Austin Waldorf School

Our Guide to On Campus Learning COVID-19 Safety Procedures for the 2020-2021 School Year
This document outlines the current best practices for minimizing the risk of spread of Covid-19. Most of the information contained in this guide is verbatim from or largely informed by the Austin Public Health Interim Guidance on Reopening for Austin-Travis County Schools. Throughout this guide Austin Public Health will appear as “APH.” Other sources informing this guide include the TEA, CDC, and the AAP. The policies and procedures outlined below are for faculty, staff, students and families.

The guidance in this document is based on the best available evidence at this time. These guidelines may be updated or modified at any time as new information becomes available.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine recommend that schools prioritize mask wearing, healthy hand hygiene, physical distancing, and limiting or eliminating large gatherings to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The study recommends frequent cleaning (of hard surfaces), the creation of small cohorts of students, and improvements in HVAC systems/ventilation as additional mitigation strategies on which schools can focus.

In addition to the strategies described in this guidance, the fall influenza season will complicate school and community efforts to curb the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is important for staff, students, and their families to understand that, as the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine point out, “Even if all of the mitigation strategies are in place and well implemented, it is impossible to completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19 in schools. Therefore, it is incumbent on school officials, in association with local public health authorities, to plan for the possibility that one or more students, teachers or staff will contract COVID-19.
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Covid-19 Point of Contact for AWS

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Any questions and concerns regarding Covid-19 at AWS should be directed to Ashleigh.

Communication & Information

Parents can expect regular communication and updates from the school via Weekly Announcements, individual messages/emails, and class emails. Parents need to make sure that school messages and emails are not being directed to spam folders, and that they are subscribed to the class email lists of their child(ren).

- Signs, posters, and fliers will be posted at main entrances and in key areas throughout school buildings and facilities to remind students and staff to use face coverings, wash hands, and stay 6 feet apart whenever possible.

- As updates become available, Covid-19 information will be shared with the community via email.

COVID-19/health/illness questions/concerns  Ashleigh Tolliver  atolliver@austinwaldorf.org
Social-emotional health/counseling  Jada D'Angelo  jdangelo@austinwaldorf.org
Canvas/Distance Learning Tech Support  distancelearning@austinwaldorf.org
Magnus Health App Tech Support  877.461.6831 or  service@magnushealthportal.com
Absences:  Main Office  awsmail@austinwaldorf.org or  High School Office  highschool@austinwaldorf.org
Healthy Hand Hygiene

- Teachers and staff will facilitate frequent and proper handwashing and sanitation breaks in classroom activity.
  - Children will wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - Staff and older children may use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

- Staff will encourage healthy practices such as:
  - Reminding others to cough and sneeze into their elbows, or to cover with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - Reminding others to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- AWS will provide increased monitoring to promote safety among students and staff.
  - Supervising use of hand sanitizer by students.
  - Children with skin reactions and contraindications to hand sanitizer should use soap and water.
  - Reinforcing handwashing during key times such as:
    - Before and after eating food;
    - After using the restroom;
    - After blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing;
    - After handling cloth face covering;
    - After touching objects with bare hands which have been handled by other individuals; and
    - When hands are visibly soiled

- Additional staff will be hired to ensure all bathrooms and handwashing are supplied with:
  - Soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol for safe use by staff and older children, paper towels, and tissues in each classroom, and
  - Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol at key building entrances and exits and in the gym for safe use by staff and older students.
  - Hand wash and Disinfecting Stations: There will be at least four outdoor hand wash stations to ensure ample opportunities and space for frequent handwashing. All of the soaps and disinfecting agents are NSF approved. Except in the kindergarten (where Dr. Bronner’s lavender castile hand soap is used), most pump soaps are White Pearl Hand and Body Wash, by NCL. The sanitizer dispensers use a product called Maxim; it’s a foaming NSF approved sanitizer with no color or fragrance. The disinfecting and sanitizing products are hydrogen peroxide based with a slight amount of orange oil as an emulsifier.
Physical Distancing and Minimizing Exposure

● Max occupancy of common spaces will be posted to ensure proper social distancing.

● Policies regarding nonessential visitors and activities involving external groups or organizations will be in alignment with current APH recommendations.

