



VIBRANT MINDS CHARTER SCHOOL

TK-6 Grade, Free, Public Education

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COVID-19 BOARD POLICY

The health, safety, and welfare of the staff and families of Vibrant Minds Charter School (the "School") are our first priority. The following constitutes the policies and procedures that school staff, scholars, families, vendors, and visitors will adhere to in the prevention and/or event of a COVID-19 outbreak or epidemic when on school grounds.

These guidelines will be updated as needed to comply with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Education, Center for Disease Control, Homeland Security, the California Department of Education, the California Department of Health, and the County Department of Health. Under conditions of increased severity, the CDC may recommend additional measures to help protect scholars and staff if global and national assessments indicate that COVID-19 is causing more severe disease. In addition, local health and education officials may elect to implement some of these additional measures, up to and including school site closure, and move all scholars to distance learning.

Reporting Suspected or Diagnosed COVID-19 Cases

Schools must report suspected or diagnosed COVID-19 cases to the County Public Health department. See, for example: <https://cchealth.org/cd/pdf/report-cd-outbreak.pdf>, which will be reproduced in some fashion and posted at the school site.

Schools must generally follow these regulatory procedures to report communicable diseases, including COVID-19:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>

COVID-19 should be treated as a "Report immediately by telephone" incident. However, let Public Health conduct any investigation or take further actions after reporting.

General Policies and Procedures

- **Reporting to Administration:** All employees are required to report suspected or known cases of infection to school administration immediately. Similarly, parents and guardians are required to report suspected or known cases of infection to school administration immediately.

- **Stay home when sick:** Those with flu-like illness must stay home for at least 48 hours after they no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever reducing medicines. They should stay home even if they are using antiviral drugs. Schools should exclude scholars, teachers, or staff who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 from the school for 14 days from the day of their last exposure.
- **Separate ill scholars and staff:** Scholars and staff who appear to have flu-like illness are to be sent to the site health office and kept separate from others until they can be sent home. CDC recommends that those displaying symptoms wear a surgical mask, if possible, and that those who care for ill scholars and staff wear protective gear such as a mask and single use gloves.
- **Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette:** All scholars will participate in hygiene curriculum. This curriculum will emphasize:
 - the importance frequent handwashing with soap and water when possible, or the use of hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available,
 - covering noses and mouths with disposable tissue when coughing or sneezing (or alternative face covering such as shirts or “elbow” if no tissue is available),
 - the importance of disposing soiled tissues immediately,
 - the importance of keeping hands off face and out of mouth,
 - the importance of personal space.
- **Routine cleaning:** School staff will develop a schedule for routine sanitization with a disinfectant of areas that scholars/staff touch often.
- **Early treatment of high-risk scholars and staff:** People at high risk for influenza complications who become ill with influenza-like illness should speak with their health care provider as soon as possible. Early treatment with antiviral medications is very important for people at high risk because it can prevent hospitalizations and deaths.
- **Active screening:**
 - School staff will self-check temperature prior to arrival to work. Staff with an unexplained temperature should follow procedures for taking sick time and seek medical advice before returning to work.
 - All staff will screen scholars for fever and other flu-like symptoms when they get to school in the morning, separate those who are ill, and send them home as soon as possible. Throughout the day, staff should be vigilant in identifying scholars who behave as though they do not feel well or appear ill.
 - Scholars with self-reported illness will be sent to the health office for evaluation. All visits will be documented in the scholar’s health records.
- **High-risk scholars and staff members stay home:** People at high-risk of flu complications should talk to their doctor about staying home from school when the flu/COVID-19 is circulating in the community
 - Scholars may elect to complete distance learning in lieu of in class attendance for a period of time in compliance with all applicable school policies and the law.
 - Scholars requiring an extended period of distance learning may make the request to school Administration at any time.

- Should the community in which the School be considered high-risk, the school may close the site and move all scholars to a distance learning program.
- **Scholars with ill household members stay home:** Scholars who have an ill household member should stay home for five days from the day the first household member got sick.
- **Increase distance between people at schools:** CDC encourages schools to try innovative ways of separating scholars during the “flu season.” To the extent possible, staff will encourage personal space between scholars.
- **Extend the period for ill persons to stay home:** If influenza/COVID-19 severity increases, people with flu-like illness should stay home for 48 hours after symptoms are gone, without the use of medications.
- **School dismissals:** School and health officials should work closely to balance the risk of COVID-19 in their community with the disruption that school closures will cause in both education and the wider community. The length of time schools should be dismissed will vary depending on the type of dismissal as well as the severity and extent of the illness. Should school sites close, teachers and staff will remain available to provide instruction, support, remediation, and food services.

