



## **Christian School Coalition Collaborative Response to COVID**

For years, Christian Schools across the country have recognized the need to have a focus on student wellness, which encompasses physical, mental, and spiritual health, as an essential part of the school's overall program. In recent years, this emphasis on wellness has expanded in many schools to include the entire school community. Through this focus, we have seen so many schools grow in student achievement, effectiveness of discipleship programs, and improvements in school culture.

The outbreak of COVID-19 caused many states to take the unprecedented step of closing public and private schools across the country. While this measure was intended to protect the physical health of our school communities, it did not address the mental health and spiritual health needs of our communities. As we look to the 2020-21 school year and the reopening of our schools, we believe our focus must return to overall community wellness, not just physical health. A coalition of Christian school leaders and team members have collaborated to develop the general guidelines below to help promote mitigation from COVID-19 and other diseases; these guidelines will also ensure our community remains healthy spiritually and mentally. The specific details of the implementation of these guidelines to fit the needs and operational capabilities of each school will be published to their families.

### **Why are we developing guiding principles?**

- COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus first identified in the United States in early 2020. At this time there is no vaccine or cure for this disease. Our goal is to mitigate our community's risk while ensuring our practices do not prevent us from delivering our mission, which is to provide an excellent education and discipleship process for our students.
- The guidelines established in this document are designed to promote the overall wellness (physical, mental, and spiritual health) of all members of our school community.
- As a coalition of schools, we developed this plan in conjunction with documents provided by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), PA Department of Health, ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International), and our local school districts.

### **Will each school develop a "Pandemic Team" for response and facility planning?**

- Whether in green or yellow, each school will establish a Pandemic Team.



- Pandemic Team members may include the school's Administrator, Operations Manager, Principal/Lead Teacher, and someone from the healthcare field.
- The Pandemic Team will remain in consultation with ACSI, CDC, DOE (Department of Education), and the IU/local school district.
- Pandemic Team members are responsible to communicate with the entire school community the Opening Plan, Operating Procedures, and Feedback Opportunities from all constituents.

## **How will schools maintain healthy environments?**

- Cleaning and Disinfection
  - The school will establish a schedule to ensure an increase in routine cleaning and disinfecting.
  - The school will ensure employees properly use and store all cleaning supplies. All disinfecting products used will be EPA approved for disinfection.
- Cloth Face Coverings
  - The use of cloth face coverings for the entire school day will cause too many challenges to effective teaching. Additionally, students and employees will have a difficult time not touching their faces or other objects after adjusting their masks during the day.
  - Cloth face masks may be required when social distancing cannot be maintained and as appropriate.
- Shared Objects
  - The school will make every effort to avoid student/staff sharing of objects that are difficult to clean or disinfect.
  - Objects that are shared will be cleaned or disinfected between uses.
  - Students will provide their own personal school supplies for the year. These supplies, and students' personal belongings, will be stored in designated areas.
- Ventilation
  - The school will make every effort to ensure ventilation systems are working properly. The school will also increase the circulation of outside air as much as possible. This may be accomplished either through the ventilation system or by opening windows.
- Modified School Layouts



- The school will take measures to mitigate the possibility of COVID transmission within the school.
  - Classrooms will be arranged to provide as much distance between students as possible and desks/tables will be turned to face the same direction.
  - Students will be scheduled in a manner to keep groups of students as static as possible.
  - Limiting Numbers in Classrooms and Shared Spaces
    - Schools will create one-way traffic patterns in hallways as possible.
    - If/when virus counts decrease, schedules could begin to return to normal based on staff and family comfort levels and current guidance.
    - Large group gatherings will be based on school size. CDC guidelines are currently at 250 maximum.
  - Communal Spaces
    - Communal areas, such as faculty lounges, gyms, and cafeterias, will either be closed or will have scheduled, staggered usage in order to mitigate possible COVID transmission. If the areas are used, they will be cleaned between uses.
    - The limitation of common areas will be reviewed as virus counts decrease.
    - Restrooms will be cleaned and sanitized on a daily basis.
- (yellow phase additions/changes)
- Movement in buildings will be limited to curtail student interactions.
  - Use of common areas will be limited to begin the school year.
  - Consideration will be given to online only or a "small group" event model like churches use. A balanced approach will be taken regarding the use of virtual and in-person events.