● Faculty and staff will monitor arrival and dismissal to discourage congregating and ensure students go straight from a vehicle to their classrooms and vice-versa.

● AWS will discontinue in-person activities that involve bringing together large groups of people and activities that do not allow for social distancing (e.g. assemblies, performances). [Other strategies for experiencing some of these activities will be considered.]

● Faculty and staff will assist students in maintaining 6 feet of social distance in outdoor settings.

● Furniture will be separated by at least 6 feet to the greatest extent possible.

● Verbal and visual reminders will be provided for students, teachers, staff, and visitors to stay at least 6 feet apart from one another.

● Classes are to use outdoor spaces as often as possible, weather-permitting, to enable social distancing.

● Lunches, snacks, breaks, and meetings should take place outside as much as possible.

● Classroom furniture will have desks face in the same direction (rather than facing each other) or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.

● Staff and parent meetings will be virtual, rather than in-person, as much as possible.
Face Coverings

Wearing face coverings correctly and consistently can help slow the spread of COVID-19. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing; individuals are advised to continue to keep 6 feet between themselves and others, even when wearing masks. The use of cloth face coverings is especially important when students, teachers, and staff are indoors and when social distancing of at least 6 feet is difficult to implement or maintain.

Face coverings are used to prevent infected persons from spreading the virus to others; per the CDC "Masks are recommended as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the mask coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. This is called source control. This recommendation is based on what we know about the role respiratory droplets play in the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, paired with emerging evidence from clinical and laboratory studies that shows masks reduce the spray of droplets when worn over the nose and mouth."

- All persons must wear a face covering inside school buildings, and anywhere on school grounds, including outside when social distancing can not be maintained.
  - Children in early grade levels, especially those in Kindergarten, may have difficulty complying with mask usage. Nonetheless, efforts will be made to encourage compliance.
- Students and staff will need to provide their own face covers. A newly cleaned mask will be needed each day. Disposable face coverings will only be provided to staff, students, and visitors who do not have them or if face covering becomes soiled.
- Face coverings should not be placed on:
  - Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious;
  - Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.
- The CDC does not recommend that face shields be used for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings.

The CDC notes that clear face coverings are not face shields.
Proper use and handling of face covering:

○ Wash or sanitize hands (using a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol) before putting on a cloth face covering.
○ Do not touch cloth face coverings while wearing them. If an individual does touch their face covering, they should wash their hands before and after with soap and water or sanitize hands. (using a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol)
○ Wash or sanitize hands (using a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol) before and after helping a student put on or adjust a cloth face covering.
○ Cloth face coverings should not be worn if wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.
○ AWS encourages students’ cloth face coverings to be clearly identified with their names or initials to avoid confusion or swapping. Additionally, it may be beneficial to label students’ face coverings to indicate top/bottom and front/back.

Faculty and staff who may consider using clear face coverings (not a face shield) that cover the nose and wrap securely around the face:

○ Teachers of young students learning to read
○ Teachers of students for whom English is a second language.

Individual children’s extra face coverings will be stored in a separate space designated for each student when not being worn (e.g., in individually labeled containers, bags, or cubbies).

Each student will be directed to use a personal designated space for their mask when not wearing it, or each student will be provided with a “break-away” lanyard to which the mask is attached and can hang loose when not being worn.

Frequent Cleaning and Disinfecting

AWS will follow CDC guidance on effective and safe cleaning and disinfection practices and on cleaning and disinfecting the school if someone is sick.

AWS will wait 24 hours before cleaning or disinfecting areas used by a sick person. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. If more than 7 days since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary beyond routine cleaning and disinfecting practices.

Routine cleaning and disinfection will be performed on frequently touched surfaces such as:

○ Door handles
○ Faucet handles
○ Toilet handles
○ Light switches
- Desks and tables
- Chairs
- Shared supplies, such as art supplies (ex: music stands, easels)
- High touch devices such as shared computers or tablets

- High touch plastic and metal playground surfaces such as grab bars and railings will be cleaned routinely. Wooden surfaces such as picnic tables will be cleaned after each use.

- Staff will work to ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student their own art supplies) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.

