

Covid-19 Safety - Labs and Activities

The district approved curriculum contains an emphasis on hands-on learning and laboratory experiences in the science classroom. On July 20, 2020, the Mercer Area School District Board of Education also approved the Mercer Area School District Phased School Opening Health and Safety Plan.

That document contains the following excerpt that pertains directly to science labs being conducted as part of the curriculum (page 5 of the document).

To the fullest extent possible, sharing of item and equipment, i.e. art supplies, lab equipment, will be limited. Materials that will need to be shared will be cleaned and disinfected after individual usage.

In order to fulfill the expectations of the Health and Safety Plan and still provide robust, hands-on labs and activities, the following protocols will be in place. **All protocols will be followed in all labs and activities:**

- All students and teachers will maintain social distancing practices to the maximum extent possible (as determined by school administrators and teachers).
- Face to Face work will not be permitted unless a minimum distance of six feet between stations can be maintained or a plexiglass barrier between the stations is utilized.
- Workspaces will be cleaned and sanitized utilizing district approved materials and methods prior to students entering those workspaces.
- Equipment to be utilized will be cleaned and sanitized prior to students using that equipment.
- Students will wash their hands prior to working with the lab or activity equipment and materials.
- Students will wear gloves during all labs and activities.
- Students will wear face masks or face shields during all labs and activities.
- Additional personal protective equipment such as goggles, face shields and aprons or lab coats will be worn as necessary. *Goggles and aprons will be provided by the district.*
- Personal protective equipment should not be shared between students.
- Every effort should be made to minimize the sharing of materials.
- Partner work can be utilized if materials are not shared between partners.
- All materials utilized during a lab or activity must be cleaned and sanitized according to district approved methods after use by a student before it can be utilized (again) by another student.
- All students must wash their hands immediately after participating in a lab or activity.

While the school cannot guarantee that the Covid-19 virus will not be contracted, it is hoped that the above protocols will significantly reduce the likelihood of infection while still maintaining an engaging learning environment in our classrooms.

Definition of terms:

Activity: Hands on (or virtual) manipulation of materials deemed necessary to promote understanding of specific components of the curriculum.

Lab: An activity that requires additional safety precautions such as the wearing of goggles or aprons.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____