



ZEELAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Zeeland Christian School and COVID-19

While we know that the situation with COVID-19 is variable, we have reviewed both the Preschool/Childcare Reopening Guidelines and the Prek-12 MI Safe Schools Roadmap documents from the state of Michigan. Here are answers to some of the most common questions.

NOTE: Many questions were asked using similar phrasing. We combined where we felt confident the answer provided covered all phrasing, but other times we split them into separate questions to hopefully provide information from multiple perspectives.

General

Are we returning to in-person learning?

YES! We are thrilled to be returning to in-person learning, five days a week! We can't wait to see all of you. We also know that the teachers and staff are going to do everything they can to make this an amazing year for students. As parents, we chose Christian education specifically for challenging seasons like this. What a blessing to have a teacher reinforcing the Christian principles you are teaching at home as we live through challenging, tense, and uncertain times.

Do you have an online option available for families?

Yes! Zeeland Christian School Global is a Christ-centered online school infused with the vibrant culture of Zeeland Christian. Visit www.zcs.org/global to learn more and view the recording from our information meeting on July 27.

When are class lists coming out?

Monday, August 10.

Will it be safe?

We will be following every requirement outlined by the State of Michigan and as many as possible of the strongly recommended protocols in the Safe Schools Roadmap. Students will be frequently



washing their hands, social distancing when possible, teachers will perform extra classroom cleanings everyday, and we will have two cleaning custodians every day throughout the building.

Is there a watch guide for the second town hall?

[You can watch the second town hall here.](#) The first 20 minutes is a presentation from Head of School, Tim McAboy, and Board President, Betsy Koop '98 which we highly recommend you watch. [You can view a summary of the questions here.](#)

Is there a date when the call will be made for which phase we will be starting in?

This will be determined by the State of Michigan. There are no indications our phase will change before August 25.

Are private schools exempt from following any or all state guidelines?

No. The Governor has made it clear that the state's Safe Schools Road Map applies to public and private schools.

Will there be All School Chapel?

Yes! Leadership is exploring creative ways to worship together outside, in smaller groups, or via Zoom. Gatherings are limited to homerooms, but we are working on creative ways to make sure this core experience still happens regularly.

Will start times change for this year?

No. Start and end times will remain the same for preschool, elementary, and middle school.

Will there be any changes to preschool?

Please see the preschool specific portion of this document below.

Masks/Social Distancing

When will my child have to wear a face covering?

Required in Phase 4: (Per the MI Safe Schools Roadmap)

- All teachers, staff, and students in 6th-8th grade are required to wear face coverings in classrooms, hallways, and common spaces.

- Students in Young Fives - 5th-grade are only required to wear face coverings when they are in common spaces or with a group of students other than their classroom.
- Three and four-year-olds do not need to wear masks.
- All students are required to wear face coverings when riding the bus.
- If students are at recess with another classroom they will need to wear masks.

Will kids have to wear face coverings during specials?

We have made the decision to keep kids in their homerooms for specials. This means that Y5-5th grade students will not need to wear a mask during P.E., Art, or FLES. Middle school students will be required to wear masks in Phase 4.

Will there be exceptions made for kids who cognitively do not understand the importance of a face covering and will not keep one on?

Yes, our Support Services team is working with All Belong (formerly CLC Network) to address situations such as this. Face coverings may also be waived for specific medical diagnoses. [Click here to view the MEDICALLY VULNERABLE PHYSICIAN FORM.](#)

My 5th-grade child has sports asthma. Will they be required to wear a mask?

There is still some question about this from the state, but this form has been shared with our county and at this time we are requiring this form to be filled out by a physician. [Click here to view the MEDICALLY VULNERABLE PHYSICIAN FORM.](#) Young Fives-Fifth grade students will only be required to wear a mask for short periods of time as they walk through common areas. Thanks to a ZCS donor, we have ordered highly breathable buff style face coverings that will be given to all the students on the first day of school. Each grade level will have it's only color scheme as well!

Have you received information yet if face shields will be acceptable as face coverings?

We have been informed that face shields are not an acceptable facial covering. We are purchasing clear face coverings to allow for younger students and immersion students to see facial expressions and mouth movements of teachers.

For middle schoolers who will be required to wear face coverings the vast majority of their day, will there be frequent breaks for them to get fresh air (similar to hand washing breaks)?

Yes, our plan is to plan for and allow mask breaks throughout the day, at least once every hour. For example, this may be a five minute walk or a brief learning experience outdoors with social distancing.

What type of masks will be allowed? Is there a requirement for the porosity of the mask?



In the Safe School Roadmap, it states “Facial coverings may be homemade or disposable level-one (basic) grade surgical masks.” Our recommendation would be to make sure your mask meets the [CDC’s mask guidelines](#)

Classroom Community

If a child in one of our children's classroom tests positive on a COVID test then who needs to be quarantined? Will children who sit within a 6-foot radius of the positive student need to quarantine? Will the teacher? Will those who encountered that student at specials or outside or in the hall?

The Safe Schools Road map states “Anyone who was within close contact of the case (less than six feet apart for 15+ minutes) will be asked to self-quarantine for up to 14 days.” Every situation will be assessed individually and we have been instructed to follow the lead of the Ottawa County Health Department. We do not expect that one positive test will cause the whole class to be required to quarantine.

If a student tests positive for COVID-19 and has been in their homeroom, will other students be given the option to get tested or isolate for two weeks at home?

In regards to testing, each situation will be assessed individually and we will follow the lead of the Ottawa County Health Department. ZCS will not conduct any testing of students or staff. If you chose to self-quarantine, ZCS has formed a Blended Learning Design Team and our teachers will be prepared for students to continue with learning when they are not able to be in person due to COVID.

If a teacher or family chooses to travel outside of Michigan, will there be a mandated quarantine time upon return? Or is this a recommended situation? Or is this likely not an issue at this point?

If the Governor or local officials issue an order for those traveling from other areas to quarantine, we will follow the order. We will not issue our own quarantine order.

When parents keep kids home from school for illness is the policy of 24-hour fever/symptom-free being lengthened? Example- strep, tummy ache, stomach flu, headache.

The Michigan Safe Schools road map states “Students with a temp of 100.4 or greater must stay home and consider COVID testing.” For ZCS, the policy is 24-hour fever free before returning for Y5 -8th and 72 hours for threeschool and preschool per state licensing requirements.

At this point, if kids stay home for a fever with an unknown source, are they required to have a negative COVID test to return?



At this time it is not required for students to get a negative COVID test to return. The Michigan Safe Schools road map states “Students with a temp of 100.4 or great must stay home and consider COVID testing.” For ZCS the policy has not changed from 24-hour fever/symptom-free.

Are there plans to somehow split large class sizes?

There are no plans to split classes at this time. We are making all possible arrangements to follow social distancing guidelines within classrooms.

With the potential that some or all students will quarantine one or more times during the year, what should we expect for at-home learning during that time to track with the rest of the class?

For all of our programs, we have formed a *Blended Learning Design Team* to make distance learning more robust and foster greater consistency for students learning at home and students who transition between the classroom and home due to illness or quarantine.

What plans are being established to allow for consistency in the classroom if the teacher is not able to be present?

We are ensuring that we have a robust and ready to go group of Guest Teachers (Substitute Teachers) who will continue the learning when the teachers may need to be out. Teachers will be planning ahead to ensure plans are in place for the learning to continue. Guest Teachers may receive support from other grade level teachers in the event that the teacher who is ill is unable to provide support from a distance.

If a teacher in an immersion classroom needs to be in quarantine, will the class have a substitute teacher who speaks the target language?

Yes, in most cases, the substitute in an immersion class speaks the target language. We expect there to be high demand for substitute teachers this year. We will do everything we can to make sure every classroom has the best possible substitute.

How are the teachers and staff feeling about their own safety of in-person teaching?

The strength of ZCS is our teachers. We have been seeking regular input from them on the comfort level of returning to the classroom. Overall, the focus for our teachers has been on creating the best possible Christ-centered learning experience for their students within the requirements placed on schools by the state.

Educational Options

Will a student need to be at home doing distance learning for 14 days if he/she tests positive for COVID?



Students who test positive will need to be quarantined at home for 14 days. ZCS has formed a Blended Learning Design Team and will be prepared for students who are in and out of the classroom due to illness or quarantine.

Is there discussion of offering a Split Distance/Hybrid Learning in which some days would be in-person and some would be distant?

No. At this time we are planning on in-person instruction 5 days a week. Zeeland Public Schools are also planning on 5 days a week of in-person instruction. *We do currently offer a similar schedule in our School/Home Collaborative program. If interested, please contact Enrollment Coordinator, Nakisha DeJong at ndejong@zcs.org.*

If we choose to homeschool for the first few weeks or even the first month will we be allowed to enroll back into school?

Yes, we will work with families in these situations.

Would it be ok to have different plans for different kids in the same family?

Yes! ZCS is a one-size-fits-one school and will continue to be.