**Screening for COVID-19 Symptoms before Entry**

All staff and students will be required to screen for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure at home each day prior to coming to school by using the Magnus Health app. The Magnus Health app questionnaire must be completed for each child at least one hour prior to arrival. This will provide school administration with the time to run appropriate reports.

- AWS will use the following list of symptoms for screening of all teachers, staff, students, and visitors
  - A temperature of 100 degrees or higher as measured by a thermometer
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Chills, muscle, or body aches
  - Sore throat
  - A new uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for persons with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
  - Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
  - A severe headache
  - Close contact within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 10 minutes within the last 14 days
Process if Safety Protocols Are Not Followed

It is critically important for the safety of the community that all safety and health protocols are adhered to throughout the day by all members of the school community. This includes during athletics practices and other extra-curricular activities. Students will be provided clear instructions and plenty of opportunities for practice.

It is understood that students will forget and make mistakes. Across all grades, the adults will model the behavior they want the students to follow. In the kindergarten program and lower grades, children will be shown how to wear a face-mask properly, how to social distance when lining up for activities, how to wash their hands between activities and before and after they have been eating. All modeling and coaching will be done with encouragement and loving understanding. More personal accountability will be expected from students in middle and high school. Kind reminders will be offered as routines and habits are established.

To ensure the health and safety of our students and faculty and support our learning environment, the Austin Waldorf School supports the following behavior standards with regard to our Covid-19 safety guidelines:

- Students will wear their masks when advised to do so.
- Students will respect six feet of distance between others.
- Students will wash hands thoroughly after bathroom use and when advised to do so.
- Students will abide by other safety measures when requested by faculty or staff.

Students will be regularly reminded of the safety protocols required for on-campus learning, and are expected to be able to manage themselves appropriately for their grade level in an on-campus setting. If a student is consistently unable to comply with the safety expectations for their grade level, this will result in appropriate interventions as follows to protect everyone’s health and safety.

- If a student is unable to consistently follow the safety guidelines or the teacher’s safety instructions, the student may be sent home with a report to be signed by the parents and returned to the school.
- For repeated concerns, the student may be sent home and the student and parents will meet with the Pedagogical Administrator and/or Head of School. It may result in the student remaining remote during our hybrid program, or not being able to participate in athletics or extra-curricular activities if applicable.
Pick Up and Drop Off Procedures

- Covid-19 screening needs to be completed each day in the Magnus Health app before arriving on campus.

- There is no “before care” and the playgrounds are closed.

- An additional drop off area will be added to aid in social distancing.

- Parents need to remain in their vehicles at all times.

- Drop off times will be staggered to decrease congestion and aid in maintaining social distancing. Students will only be allowed to arrive during their scheduled drop-off window.

- Students will be checked in by staff at drop off to ensure that the Covid-19 screening has been completed before going to their classrooms.

- Students will be escorted between drop off/pick up and their classroom space to help maintain social distancing.

- Students arriving late will need to check in at the main office (kindergarten and students in grades 1-8) or high school office using the walk-up window. Parents will need to accompany all late students (including high school students) to the office to ensure that the Covid-19 screening has been completed.

- Parents needing to pick up students early must notify the office in the morning. They will need to sign their child(ren) out at the walk-up windows in the main office or high school office. Staff will retrieve the children from the classrooms. Parents are not to pick their child(ren) up from the classrooms on their own.

- Children that become sick during the school day will need to be picked up as soon as possible, and within no more than an hour.

Attendance

Attendance for on-campus learning will be taken upon arrival at drop off or during the first activity of the day. Completion of the Magnus Health App screening will be required before admittance to campus. Students who arrive late for any reason need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian to the main office (K-8) or high school office (9-12) for check-in.

Attendance for Distance Learning will be taken daily by the individual teachers.
Class Groups/Cohorts

Dividing classes into small groups will help to limit contact between students and staff in order to limit transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19). This aids in more efficient contact tracing in the event of a positive case; and allows for targeted testing, quarantine, and/or isolation of a single cohort instead of school-wide measures in the event of a positive case or cluster of cases.

- Classes will be divided into smaller groups.
- Student and staff groupings will be as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same class teachers and limited number of subject teachers from day to day (all day for kindergarten children and as much as possible for older children).
- Schedules will be designed to limit mixing among cohort groups (e.g. during recess, special areas classes, lunch, arrival, dismissal, etc.).

