francis), Technology Director (Tanya Finegold), members of the Missionary Franciscan Sisters and our Mount Alvernia High School Board.

I wish all our families continued health and look forward to seeing everyone in September.

All the best,

Nicole O'Brien

Nicole Pascarelli O'Brien '97
Interim Head of School

July 31, 2020

Mount Alvernia High School

Planning for the 2020-2021 School Year and Reopening: Academic Planning

Overview

Our goal is to reopen Mount Alvernia High School this fall with in person learning for as many students as possible based on current data. We understand students need to return to a structured and familiar environment. We also understand that in addition to academics, we need to focus on the mental health and social-emotional wellbeing of all members of our community. Collectively we have lived through a challenging experience and have largely remained isolated and without structured routines. Building back to where we were will take time. We are committed to working with our students and families to support this fall's return to Mount Alvernia High School.

The health and safety of our whole community is our priority. To this end, we will be limiting events and visitors to the buildings as much as we can. As health guidelines and data are updated, we will continue to revisit and revise as necessary.

We ask families to partner with us to continue conversations with your daughter about the importance of social distancing, hygiene and mask wearing to help keep everyone healthy.

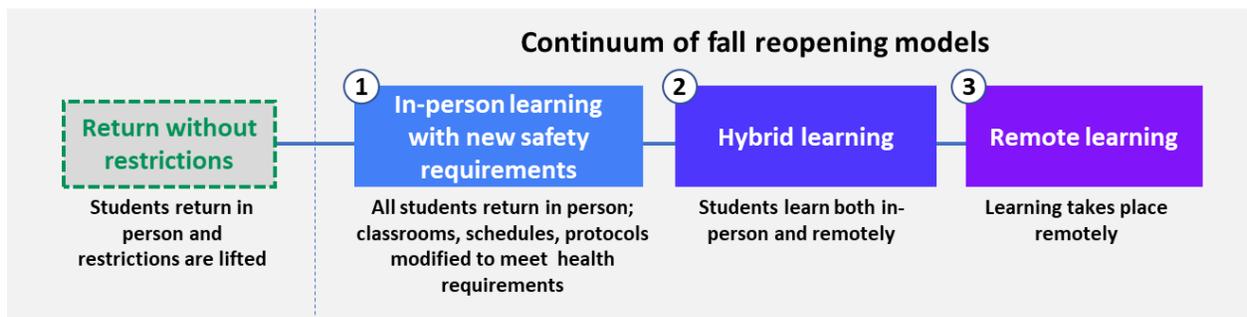
A previous document dated July 14, 2020 details our operational planning for opening school. This document focuses on instructional planning.

Defining Options for Instruction

Components of district/school fall reopening plans

From Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

Each district and school will need to plan for three possibilities on the continuum of reopening: 1) in-person learning with new safety requirements; 2) a hybrid of in-person and remote learning; and 3) remote learning. In addition, all districts/schools will also need a focused plan for serving special student populations across each of these models.



1. In-person learning with new safety requirements: For the fall, the box in light blue represents our goal to get as many students as possible back into schools for in-person learning—safely. In this model, all students return in person to school settings that are appropriately modified to accommodate the health and safety requirements outlined above. Examples of modifications could include altered classroom configurations, setting up additional learning spaces, and schedule changes.

At MAHS In-person means as many students and faculty as are able, are on campus. Instruction occurs in the traditional form. For students who are not able to attend in person classes due to health concerns, family concerns or during a period of quarantine, Google Meet will be available and students will be able to interact in the class.

2. Hybrid learning: In addition, all districts/schools must create a plan for a hybrid model in the event they are unable to bring all students back to school under the health and safety requirements despite their best efforts, or in case of COVID-19 related circumstances. A hybrid model means that students would alternate between in-person and remote learning. For instance, students could switch between in-person and remote learning on alternating weeks or days of the week.

AT MAHS Hybrid means instruction is both in person and online. This mixed method allows for a smaller number of students in the buildings. Schedules will vary to allow for students to attend on different days following guidelines for social distancing.

3. Remote learning: All districts and schools are required to have a plan for operating a remote learning program. This model must be available for individual students who cannot yet return in-person, and for all students in the event of future classroom or school closures due to COVID-19. Additional guidance on statewide support and resources for remote learning will be provided in the coming weeks.

At MAHS Remote learning means all classes are held virtually through Google Meet. A specific schedule will be followed to adhere to best practices for virtual learning that will include synchronous (live) classes and asynchronous work (either recorded or independent assignments).

