

## **SY 2021-22 LEA Health and Safety Plans**

**School Name: River School (The)**  
**School Contact: Nancy Mellon**  
**School Type: Private, Parochial or Independent School**  
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### **Background and Purpose**

[OSSE's Health and Safety Guidance for Schools](#) is issued for LEAs and private, parochial and independent schools (schools). LEAs and schools must develop and submit to OSSE comprehensive health and safety plans. This plan is intended to provide the public with information on how the School will support the safe reopening and operation of school buildings, including guidelines on masking, social distancing, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, and appropriate response to a positive COVID-19 case.

OSSE reviewed each School's responses to the questions for clarity, completeness, and compliance with the DC Health and OSSE health and safety guidance for schools and provided feedback to the School. Before publication, School's were given the opportunity to revise their responses based on OSSE's feedback. LEAs and schools are responsible for incorporating additional or updated public health guidance into their policies and procedures throughout the school year as such guidance is released.

## Face Masks

### 1. Provide the School's plan to comply with the requirements to:

- **a. except for specific circumstances (e.g., while eating) articulated in OSSE's guidance, all students, staff and visitors, including those who are full vaccinated, must wear non-medical face coverings or face masks at all times while on school grounds, on school buses and while participating in any school-related activities, including physical education and sports; and**
- **b. masks must be worn correctly.**

All River faculty and staff will wear face masks throughout the school day and while in the building. Masks should be two to three layers of tightly woven fabric, cover the nose and mouth, and fit snugly against the sides of the face.

Children 2 years old and older will be asked to wear face masks throughout the day with appropriate breaks given during designated times (e.g., during naps, during snack and/or lunch) and at the discretion of the teachers.

Any adults arriving on campus will also be required to wear an appropriate face mask while on site, even outdoors to walk a child up to the building.

River will restrict non-essential visitors from campus until conditions allow for more adults on campus.

### 2. Provide the School's policies and procedures in the event that a student, staff member, or visitor is unable or unwilling to wear a face mask at all times.

The River school was open for the 2020-2021 and we found that with appropriate training and teacher support the children were able to wear their masks correctly throughout the day with appropriate breaks. We do not anticipate a problem in the 2021-2022 school year.

Staff and visitors will not be allowed inside without a mask and will be asked to leave if they are unwilling to wear a mask.

### 3. Provide the School's policies and procedures to support physical distancing between individuals and within and across groups, including in classrooms, common spaces, during arrival and dismissal procedures, and during extracurricular activities.

Because of the young age of our students, maintaining social distancing within the classroom

cohorts does not provide an optimal learning environment. Because we are aware the students within each classroom cohort will not be physically distancing at all times, we layer other mitigation strategies (e.g frequent handwashing and enhanced ventilation) including strict cohorting within the classroom and physical distancing throughout the rest of the school.

Groups of students moving throughout the building are scheduled to avoid overlapping in the halls.

Bathrooms have been assigned to each cohort and times and usage are monitored so cohorts do not overlap.

Recess time has been scheduled to allow only one cohort on the playground at any given time, with space between to enter and exit the playground without overlapping the previous cohort.

We have staggered morning arrival and modified afternoon dismissals to limit the number of children entering and exiting the building at one time. Because multiple cohorts dismiss at the same time, we have created a queue that separates the children as they wait to be picked up. The majority of this queue is outside to mitigate risk. We use multiple entrances and exits to allow for increased social distancing.

**4. Provide the School's policies and procedures regarding the use of cohorts for students and/or staff, including steps to minimize interactions between cohorts, as applicable.**

Our students spend the bulk of their time in their classrooms with their two teachers. This forms our base cohort unit. We have Teaching Assistants who function as substitute teachers as needed. Each Teaching Assistant is assigned a limited number of cohorts to interact with (for example, a TA might be assigned to 2 first grade classes), however, on occasion those TAs may need to sub in a class outside of their designated cohort. We offer Arts and Sciences classes on a rotating quarterly system for groups of cohorts. So, for example, in one quarter the Art Teacher may see only the Kindergarten and First grade students. These classes are scheduled so that the students in each cohort do not overlap, but do share exposure to the Art Teacher. All of our Faculty and Staff will be vaccinated by the Fall, so we do not anticipate this limited, overlapped exposure to a shared adult to be an issue. We are primarily relying on maintaining distance between separate student cohorts, because they will not yet be vaccinated.

**5. Provide the School's policies and procedures to support handwashing and respiratory etiquette including frequent, proper handwashing strategies and encouraging covering coughs and sneezes.**

Handwashing occurs frequently in the classroom, including but not limited to, arrival into the classroom, before and after recess, before and after eating, after using the restroom, and any time the teacher observes mouth or nose touching.