Distance Learning

AWS will continue to offer Distance Learning for students that are unable to participate in on-campus learning. There will be a period of adjustment for students remaining in Distance Learning as the school transitions to hybrid programming.

Classes which had previously been asynchronous, or designed specifically for Distance Learning, will have a different format and schedule to coincide with on-campus lessons. Students remaining in Distance Learning may join live classes via Zoom streaming from a classroom.

AWS is preparing for the majority of classes to be accessible both in-person and online, but there are some cases in which this may not be possible for logistical reasons and alternative solutions will be offered.
School Counselor and Social-Emotional Learning

School Counselor: Jada D’Angelo jdangelo@austinwaldorf.org

AWS has been working diligently to return to campus in a safe and effective manner and the social well-being of the students and their families is a vital part of this strategic plan. Many feelings and behaviors, some quite challenging, have accompanied this unprecedented past seven months. It is expected that big feelings may occur as we go through this next transformation as a school community.

To best support students and families both with the transition back to campus and going forward, the school has brought on Jada D’Angelo in the capacity of school counselor. Jada is prepared to help students or families with the myriad of feelings change can bring forth (anxiety, stress, tiredness, defiant behaviors, etc.) She is prepared to offer resources, meet students and families one on one, conduct therapeutic sessions, teach mindfulness practices, and generally assist our school families in any way she can.

The students’ social-emotional well-being is an integral component of their education at AWS. There is no question or concern too small. Parents are encouraged to reach out to Jada if something is on their mind or heart so that she can work with parents to address and improve the situation.

Student Support

The Student Support Program will continue to serve students. Individual students and small groups will be seen outdoors following social distancing guidelines, weather permitting; and in some cases in a large classroom with adequate ventilation. For remote learners, student support will continue to provide on-line tutorial opportunities. Student Support teachers will continue to use Canvas Learning Management System to communicate assignments and Zoom meetings. Student Support staff will be in communication with students and parents regarding this transition.
Special Guests

AWS will occasionally bring visiting speakers, teachers, observers, administrators, or other guests into a classroom or online. The school will do its best to introduce the person to families beforehand. Parents may reach out to the class teacher to ask for more information about any classroom visitor. This fall AWS will have practicum students earning their Waldorf certification under classroom supervision, as well as guest teachers teaching blocks in the middle school.

All guests invited to visit the campus will be expected to:

- Disclose recent travel destinations prior to approval for the school visit
- Disclose whether or not they have been in close contact with anyone testing positive with COVID-19
- Follow all of the school’s health & safety protocols
- Home self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms
- Social distance while on campus
- Wear a face mask covering as required

Volunteers

During a typical school year, AWS relies heavily upon the great generosity of time and spirit of parent volunteers. Due to COVID-19, AWS will follow stricter protocols to protect the health and safety of students and staff on campus. The number of individuals who move freely about campus will be carefully managed to minimize interaction across class groups.

All volunteers will need to be invited to participate by an AWS faculty member, staff member, or administrator, and will be required to:

- Complete the Magnus Health app home self-screening
- Follow all mandatory health and safety protocols
- Social distance while on campus
- Wear face covering as required
- Check in with the main office or high school office prior to proceeding to the volunteer area.
Technology

AWS will continue to utilize Canvas and Zoom while in hybrid programming. In some cases, these will augment the on-campus lessons with additional activities or classes that will take place at home for all students. In other cases, Canvas and Zoom will be used by those students and faculty who are unable to be on campus.

A number of classrooms will be equipped to handle hybrid needs, providing students from home with the opportunity to participate in live classes on campus, as well as providing faculty with the means to teach students remotely.

Ventilation and Air Quality

Because the COVID-19 virus can be transmitted through airborne means, we have researched best practices on improving Indoor Air Quality, by incorporating recommendations from ASHRAE as well as consultations with indoor air quality professionals.

Principles:

- Reduce concentration of airborne particles by fresh air input, good filtration and treatment.
- Reduce exposure by limiting the amount of time that people are together in a classroom.