Reactive dismissals might be appropriate when schools are not able to maintain normal functioning (e.g., when a significant number and proportion of scholars have documented fever while at school despite recommendations to keep ill children home).

Preemptive dismissals can be used proactively to decrease the spread of flu. CDC may recommend preemptive school dismissals if the flu starts to cause severe disease in a significantly larger proportion of those affected.

- **Face Covering/Face Shields:** Face coverings and/or face shields (e.g., masks) should be worn pursuant to CDC guidelines found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>
 - Face coverings/face shields must be worn when not at desks with transparent study carrels. This includes entering/exiting the school, walking in the hallway, using the restroom, visiting the office, standing in a line, etc.
 - If a staff member determines that there is sufficient social distancing, s/he may permit scholars to remove their face coverings/face shields.
 - Face coverings should not be placed on children younger than two years old, anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, and/or anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
 - A medical note stating that a face covering/face shield should not be worn will be accepted.

Preparing for the 2020-2021 School Year

These steps will be followed to prepare for the potential COVID-19 return during the 2020-2021 school year:

- Update scholar, teacher, and staff contact information, as well as emergency contact lists.
- Identify and establish points of contact with the all public health and education agencies.
- Develop a plan to cover key staff positions when staff stay home because they are sick.
- Develop communication tools (e.g., letters to parents, Web site postings) that can be used to send sick scholars home, dismiss scholars, and to remind parents and staff how long sick scholars and staff should remain at home.
- Continuously review school policies and establish criteria to protect personal space.
- Develop a school dismissal plan and options for how schoolwork can be continued at home (e.g., homework packets, Web-based lessons, phone calls), if school is dismissed or scholars are sent home when sick.
- Collaborate with the local health department, community organizations, local businesses, and social services on a plan for COVID-19 response.
- Help families and communities understand the important roles they can play in reducing the spread of flu in schools.

Teacher Fact Sheet – Action Steps for Teachers to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

Take the following steps ALL the time, and not only during a pandemic, to help keep your scholars and yourself from getting sick with flu and/or COVID-19.

- Educate and encourage scholars to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. Also, provide them with easy access to tissues. Remind them to cover coughs or sneezes using their elbow instead of their hand when a tissue is not available.
- Remind scholars to practice good hand hygiene and provide the time and supplies (easy access to running water and soap or hand sanitizer) for them to wash their hands as often as necessary.
- Be a good role model by practicing good hand hygiene and covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Keep an eye out for sick scholars and send them to the school health technician for further evaluation. Sick people should stay at home until at least 48 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).

- Clean surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact such as desks, doorknobs, keyboards, or pens, with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas.
- Teachers should also stay home when sick. Stay home until at least 48 hours after you no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).
- If you have health conditions that put you at higher risk for complications from the flu and/or COVID-19, you should speak with your doctor as soon as possible if you develop symptoms of a flu-like illness.
- If you have children, plan ahead for childcare if your child gets sick or his or her school is dismissed.
- Be prepared in case COVID-19 becomes more severe.
- Develop options for how schoolwork can be continued at home (e.g., independent work, Web-based lessons, etc.) for your scholars who must remain home because someone in their household is sick.
- High-risk scholars will be permitted to stay home. Prepare a means to provide support for these students that works for the family. This may include Zoom lessons, video lesson, remind calls, etc.
- Find ways to increase protect personal space in your classroom. Limit activities that require personal contact.

School Closure

The School will continue to monitor CDC, State, and local agency guidance. Because local communities can expect to see a lot of differences in disease burden, the School will strive to balance a variety of objectives to determine their best course of action to help decrease the spread of COVID-19. The School will explicitly identify and communicate its objectives which might be one or more of the following:

- protecting overall public health by reducing community transmission;
- reducing transmission in scholars and school staff; and
- protecting people with high-risk conditions.

Some strategies can have negative consequences in addition to their potential benefits. In the particular case of school dismissals, the School will consider and balance these additional factors:

- how to ensure scholars continue to learn;
- how to provide an emotionally and physically safe place for scholars;
- how to reduce demands on local health care services;

- how to provide services to scholars with unique needs; and
- how to support the whole family, including childcare for working parents.