

CHOICE
ACADEMIES
INC



CHOICE ACADEMIES INC.

The Following reopening/mitigation plan is designed to provide guidance to our district for the start of the 2020-2021 school year. The current plan is to open our schools to in-person learning on Monday, August 17, 2020. We recognize there is a large segment of our population to who also prefer distance learning at this time. With the support of the Board of Directors and administration and staff this plan reflects the needs and desires of our constituents while taking into account necessary safety precautions to begin the school year.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) recommend that reopening decisions be driven by the current prevalence of COVID-19 in the community. The policy recommendations that follow do not address whether a district should reopen, but instead address risk mitigation once the decision to reopen has been made. They are based CDC “step” guidelines-specifically, Steps 2 and 3. Step 2 protocols, which include enhanced social distancing measures, should be followed until guidance from Arizona public officials indicates that a transition to Step 3 protocols – which include relaxed social distancing measures – is appropriate.

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CHOICE ACADEMIES INC.

COVID-Protocols for Re-Opening Schools

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) recommend that reopening decisions be driven by the current prevalence of COVID-19 in the community. The protocols are based on CDC “step” guidelines-specifically, Steps 2 and 3. Step 2 protocols, which include enhanced social distancing measures, should be followed until guidance from Arizona officials indicates that a transition to Step 3 protocols is appropriate.

The following protocols are to be implemented across all district sites. Normal procedures for students who qualify for homebound or chronic ill services will be followed; as will normal procedures for employee requests for reasonable accommodation due to disability.

STAFFING ASSIGNMENTS

The public information committee (PIC) consists of the school administrators and the Facilities Manager. At the district level, the public information committee (PIC) will coordinate all messages to students, parents, staff, and the community regarding reopening, possible closure, and other COVID-19-related information. The PIC will ensure that each building has posters with messaging on handwashing and covering of coughs and sneezes located throughout, along with posters at site entrances reminding individuals not to enter if sick.

Each school administrator will coordinate social distancing protocols, including ensuring that student and staff schedules, as well as facility set-up, allow for implementation of protocols.

Jason Laidlaw, the Facilities Manager will coordinate implementation of cleaning protocols, including ensuring that sufficient cleaning supplies are available to janitorial staff and, as appropriate, students and staff.

Each school administrator will work in conjunction with the Health Aide, or other designee to coordinate and implement the protocols set forth in the Step Two Protocols: Employees section of this document for screening of staff. That individual will be responsible for:

- communicating any reported case of COVID-19 among the school population to CEO (Ms. A Wilson-Smith), and
- Informing Ms. Wilson-Smith if absences of students and staff on any given-day are above 5%, or if there appears to be a cluster of respiratory-related illnesses

The special education director and 504 coordinator will coordinate with site-based case special education staff to ensure that the needs of special education students and students with special needs are being met in the context of implementation of these safety protocols.

In conjunction with school administrators, athletic directors and coaches will develop protocols that incorporate applicable Charter Athletics Association (CAA) and CDC recommendations for athletic activities.

TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION

Training

Prior to students returning to campus, all staff will be trained on implementation of these protocols. Training will include proper use of PPE and supplies; cleaning and disinfecting; and other measures.

Communication

Prior to students returning to campus, parents will be emailed a copy (or directed to review a copy on the district or school website) of the portions of these protocols that relate to students and visitors. As part of this process, the district will send communication to all parents that outlines the symptoms for which parents must screen each morning, as well as the expectation that students will not be sent to school or placed on the bus if they are exhibiting any symptoms. The district will require a signed acknowledgement form parents regarding these protocols.

Each school Director or Principal will be the designated COVID-19 point of contact for their particular school, which will be communicated to parents prior to the first day of school. This person will be responsible for answering parent questions regarding implementation of COVID-19 protocols.

STEP 2 PROTOCOLS: STUDENTS ON CAMPUS

Step 2 protocols are established based on community monitoring that reveals low levels of community spread of COVID-19. These practices are put in place as part of a general scale-up of operations.

Daily Health Screenings

At home

Inform students and parents that students must not come to school if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, or chills;
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
- Muscle aches;
- Sore throat;
- Headache;
- Fatigue;
- Congestion or runny nose;
- Cough
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea; or

- New loss of taste or smell

Also, parents will be reminded on the school website, and via email reminders that they should screen students for the above symptoms each morning, should self-report symptoms, and must keep students at home if any symptoms are present. Students will have the opportunity to make up work missed due to symptoms of COVID-19.