The recommendations are to:

- Use the highest MERV filtration applicable for the HVAC units.
- Use purification equipment.
- Add as much fresh air into the system as possible.
- Flush the buildings daily with outside air.
- Manage indoor humidity. (40-55% relative humidity is ideal)
- Continue with regular disinfection of room surfaces.
- Continue with social distancing, masks, etc.

Each of the 44 HVAC units on campus have been checked for proper operation, serviced and cleaned as necessary. Filters with higher MERV rating (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value) have been installed. These high efficiency filters can cause air flow and equipment problems with HVAC systems, and therefore, we have increased the size of the filter housings in 13 classrooms. We are installing air ionization systems in classroom units. Many of our newer systems (15) have the ability to inject outside air into the systems and these are being maximized. Stand alone purifiers/filters will also be used as needed.
The following routines are being established to help ensure the best possible air quality inside:

- Prop doors open during class change to minimize contact with door handles, etc.
- During moderate weather, open doors and windows to allow as much fresh air flow as possible.
- Limit group time inside classrooms to 55 mins or less.
- Between classes, spaces will be aired for 10-15 mins.
- During extremely cold or hot weather, supplemental heat or cool may be necessary. (Have occupants dress accordingly.)
- Restrooms are equipped with exhaust fans. These should be running constantly to continuously ventilate the space. Bathroom entry doors will be propped open to encourage air flow as well.
- When practical, air out the classroom before the first class of the day.

### Snack and Lunch

- Snacks and meals will be eaten outside, while maintaining social distancing and remaining in the small class group, weather permitting.

- No shared snacks, including birthday snacks, or meals will be provided.

- Handwashing breaks will be included before and after any snack or meal.

- If needing to eat indoors due to weather, room ventilation will be increased as much as possible by opening doors and windows.

### Recess and Games/Gym Classes

Vigorous exercise in a confined space (e.g., indoors) may contribute to transmission of COVID-19 and should be limited unless additional protections are in place.

- Staff will ensure students practice physical distancing to protect students at recess or in physical education class.

- Whenever possible AWS staff will conduct physical education classes and recess outdoors.
● Staff will choose physical education activities that limit the use of shared equipment and ensure any close contact between students during those activities is limited and brief.

● Students will wash hands at the end of each recess, gym, or games class.

● Equipment will be cleaned and disinfected between classes.

Band, Choir, and Music Classes

In light of evidence that singing may contribute to COVID-19 transmission, the National Federation of State High School Associations issued guidance that discourages indoor group or ensemble singing until mitigation techniques have been tested and proven effective and recommends that instrumental groups be limited in size to meet physical distancing requirements. The American Choral Directors Association has issued guidance recommending that choirs rehearse and perform in small, physically distanced groups and outdoors if possible.

● When students are not singing or playing an instrument that requires the use of their mouth, they should wear a cloth face covering in music class (unless class is outdoors and distance can be maintained).

● Practice social distancing and hand hygiene practices during music class.

● While students are singing or playing an instrument, use visual cues to keep them at least 6 feet apart.

● Avoid the playing of woodwind and brass instruments due to increased risk of respiratory droplets and inability to wear a cloth face covering while playing.

● Weather permits, classes will be held outdoors where air circulation is better. Maintain at least 6 feet distance between students.

● Students will wash hands at the end of each class.

● Digital music learning systems (i.e. Smart Music) will continue to be used in middle school and high school to support essential music skill learning.
AWS Athletics

Participation in sports where guidelines for limitation of group size, social distancing, and masking are not practical or possible will increase the risk of disease spread. Therefore, these activities are likely to contribute to increased disruption in the academic year and continuity of education for students. AWS might forgo athletic activities in order to reduce disruptions to the school year and facilitate a more timely return to in-person instruction for a greater number of students and staff, unless those activities may be done virtually or within the guidelines for masking, social distancing, and group size.

- Every player and coach will need to complete their Covid-19 screening in the Magnus Health app before coming to practice.

- Water fountain/bottle fill will not be available. Athletes must bring their own water bottles.

- Athletes will have a designated area for their personal belongings during practice.

- Athletes must remain in their cars until 5 minutes before the scheduled start time and must return to cars promptly when practice ends.

- Parents must remain in their cars at all times. No parents are allowed in the practice areas.

