



# MIDLAND SCHOOL COVID-19 PLAN

2021-22 | Updated Jan '22



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# A Message from the Head of School

January 2022

## Dear Midland Community,

With great consideration for the health, wellness, and safety of all our community members, we would like to share our most current plans for a return to campus. This dynamic document contains the informed and sensible collaboration of our administration, staff, faculty, local and national medical professionals, and organizations. For the remainder of the school year at least, we will be confronting the challenge of the Omicron variant - its rapid spread and high case numbers.

While we expect (and hope) for a more “normal” year, we also want to prepare and plan for the inevitable anomalies and challenges - such as the Omicron variant. This is a plan in response to an evolving situation. President Eisenhower popularized the notion that plans (and planning documents) are useless and the process of planning is priceless (drafting & reviewing planning documents). We embrace this perspective and expect this plan to evolve given the rapidly changing context and available information. At heart, our intent is to craft a special year that responds to the various challenges and crises, allowing a path for continued on-campus learning in the future.

## Our Continued Priorities for the Year

We have identified the following priorities in last year’s plan. This plan and our response should be bounded and limited to actions that support these priorities:

- Long term and short term health and wellness of students & community
- Mission: Survival of our ability to deliver Midland School’s mission & core values into the future
- Institutional change to further incorporate our diversity, equity, and inclusion work into school culture, curriculum, programs, and practices
- Respond to the emerging needs of the Midland community by bolstering our ability to be nimble and sensible
- Financial viability/solvency, especially the resources to allocate to needs (e.g. payroll, financial aid)

Although we recognize that the impact of the current challenges may extend well beyond a year, the scope for this planning effort is for the remainder of this school year. Please expect subsequent updates as we synthesize new information and best practices.

Sincerely,



Christopher Barnes  
*Head of School*

## Organizing Principles

### **Vaccination for All**

- We are seeking the significant benefits of herd immunity by requiring vaccination of all students and employees (and allowing for required medical or religious exemptions/exceptions)
- We do this to protect ourselves and each other. Vaccination strongly supports our responsibility to participate in the broad response to COVID-19.

### **School Outside ~ as needed or prudent**

- Maximize the use of our assets and skills – utilize the natural world as a classroom space frequently
- We can and will increase outdoor classes and decrease indoor classes as needed to mitigate risk

### **Stick to the Basics**

- Ongoing commitment to basic hygiene practices, especially hand washing before and after meals and other community activities
- Masks usage indoors for all until mandate changes and then for symptomatic (flu-like &/or COVID) individuals & unvaccinated individuals wear masks indoor in communal settings
- Expand (spread out) to use the available space(s) to minimize unnecessary density in indoor settings. Consider masking for any high-density environments

### **Our Scale Is a Strength**

- Be nimble and sensible – maintain agility and practicality that allows for quick decision-making and plan modification because our size allows for quick pivoting as we gather updated information
- Greatly expand flexibility by expanding roles and responsibilities (team approaches to most tasks and duties)

### **Maintain Decision-Making Discipline**

- Utilize definitive and high-quality sources for data and recommendations, controlling guidance hierarchy is Santa Barbara County Department of Public Health, California Department of Public Health, and finally the Center for Disease Control (CDC)
- We can and should utilize the data and information coming from other boarding schools, summer camps, and associations as sources for practices that have been demonstrated to work
- People's long-term well-being and mental health should supersede short-term gain & benefits

## Modes of Campus Operation

### **Overview of Protocols and Expectations**

Nobody is or can be perfect, and yet if we are not all highly disciplined and thoughtful in making the transition from life at home to life on campus, our time together on campus will be short-lived. A myriad of schools and colleges have opened only to be forced to re-close quickly due to an outbreak; others have been successful in managing the risks. The differentiator is the effective utilization of the basics!

All that follows are strong guidelines and expectations. Please read and consider them to be rules and requirements. It is important that we all internalize that the task at hand is fundamentally difficult; yet the task is for the benefit of others more than for ourselves. While each of us might make compliance mistakes, we endeavor to uphold them and hold each other accountable.

As a community, we slow the potential spread of COVID-19 by vaccination, monitoring, and reducing time and exposure. As an individual, you slow the spread by following the 4Ws (Wear a mask, Wash Hands, Watch distance, and We are in this together) and by maintaining an honest and transparent awareness of those with whom you have been in close contact. Please, for all our sakes, strive mightily to meet the ideal outlined below.

We will operate in one of two modes this year, with specific guidance for each one. However, we will adapt the plan and criteria based on the evolving guidance, data available to us, the number of infections on-campus & locally, and any number of other factors.

The following protocols and expectations reflect our best effort at implementing the most recent and widely accepted practices for residential schools and similar congregate living facilities. Midland has some unique opportunities and strengths to apply to this challenge; we must fully utilize them: use the outdoor space to spread out, and build on our long history of doing the right thing even when it is the hard thing.

There is a risk of infection every time we leave our homes or invite someone into them. Ultimately, our goal is to stay open, which will require our collective commitment to each other. It is difficult to balance the requirement to inform community members of confirmed COVID cases with a desire to honor individual desire for privacy (an imperfect balance). Therefore, Midland is committed to upholding public health requirements and we plan to inform both community members and local public health officials of COVID-19 infections and ongoing test results. We are hopeful that in adhering to some basic sensibilities, we can reduce disease transmission and enjoy a full and joyful on-campus return.

General Expectations	Overview of Level I High Risk Mitigation	Overview of Level II Surveillance & Management
<b>Trigger Levels</b>	Known/suspected COVID-19 infection on campus Significant increasing local/regional infection rate & Public Health officials recommendation	2+ weeks since last known infection on campus <b>Note: We expect to start school in this category/column for the 2021-22 School Year</b>
<b>Wash your Hands</b>	Before & After meals and restroom use Before & After any group activity with substantial contact (people or objects) Utilize handwashing and hand sanitizer stations throughout campus After sneezing or coughing (sneeze into your elbow!) Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.	
<b>Wear your Mask</b>	<i>As of CDPH Guidance from late November (<a href="#">here</a>): : Masks and masking are required for all students and teachers in all schools state-wide when INDOORS (regardless of vaccination status or distancing, except while eating food). Also, see <a href="#">July 28 Guidance for the Use of Face Covering</a> and <a href="#">CDC Guidance from July 9</a>. (This above does not apply to roommates in cabins)</i> If symptomatic (cough, sneezing, or other flu-like symptoms) both INDOORS and OUTDOORS When masking: Approved masks only (bandanas, neck gaiters, buffs, or loose face coverings are <b>not</b> acceptable) Any cloth face coverings need to be frequently washed, like underwear, and not reused from day-to-day As per CDPH guidance, any deviations from compliance (for legitimate exemption reasons) must be paired with additional risk mitigation strategies (e.g. face shield usage, workplace spacing changes, etc.) <b>Use/require higher efficacy masks (e.g. KN95) as prudent, especially during the “Level 1 Higher Risk Mitigation”</b>	
<b>Watch your Distance</b>	Maintain spacing as possible (expand to fill the space rather than clumping together) As possible, settle into 3 foot or greater spacing for extended communal settings (study time, class periods etc.)	
<b>We are in this Together</b>	Everyone sacrifices some personal freedoms and comforts for our collective good. We celebrate individual contributions to the common and collective good.	

Vaccination Status	Level I High Risk Mitigation	Level II Surveillance & Management
<b>Vaccinated Individuals</b>	This plan presumes that nearly all individuals (>95%) are vaccinated in our community. “Vaccinated” status means that the individual has completed the initial series as recommended AND has any and all recommended OR permitted boosters (note: individuals who live or work in congregate settings are frequently higher priority)	
<b>Non-Vaccinated Individuals, age 12 and over</b>	Mask required INDOORS at all times Mask required OUTDOORS in congregate settings (assemblies or gatherings) Mask alternatives (face shields, etc...) allowed for cause and by administration and health office permission only For walk thru and self-serve meals, sit spaced 6 feet or greater when unmasked (separately or outside) Must submit to PCR-type surveillance testing at least once every 2 weeks (more frequently if deemed prudent)	
<b>Non-Vaccinated Individuals, age 11 and under</b>	Mask required INDOORS at all times Mask required OUTDOORS in congregate settings (assemblies or gatherings) Mask alternatives (face shields, etc...) allowed for cause and by administration and health office permission only For walk thru and self-serve meals, sit spaced 6 feet or greater when unmasked (separately or outside) Surveillance testing available & variable (depends on other school testing regimes, etc. on a case by case basis)	

Testing & Tracing	Level I High Risk Mitigation	Level II Surveillance & Management
<b>Community Health Surveillance</b>	<p>Daily self-evaluation of signs &amp; symptoms of COVID (see CDC guidance <a href="#">here</a>)                      Immediate quarantine for any flu-like symptoms until cleared by our health office                      Continue diligent hygiene, disinfecting and sanitizing practices                      Periodic surveillance testing (bi-weekly, weekly, or even daily) as deemed prudent by the school in consultation with public health officials, CDC guidance, and common practice of other analogous institutional/communal settings                      See <a href="#">Addendum: COVID Testing</a> for further details                      Note: As a school, Midland is required to report all testing results (positive, negative, or inconclusive) to local public health officials with basic identifying and demographic data</p>	
<b>Contact Tracing</b>	<p>After a student has tested positive for COVID-19 or is suspected to have COVID-19, contact tracers interview to determine what other individuals are at risk                      It is critical that students be honest with the contact tracers so that we can mitigate the spread of COVID-19. <i>Any information gleaned through contact tracing will not result in disciplinary measures.</i>                      We are required to report all positive cases to the Santa Barbara County Dept of Public Health Disease Control.                      Both close contacts and roommate maybe placed in cabin quarantine if unvaccinated or symptomatic                      Close contacts policy as per January 4th guidance from SBDPH (<a href="#">here</a>): the key point is asymptomatic vaccinated students can return to school with testing on day 5                      “close contact” = less than 6 feet apart for more than 15 minutes within a 24 hour period (with or without a face covering)                      Symptomatic individuals may be moved to a higher level of quarantine or sent home (TBD case by case)                      Resume normal after (varies) days post-contact OR negative PCR COVID test result (if vaccinated)</p>	
Gatherings & Shared Spaces	Level I High Risk Mitigation	Level II Surveillance & Management
<b>Academic Spaces for in-person learning (once allowed)</b>	<p>Maximize usage of outdoor classes, including use of Pole Barn, Barn, Lumberyard, etc.                      Minimize the use of indoor spaces as possible and prudent (weather dependent)                      Utilize remote learning strategies &amp; systems if necessary</p>	
<b>Assembly Protocol</b>	<p>Meet outside whenever possible                      Minimize or eliminate (via online assembly) any indoor gatherings</p>	
<b>Athletics &amp; Activities</b>	<p>Re-evaluate interscholastic competitions                      Individual gear/equipment assigned                      Equipment sanitizing pre &amp; post-use                      Masks required (exp. &gt; 10-foot spacing, very high exertion levels required)</p>	
<b>Dining Services</b>	<p>Outdoor seating predominantly, meals delivered to those in quarantine, &amp; increased sanitation, minimize or eliminate sit-down meals</p>	

<b>Living Yard Restroom &amp; Showers</b>	Use limited to grade and yard level groupings Masks required except for showering	Use limited to grade and yard level groupings
<b>Public Bathrooms</b>	Capacity limited to allow for 6 foot or greater spacing (max two masked users at a time in Pink Palace bathrooms)	Normal Use
<b>Public &amp; Shared Spaces</b>	Generally closed or limited (e.g. commons, library) - OK to enter to get something, wash hands before enter & after exit No sharing of items, sanitize between users (e.g. tables, chairs)	Open & Maintain good ventilation
<b>Study Spaces, esp. Status</b>	Increased spacing (6 foot spacing & room capacity limits) evaluate use of cabins for some students (“Status “ wifi on - tbd)	Study/Status spread out using cabins, classrooms, and other spaces w/ physical distancing (3 feet or greater)
<b>Transportation &amp; Vehicle Use</b>	Essential transportation only (e.g. medical) Group (2+) w/ face coverings & windows open but limited, minimized, and for mission-specific purposes only All non-essential appointments need to be scheduled during breaks or via remote/digital Minimize risk by utilizing drivers who are internal to our community (subject to our surveillance testing, etc.) as feasible	Normal Use and Practices Increase ventilation All wear masks if anyone is symptomatic

<b>Private Spaces &amp; Quarantine</b>	<b>Level I High Risk Mitigation</b>	<b>Level II Surveillance &amp; Management</b>
<b>Student Cabins</b>	No visitors to cabins allowed	Normal
<b>Quarantining on Campus</b>	For any symptomatic or asymptomatic unvaccinated individuals while awaiting test results and/or a strong reason to believe a student has been exposed to COVID-19 Students will remain in a quarantine space (health office rooms or cabin) except for prescribed exceptions (outdoor solo exercise, bathroom use, showering, etc.) Meals will be delivered Quarantine generally begins from the date of the positive test (r known exposure if clearly explainable) and is 6-11 days in duration depending on symptoms, vaccination status, and test results (on or after day 5) Exceptions will be resolved on a case by case basis Roommates and/or an entire group/class/team may be under quarantine if one or more members test positive	
<b>Faculty Homes</b>	Minimize or eliminate high-density indoor gatherings in faculty homes (meet outside? Fewer folks?)	Normal

Personnel & Individuals	Level I High Risk Mitigation	Level II Surveillance & Management
<b>ALL Employees</b>	<p><a href="#">Daily self-screening</a> and temperature checks (as needed)                      Stay home when symptomatic                      Contact Health Office re potential testing/quarantine requirements</p>	
<b>High-Risk Community Individuals (TBD based on disease profile)</b>	<p>Encourage working remotely to decrease exposure                      Maximize separation when on campus                      100% face covering                      Maximize physical distancing between community members</p>	
<b>Non-Employee Workers/ Vendors</b>	<p>Vaccinated or masked required                      Stay off-campus if symptomatic or if in recent contact with persons known or suspected of having COVID-19</p>	
<b>Off-Campus Employees &amp; Non-employee Residents</b>	<p>Eat meals physically distanced from the on-campus population, availability dependent on food service capacity                      Stay in primary workspaces                      Minimize use of on-campus public spaces (e.g. Library)</p>	Normal
<b>Visitors &amp; Guests of Students</b>	<p>Not Allowed or minimized (including parents)                      Exceptions discouraged and require admin approval, ( for short duration only &amp; not inside buildings)</p>	Vaccination requested & masks required on arrival & thereafter masks required indoors
General Health Practices	Level I High Risk Mitigation	Level II Surveillance & Management
<b>Academic Continuity Planning</b>	<p>For each academic class (by teacher), there will be pre-planned independent study unit(s) that students could complete with only nominal subject area expert support (anyone) to allow for coverage for absent students or faculty.</p>	
<b>Cleaning &amp; Sanitization</b>	<p>Ongoing campus-wide surfaces and touchpoints disinfected + regular cleaning schedule                      Indoor spaces known to have contact with a COVID-19+ individual will be closed until cleaned                      Basic PPE for all routine cleaning tasks (mask &amp; gloves)</p>	
<b>Communication</b>	<p>Whenever we have a confirmed, or even strongly suspected, case of COVID-19 on campus, the community will be informed. As feasible (limited by our small scale and the demand of contact tracing), we will strive to respect individual privacy. We are required to report all COVID positive cases to public health officials with basic identifying and demographic data. We are required to report all testing results (positive, negative, or inconclusive) to local public health officials with basic identifying and demographic data. When we have a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19, our health care team has responsibilities that require their full attention. We ask that you please refrain from immediately calling the school to seek further information. Rest assured that if your child tests positive or is suspected positive, you will be notified as soon as possible.</p>	

**Flu Shots & Vaccinations**

COVID-19 vaccination is required for all students and employees (with some limited medical or religious exemptions)  
Flu shots are highly recommended and de facto required (with some special exceptions) for all students, faculty, and staff.  
As per California law, all students must have current vaccinations with documentation (see annual medical forms)

**Health Office**

Available spaces for quarantine are sectioned off from the main Health Office space  
Limited indoor access, used as a “triage” to assess students who aren’t feeling well  
Students may be assessed by Health Director outside  
No more than 2 students at a time in Front Office  
Some students may be sent back to their cabins or outside to wait  
All non-essential off-campus appointments must be arranged when students are home  
Essential off-campus appointments are at the discretion of the Health Office  
The Health Office will continue to evolve with the needs of the students and Midland Community

## Key Personnel & Temporary Succession Plans

### Chain of Command

*Board of Trustees (for emergent issues delegates to Executive Committee &/or Board Chair)*

*Executive Committee (Tom Mone, Gretchen Collard & Christopher Barnes)*

*Board Chair (Tom Mone)*

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 Head of School (Christopher Barnes)  
 Director of Finance & Operations (Amy Grenier)  
 Dean of Students (José Juan Ibarra)  
 Dean of Academics (Ellie Moore)  
 Dean of Experiential Learning (Dan Susman)  
 Admin Team Member(s)  
 Health Director (Tracy Wescott)  
 Faculty & Staff  
 Non-Employee Adults on Campus  
 Head Prefects  
 Prefects  
 Seniors  
 Students

### Coverage Plan for Absent, Sick, or Unavailable Key Personnel

Role / Title	1st Alternate	2nd Alternate	3rd Alternate
Head of School	Business Manager	Dean of Students	Admin team Member
Director of Finance & Operations	Head of School w/ Accounting Manager	Admin team member	BoT: Finance Comm Member
Health Director	Health Office Assistant	Any WFR Cert. Employee	Any WFA Cert. Fac or Staff
Dean of Students	Dean of Experiential Learning	Dean of Academics	BoT: Program Comm Member
Dean of Academics	Dean of Experiential Learning	College Counselor	BoT: Program Comm Member
Dean of Experiential Learning	Dean of Academics	Dean of Students	College Counselor
Director of Admissions	Assistant Dir. of Admissions	Marketing & Comms Lead	Advancement Associate
Director of Advancement	Marketing & Comms Lead	Office & Data Associate	BoT: Development Comm. Chair
College Counselor	Dean of Academics	Humanities Faculty member	Art Dept. Faculty member
IT Director	Math/Science Faculty member	Dean of Experiential Learnings	Head of School
Accounting Manager	Director of Finance and Operations	Assist. to the Head of School	Head of School
Kitchen Manager	Assistant Kitchen Manager	Any Cook	Any Employee
Subject Area Teacher	Other Subject Area Teacher	Any Teaching Faculty	Any Employee
Farm Manager	Farm & Ranch Asst.	Other Farm Staff	Horse Prog Director
Horse Program Director	Farm & Ranch Asst.	Other Horse Prg Staff	Farm Manager
Learning Support	Dean of Academics	Any designated faculty	Any designated faculty

## Selection of External Resources & References

Santa Barbara County | [Santa Barbara County Community Data Dashboard](#)

Santa Barbara County | [Santa Barbara County State Metrics Status](#)

Santa Barbara County | [How to help your kids navigate the impacts of COVID-19](#)

CDC | [Keeping Children Healthy during the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)

## Questions? Who to Contact at Midland

### **Travel, Transportation, or General Queries**

Jill Brady, Assistant to the Head Of School  
[jbrady@midland-school.org](mailto:jbrady@midland-school.org), 805.688.5114

### **Health, Wellness, Medical, or Testing Queries**

Tracy Westcott, Health Director  
[healthdirector@midland-school.org](mailto:healthdirector@midland-school.org), 805.688.5114 ext. 136

### **Community & Student Life Queries**

José Juan Ibarra, Dean of Students  
[jibarra@midland-school.org](mailto:jibarra@midland-school.org), 805-688-5114 ext.129

### **Academic Queries**

Ellie Moore, Dean of Academics  
[emoore@midland-school.org](mailto:emoore@midland-school.org) 805.688.5114 ext.122

### **External Relations**

Christopher Barnes, Head of School  
[cbarnes@midland-school.org](mailto:cbarnes@midland-school.org), 805.688.5114 ext. 112

**For all other questions, please get in touch with your child’s advisor. Thank you!**

## Addendum: Context for External Readers

Midland School is a co-educational 100% boarding (no day students) independent college preparatory high school for grades 9-12 located on a 2,870-acre campus. Enrollment is 80-85 students and we have +/- 30 faculty, staff, and employees, half or more of whom live on our campus. The core of our campus (65+ simple and rustic buildings) is spread across 100+ acres. Essentially all of our buildings and every door opens to the outdoors. Our students live in cabins (no “dormitories”) all of which open to the outdoors; there are no hallways. The school is located outside of Los Olivos, CA, bordered by the Los Padres National Forest and several large ranches (a 4+ mile drive to get to our third neighbor).

## Addendum: COVID Testing

### **Pre-arrival Testing**

All students are required to undergo COVID PCR testing (utilizing their own local options and medical support systems) and provide negative results on or before arrival from within five days of arrival. Additionally, we have day-of arrival screening expectations & procedures and the drop-offs are significantly controlled relative to external visitors/parents. Prior to any returns to campus, all students quasi-quarantine at home to minimize the total number of potential close contacts.

### **Surveillance Testing**

Given our transition to very high levels of vaccination and in light of current recommendations, we do not expect to have ongoing whole community surveillance testing, although we will periodically use surveillance testing as prudent. We are likely to require non-vaccinated individuals to complete ongoing surveillance testing (once every one to two weeks, tbd)

### **Testing After a Prior Positive Test**

Individuals who test positive, after being cleared from quarantine are exempted from COVID testing for one month from the initial positive test. Subsequent “positive” test results will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

### **On-Site &/or On-Demand Testing**

We have an established account with [Quest Diagnostics](#), which includes a local, supervising physician, and a system in place for access to testing, telemedicine, and evaluation of suspected, potential, and positive COVID cases.

The local Dignity Health system Urgent Care clinic (7 miles from our campus) is on standby for medical support, telemedicine, testing access, and the clinic's medical director has visited our campus multiple times.

We have rapid antigen testing available on-campus as an adjunct to decision-making (as feasible, positive antigen tests are confirmed by PCR type testing given the lower sensitivity of this type of testing).

### **Other Testing Options**

Midland sought and received a CLIA waiver and is evaluating on an ongoing basis the prudence of available testing technologies. We continue to track and seek to attain access to other testing options.