

August 24, 2021

Paladin Community,

We are so excited to welcome both new and returning students to Paladin for full time, in-person learning! We are less than three weeks away from the start of the 2021-22 school year, which begins for

**New Students:** Tuesday, Sept. 7th and Wednesday, Sept. 8th

**Returning Students:** Thursday, Sept. 9th

**School Hours:** Monday 9:20am - 3:15pm

Tuesday - Friday 8:25am - 3:15pm

Paladin staff will be connecting with returning students in the upcoming weeks to go over credits and build student schedules. We are excited to welcome your students back!

Link to: [2021-22 School Calendar](#)

### **Transportation:**

Kyle Murphy, our Transportation Coordinator, will be in contact with new/returning students and families regarding school van transportation requests. New students will need to get to Paladin on the morning of their first day of school via their own transportation (city bus, drop-off, etc.) Students who will be on a Paladin van route will then take the van home on the first day and continue on the van route thereafter.

### **In-Person Learning:**

Paladin will start the year fully in-person, five days per week for all students. We have applied to offer blended and online learning models should COVID, quarantine rates, or a school outbreak warrant the need. Students will not be allowed to *choose* a blended learning or online learning model like last year. Programs such as distance learning, the A/B hybrid learning format, and staff development days to prepare for learning format shifts will also not be offered during the 2021-22 school year.

### **COVID-19 Safety Protocols:**

We continuously monitor the ongoing and ever-changing conditions of the pandemic. While more information will follow in the coming weeks, we wanted to reach out to our students and families now as the school year approaches.



## **Masks / Face Coverings:**

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) have all recommended that students, teachers, and staff wear masks during school. However, at this time, there is no statewide mandate for schools to mask, leaving the decision to each individual district or charter school. As Paladin prepares for our fall in-person opening, we have considered a number of factors that include the number of students and staff currently vaccinated against COVID-19. Additionally, we are monitoring current rates of transmission within the area and other potential risk factors unique to our community. **Therefore, Paladin will require masks indoors regardless of vaccination status starting Sept. 7th.** Paladin will provide masks to students who need them. Masks are also federally required on public transportation and school vans.

Paladin understands that our decision to require universal masking has pleased many families while upsetting, even angering others. In this case, the “why” is essential.

**The Why?** Our primary objective is to ensure uninterrupted in-person learning for our students. Last year, students considered “close contacts” to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 had to be quarantined for fourteen days. New guidelines do not require “close contacts” to quarantine if vaccinated or *if both* parties were wearing a mask. This means that students should have more consistency in their school experience. This is the best way to maximize our in-person learning for all.

Paladin will review our universal masking requirement regularly. We will consider local infection trends, vaccination rates, and overall influenza-like illness data in determining when the face mask requirement can be removed.

Our decision was based on expert advice from public health agencies and following the latest guidance put forth by the Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Education, and the CDC.

Finally, we recognize that many neighboring districts have made different decisions. Without statewide directives, school districts have local control to determine the best strategy for their community. We respect the independent decisions of other districts.

## **COVID-19 Safety Measures / GPS Ionization Generator**

As students return to school facilities they'll have visible reminders of social distancing, face coverings, hand hygiene, and systems in place to protect their health and maximize safety. Paladin has installed a GPS Ionization Generator. Should COVID-19 be present in our school facility, the system will eliminate 99.4% of the virus within 30 minutes, 92.6% within 15 minutes, and 84.2% within 10 minutes.



Social distancing of 3 feet will be expected as conditions allow. This will continue to be monitored and could change based on conditions in the school setting.

### **Reporting Positive Case, Quarantine, and Isolation:**

Paladin will ask students and/or staff with confirmed cases of COVID-19 to quarantine (close contact) or isolate (positive test) for 10 days from the positive test date if asymptomatic, or from the day of first symptom. Members of the same household that are close contacts and are unvaccinated or not had a positive test more than 2 weeks ago but less than 90 days will be quarantined for 10 days.

If symptoms or positive tests for COVID-19 occur, please notify our COVID Coordinator, Maria Hartwell, by calling the school or emailing [maria.hartwell@paladincareertech.com](mailto:maria.hartwell@paladincareertech.com).

Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 will be required to stay home for a minimum of ten (10) days from the time symptoms started and/or the time they tested positive for COVID-19. They may not return to school until after that time and must be symptom free.

Students in quarantine or isolation will follow traditional methods to make up coursework unless instructed otherwise by their Student Success Coordinator. Virtual or online learning during that period should not be expected.

### **COMMUNICATION AND NOTIFICATION**

See our [2020 –2021 / COVID-19 INFORMATION](#) webpage for more information and the most up-to-date details. Parents/guardians will be notified by phone or email they are in close contact at Paladin with a positive case of COVID-19. Paladin will follow the [MDH COVID-19 Decision Tree](#) to conduct contact tracing and quarantine requirements. Students and staff who are not feeling well should stay at home.

### **COVID-19 Testing / Vaccination for Students and Families:**

We encourage families to strongly consider vaccination for their eligible children. The CDC recommends that everyone 12 years and older get vaccinated to help protect against COVID-19. [Click here to find a vaccine provider near you](#). As a note, Pfizer's vaccine just received full approval by the FDA. At this time, Paladin is not requiring COVID-19 vaccines for students and staff, but we are strongly encouraging it.

**Testing:** Testing will once again be provided free of charge for staff and students through the Minnesota Department of Health. With our students returning back to in-person learning, we encourage every family to get tested for COVID-19. Current recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health say that any children who spend time near people outside their immediate household should get tested every two weeks, through the end of the school year.



We will once again have testing available at Paladin for students and staff. When we all wear a mask and get tested regularly, we limit the spread of COVID-19, which will keep our school open for in-person learning.

## Be Prepared for Changes

We all understand that this year is about flexibility. Our data show that our safety protocols successfully prevented the transmission of COVID-19 during school last year. We will prioritize the health and safety of our students and staff by continuing to emphasize these measures. Despite these efforts, we know the coronavirus, particularly the delta variant, is relentless and additional changes may be necessary throughout the year.

## Thank You

Once again, we are grateful for your cooperation, understanding, and grace as we navigate this school year. I understand the ongoing disruptions and detours caused by the pandemic can be maddening. We *all* want this to be over. While we have made significant progress, it is not over, but we *will* get through this. Paladin will continue to make the best decisions it can with the available information, prioritizing in-person learning and the health and safety of our students, staff, and community.

As always, please reach out to me directly with any questions or feedback.

We've got your back; thanks for having ours!

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