At any time during the school year, due to recommendations by the state or the health of our faculty and staff, Mount Alvernia High School may move among these three models.

**Based on the data and guidelines on the date of this publication,
Mount Alvernia High School will begin the school year in a hybrid model.**

MAHS Data Informing our Decision

The current Massachusetts Department Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) guidelines, following Centers for Disease Control guidelines, recommend three to six feet of space between each student in a classroom. At MAHS, each classroom was emptied of seating, measured and marked for six feet of space between students.

There are 92 sections of classes scheduled for the 2020-2021 school year. This accounts for all classes and all sections of classes. Of these 92 sections, 54% of our classes could operate in their assigned space within the guidelines and capacity. 29% of our classes exceed the largest capacity rooms based on their enrollment.

September 2020

Our best determination for how to bring back students based on our capacity data, is to divide our student population.

One group will have in person classes on Mondays and Tuesdays and will use Google Meet to join their classes remotely on Thursdays and Fridays.

The second group will join their classes online using Google Meet on Mondays and Tuesdays and will attend in person classes on Thursdays and Fridays.

All students will be remote on Wednesdays. Independent assignments, check in with teachers, office hours for extra help and time for student meetings, will occur on Wednesdays.

Students have the option of attending in person classes on their assigned day. In each classroom a device will be used for remote students to join the class via Google Meet and see lessons in person as well as ask questions. Remote students are expected to have their cameras turned on and engage in the lessons. Lessons will be designed with a mixture of teacher led instruction and independent “practice” work. This model ensures continuity of learning for all students whether remote or in-person.

Group assignments will be carefully determined, factoring in a number of variables. These variables include splitting the largest sections of classes to accommodate capacity guidelines and keeping siblings in the same groupings. These groups will remain in place until data allows an increase in capacity. They are non-negotiable as many considerations have been factored into their creation.

We recognize there may be students who cannot come to campus for various reasons including health concerns, family concerns or personal quarantining. Students are expected, when healthy,

to attend their classes remotely. Attendance will be taken in each class. For students who are sick or must miss a class, our policy of contacting the front office to report their absence is still in place.

Students may switch between in person or remote fluidly, however, they may only attend in person classes on their assigned days. A handbook for Hybrid and Distance Learning expectations will be shared prior to the beginning of the school year.

Hybrid School Day Schedule

To accommodate students who are remote, as well as students who are in person, our schedule will be adjusted to accommodate our hybrid model. Under new conditions, such as wearing masks and combining online learning and remote learning, class periods will need to be adjusted. We are mindful of the rigor of our curriculum and faculty will be using their professional development planning time to continue to evaluate and balance student learning while maintaining the quality of our program.

Our goal is that classes are structured in a way to mix direct instruction with time to review, practice new concepts and allow for follow up work within a designated time. Follow up work is traditionally known as homework. Where possible, but with some exceptions, this will be accommodated in class times and finished at home. We are cognizant of the amount of time remote students will be in front of a screen each day.

This schedule allows for 30 minutes classes with 5 minutes for transition/wiping down desks. The additional time built into our transition allows for desks to be sprayed and wiped by students before moving to their next class. We will revisit this schedule as needed. Adjustments to our schedule are based on best practice research for hybrid learning.

GRADES 7, 8, 9

Homeroom	7:45-7:55
Period 1	8:00 - 8:30
Period 2	8:35 - 9:05
<u>BREAK</u>	9:10 - 9:20
Period 3	9:20 - 9:55
Period 4	9:55 - 10:25
<u>LUNCH</u>	10:30 - 11:00
Period 5	11:05 - 11:35
Period 6	11:40 - 12:10
Period 7	12:15 - 12:45
Period 8	12:50 - 1:20

GRADES 10, 11, 12

Homeroom	7:45-7:55
Period 1	8:00 - 8:30
Period 2	8:35 - 9:05
Period 3	9:10 - 9:40
<u>BREAK</u>	9:45 - 9:55
Period 4	9:55 - 10:25
Period 5	10:30 - 11:00
Period 6	11:05 - 11:35
<u>LUNCH</u>	11:40 - 12:10
Period 7	12:15 - 12:45
Period 8	12:50 - 1:20

What In Person Will Look Like

Following health and safety guidelines, masks must be worn at all times except for eating. Social distancing of six feet must be maintained whenever possible. For this reason, there will be some changes to our daily schedule when students are in the building.

Lockers - We will not be using lockers for the foreseeable future.

“Homebase” - On days students are in the building they will have a space assigned as “homebase.”

For students in Grades 7, 8, 9, homebase is the Dining Room.