## **How will schools handle food service?**

- Schools that are able to maintain manageable distance and schools utilizing the pod approach may utilize cafeteria spaces.
- Meals will be served on individual plates to avoid buffet-style service.
- Utensils will be provided in pre-rolled napkins.
- Kitchen staff will use adequate protective equipment to mitigate the spread of germs.
- Students may eat meals in their designated classrooms.



## **What steps will the school take to educate and remind students and visitors to the school of everyday protective measures to stop the spread of germs?**

- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
  - The school will ensure all students and employees are trained in proper hand washing techniques. This training will be reviewed regularly.
  - The school will ensure all students and employees are trained in proper preventative techniques to use when coughing or sneezing.
- Adequate supplies
  - The school will ensure that there are adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behavior. This includes soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues, and disinfectant wipes. Families may be requested to supply some items for their own students.
- Signs, Communications, and Messages
  - For the 2020-21 school year, signage will be posted in restrooms to remind individuals of the proper hand washing technique.
  - The school will post additional signage to support infection mitigation as needed.
  - To begin the school year, daily reminders to help stop the spread of COVID-19 will be part of the regular morning announcements. After the first two weeks, reminders will be made weekly.
  - Reminders about behaviors that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 will be included in regular internal and external communications.

(yellow additions/changes)

- If moved to yellow, students will immediately be reminded of the behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19. Parents will also be alerted of the status change and included in regular internal and external communication reminders.

## **What steps will schools take to protect students and staff at higher risk for severe illness?**

- Whether in green or yellow, staff or students who are exhibiting signs or symptoms of any viral infection should stay home and not come on school grounds.
- Staff and students should be fever free, without the use of any medications, for 48 hours before coming on school grounds.



- If symptoms of infection continue for 48 hours or more, staff and students should seek medical advice.
- Staff or students who test positive for COVID, or any family member living with them who tests positive for COVID, should quarantine until they are cleared by a medical professional.

### **What will happen if someone gets sick?**

- Whether in green or yellow, if a member of the school community shares s/he is not feeling well or develops signs or symptoms of a fever, s/he will be moved to a designated room until s/he can be picked up to go home. Staff will leave campus as soon as possible.
- Parents must make picking up a sick child a priority.
- In the event a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the school will notify employees and families that they may have been exposed to COVID-19. Due to HIPAA laws, the school will not be able to share any additional information that may identify the individual who has tested positive.
- Any individual who has tested positive must remain home until cleared to return by a medical professional.

### **What will be the processes for monitoring students and staff for symptoms and history of exposure?**

- Temperature checks have value in certain seasons and for certain communities. Whether in green or yellow, administrators may decide to implement student and/or staff temperature checks daily.
- Temperatures will be taken when a student or staff member shares they are not feeling well or is showing signs/symptoms of a fever.
- A log will be kept in the school office that records each student or staff member who has a fever at school.
- A fever is identified as a temperature at or above 100.4 degrees.

### **How will each school address attendance for staff and students who exhibit signs/symptoms of illness or test positive for COVID-19?**

- Whether in green or yellow, all members of the school community are required to stay home when sick.
- Students who test positive for COVID or have family members living with them who test positive will have excused absences as they work from home.
- Daily student work will be available for students who stay home due to illness.



- Schools will utilize their school's communication platform to keep families informed.
- Staff members who test positive for COVID or have family members living with them who test positive will not have their absences from work count against them.
- In both cases, students or staff, a medical note from a doctor will be necessary identifying if they did test positive.

### **What protocols will be followed for recess and PE classes?**

- Staff will select physical education activities that reduce or limit physical proximity of students.
- Shared equipment will be sterilized daily.
- Individual water bottles will be used.
- Social distancing guidelines will be in place in locker rooms.
- As possible, class sizes will be reduced or have staggered participation.

(changes or additions in yellow)

- Shared equipment will be avoided or sterilized after each use.
- Locker rooms will not be used.

### **What regulations will be in place for transportation?**

Each school will work closely with each bussing district to meet safety guidelines for bus transportation. Parents are encouraged to stay updated with their bussing district's transportation safety plan. When using a van or bus owned by the school, students may be asked to wear masks. Vehicles will be sterilized between uses.

### **How will sports be handled this year?**

Each school will consider guidelines set forth by PIAA or their individual conference for policies and procedures for practice and competition.