Children are encouraged to use tissues to cover coughs or sneezes, however, due to the young age of our children, they do not always have the foresight to be successful. Teachers will continue to

encourage children to use tissues as needed. Children also bring extra masks in case of contamination. The school also provides additional masks if needed.

- 6. Provide the School's plan to make available adequate supplies (e.g., soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, tissues) to support healthy hygiene practices including, as relevant, in classrooms, bathrooms, offices and common spaces.**

River has suppliers for all of our hygiene needs and has been able to successfully stock all of our supplies for our in-person 2020-2021 school year. We are fully prepared for the 2021-2022 school year.

- 7. Provide the School's policies and procedures to acquire, distribute and support the appropriate use of PPE including gowns/coveralls, gloves, surgical masks, eye protection (face shield or goggles) and N95 masks, as relevant and necessary.**

The school nurse has a supply of contact/airborne isolation PPE if a student is exhibiting symptoms. Classroom faculty are provided with masks, face shields and gloves as needed. The School stores appropriate PPE for use throughout the year.

#### **Maintain Clean and Healthy Facilities**

- 8. Provide the School's schedule for routine cleaning of rooms, surfaces and objects, including high touch objects and surfaces (e.g., pens, keyboards, elevator buttons, light switches, handles, stair rails, faucets, phones, doorknobs, grab bars on playgrounds).**

Custodial staff is assigned to specific areas of the building. They are required to wear masks and gloves at all times. All bathrooms and frequently touched areas including door knobs, light switches, stair rails, elevator buttons and office equipment are disinfected every hour using a product containing .09% Octyl decyl dimethyl ammonium chloride which is effective for killing the COVID-19 virus. Each evening M-F the entire campus is cleaned and disinfected with an electrostatic spray system using a diluted chlorine bleach solution. Playgrounds are disinfected with wipes and spray between class use.

- 9. Provide the School's cleaning and disinfecting protocols in the event that (1) a student, staff member, or visitor develops symptoms of possible COVID-19 while in the school; or (2) if the school is notified that a student, staff member or visitor who tested positive has been in the school.**

In cases of COVID-19 in a classroom, all areas that have been designated for that classroom's use are put out of service and completely cleaned by hand then disinfected with the electrostatic sprayer. In cases of office staff infections, their designated offices and bathrooms are put out of service until cleaning protocol occurs. No outside visitors are allowed inside the building during school hours.

If a student, staff member, or essential visitor develops symptoms or tests positive during the school day or within 24 hours of being in the building the cohort is dismissed as soon as possible. Once the rooms used by the cohort are vacated and school is dismissed, the cleaning protocols are put into

place. Staff wears appropriate PPE and makes sure rooms are well ventilated (open doors and windows) while cleaning and disinfecting, including using an electrostatic sprayer.

In the case of a student, staff member, or essential visitor testing positive more than 3 days after being in the building, normal cleaning and disinfection protocols are in place.

**10. Provide the School's plan to make available sufficient and appropriate cleaning and disinfection supplies.**

A month's supply of cleaning solution, nitrile gloves, alcohol wipes, disinfecting wipes, antibacterial soap, and gel hand sanitizer is kept in the facilities storage room. Classrooms are replenished as needed by the custodian of their designated area. The Business Manager works with facilities to place monthly orders from several vendors.

River has suppliers for all of our cleaning needs and has been able to successfully stock all of our supplies for our in-person 2020-2021 school year. We are fully prepared for the 2021-2022 school year. Teachers and facilities staff are fully stocked with gloves as needed.

**11. Provide the School's plan to perform necessary maintenance to ventilation and water systems and features (e.g., sink faucets, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) so that they are ready for use and occupancy and are adequately maintained throughout the operating period.**

The ventilation system was upgraded prior to the 2020-21 school year with IWAVE bi-polar ionization commercial air cleaners that kill mold, bacteria and airborne viruses. HVAC air filters are changed every quarter. All drinking water on campus is provided by Quench water filtration stations. These station's push tabs as well as all campus faucets are disinfected hourly by the designated custodial staff.

**Response to a Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 Case**

**12. Describe the School's policies and procedures to:**

- **a. Comply with the requirement to not admit or to dismiss any student, staff member or visitor who is COVID-19 positive or otherwise meets criteria for exclusion, per OSSE's guidance; and**
- **b. Dismiss any individual or cohort that is potentially exposed to COVID-19 within the school setting.**

Any student, staff member or visitor who is on campus is required to complete a symptom and travel/exposure screening. If any symptoms, exposures or travel is noted without the proper testing/quarantine having been completed, they're asked to leave campus. If an individual or cohort is learned to be positive, we immediately dismiss the individual/cohort and any other exposures and notify DC Health.