When will parents hear about how distance learning will look for ZCS if the region returns to Phase 3?

If we return to Phase 3, all schools will return to distance learning. Our *Blended Learning Design Team* has been meeting this summer to provide a smoother transition if we move to Phase 3.

Would we be able to switch from full-time in person, to full-time online?

Through ZCS Global can you start the year online and switch at the semester break in January. In order to start the year in ZCS Global we need a commitment by Aug. 5. Please visit www.zcs.org/global to learn more.

Preschool Specific

Will my child need to wear a mask for preschool?

No. Children ages 3 and 4 are not required or recommended to wear masks while attending preschool.

Will the teachers and staff be wearing masks?

At this point in time, yes, we are planning on teachers and staff wearing masks while they are inside with students. However, that may change at some point in time given the guidelines in our community. We are pursuing the option of clear masks so that students can see smiles and expressions on our faces or having other kid-friendly fabrics for teacher's masks.

Will drop off procedures look different this year than in past years?

Yes. At our Central Ave. site, parents will drop their child off at the exterior classroom door where the teacher will greet each child arriving. The classroom assistant and other staff members will help students enter the classroom, wash their hands, and get settled into the room. Drop off at Creation Ridge and the Drenthe site will be similar, but specifics will be emailed in August.

What if my child has a hard time entering the classroom without a parent?

We will work with you on this! We know some children struggle with the transition into school, and we will work with individual families to help each child develop a successful drop off routine.

Will my child need a temperature check or health screening?

Yes. Each day before entering the classroom, every staff member and child will need a temperature check and health screening. We are working on specific plans to make this be seamless throughout the drop off process. We have purchased infrared thermometers, so we do not need to touch a child's skin to do a temperature check. Details about how this will be specifically handled will be shared in August.

What will Creation Ridge look like?

Please visit www.zcs.org/creationridge to learn more about Creation Ridge's day-to-day plans for this year. Also, a parent email detailing the day-to-day activities at Creation Ridge was sent out a week ago. Please email zcsinfo@zcs.org if you did not receive this email and would like to.

Will there be more cleaning and hand-washing in preschool this year?

Only a little bit more - because preschool licensing requirements already expect a lot of cleaning/sanitizing and hand-washing! As we continue to follow our normal requirements, we already are well on our way to the very best hygiene standards in preschool. However, we will be cleaning toys more frequently, and we will spray down knobs, handles, and other high touch surfaces more often throughout the day.

Will parents still be volunteering as "Parent Helpers" in the classrooms?

To start the year, no. Licensing guidelines recommend limiting the number of adults interacting with students in a classroom beside the specific teachers/assistants assigned to that group. However, as the year progresses, we will determine if we should add Parent Helpers back into the classroom.

What happens with preschool classes if the Governor moves our community to Phase 3 of reopening and all K-12 students move to distance learning? Will Creation Ridge stay open if we return to Phase 3?

We don't have a definitive answer on what exactly we, at Zeeland Christian Preschool, will choose to do in that situation. Preschool falls under child care licensing. Most likely, child care centers will remain open during Phase 3 which gives our preschool the option to continue in-person instruction and care while older students are learning from home. However, there are a number of factors for us as a school to take into consideration, including the condition of the virus in our community, that would impact our decision if this happens. We will continue to discuss this option in the weeks to come.

Will my child still be taught the social-emotional skills kids need to learn when they are 3 and 4?

Yes! Social-emotional learning is highly important for preschool kids. Our teachers and staff will continue to teach specific lessons in social skills and emotional intelligence throughout their class time. That's one of the reasons why it's so important that kids can see our faces - to read our facial expressions!

Should I still consider having my child do threeschool, even though I can teach many of the same things at home?

Threeschool is a great opportunity for students to learn how to "do school". Over the years we have found that students who have a threeschool experience are well prepared to enter the kindergarten readiness programming of preschool. They already understand the routines of school and are ready to jump into deeper learning as a four-year-old. Even with the adjustments to the threeschool procedures this year, the students will still have a great opportunity for learning and growing in school.

Each family will need to decide what risks vs. opportunities they want available for their children this year. Each family will need to make decisions for each child regarding schooling, church activities,



and other extracurricular activities. While we cannot make that decision for any parent, we will work hard to make the threeschool great for our students this year!

Will my child still get the "Zeeland Christian Preschool experience"?

Yes! While we need to make some adaptations to our procedures this year, we know that we will still offer high-quality preschool education to the kids in our community. We can't wait to get back to teaching and learning with young kids in September!