- Athletes must wear masks and maintain social distancing when transitioning between vehicles and practice location and while taking bathroom breaks.

- There will be regular breaks to allow for handwashing/hand sanitizing before, during, and after practice.

- Social distancing of 6 feet will be maintained at all times.

- Coaches will wear masks at all times when within 20 feet of players.

- Shared equipment will be sanitized during and after practice.

- During any activity when 6 feet of social distance cannot be maintained, masks will be worn at all times.

- Bathrooms will be available, no more than 3 people at a time. Masks will be required for bathroom breaks.

- Coaches will provide physical guides, such as signs and cones on floors or playing fields, to make sure that players remain at least 6 feet apart.
• Students and adults at high risk for severe illness due to COVID-19, and those who live in the same household with individuals at high risk, should consider forgoing AWS athletic activities altogether. Each parent/guardian of a student who may elect participation in sports or extracurricular activities will be informed about the increased risks of COVID-19 transmission involved with interscholastic activities as well as mixed cohort groups around common interest clubs or activities.

Local Field Trips

Local field trips will be reviewed by the Safety and Health Committee on a case-by-case basis, and a final determination made in consultation with the School Nurse, Pedagogical Administrator and Head of School.

Overnight Trips

No overnight trips will be considered under current conditions regarding COVID-19.

After School Programs

• When on-campus after-school programs such as tutoring, music lessons and aftercare resume, they will adhere to the requirements of other on-campus activities.

• To minimize the number of children students will come into contact with, after-school programs should divide children into small, stable groups or cohorts (possibly by grade). Avoid mixing of children and adults across groups. To the extent possible, keep groups in separate spaces from other groups. To the extent possible, siblings, especially those close in age, could be grouped together.
Procedures to Follow when Individuals Present with COVID-19 Symptoms on Campus

AWS may encounter situations where individuals develop COVID-19 symptoms while on campus.

- Individuals who develop COVID-19 symptoms will be quickly isolated from other students and staff.
  - AWS has adopted an illness management policy to minimize COVID-19 transmission to others. The illness management policy includes the creation of a dedicated isolation area (quarantine space in the “wood shop” building) and identification of designated staff, Ashleigh Lang-Toliver, to monitor and care for the sick individual until they can be safely transported home or to a healthcare facility.
  - Two rooms will be designated for patient care.
    - The Health Room (in the admin building) is designated for healthy students to obtain medications and nursing care (e.g. blood sugar checks and first aid).
    - The (the wood shop building) second room will be used only for isolating sick individuals, have disposable or dedicated equipment, and be cleaned according to CDC Cleaning and Disinfecting guidelines between uses.
    - The isolation area will be vented to the outside to prevent droplets containing the virus to circulate in the rest of the building.
  - Individuals who are sick and waiting to go home or to a healthcare facility must wear a face covering, unless an exception in the Face Covering section of this document applies. Refer to the Face Coverings section of this document for additional guidance.
  - Students with symptoms will be isolated within the line of sight of adults, and for very short periods of time. The privacy and confidentiality of those seeking healthcare and those who may be part of any contact tracing investigation and notification will be maintained.

- School staff (e.g., workers, teacher aides, school health staff) who interact with a student who becomes ill while at school will use Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions when caring for sick people. Illness management policies will consider aerosol generating procedures (AGP) in the school setting.
  - The school will provide equipment for and training on the use of Standard and Transmission-based Precautions and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
  - Standard Precautions are used to care for all patients in all settings and include:
Hand hygiene
Environmental cleaning and disinfection
Medication safety
Risk assessment with use of appropriate personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves, gowns, face masks) based on activities being performed
Minimizing potential exposures (e.g. respiratory, hygiene, and cough etiquette)
Cleaning and reprocessing of reusable medical equipment between each patient and when soiled (e.g., thermometers)
  - Separation will be maintained between clean and soiled equipment to prevent cross contamination.
  - Manufacturer’s instructions for cleaning and reprocessing of equipment will be followed.

Transmission-Based Precautions are the second tier of basic infection control and are to be used in addition to Standard Precautions for patients who may be infected or colonized with certain infectious agents for which additional precautions are needed to prevent infection transmission. The school will refer to CDC Infection Control guidance and consider Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic in the school’s illness management policies.