A student, staff member, or essential visitor must stay home, or not be admitted, and must follow the applicable DC Health guidance for isolation or quarantine, if they:

- Have had a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher or any of the symptoms listed in the “Daily Health Screening” section of this guidance in the last 24 hours.
- Are confirmed to have COVID-19.
- Have been in close contact in the last 10 days with an individual confirmed to have COVID-19.
- Are awaiting COVID-19 test results or have a household member who is awaiting COVID-19 test results.
- Have traveled domestically in the last 10 days to any place other than Maryland or Virginia, unless they did not attend school until tested for COVID-19 three to five days after returning to DC AND received a negative COVID-19 viral test.
- Have traveled internationally in the last 10 days, unless they did not attend school for seven days, got tested for COVID-19 three to five days after returning to DC, AND received a negative COVID-19 viral test.

Students or staff with pre-existing health conditions that present with specific COVID-19-like symptoms will not be excluded from entering the school building on the basis of those specific symptoms if a healthcare provider has provided written or verbal documentation that those specific symptoms are determined to not be due to COVID-19.

Provided that they do not currently have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days or is fully vaccinated may be admitted while awaiting COVID-19 test results, after close contact with someone with confirmed COVID-19, when a household contact is awaiting COVID-19 test results, or after travel. Any individual with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 must follow the exclusion criteria outlined above.

Provided that they do not currently have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days or is fully vaccinated against COVID-19 may be admitted immediately after domestic or international travel. They should get a COVID-19 test three to five days after international travel.<sup>14</sup> Any individual with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 must follow the exclusion criteria outlined above. If excluded, students (or their parents/guardians), staff, and essential visitors should call their healthcare provider for further directions.

DC Health recommends that students and staff should get tested for COVID-19 if anyone in their household has symptoms of COVID-19, even if the student or staff member themselves does not have symptoms. All members of the household should be tested at the same time. Individuals who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 should only get tested in this instance if they develop symptoms.

#### Dismissal Criteria and Protocols

If a student, staff member, or essential visitor develops a fever or other signs of illness, the school will follow the above exclusion criteria regarding the exclusion and dismissal of students, staff, and essential visitors.

- For students, the school will:

- Immediately isolate the student from other students.
- The student should immediately put on a face mask or surgical mask, if not wearing already.
- The nurse will accompany the isolated student to the isolation area and supervise the student while awaiting pickup from the parent/guardian.
- The staff members briefly responding to the sick student in the classroom, accompanying the student to the isolation area, and supervising the student in the isolation area should comply with PPE best practices per Appendix B.
- Additionally, the school will:
  - Notify the student's parent/guardian of the symptoms and that the student should be picked up as soon as possible and instruct them to seek healthcare provider guidance.
  - Follow guidance for use of the isolation room below.
  - Immediately follow all cleaning and disinfection protocols for any area and materials with which the student was in contact.
- For staff and essential visitors, the school will:
  - Send the staff member or essential visitor home immediately or instruct them to isolate until it is safe to go home;
  - Instruct the staff member or essential visitor to seek healthcare provider guidance; and
  - Follow cleaning and disinfecting procedures for any area, materials, and equipment with which the staff member was in contact.

The school has one isolation room available indoors and several locations outdoors as needed.

**13. Provide the School's plan to comply with the requirements to:**

- **a. Identify a staff member as the COVID-19 point of contact (POC) to whom families, staff, contractors and vendors should report a positive case of COVID-19 and who is responsible for reporting positive cases of COVID-19 to DC Health;**
- **b. Report any applicable positive COVID-19 case in a student, staff member or essential visitor to DC Health on the same day the school is notified;**
- **c. Not exclude students or staff with pre-existing health conditions that present with specific COVID-19-like symptoms on the basis of those specific symptoms, if a healthcare provider has provided written or verbal documentation that those specific symptoms are not due to COVID-19.**

The point of contact at River School is the school nurse. A health screener is done daily which flags people with non-pre existing symptoms. The school nurse refers children who are symptomatic or who may have been exposed to COVID-19 to their physicians for evaluation and possible COVID-19 testing. If a pre-existing condition exists, we require documentation (i.e. a cough due to asthma). If a positive case is reported to the school nurse, the school nurse notifies DC Health within 24 hours.