Note: Schools will not give out attendance awards for the duration of the COVID-19 health crisis.

On the bus

All buses will have clearly visible signage communicating to parents that students should not enter the school bus with any of the above symptoms

The bus driver will be wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), will visually check each student prior to the student boarding the bus. If a student exhibits visible symptoms (runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, or vomiting), the following steps will be taken:

- If the parent is at the bus stop, the student will return to their parent
- If the parent is not at the bus stop, the student will be provided with a mask if they do not have one already, and – if possible- will be situated as to be socially distanced from other person.

If a student has a chronic condition such as allergies or asthma, parents should inform staff of that condition. If staff has been so informed, students with symptoms of runny nose or cough should be permitted to ride the bus.

At school

Upon arrival at school, each student will proceed directly to the student's first period classroom. A staff member will visually check each student for symptoms prior to students entering the school. Any student with visible symptoms of runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, or vomiting, will be taken to the health office. Parents may be contacted for pick up with the following exceptions:

- If the student has a runny nose and the nurse/health aide observes that there are no other symptoms, the nurse/health aide will contact the parent to inquire as to whether the student has had any other symptoms or there have been any COVID-19 exposures in the home. If not, the student may return to class.
- If the student has health information on file that confirms a diagnosis of asthma or other respiratory condition and the nurse/health aide observes that there are no other symptoms, the nurse/health aide will contact the parent to inquire as

to whether the student has had any other symptoms or there have been any COVID-19 exposures in the home. If not, the student may return to class.

Enhanced Social Distancing

Basic social distancing practices

Staff members will be expected to educate and remind students regularly to maintain at least 6 feet of distance between individuals at all times possible.

Where possible, have students remain with the same groupings or cohort and the same staff throughout the day. Design schedules for middle and high school students to allow the same groupings of students to move from subject to subject as much as possible. Consider reducing class sizes as much as possible within the constraints of the number of students enrolled and the physical layout of the school. Based on the number of in-person students classes will be able to maintain social distancing for the high school. Elementary classes will have to take steps to separate students as much as possible to provide some distance.

Finally, convert non-instructional activity spaces to classrooms if the school site has sufficient teachers to staff those converted classrooms.

In Person school attendance. (Elementary) Assign students to specific classes/cohorts. Students will remain in the same cohort each day for all instructional time. School will run Monday through Friday on the regular schedule. (High school) students will continue with their regular school schedule for classes Monday through Friday. Friday will continue to be a half day of school for high schoolers. Distance learning will have teachers on site to provide instructional hours to students. Grades K-4 will have specific distance learning teachers for their grade level. Students will remain with the same cohort for the first quarter. Grades 5-12 will follow their current schedule with their homeroom and other teachers and specials at the designated times on their class schedules.

Students will be provided the same amount of in-person and distance learning time unless distance learning is not necessary to ensure enhanced social distancing practices in that student's classroom, or an IEP team has determined that the student's least restrictive environment is home instruction placement.

Drop-off/Pick-Up procedures. We understand that some parents may not allow their children to ride the bus under current conditions, leading to greater crowding at the drop-off;/pick-up locations. The district will review current layouts to consider potential expansion of these locations when possible and if necessary.

Staggered drop-off times will continue with High School students beginning their school day at 7:45am and elementary at 8:00am. Elementary students will be on rainy day schedule going directly to class when dropped off in the morning. Students 6 years of age and older may choose to wear a mask while attending school. Pick up times for high school students is 2:45pm

and 3:00pm for elementary students. School administration will notify parents of any additional changes to drop off or pick up schedules in a way that best meets the individual school's needs and reduces the number of students in common areas at the same time.

Parents are to drop off/pick-up students without getting out of the car, unless express permission from an administrator is provided for good cause. If a parent has permission to get out of the car during drop-off/pick-up, have the student arrive at/leave school before or after assigned times for the majority of students. Students will not be permitted to be picked up in the front lobby at the 3:00pm dismissal time.

Bus Transportation Seating Options:

Students will be assigned to bus seats one to a row. Have students sit in the seat closest to the window. To the greatest extent possible, leave an empty row between each student. Maintain maximum bus ventilation at all times, including open windows (weather permitting). Set ventilation to non-recirculating mode.

