

Saugatuck Middle School & High School  
Handbook Amendments  
for Learning Amidst Covid-19  
September 2020

Dear Students and Parents,

As we embark on the year ahead, we are once again filled with the excitement and the promise of a new school year—the social and intellectual opportunities, the laughter, and the shared learning and experiences waiting to be discovered. This year, however, brings far more anxiety and unknowns than we are usually accustomed to. It is hard to fathom that nearly six months have passed since we closed our doors last spring to keep our students, faculty, and our community safe during the Covid pandemic.

Last year, we learned very quickly how to adjust our normal day-to-day schedule into a series of Zoom meetings and online platforms. I'm proud to say that we did it better than most. We also learned several lessons and have worked diligently to fine-tune this practice in the event we need to return to online classes.

However, this handbook is not about that. This handbook is about clarifying our best practices to keep one another safe in the midst of this ongoing pandemic. This handbook includes our shared beliefs that have been well vetted by health officials in the hopes of maintaining an in-person education that we value so deeply.

Please spend some time reading through these practices and protocols to familiarize yourself with Saugatuck Middle School and High School expectations before our first day back to school, September 8, 2020.

Sincerely,

Mr. Neidlinger and the Saugatuck Faculty

## **Entrance and Dismissal**

This school year, due to the pandemic, we will be tightening our hours of operation. Our front doors will open at 7:40 am each morning and doors will close at 3:00 pm. Please plan accordingly for drop-off and pick-up. No students are allowed to be in the hallways after 3:00 pm.

During entrance periods (7:40 am to 7:59 am), the front doors marked with a blue dot adhered to the pavement six feet apart will be open in the morning. Adults will be stationed at each entrance every morning.

At the close of the day, front doors marked with a series of orange dots six feet apart on the floor will be propped open. Adults will be stationed at the dismissal doors each afternoon.

Careerline Tech students will board the SPS bus or van at 7:20 am, and the doors will be unlocked from 10:15 to 10:45 am for their return to the building.

## **Floor Markings**

Students, faculty, and visitors will note floor markings indicating the flow of traffic. We are fortunate that the majority of our hallways can be marked in a one-way direction. There are, however, a few hallways that will remain two directional. Please follow the arrows on the right side of each hallway in the direction you are moving.

Dots and lines will be utilized to mark areas where lines will occur. Please respect the six-foot measurements that are indicated on the floors.

## **Lockers vs. Backpacks**

Our lockers in the middle school and the high school are too close together to safely social distance. For that reason, our students will not be utilizing their lockers this school year. Students should have a backpack that holds the items they need throughout the day and should do their best to keep it with them from class to class, keeping them tucked out of common walkways. Students should not bring valuables with them to school. We recognize that this protocol is not ideal, particularly as the cooler months come our way. As a faculty, we will be developing a plan for coats and winter wear.

Band instruments will be stored in the hallway outside the band room (although flutes and clarinets may elect to carry theirs in their backpacks). Instruments are to be placed upright, as tightly as possible against each other and the wall, with name tags facing out for prompt and accurate retrieval. There will be signs on the wall to facilitate this, please follow the signage.

## **Upon Arrival**

Upon arrival, students should go directly to their first hour class and sit in their assigned seat. If students arrive early for breakfast, they may pick up a bagged breakfast in either the middle school hallway or in the collab space if they are in high school. Bagged breakfasts may be eaten in any of our "learning hubs" (collab, cafeteria, or the middle school pit area).

## **Learning Hubs**

In an effort to reduce classroom capacity, we will be utilizing common areas as learning hubs. Classes that are beyond the room capacity will be split into two sections: the direct instruction group and the learning hub group. They will switch locations halfway through the class period. When students are in the learning hubs, they should be working on schoolwork, much like our advisory classes last year. There will be an adult supervising these periods and taking attendance.

## **Furniture**

Every effort has been made to socially distance our school furniture. Classroom desks and tables have been spaced at a distance of 6 feet based on the health department's recommendations. Sofas and lounge furniture that are fabric-based have been removed from classrooms; cafeteria tables are not being utilized; and other areas such as the "senior benches" have been removed for the foreseeable future with every intent to return them when it is safe to do so.

Students will be asked to wipe down desk surfaces as they leave a classroom and as they enter a new classroom.

## **Drinking Fountains**

The mouth spigots of our drinking fountains have all been blocked. Students should bring water bottles to school to stay refreshed and well hydrated, particularly as we will be utilizing the outdoors as frequently as possible. We have a number of drinking fountains throughout the building that retain the capability to distribute water into bottles.

## **Bathrooms and their Usage**

Bathroom stalls will be closed down to every other stall when feasible. Bathroom sinks will be closed to every other sink when feasible. Bathrooms will be limited to two students at a time. Students will be asked to use bathrooms during the hub time portion of their class periods rather than the rush of passing time. Bathrooms will be cleaned and sterilized throughout the day and will remain well stocked. If supplies are limited or missing, students should inform an adult who will report this to the office staff. The boys and girls locker rooms will be locked during the school day.

## **Lunch Periods**

School lunches can be purchased and picked up in the middle school or in the collab space for high school students. Students will pay for a meal on one day and change will be given the next day. To the best of our families' ability, it would be beneficial to put money into your student's account to draw from.

Middle school students should plan on eating in classrooms, learning hubs, and when the weather permits, they may eat outdoors under a tent or on the lawn.

High school students will retain the long-standing tradition of sitting in the hallway only with a safe distance apart from their friends. High school students are also encouraged to eat outside when permissible. As usual, only juniors and seniors may leave campus for lunch.

The health department strongly advises students to wash their hands frequently throughout the day, including before and after lunch.

### **Masks**

Michigan's Department of Education has determined that masks are strongly suggested at Pre-K through 5th grade, but from 6th through 12th grade, masks are mandatory throughout the day for students and for staff with the exception of eating. Saugatuck faculty and staff will be following and enforcing this policy.

*We do, however, also understand that everyone needs a break from the mask a few times throughout the day. For that very reason, students will be given personal breaks when appropriate, to take a breather in the hallway during class time and remove their mask and breath deeply.* In addition, all teachers are encouraged to bring their classes outdoors and socially distance far enough apart that masks can be removed without fear of contamination. All masks must cover the mouth and nostrils. Mask graphics need to follow the same protocol as in our dress code, meaning masks should avoid offensive visuals and language as well as steer clear of politics. Students who forget or lose a mask will be provided one from the school.

Refusal to wear a mask will be met with the following disciplinary procedures:

- 1st offense—Verbal warning
- 2nd offense—Removal from class
- 3rd offense—Suspension
- 4th offense—Principal's discretion

We anticipate having to remind students to raise their masks from time to time, which we view as very different from the *deliberate refusal* to wear a mask.

### **Tents**

Several tents have been purchased and several more have been donated to the middle school and high school allowing us to take our students outside for instruction when appropriate. Students should notify their teachers in the event they have a strong allergy that we should know of such as bee stings, etc. When students are being instructed outside and at a safe distance from one another, masks may be removed.

### **School Visitors**

All efforts will be made to limit the number of visitors entering the school building while school is in session. Though we love our parents, they will generally be asked to leave forgotten items on a table in front of the building rather than being buzzed into the school environment. When visitors are granted access to the building, social distancing practices shall be followed.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

We have spent the summer months ordering supplies to keep our students and our faculty safe. We have ample amounts of sanitizer in the classrooms and hallways, plenty of paper towel and eco-friendly cleanser to disinfect desks, rubber and plastic gloves for necessary tasks, garbage cans without lids are easily accessible, plexiglass shields are available at every teacher desk and office desk, a series of thermometers, and

disposable masks galore. Nonetheless, if you have extra supplies or see a great deal and want to donate to the cause, we will always be appreciative. We are having difficulty filling our disinfectant wipe order and would welcome any additional surplus our families could spare.

### **Mental Health**

We recognize that our students will be returning to school having had a variety of experiences over the course of the pandemic. Some have really enjoyed this lengthy break from their traditional routines while others have been unanchored and may be looking for the stability that we can offer our students. Our students' mental health will be our top priority as we all acclimate to our routine. Our students will have a number of resources available to them regardless of their need. We also have a number of family resources available should our parents need assistance. Wendy Delhaye School Counselor [wdelhaye@saugatuckps.com](mailto:wdelhaye@saugatuckps.com) and Katie Gibbie our School Social Worker [kgibbie@saugatuckps.com](mailto:kgibbie@saugatuckps.com) are available to help with your needs.

### **Keeping it Safe**

As you can easily see, we have been working diligently throughout the summer to make returning to school feasible and safe. It is our most sincere hope that we can collectively work to make this a valuable experience. The four best practices that we can all do are as follows:

1. Mask up;
2. Practice social distancing;
3. Wash our hands frequently;
4. Stay home if we are not feeling well.

These new protocols are big changes to adapt to, but our plan is to take it slowly and seriously. We want to make this work for our students and for our families. Please pitch in and do your part.