**14. Provide the School's procedures to support DC Health with contact tracing in the event of a positive case of COVID-19.**

The school nurse reports the positive case to DC Health and is the contact person for any questions needed for the investigation.



**15. Describe how the School will notify the school community, as appropriate, of the positive case and corresponding actions taken by the School.**

The parents of the affected cohort are notified as soon as possible and students are picked up early if necessary (i.e. if not at the end of the day). They're notified that they should quarantine unless DC Health tells them otherwise and that someone from DC Health should follow up with them. Faculty and staff received separate notification, followed by an all community message notifying the whole school community that a positive case has been identified in the school and outlining the schools cleaning and disinfection protocols.

### **COVID-19 Testing and Vaccines**

**16. If applicable, describe the School's current or planned COVID-19 testing protocol for symptomatic and/or asymptomatic students and/or staff, including steps the School will take to encourage participation in the testing program. Please include the School's plan to ensure that results of such testing programs are reported to DC Health per DC Health's COVID-19 reporting requirements: [dchealth.dc.gov/page/covid-19-reporting-requirements](https://dchealth.dc.gov/page/covid-19-reporting-requirements).**

During the 2020-2021 school year, The River School referred symptomatic students and/or staff to their physicians for guidance on testing. If the physician required COVID-19 testing, we would ask for the documentation. For asymptomatic students and/or staff, we asked for them to reach out to their physicians for guidance on testing if they were quarantined but otherwise we did not require asymptomatic testing.

**17. Provide the School's plans to support COVID-19 vaccination of staff and students, as eligible, including efforts to encourage participation in public and community-based vaccination opportunities.**

During the 2020-21 school year, The River School has fully supported all of the eligible staff to get vaccinated. This included communications about opportunities for vaccination as well as liberal leave policies to encourage staff to secure appointments, even during school hours. For the 2021-2022 school year, vaccination will be a requirement for all staff.

We have communicated to our families who are enrolled for the 2021-22 school year that the vaccine will be required for each age group as they become eligible. Only documented medical exemptions will be considered by our medical panel.

### **Students with Disabilities**

**18. Provide the School's plans to provide appropriate accommodations to students with disabilities with respect to its health and safety policies and procedures.**

The River School is an inclusive program that educates children with hearing loss alongside their hearing peers in mainstream classrooms. Fifteen percent of our students have hearing loss. The River School will make clear masks available for children, faculty and staff members who have difficulty communicating while wearing standard face masks. During the 2020-2021 school-year most of our children, faculty and staff members were able to fully participate using standard face masks. Feedback from these groups identified fogging and added heat while wearing clear face masks as reasons for switching to wearing standard masks.



## **Training, Technical Assistance, and Monitoring**

**19. Please provide the School's plan to provide training and technical assistance on its policies and procedures to safely reopen schools in accordance with the DC Health Guidance for Schools and the OSSE Health and Safety Guidance for Schools, including:**

- **a. who will receive training and technical assistance; while on school grounds, on school buses and while participating in any school-related activities, including physical education and sports; and**
- **b. the topics that the training and technical assistance will address; and**
- **c. how and by whom the training and technical assistance will be delivered.**

All employees will receive training and technical assistance during our two-week staff orientation prior to the school reopening after Labor Day. Sessions led by our school nurse will outline all of the COVID-19 protocols, including handwashing, ventilation, the use of masks, cleaning, cohorting, symptom checking, and reporting requirements. All health concerns are shared with the nurse who then communicates with the family, the child's pediatrician and DC Health if a positive test result is obtained.

**20. Provide the School's plan to monitor the implementation of the health and safety plans at each campus, including how, when and by whom the implementation will be monitored, and how the School will respond if a given campus is not adhering to the plan.**

The school nurse, along with key administrators, will be responsible for monitoring and implementing the health and safety plans.

**21. Describe the School's plans to communicate key health and safety policies and procedures to students, families, staff and visitors.**

The River School's key administrators will communicate any necessary news to parents and faculty and staff through dedicated emails and school e-newsletters using an email service provider (Constant Contact) in order to track opens, timing, etc. We will also post key information on our website's home pages, landing pages and subpages, making certain the content is easily accessible to parents, prospective parents and any visitors. A complete back-to-school plan, including key health and safety policies and procedures, will be distributed in August via email to parents and faculty and staff. It will also be posted prominently on our website. If necessary, we will make use of online survey tools to gain information from the parent community.

Given the age of the students at River (18 months - Grade 3), we do not communicate with them outside of school. The teaching teams for each class covers health and safety topics with the children in an age-appropriate manner.

River's administrative team is also available to manage individual requests for information through emails, phone calls, Zoom meetings, etc.