- When bus capacity will not allow for one student per row and an empty row between students, require students to wear cloth face coverings when on a school bus unless a health condition prevents this.
- Staff may choose to wear (or not wear) cloth face coverings when on a school bus unless a health condition prevents this.
- Load buses from back to front at bus stops, and unload front to back when at school (to minimize students passing by other students).
- Allow siblings to sit together if they wish

School bus riding waiver and guidelines will be provided to families participating the fee based program.

Classroom layout. All students age 6 and older may choose to wear (or not wear) a face covering unless a health condition prohibits. For all grades, mark classroom floors with adhesive tape to indicate where individual desks/workspaces will be located.

Position desks 6 feet apart unless that spacing is not possible due to the size of the classroom and the number of students assigned to it. Position desks as far apart as possible .. Position desk to face the same direction rather than facing each other. Do not use large tables for groups of students unless this is the only option. If this is the case, the district may consider requiring face cloth coverings.

Do not permit students to be physically grouped to work together. Instead, encourage teachers to use technology to facilitate group work and group learning where appropriate for the age, subject, and capabilities of the students.

Communal spaces. Guidelines for specific communal spaces are given below.

Hallways: Mark hallways with adhesive tape to direct students to stay on one side of the hallway for each direction of travel. Where possible given the school layout, certain hallways may be designated one-way.

Playgrounds:

No more than one class at a time on playground equipment. Assign classes a specific time slot, with time slots to be scheduled such that there is sufficient time between classroom use that playground equipment can be disinfected before the next group uses it. Encourage teachers to be creative in employing techniques to maintain social distancing during unstructured time. Finally, require teachers and student to wash their hands following activities.

Lunch room:

Open the multipurpose room during lunch, with increased safety measures, including the following:

- Mark tables in the multipurpose room to indicate where students may sit
- Assign students to a specific seat with a minimum of 3 feet between marked seats
- Limit multipurpose room seating to the number of assigned seats
- If students line up for lunch service, permit only one class to line up at a time, and place markings on the floor to indicate where students should stand to maintain social distancing.
- Serve lunches on disposable food service items (trays, plates, etc.), if possible. If disposable items cannot be used, have food service staff collect items while wearing gloves.
- Prohibit students from sharing lunch items with one another.

Bathrooms. Permit students to enter bathrooms in groups no larger than the number of stalls/urinals in the bathroom, and direct them to maintain social distancing. If sneeze guards or partitions are not possible due to physical layout or cost, limit the number of students in the bathroom to allow an empty sink between students during handwashing. Finally, display posters reminding students of proper handwashing techniques.

Front offices. Plexiglass divider is in place in front of the front desk. If this is not feasible, place adhesive tape on the floor 6 feet from the front desk and post signage directing visitors not to come closer than the tape markings.

Hand Washing

Require all students to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol at the following times:

- Upon arrival at school (use hand sanitizer if there is no sink in the classroom

- After being outside for physical activity,
- Before and after lunch,
- Prior to leaving school for home, and
- After sneezing, coughing, or blowing nose.

Cloth Face Coverings

Students and staff may wear cloth face coverings, subject to health condition exception stated below, when physical space does not allow for maintenance of 6 feet of space between individuals. Executive Order 2021-10 issued by Gov. Ducey provided the school district the ability to decide whether mask mandates are required. Choice Academies governing board voted on 4/21/2021 to leave the decision optional whether students and staff wear face masks. Students will not be required to wear cloth face coverings during physical activities and when social distancing is maintainable, though they may voluntarily wear face coverings at any time.

Any student who has difficulty breathing or who is incapable of physically removing the face covering on his/her own will not wear cloth face coverings, and alternate methods of protection will be discussed by parents and staff.

Students must bring their own cloth face coverings to and from school. When feasible, schools should also have a supply of face coverings available to provide students who cannot afford or do not have their own. Districts will provide instructions at the beginning of the school year regarding how to wash face coverings and how often.

Note: Cloth face coverings are designed to protect other individuals rather than the individual wearing the covering. Accordingly, the greater number of students wearing cloth face coverings, the greater the overall transmission mitigation that will be achieved. Plastic face guards, which provide protection for the wearer, will not be required or provided and are not permitted.

Student Belongings/Materials

For younger grades and where possible, require that student belongings be kept in individual bins or cubbies labeled with each student's name. Belongings should be sent home for cleaning each.

Do not permit sharing of school supplies among students. If a school supply or piece of equipment must be shared by students (for instance, a pencil sharpener or blocks/toys), have a staff member wipe down the item with disinfectant after each use.

