

Good afternoon, Trailblazers! I am writing to share some information based on questions students have recently asked. I also want to encourage you to take advantage of the upcoming warm weather, while continuing your outstanding cooperation with MCLA masking and social distancing.

As vaccines have rolled out, some students are asking about protocols for those who have been fully vaccinated, particularly as the CDC provides new guidance. Information is continually changing and we will monitor new guidance regularly to determine what, if any, changes to protocols might apply this semester. Here are some updates:

- The CDC has recommended, and the MA DPH has concurred, that *those who have been fully vaccinated need not quarantine if exposed to a COVID positive person as long as the individuals are COVID symptom-free and monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days*. In the event that you are vaccinated and have been in close contact with a COVID positive person, you can provide your vaccination card documenting your fully vaccinated status to Health Services to discuss being exempt from the normal quarantine process.
- Because there is evidence that those who are vaccinated can still shed the virus and transmit it to others who are not vaccinated, *all students will be required to continue testing according to our COVID protocols*, whether vaccinated or not.
- While the CDC has recently announced that fully vaccinated people can gather without masks in small groups with other vaccinated individuals, *MCLA will not be altering its current masking and social distancing protocols*. The percentage of students who have been vaccinated is still relatively small and the potential of unvaccinated students being exposed to the virus by unmasked peers remains too risky to alter our protocols this semester.

We are scheduled for some nice weather this week and hope that you will be able to enjoy time outdoors! As a reminder, the outside gathering limits of 25 people and indoor limit of 10 will remain in effect at least through March 22 when the Governor's Office will consider moving to the step 1 of Phase IV. Maintaining 6 feet of social distance and wearing a mask or face covering are still a state and campus requirement. Thank you for your continued adherence to COVID protocols and your contribution to keeping the MCLA community healthy.

Best,
Cathy

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