- Sick individuals will be sent home or to a healthcare facility, depending on how severe their symptoms are. This assessment of severity will be provided by the School Nurse. CDC guidelines will be followed in caring for oneself and others who are sick.
  - The school will provide information on quarantine, isolation, and return-to-campus criteria to individuals sent home.
  - If an ambulance needs to be called or a student needs to be brought to the hospital, the school will first alert the healthcare staff that the student may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 if applicable.

- Cleaning and disinfecting: after an individual becomes sick or is placed in an isolation area, school staff who work in the isolation area will follow CDC’s Considerations for Cleaning and Disinfecting, at a minimum:
  - Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
  - Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
  - Wait 24 hours before cleaning or disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
  - Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, and keyboards.
  - Vacuum the space if needed, using a vacuum equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, if available.
If more than 7 days since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary. Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

COVID-19: Who Quarantines, Who Isolates, Who is a Close Contact?

The school will use the latest CDC guidance when addressing questions regarding the need for isolation, quarantine, and who is considered a close contact.

- **Isolation** is used to separate people infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, from people who are not infected.
  - People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific “sick room” or area and using a separate bathroom (if available).

- **Close Contacts** are any persons who were within 6 feet of a COVID-19 infected person for at least 15 minutes, during the 48 hours before the person began feeling sick until the sick person began isolation.
  - The most recent guidance from the CDC clarifies that “an individual is still considered a close contact even if wearing a cloth face covering while around someone with COVID-19. Cloth face coverings are meant to prevent someone from transmitting the disease to others, and not to protect someone from becoming infected." This is called source control. This recommendation is based on what is currently known about the role respiratory droplets play in the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, paired with emerging evidence from clinical and laboratory studies that shows masks reduce the spray of droplets when worn over the nose and mouth. This guidance is subject to change as more evidence-based research becomes available.
Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others.

- Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.
- People in quarantine should stay home for 14 days, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department.
- Per the CDC, if you have been around someone who was identified as a close contact to a person with COVID-19, you should closely monitor yourself for any symptoms of COVID-19. You do not need to self-quarantine.

Close contacts should QUARANTINE for 14 days and Persons diagnosed with COVID-19 should ISOLATE for minimum of 10 days.
Quarantine:

People who are close contacts of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19

- Stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19
- Monitor your health: Watch for fever (100.0°F), cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19
- If possible, stay away from others, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19
- Consult with your healthcare provider
- Even if you test negative for COVID-19 or feel healthy, you should stay home (quarantine) since symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus

Isolation:

People who have symptoms of COVID-19 and are able to recover at home

People who have no symptoms (are asymptomatic) but have tested positive for infection with SARS-CoV-2

- Notify your healthcare provider
- Stay home except to get medical care
- Monitor your symptoms. If you have an emergency warning sign (including trouble breathing), seek emergency medical care immediately
- Stay in a separate room from other household members and use a separate bathroom, if possible
- Avoid contact with other members of the household and pets
- Don’t share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils
- Wear a cloth face covering when around other people, if you are able to
The school may encounter situations where individuals were on campus and later tested positive for COVID-19.

**Reporting and Notification of COVID-19 Diagnoses**

Public health surveillance is the ongoing, systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of health related data essential to planning, implementation, and evaluation of public health practice. Continued tracking of SARS-CoV-2 infection among children is important to characterize morbidity and mortality.

COVID-19 data can be used to help public health professionals, policy makers, and health care providers monitor the spread of COVID-19 in the United States and support better understanding of illness, disease severity, effectiveness of community interventions, and social disruptions associated with COVID-19 in the U.S. These data help inform U.S. national, state, local, tribal, and territorial public health responses to COVID-19.

The school will:

- Notify Austin Public Health at 512-972-5560 when a student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19.