Trips and Activities

Field trips will be cancelled. Have teachers use virtual learning opportunities (such as virtual tours of museums) to enhance student's educational experiences.

School-wide assemblies may not be held with students assembled in the same physical location. As an alternative (if feasible), hold school-wide assemblies virtually, with student groups remaining in their classrooms.

Large-scale school events such as “Back to School Night” or fall carnivals will be cancelled or reconfigured in order to maintain social distancing. Small-scale activities like parent-teacher conferences may take place over the phone or other electronic means. Other extracurricular activities will be cancelled unless the activity can be conducted in compliance with the protocols in this document.

Specialized Classes

Some classes, such as science labs, choir, band, PE, and others, will have alternative lesson plans to limit contact and the sharing of supplies, and to reduce the spread of respiratory droplets.

STEP 2 PROTOCOLS: EMPLOYEES

Step 2 protocols are established based on community monitoring that reveals low levels of community spread of COVID-19. These practices are put in place as part of a general scale-up of operations.

Exposure Assessment and PPE

Prior to allowing employees to report to work, district administration, in conjunction with relevant site supervisors and department supervisors, must assess each work site to determine whether PPE is necessary for specific positions in order to limit the spread of COVID-19. If a position is determined to require PPE, provide the PPE to staff at no cost and train staff on its correct use.

Visitors to School

Limit nonessential visitors and volunteers at school. Parent volunteers will not be used in the classrooms during the COVID-19 health crisis.

Daily Screening

Employees will not report to work onsite if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4 and higher or chills
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Muscle aches
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Congestion or runny nose

- Cough
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea, or
- New loss of taste or smell

Additionally:

If an employee's temperature is at or above 100.4, they will be sent home. Inform employees that they must self-report any symptoms that develop during the day and must remain home if they exhibit any of the symptoms identified above while away from school.

Each employee should take his/her temperature at home prior to arriving at work. When the employee arrive at work, the employee will check in at the visual monitor that registers time attendance and temperature at the lobby desk. The designated on-site person, maintaining at least 6 feet of distance and verbally confirming that their temperature was less than 100.4 degrees when they left home and that they do not have any of the symptoms listed above.

Handwashing

Require employees to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol at the following times, at minimum:

- Upon arrival at school
- After being outside for student physical activity
- Before and after lunch
- After sneezing, coughing, or blowing nose, and
- After physical contact with other staff or students

Enhanced Social Distancing

Require employees to maintain a distance of at least 6 feet between individuals at all times, unless this is not physically possible or, for a student's safety, less space is required. If a situation arises that requires a staff member to touch a student or another staff member for instance, if a student requires toileting help, is having a physical emergency, or requires a two-person restraint), have the staff member resume social distancing as soon as safely possible, wash their hands, and disinfect any surfaces they touched.

Cloth Face Coverings

Students and staff may choose to wear (or not to wear) face coverings, subject to the health conditions exception stated below, when physical space does not allow for maintenance of 6 feet of space between individuals.

Gov. Doug Ducey's Executive Order 2021-10 provided the school district the ability to decide whether mask mandates are required. The governing board of Choice Academies Inc and

Choice Services LLC voted on April 21, 2021 to leave the decision with the individual staff and students/families to wear a face covering or not.

Staff will no longer be required to wear face coverings at any time while on campus, though they may voluntarily wear face coverings at any time. In select cases where staff are not comfortable with the change in the mask mandate policy, employees are to notify their supervisor and discuss strategies for educating employee interactions with students or staff and other options for maintaining safety protocols. Have employees contact the district's ADA coordinator or their direct supervisor to request reasonable accommodations where possible.

Unless a health condition prevents it, all janitorial staff should wear cloth face coverings and/or other personal protective equipment (as available and appropriate) while cleaning and disinfecting the schools.

Note: Wearing or deciding not to wear cloth face coverings does not replace the need to maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet whenever possible.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Arrange for daily cleaning and disinfecting of all frequently touched surfaces in work areas, such as door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains, desk, and learning tools. The playground, sports equipment, and any other shared items (if they are being used) must be cleaned between uses by groups of students.

Inform staff that they are expected to clean and disinfect workspaces when they arrive at work and just before leaving work.

Assign schedules to janitorial staff for increased cleaning of surfaces and bathrooms throughout the day.

STEP 3 PROTOCOLS: STUDENTS ON CAMPUS

Introduction

Step 3 protocols are established based on community monitoring that reveals even lower levels of community spread of COVID-19 than in Step 2. When a district, or a specific school site, progresses to Step 3, The Step 2 protocols should remain in place with the following exceptions:

Social Distancing

Introduction

Social distancing protocols may be relaxed somewhat during Step 3. Staff members should continue to educate and regularly remind students to maintain 6 feet of distance between individuals at all times possible. However, increased social interaction among classes is permissible.

Note: Non essential visitors and volunteers at school may continue to be prohibited. If volunteers and visitors to school are permitted, they should be limited in number and must agree to adhere to the district's social distancing and other protocols.

Drop-off/Pick-up procedures

If schools adopted staggered drop-off and pick-up times with specific time slots assigned to families they may revert to a single drop-off/pick-up window for all families. If schools adopted a drop-off/pick-up process with a prohibition on parents getting out of the car, this may be lifted.

Communal spaces

Playgrounds. Permit classes to have staggered use time on playground equipment. Assign no more than two classes to a specific time slot, and schedule time slots such that there is sufficient time between classroom use for disinfection of the playground equipment.

Lunch rooms. Multipurpose room during lunch, with increased safety measures, including the following:

- Mark tables in the multipurpose room to indicate where students may sit
- Assign students to a specific seat with a minimum of 3 feet between marked seats
- Limit multipurpose room seating to the number of assigned seats
- If students line up for lunch service, permit only one class to line up at a time, and place markings on the floor to indicate where students should stand to maintain social distancing. Alternatively, staff may serve food to each student at their assigned seat.
- Serve lunches on disposable food service items (trays, plates, etc.), if possible. If disposable items cannot be used, have food service staff collect trays wearing gloves.
- Prohibit student from sharing lunch items with one another.

Trips and Activities

Field trips that can comply with the protocols in this document will be permitted only if the area to be visited is at a Step 3 of community mitigation. Teachers should continue to use virtual learning opportunities (such as virtual tours of museums) to enhance students' educational experiences

School assemblies may be held in staggered groups to ensure that social distancing protocols can be maintained. Unless social distancing can be maintained with all students in the same room, school-wide assemblies must be held virtually with student groups remaining in their classrooms.

PROCEDURES FOR COVID-19 SYMPTOMS OR A POSITIVE TEST

If a person becomes sick with COVID-19 symptoms or reports a positive COVID-19 test, the procedures listed below should be followed:

1. Immediately report the situation to the business office HR employees ONLY.
Confidentiality must be maintained to the greatest extent possible.
2. If an employee develops COVID-19 symptoms at work, separate the employees from all other students, staff, or visitors, then make arrangements to send the employee home in a safe manner. If the employee is able to self-transport, contact a family member, friend, or other method of transport to get the employee home or to a health care provider. If the employee appears to be in medical distress, call 911.
3. If a student develops COVID-19 symptoms at school, separate the student from all other students and staff, with the exception of one staff member to supervise the student. Have this staff member wear PPE or a cloth face covering and maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from the student at all times, unless there is an emergency. Immediately notify a parent or emergency contact to pick up the student, and call 911 if the student appears to be in medical distress.
4. Close off any areas that were exposed to the symptomatic employee or student for a prolonged period. Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting those areas. During that time, if feasible, open windows or outside doors to increase air circulation. After 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting those areas. During that time, if feasible, open windows or outside doors to increase air circulation. After 24 hours, thoroughly clean and disinfect all surfaces in the area, per CDC guidelines.
5. Determine whether other employees or students may have been exposed to the symptomatic individual within 6 feet, and for a prolonged period of time (typically longer than 15 minutes). If so, notify those individuals (or, in the case of students, their parents) of the potential exposure. DO NOT disclose the name of the individual who has become sick. Notification should recommend that exposed individuals monitor their health closely, contact their health care provider if possible and self-quarantine if any symptoms develop.
6. Employees or students who have developed COVID-19 symptoms or had a positive COVID-19 test may not return to the site until either of the following two scenarios has occurred:

Scenario one

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery, which is defined as:
 - a. Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and
 - b. Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and

- At least 10 days have passed since the first symptoms emerged

OR

Scenario two

- There has been a resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and
- There has been improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
- The individual has received negative results of an FDA emergency-use-authorized COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of the virus that causes COVID-19 from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens).