

Twin Cities German Immersion School
Safe Return to
In-Person Learning Plan
SY 2021/22



Updated 8/13/2021

Please Note: Recent updates are highlighted in grey

TCGIS Mission

Innovative Education of the Whole Child through German Immersion

TCGIS Vision

Andere hören, andere sehen, weltoffen denken und handeln.

Educating multilingual world citizens who listen to others, see others, and think and act with an open mind.

TCGIS Values

Curiosity, Kindness, Challenge and Support, Community and Intercultural Engagement

Planning Guidance from the State of Minnesota

COVID 19 Safety and Health must take priority per the Minnesota Department of Health and the Department of Education issued the following Safe Learning Goals:

1. Prioritize the safety of students and staff
2. Prioritize in-person learning
3. Consider infectiousness and transmission risk among different ages
4. Support planning, while permitting flexibility for districts
5. Take into account disease prevalence at a local level

Return to In-Person Learning

Twin Cities German Immersion School (TCGIS) will return to in-person learning Monday-Friday for 1st-8th grade students on August 30th, 2021 and September 1st, 2021 for Kindergarteners. As this plan is subject to change based on recommendations or requirements, TCGIS will regularly consult our local public health experts when making any changes or decisions concerning our school plan.

Face Coverings

Face Masks will be required by all students, staff, and visitors present in school buildings and offices during school or program hours.

- This recommendation is aligned with CDC's guidance for fully vaccinated people in the [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#) which advises schools to continue this prevention strategy due to lower vaccination rates among youth between ages 12-15 and lack of eligibility for vaccination among youth under 12 years of age.
- TCGIS will maintain a supply of face coverings for students or staff who forget to bring them. Staff and students may choose to wear their own.
- Mask Exemptions will be accepted with documentation from a physician. Alternative mitigation (face shields, social distancing, etc) are expected in this case.

Regular Testing

TCGIS strongly recommends all unvaccinated students and staff test for Covid-19 once a week.

- TCGIS will participate in state-supported Covid-19 testing for our students, including providing tests for families at home and onsite testing. [More details will be provided in the coming weeks.](#)
- TCGIS will require the 6% of unvaccinated staff to share their weekly negative test results. We will provide our unvaccinated staff with all our remaining inventory of Vault zoom-enabled Covid-19 tests.

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Physical distancing

TCGIS will continue to maintain physical distance, whenever possible. Teachers will maintain assigned seating in the classroom, cafeteria, and any other space their class occupies. This protection reduces risk of exposure and limits the number of close contacts when someone is infected with COVID-19 by following the CDC's guidance.

In addition TCGIS will continue the following best practices:

- Evaluate classroom capacity with the goal of creating as much space between students as possible, recommending 3 feet if feasible.
- Face desks in the same direction, where possible. At TCGIS this is mostly possible in our Middle School classrooms.
- Regular documentation of student seating to support notification of close contacts in the event of an exposure.
- Maintain 6 feet of distance in the following settings, whenever possible
 - Between school staff and all other adults in the building, and between adults and students, whenever possible.
 - Between any visitors, volunteers, or others coming into the school building.
 - During activities when increased exhalation occurs, such as singing, shouting, band, or sports and exercise. Holding these activities outdoors whenever feasible.
 - In common areas where many people from different cohorts are intermixing. Develop and keep students and staff in small cohort groups that stay together as much as possible throughout the day and from day to day, particularly among student groups who are not currently eligible for vaccination (e.g., elementary age students).
 - Student support programs such as special education, English language learner, and counseling—which pull students from their primary classrooms in order to provide essential services

Lunch Mitigations

TCGIS students will eat lunch in the cafeteria due to staffing and 100% of our student population returning to in-person learning. We will follow the additional mitigations in the cafeteria to increase safety:

- Classroom-assigned seating will match cafeteria-assigned seats to decrease potential close contacts, whenever feasible.
- Tables will be spread out with as much distance as possible between classes. Some tables will be moved to the foyer to increase distance between classes.
- Two High-Efficiency HEPA filter systems have been installed in the cafeteria.
- Windows and doors will remain open to increase air flow.
- Tables and chairs will be sanitized between student groups.

Recess Mitigations

Recess at TCGIS will be held on our playground, as in a typical year with multiple grades and cohorts. Due to our limited space, scheduling restrictions, and value to our students/staff health and safety, students and staff will wear masks on the playground for the following reasons:

- Students want to mingle with their friends, especially in different classes. We value the social and emotional well-being of our students.
- Recess is essential for all of our students' well-being.
- Staff are unable to ensure distancing between students in different cohorts or grades due to the number of students on our playground with its limited square footage at any given time.
- Contact tracing becomes increasingly difficult when returning all students to in-person learning and our regular recess schedule.
- Due to high transmission of the Delta Variant, the CDC recommends that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated.

Transportation Mitigations

TCGIS students will follow all CDC and MDH requirements including:

- Buses will maintain a $\frac{2}{3}$ reduced capacity
- All students and staff will be required to wear masks while on buses.
- Windows will be opened, whenever possible, to increase ventilation.
- Distance between the bus driver and students will be maintained.

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Cleaning and Disinfecting

TCGIS continues our daily schedule for routine cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces in classrooms and common spaces by:

- Scheduling routine cleaning when students and teachers are not occupying the space.
- Ensuring the availability of appropriate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, disinfectant wipes, and tissues) and strategically placing supplies in areas where they may be frequently used.
- Building routines including handwashing and sanitation into breaks during or between classroom activities.

Increase Ventilation

- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly, use the highest grade filters available for our systems (Merv13 grade filters).
- Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, whenever feasible.
- All classrooms will continue to run a HEPA Filter Portable System during school hours or programming hours (All HEPA filters will be replaced in each portable system).

COVID-19 Coordinators

- TCGIS Health Service Associate and Director of Operations will function as the school's COVID-19 Coordinators to trace, track and report any COVID-10 cases to the Minnesota Department of Health.
 - Ashley Weston Miller, Director of Operations and HR: awestonmiller@tcgis.org or 651.999.3698
 - Monika Avery, Health Service Associate: mavery@tcgis.org, 651-492-7106

Health screening, isolation, and quarantine

All members of the school community, including staff, students, families, visitors, and others should continue to be vigilant in monitoring for symptoms of illness and protect others by staying home when they are feeling ill and following COVID-19 specific exclusion and self-quarantine guidance when appropriate.

TCGIS will continue to follow the Recommended [COVID-19 Decision Tree for People in Schools, Youth, and Child Care Programs](#). In addition we will continue to do the following:

- Quarantined students or staff will stay home for 7 days and be required to show a negative PCR or Molecular test before returning to school. If a student or staff chooses not to test, they will be asked to quarantine for 14 days after exposure.
- Educate staff, students, and families about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, when their children should stay home, and when they can return to school.
- Follow clear procedures requiring staff and students to stay home if they have tested positive for COVID-19, have symptoms of COVID-19, or are ill and waiting for a COVID-19 test result.
- Require staff and students to stay home when they have had recent close contact (within 6ft for more than 15 minutes within a 24 hour period) with a person with COVID-19, unless they are vaccinated.
- Require vaccinated individuals to quarantine if they are exhibiting symptoms or test positive for Covid-19.
- Post signage at main entrances requesting that people who have been symptomatic not enter the building.

Educating During a required Quarantine

With the goal of creating a safe and welcoming learning environment, **K-2nd grade** will quarantine the entire class if there is an individual who tests positive within the classroom. Maintaining distance and assigned seating is particularly difficult amongst our youngest students.

- Schedules and asynchronous work will be provided on the first day of a quarantine and limited synchronous and asynchronous work will be provided on all following days.

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3rd-8th grade classes will only quarantine students considered close contacts based on assigned seating and interviews with the individual who tests positive.

- Quarantined students will be provided asynchronous work through our educational platforms.

Handling a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19

TCGIS will continue to manage case follow-ups and notifying exposed people, consistent with [Recommendations for Handling a Confirmed Case of COVID-19](#). Any known positive Covid-19 case with potential for exposure onsite will be communicated to all known close-contacts, all faculty and staff, and the entire school community.

TCGIS's Covid Coordinators will continue systems in place to allow staff and families to self-report to the school if they or their student have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or recently had a close contact to someone with COVID-19 in a manner that is consistent with applicable laws and privacy policies, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Traveling Requirements

TCGIS asks all **out of state or country** travelers to provide a negative Molecular or PCR test result before returning to school; we will not require self-quarantine but strongly recommend self-quarantining according to CDC recommendations. Currently, the CDC recommends the following for [unvaccinated individuals](#):

- Get tested with a viral test 3-5 days after travel AND stay home and self-quarantine for a full 7 days after travel.
- Even if you test negative, stay home and self-quarantine for the full 7 days.
- If your test is positive, isolate yourself to protect others from getting infected.
- If you don't get tested, stay home and self-quarantine for 10 days after travel.
- Avoid being around people who are at increased risk for severe illness for 14 days, whether you get tested or not.
- Self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms; isolate and get tested if you develop symptoms.

Promoting Covid-19 Vaccinations

TCGIS will communicate any vaccination information, vaccine locations, or vaccine updates provided to us from the Minnesota Department of Health or Minnesota Department of Education in our weekly *Rundbrief*. We know vaccines protect against illness, hospitalization and death. In addition, TCGIS will do the following:

- Track voluntary vaccination status of all our staff. TCGIS will continually recommend that all staff who do not have a medical exemption receive a Covid-19 vaccination.
- Host a Vaccine Clinic onsite, in partnership with Hennepin Health Care or another provider, when availability and eligibility expands to 5-11 year olds.

Please provide any comments or questions in the linked [survey](#).