- Determine when the person with a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case was last on campus.
  - Procedures will be in place to quickly determine when a lab-confirmed COVID-19 individual was last on campus.
    - Classrooms will strive to have assigned seating to facilitate the rapid identification of close contacts should the school become aware of a COVID-19 infected individual.
    - When the school is notified of a COVID-19 infected individual, a designated staff member will review the individual's class schedule and review seating charts to identify the close contacts of the lab-confirmed COVID-19 individual.
      - The school will notify the close contacts of their potential exposure to COVID-19 and advise those contacts to quarantine for 14 days from the time of their last contact with the infected individual. The close contacts should not return to campus until the 14-day quarantine period has passed.
  - The school will identify the classrooms and areas the lab-confirmed COVID-19 individual was in and follow CDC’s guidelines for “Cleaning and disinfecting your building or facility if someone is sick.” The school will, at a minimum:
○ Close off areas/classrooms used by the person who is sick.
○ Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
○ Wait 24 hours before cleaning or disinfecting the area/classroom. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
○ Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, and keyboards.
○ Vacuum the space if needed, using a vacuum equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, if available.
○ Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.
○ If more than 7 days since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.

● The school will follow all privacy guidelines when identifying close contacts and notifying individuals of potential exposure to COVID-19.

**Contract Tracing**

Contact tracing is used to prevent the spread of infectious disease. In general, contact tracing involves identifying people who have an infectious disease (cases) and their contacts (people who may have been exposed) and working with them to interrupt disease transmission. For COVID-19, this includes asking cases to isolate and contacts to quarantine at home voluntarily. The local health departments may contact close contacts. Contact tracing is conducted by the local health departments upon notification of a lab-confirmed COVID-19 positive case. The school may be asked by Austin Public Health to provide information and assist in contact tracing efforts.

**When Can a Person who Is Quarantining Return to Campus?**

When an individual has been sent home to quarantine, they may return to campus after the 14-day quarantine period has ended and they have cleared their return with Ashleigh Tolliver (atolliver@austinwaldorf.org). If individuals develop COVID-19 symptoms while in quarantine, they should contact their healthcare provider and follow the “When Can a Person who is Isolating Return to Campus?” guidance below.

**When Can a Person who Is Isolating Return to Campus?**

Current CDC guidance does not support schools requiring testing results as a part of return to school policies. When an individual has been sent home for COVID-19 like symptoms, the school may use the following decision tree for return to campus decisions:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Isolation Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual tested positive for COVID-19 or was clinically diagnosed for COVID-19 and has symptoms</td>
<td><strong>Isolate until all three conditions have been met:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared, AND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication, AND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Symptoms have improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual tested positive for COVID-19 but has no symptoms</td>
<td><strong>Isolate until:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 10 days have passed since test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If individual develops symptoms, follow the guidance for “Individual tested positive for COVID-19 or was clinically diagnosed for COVID-19 and has symptoms”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual tested negative for COVID-19 and has symptoms</td>
<td><strong>Stay home until symptoms have improved.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Follow specific return guidance from the school district, such as being fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual was not clinically evaluated and is monitoring symptoms at home</td>
<td><strong>Isolate until all three conditions have been met:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared, AND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication, AND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Symptoms have improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual has symptoms and wants to return to campus before isolation period ends</td>
<td>(1) Individuals may obtain an alternate medical diagnosis from their healthcare provider and follow specific return guidance from the school district and healthcare provider, OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Per TEA guidance, individuals can return to campus before meeting all three isolation conditions IF they obtain an acute infection test at an approved testing location (<a href="https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/">https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/</a>) that comes back negative for COVID-19.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The decision to close school for in-person learning will take into account a number of factors, such as:

- The level of community transmission;
- Whether cases have been identified among students and staff;
- Other indicators that local public health officials are using to assess the status of COVID-19 in their area; and
- Whether student and staff cohorts have been implemented within the school, which would allow for the quarantining of affected cohorts/classrooms rather than full school closure.

AWS may need to temporarily close classrooms or dismiss school for shorter periods of time if a student or staff member attended school before being confirmed as having COVID-19. Closures may occur for one or more classes or sections, depending upon the extent of the outbreak. This dismissal would allow time for the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school and for custodial staff to clean and disinfect the affected facilities.

If there is substantial transmission in the local community, local health officials may suggest extended school dismissals (e.g., dismissals for longer than two weeks). This longer-term, and likely broad reaching, dismissal strategy is intended to slow transmission rates of COVID-19 in the community.
Notes on Sources

This guide is based on the Austin Public Health Interim Guidance on Reopening for Austin-Travis County Schools,

The information in the APH guide is sourced from:


