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COVID-19 Exit Management Handbook 2021-2022

Updated 11.09.21

(Returning to Pre-Pandemic Operations Guidance, Protocols & Timeline)



The mission of [REDACTED] is to ensure all students graduate from a safe and caring school, equipped with the knowledge, skills, and desire to reach their full potential.



Contents

COVID-19 and Our School Community	3
Reinstating School Operations - Post Pandemic	4
Universal Health Protocols	5
Countering Covid-19 Stigma	7
Recovery: Trauma Informed Care	8
Implementation Timeline	11
Forms and Disclosures	12



COVID-19 Exit Management

This handbook serves as a living document, subject to amendment and revisions as circumstances change. All future amendments and revisions will be marked with the date.

COVID-19 and Our School Community

The wellbeing of employees and students is our greatest priority.

We recognize that our school is an important part of the infrastructure of our larger community. We are proud to provide safe and supportive learning environments for students that support social and emotional development and



improve life outcomes. We also provide employment and enable parents, guardians and caregivers to work. Though COVID-19 occurrences have appeared in school settings, multiple studies have shown that transmission rates within school settings are typically lower than community transmission levels.

██████████ administrators acknowledge that our school serves a population from close, surrounding communities, and are basing decisions on the demographics of our school population, families and students we serve. Our students are our first priority, and due to our dedication we have diligently taken into account many factors when making operational decision. In regard to this document, ██████████ evaluated the ages of children served and the associated negative psychological, intellectual and developmental health consequences from covid mitigation protocols weighed against the community transmission rates, amount of risk for infection, severe illness, and the growing percentages of vaccinated citizens, as well as the lack of strain on health system capacity for the community.

Reinstating School Operations - Post Pandemic

Teachers and staff will do their best to assist students in returning physically and mentally to typical daily behaviors by following these guidelines set forth here.

Face Coverings

Face masks are optional for students and staff. Opt-Out forms will be provided under the parent tab on the [REDACTED] website. All opt-out forms must be submitted to the school office prior to a student attending school without a mask. Any student or staff who wishes to wear a mask indoors will be allowed to continue the practice according to the [REDACTED] Covid Best Practices.

Social Distancing

It is suggested to staff and students to practice a comfortable social distancing where feasible. Individuals will make best efforts to keep a 3-foot distance in hallways and stairwells, when possible.

Accountability

Teachers, staff and volunteers are responsible to do the following:

1. Ask unmasked students, if not on their online opt-out list to “please put on your mask.”
2. If the student states they are opting out or exempt, wait 24 hours and check the opt out list for their name. If the student is not on the list, ask the student again to “please put on your mask.”
3. If the student refuses to comply with wearing a mask, submit their name to administration for further follow-up. Employees should not discipline or attempt to coerce the student.
4. In common areas such as hallways, reasonable attempts should be made to keep all students socially distanced.
5. Employees will not “COVID bully” students or single out students who are not wearing a mask.
6. For students with an IEP or 504, appropriate accommodations must be made based on the individualized needs of the students and parent guidance. If a student forgets, loses, or damages their face covering, [REDACTED] will provide a disposable face covering for that day.

Universal Disease Mitigation Standards

Attendance

All staff and students are asked to stay at home if they suspect they have an illness and are required to stay home when they have a fever above 99.5 degrees or a severe instance of the following:

- headache
- Cough
- Chills
- Muscle Pain
- Shortness of Breath/Difficulty Breathing such as new uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/ asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
- Sore Throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain

Parents and employees are instructed to contact a health care provider if any of the symptoms last for more than 24 hours. Students may return to school in they are symptom free and fever free for at least 24 hours.

Cleaning Practices

All surfaces and high touch areas must be cleaned frequently with disinfectant. All rooms will be provided with hospital grade disinfectant, to be used after students have been present.

Main Offices and Meeting Rooms

- All outside visitors, vendors and district personnel will review the self-check disease prevention guide for upon entering the building. This can be found on our school website under Health and Safety.
- Parents and guests will have the option to wear masks into the building.
- Parent conferences can be conducted either virtually or in person.
- Encourage visits by appointment only.
- Tardy notes and absence notes may be accepted by email or be handwritten.
- Best efforts will be made to hold all meetings where maintaining social distancing is possible for those who wish to do so.

Classrooms

- Hand sanitizer or soap will be present in all classrooms.
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly.
- Teachers should continue using a seating chart for contact tracing purposes.

Open Spaces

- Discourage congregating in bathrooms, hallways or stairwells.

Universal Disease Mitigation Standards

Handwashing and Hygiene

Handwashing is an important part of keeping our community healthy. Teachers will remind students to wash hand frequently. Hand sanitizer stations are provided for each classroom and outside all lavatories and stairwells.

Vaccinations

Receiving a COVID-19 vaccine is a private decision. Administration and employees may not inquire or discuss a student's or employee's vaccination status.

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing is a disease control measure to identify persons who may have been exposed to an infectious disease. It is in an attempt to help prevent the spread of the infection. Contact tracing is confidential. All parties involved are not identified by name or any other information.

██████████ will notify any parties believed to have been exposed to a confirmed case of Covid-19. Those contacted will self-monitor based on symptoms and their health provider's recommendations. ██████████ is not responsible for monitoring or enforcing any behaviors relating to health or treatment recommendations.

Meal Service

Standard meal service procedures will be implemented. These can be found on our website at ██████████ under the PARENT tab.

Countering COVID-19 Stigma

Bullying and harassment are never acceptable, but they can be especially damaging when students feel especially vulnerable. School personnel need to be prepared to prevent and to intervene quickly and effectively in the presence of abusive behaviors toward any students. Indeed, schools have a legal and ethical responsibility to uphold all students' civil rights, which includes preventing all forms of bullying, harassment, and intimidating behavior.

Covid-19 Stigma is associated with a lack of knowledge about how COVID-19 spreads, a need to blame someone, fears about disease and death, and gossip that spreads through rumors and myths.

Public health emergencies are stressful times for people and communities. Fear and anxiety can lead to social stigma, which is negative attitudes and beliefs toward people. Stigma can lead to labeling, stereotyping, and other negative behaviors toward others.

Stigma hurts everyone. Stigma negatively affects the emotional, mental, and physical health of stigmatized students. Stigmatized individuals may experience isolation, depression, anxiety, or public embarrassment. Stopping stigma is important to making everyone healthier.

Some groups of people who may experience stigma during the COVID-19 pandemic include:

- Students who have underlying health conditions that cause a cough.
- Students whose families choose not to wear a mask.

Students who experience stigma may also experience discrimination. Discrimination can take the form of:

- Other students avoiding or rejecting them
- Verbal abuse
- Physical violence

Employees will help stop stigma by:

- Protecting the individual rights of all students.
- Monitoring students who may be stigmatized.
- Maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of those seeking healthcare and those who may be part of any contact investigation.
- Correcting negative language that can cause stigma by sharing accurate information about how the virus spreads.
- Speaking out against negative behaviors and statements.
- Teaching appropriate socially acceptable behavior.

Trauma Informed Care

First, we must universally acknowledge that students have been through trauma inducing situations since the pandemic began, both in their educational life and in society at large. Students have been subjected to adapting very quickly to new and complex behaviors without ample to time to adjust, process and adjust. This has resulted in various harmful mental and physical manifestations, as well as adverse social outcomes.

School-age children need to naturally interact with their peers to feel good and practice social skills. Things that once came naturally — like just being out in the world — have been fraught with concern. For example, if a child was already prone to anxiety, they might have felt intense rejection when someone steered away from them even when trying to physically distance.

Staff and teachers will be attending a minimum of three in-school training sessions before the end of school year. Teachers are to practice the following steps:

1. Recognize every student has a story to tell.
2. Remember that students will react to both what you say and how you say it.
3. Some students may have had a difficult time emotionally since the pandemic began.
4. Be alert for students who suffered abuse.
5. Discuss your concerns with the student's parents or legal guardian.
6. Remember that all students have been through this and there are vastly varying levels of harm and abuse.
7. Be sure students know they can come to you if they have questions.
8. Make yourself available to listen and talk
9. Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.
10. Make sure not to spend too much time, too much focus on the topic can lead to anxiety.
11. Give students information that is appropriate for their age and developmental level