



Subject: Holiday Plans in a Pandemic

Dear Khalsa Community,

Happy Thanksgiving this unusual year. As we prepare and begin the holiday season, it is important for us to reflect on our commitment to each other and the greater school community. There have been increasing levels of positive cases in Maricopa County as well as in the State of Arizona. Our particular zip code, 85004, has a positive rate of 6.51 which is in the moderate (yellow) spread category. The larger community spread metric has returned to substantial (red) as it was when we opened in August.

We have worked hard to create a safe learning environment for all our students. We have respected families' choices regarding in-person or distance learning methods. As a result, our in-person learning has successfully navigated the risks of COVID-19 spread in the larger community. We have not had to close any classrooms. The one confirmed case was a staff member who was exposed outside of school. No children have been exposed at school. Other families who have had potential exposures have quarantined voluntarily until two negative tests have been received. It is our goal, through the holiday season, to maintain this track record. The choices that we all make outside of school are what keeps us safe inside of school.

Thanksgiving is a beautiful holiday, celebrating all the blessings we have. A positive message at this challenging time is appreciated and worthy of our attention rather than the sea of negative messages that surround us. Enjoy your loved ones and gather outside if people are not in your personal bubble. If you travel, be cautious and follow the same protocols of physical distancing, mask-wearing, and hand hygiene. When eating or drinking, distance matters as does the setting. Outside is best to share a meal. If that is not possible, open windows to allow fresh air inside. Be creative with games that are outside. And most of all, appreciate the many blessings that each of us has as a member of this community.

The CDC and our local and state health authorities have all recommended that you stay home and not travel. If you do travel or attend events of 10 people or more, please get tested before you return to school on November 30. There are many free testing sites available in Phoenix. Be aware, most require an appointment. <https://www.maricopa.gov/5588/COVID-19-Testing>. There is greater demand for testing with a larger number of positive cases. Plan ahead and if returning at a time that testing is not available, let the in-person student's teacher know so that work can be sent electronically as you await test results.

We have committed to upholding The Promise to each other. It is a reflection of the school community and our faith in each other. COVID fatigue is a constant presence everywhere. Our choices make a difference for each other and keep us safe during this new surge of infections. In maintaining our commitment to each other, we will all enjoy a healthy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Karen Paxton