For Students in Grades 10, 11, 12, homebase is in the Gym.

These spaces will have individual desks spaced six feet apart and facing the same direction. Students will remain in their space for their two days each week. Any materials that are not needed in their backpacks, can be placed on their desks (lunch for example). Jackets may be placed on the back of the chair.

This is obviously a smaller personal space than a locker. For this reason, we suggest personal belongings remain at home. Any additional books not needed in class should also remain at home. Students will travel to classes with their backpacks. Backpacks will be allowed in each classroom space. Students are expected to keep their personal homebase space tidy.

When students arrive in the morning, they are expected to enter the school building with their masks on, covering both nose and mouth. A portable hand sanitizer dispenser will be located at the entry door for students to use before moving to their homebase. They should report to their homebase until homeroom. Students should not arrive before 7am. Students should not move their desks so that they remain socially distant. Students should stay at their desks until it is time to go to their homeroom. During break and lunch this is the seat students should return to.

On Wednesdays and weekends this space will be thoroughly cleaned using an electrostatic disinfectant sprayer to prepare for the alternate group.

Lunch - Non perishables will be available for sale using our punch card system. Punch cards may be purchased in the student’s homebase during break and lunch only. Pizza lunch will be available on Tuesdays and Fridays and can be signed up for the morning of. Microwaves will not be available. Students are expected to remain in their assigned seats in their homebase during lunch.

Vending machines will not be available. Water fountains will not be used. Both of these decisions are to mitigate the spread of germs on multiple touch surfaces. Students are encouraged to bring water bottles from home. Bottles of water will be available for purchase.

After School - The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) the governing body of high school athletics and of which we are a member, has announced as of the date of this

document that practices will not be permitted until September 14th. As we have more information about fall sports, we will share that. It is expected, with the exception of fall sports, that students, faculty and staff leave the campus at the end of the day. We will close our buildings at 2:30pm to allow for daily cleaning and disinfecting. Decisions regarding how athletics will be affected will be forthcoming.

Clubs and activities will meet virtually on Wednesdays.

**Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Required to be Implemented Under the Guidance of
MA Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE)**

Students, with the assistance of their families, must be monitored daily for any symptoms of COVID-19. We ask that you assess your daughter each morning prior to her leaving for school as to how she is feeling and consider checking her temperature if you have any doubts and/or concerns. Please do not send your daughter to school if she is unwell, especially if she is displaying any of the symptoms outlined below that could potentially indicate an active case of COVID-19 which would then result in her having to be dismissed from school.

Everyone must do their part to protect others and not come to school if they are exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms.

Below is the full list of symptoms families should monitor on a daily basis:

- Fever (100.4° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache when in combination with other symptoms
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms

The single most important thing to do if any of the above outlined symptoms are present is to **STAY HOME.**

Our hybrid model allows for individual daily decisions on days students are scheduled to be in person. The collective health of our school community relies, in part, on individual attention and responsibility.

Note that some symptoms of COVID-19 are the same as the flu or a bad cold; please do not assume it is another condition. When in doubt, stay home and contact your medical care provider for further direction.

Any student who develops any of the above outlined Covid-19 symptoms whether at home or in school, must be tested for possible active COVID-19 infection prior to returning to school.

- Any student who develops Covid-19 symptoms while in school will be dismissed home for further medical evaluation and required Covid-19 testing. Information about testing sites is available on the Commonwealth of Massachusetts website (<https://www.mass.gov/>)
- Parents/guardians will be immediately contacted by the school nurse and we ask that you promptly arrange for their dismissal from school.
- Any student complaining of symptoms related to Covid-19 may not take any form of public transportation home, i.e. Uber, MBTA, etc.
- Mount Alvernia High School requires that the person designated to pick up your daughter wear a mask/face covering when arriving at school.
- It is advised to wash hands upon arriving at home and change clothes, as a precaution.
- Any student who tests negative for Covid-19 may return to school once asymptomatic of their illness for 24 hours and will provide a medical note for return to the school nurse on the day of her return.

Any student who tests positive for Covid-19 will remain at home.

- Self-isolation for COVID-19 positive cases is a minimum of 10 days.
- A student may return to school when:
 - a. she has gone for *3 days without a fever* (and without taking fever-reducing medications like Tylenol);
 - b. she has experienced *improvement in other symptoms* (for example, cough has gotten much better);
 - c. she has *received clearance* from public health authority contact tracers (the local board of health or Community Tracing Collaborative);
 - d. provides a *medical note for return* to school to the school nurse on the day of her return.

Return to school should be based on time and symptom resolution.

Any student who has had a possible close contact of a Covid-19 case, whether at home/surrounding communities or in school, will not return to school until they have either been tested or elects instead to self-quarantine for 14 days and must be asymptomatic of illness upon return.

A close contact is defined as:

- Being within less than 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for at least 10-15 minutes.
- The Covid-19 case may have shown symptoms at the time of exposure; however, they are still considered **contagious 48 hours before the onset of their symptoms.**
- Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on) while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment (mask) is also considered a close contact exposure.

In order to return to school, close contacts must:

- have one negative test result;

It is important to note:

Because tests performed too early can be falsely negative, the test should be performed no sooner than 4 or 5 days after the last contact with the person who tested positive;

- not be showing any COVID-19 symptoms;
if they have symptoms but test negative regardless, your daughter is required to wait until they are **asymptomatic for 24 hours** before returning to school;
- provide a medical note for return to school to the school nurse.

or if they do not wish to be tested:

- quarantine at home for 14 days;
- not be showing any Covid-19 symptoms;
- provide a medical note for return to school to the school nurse.

Note: Any close contact exposure that results in a positive Covid-19 test result would follow the guidelines outlined above for “**Any student who tests positive for Covid-19**”.

***We ask that all communication regarding any symptoms, possible infection and/or close contact related to Covid-19 whether occurring at home or in any other setting be promptly relayed to the school nurse in order that our mitigation strategies may be immediately taken in order to reduce the risk of further transmission at school.**

The same protocols listed above are in place for faculty and staff of Mount Alvernia High School.

Mount Alvernia High School must be notified immediately of any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Travel

Per guidelines issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, anyone who travels by airplane must self quarantine for 14 days. Similarly, anyone returning from a state not designated by Massachusetts as approved to not quarantine, must self quarantine for 14 days. Alternative to the 14-day quarantine, travelers can take a COVID-19 test within the first 72 hours of arriving in Massachusetts. Those people must remain in quarantine until they get their negative test results.

Decision to Move to Remote Learning for All Students

Should we receive confirmation of a positive case of COVID-19 and that student or faculty/staff member was in the building 48 hours before their positive test confirmation, families will be notified and we will move to our Distance Learning Plan. Because of the size of our school and multiple contact locations such as bathrooms and hallways, we are unable to prevent widespread infection with even one case.

We will close our school for two weeks to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the case of a positive test. Ongoing communication about shifting to Distance Learning and a plan for reopening will be shared.

Distance Learning Plan

Our Distance Learning Plan combines our feedback from last spring, with research for best practices.

Mirroring our hybrid schedule, students will have classes Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. The schedule of classes will be held from 9am-1:30pm with a break for lunch.

Wednesdays will remain an independent work day, office hours and time for student activity meetings. On Wednesdays, students are expected to meet with teachers during normal class times for office hours/extra help or to check in and/or submit assignments as needed.

The six day rotation will be used with all classes meeting for four days of instruction.

Changes to Our School Calendar

Grading

Prior to the school year beginning, we will share a Handbook that will detail grading policies and dates of terms. We are reviewing best practices and recommendations that accommodate hybrid and distance learning options.

Events

As we have more information and data throughout the school year, we will make decisions about individual events. Some events may shift to later in the year, some we may have to forgo this school year. We plan to do our best to maintain our community and as many special events as we are able to while also being conscious of health factors and exposing our community to outside visitors. Each month we will share a calendar of events.

Field Trips

We are suspending all field trips and off campus events until further notice.

Conclusion

We appreciate the support we have received from our community. Your feedback is important to us. We ask for your patience as we work through our plans. As we did in the spring, we will make any adjustments and changes as we need to to best serve our community. We will do our best to communicate with you as we have information, and we ask the same of you. This is an unprecedented situation that we are all experiencing together. We hope health indicators continue to move in a direction that will allow us to relax restrictions as public health officials advise. In all decisions Mount Alvernia High School makes, the health and safety of our school community is at the center.

September 2020 Calendar

Opening Days will be divided by groups. Student group assignments will be shared in the coming weeks.

Thursday, September 10th Opening Day 8am-11:40am

- Individual Pictures
- Opening Assembly
- 15 minute Classes
- Closing Q&A

Friday, September 11th Opening Day 8am-11:40am

- Individual Pictures
- Opening Assembly
- 15 minute Classes
- Closing Q&A

Week of Monday, September 14th Hybrid Model Begins

Back to School Night For Parents will be a combination of a recorded tour of the school and updates to health, safety and educational protocols and Google Meetings with individual teachers. Date to be announced.