

School Coronavirus Plan

The Academy recognizes that students with autism often have difficulty adjusting to changes in their routines, and that the statewide school building closure experienced in the spring of 2020 was particularly disruptive to the Academy's student population. As such, the Academy has assessed that the "hybrid" model contemplated by many Ohio school districts, which would combine both in-person and remote learning, is not ideal to further effective learning. The Academy's plan for its students seeks to maintain as much continuity as possible.

The Academy has adopted a "stoplight" system denoting which method of instructional delivery it is using. At this time, the Academy intends to re-open with in-person learning on a full-time basis. However, the Academy has also developed a plan for remote learning in the event the school building is closed or any of the students are required to self-quarantine for any period of time. Color changes will be communicated through the Academy's one call phone system and through local media.

Stoplight System

Green (Traditional in-person all-day school)

- To enable safe and appropriate transportation and entry/departure from the school building, the Academy will operate with staggered school schedules, as follows:
 - Orange, Silver, Blue – 8:00-2:00
 - Yellow, Red, Brown – 9:00-3:00
 - Gold, Green, Purple – 10:00-4:00
- Lucas County is at a Level 1 (Yellow) or Level 2 (Orange) on the Ohio Public Health Advisory System.
- Student/staff health assessments daily, including temperature checks (must be under 100 degrees)
- All staff and students will be required to wear masks at all times. All students are required to wear masks while on Academy vans.
 - A student may be exempt from wearing a mask if the IEP team determines the child's individual disability and sensory differences make mask wearing intolerable.
 - If a student cannot wear or tolerate a mask due to a health or developmental reason, the Academy reserves the right to request appropriate medical documentation.
- Frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizer
- Increased cleaning of building/classrooms, at least daily
- Following social distancing guidelines to the extent possible
- Parent/Teacher Conferences, Open House held virtually

Yellow (Temporary remote learning)

In the event of a positive test or exposure to COVID-19, the Academy may assess that it is appropriate for one or more classrooms to move to remote learning temporarily to reduce the risk of further exposure or spread within the school building. In this event, students in those classrooms will participate in remote learning opportunities as outlined in the “Red” category below.

Red (Remote Learning)

- If required to close due Governor’s order or directive by the state or local health department.
- Lucas County goes to Red (Level 3) or Purple (Level 4) on the Ohio Public Health Advisory System.
- Daily instruction will come from Blizzard Bags compiled by classroom teachers for students.
- IEP needs will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and the Academy will work with parents to develop and appropriate plan for the provision of services.

Health and Safety Protocols

The health and safety of our students and staff are our top priority as we plan for how to reopen the school. The Autism Academy of Learning requires the following hygiene and social distancing protocols to be followed at all times.

Masks and Face Shields

- All staff are required to wear masks.
 - AAL will provide masks to staff, or staff will be able to wear their own masks if they have one.
- Students are required to wear masks on the van.
 - AAL will provide masks to students who need them, or students will be allowed to wear their own masks if they have one.
- All students required to wear masks while in the school building.
 - Students may be given mask “breaks” when they are able to be socially distanced, preferably outdoors.
 - AAL will provide masks to students who need them, or students will be allowed to wear their own masks if they have one.
- If a student cannot wear or tolerate a mask due to a health or developmental reason, the Academy reserves the right to request appropriate medical documentation.
- A student may be exempt from wearing a mask if the IEP team determines the child’s individual disability and sensory differences make mask wearing intolerable.

Health Screenings

- Families are required to conduct home assessments of their student’s health each day before sending them to school.

- Students with temperatures of 100 degrees or higher, without fever-reducing medication, or other known COVID-19 symptoms are not permitted to come to school.
- If being transported by the Academy, student temperatures will be taken prior to getting on the van by the school van driver and students with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher are not permitted to enter the van. Parents must remain with students until the temperature has been taken.
- Students being dropped off will have their temperature taken upon entry into the building, and students with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher are not permitted to remain at school. Parents dropping students off must remain at the Academy until the student's temperature is taken.
- Classroom staff will conduct temperature screening for their students who are being dropped off.
- Staff are required to do a self-assessment of their own health before reporting to work each day.
- Families should be prepared to make arrangements for pick-up of students who become ill during the school day.
- The Academy will have a separation room (room next to the principal's office) for students who are feeling ill and awaiting pick-up from their parent or guardian.

Hygiene Protocols

- Appropriate and thorough handwashing for at least 20 seconds is encouraged, and the Academy will provide frequent scheduled breaks throughout the day for students to wash hands.
- Staff and students must use refillable water bottles and are not permitted to drink directly from water fountains.

Building Safety

- Social distancing in classrooms and all common areas, avoiding crowds, and staying at least 6ft away from others when possible.
 - Physical barriers will be put in place where it is difficult to maintain social distancing.
 - To accommodate for social distancing in the classroom, administration and teachers have rearranged classrooms and common areas.
 - The Academy will provide visual cues in hallways indicating appropriate distance.
- Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the school building
 - Hand sanitizer stations will be placed at the front or back entryways.
- Limited visitors or volunteers will be allowed into the building.
- No in-person field trips will be allowed.
- AAL Staff will thoroughly clean and disinfect school building each night after in-person classes. The Academy also will continue to have a cleaning company come in regularly during the week to clean and sanitize the building.

- In the event of a positive COVID test, any affected classroom, common area, or van will receive a deep cleaning and sanitization.
- The Academy will maintain a sufficient amount of personal protective and sanitation supplies, including but not limited to soap, hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, tissues, and disposable face masks.

Transportation

Due to the challenges associated with social distancing and van rider capacity, the number of students riding on the school vans will be reduced. The Autism Academy will continue to provide transportation to those students who qualify for transportation but encourage parents to transport students whenever possible.

- All staff and students are required to wear a mask while on the van.
 - If a student cannot wear or tolerate a mask due to a health or developmental reason, the Academy reserves the right to request appropriate medical documentation.
 - A student may be exempt from wearing a mask if the IEP team determines the child's individual disability and sensory differences make mask wearing intolerable.
 - Staff who are unable to wear a mask will not be permitted to be on a van with students.
- Van routes will have no more than two students per route and no more than four people in the van, including the driver and rider, if applicable.
 - Students will be arranged in the van with students sitting on opposite sides and rows.
 - To the extent practical, students in the same classrooms will be transported together.
- Vans will be cleaned and sanitized after each route.

Classroom

The students and staff of the Autism Academy will be in assigned self-contained classrooms with limited movement around the building.

- Students will have their own materials. No sharing between students.
- Frequent breaks throughout the day for handwashing (arrival, after morning centers, before/after lunch, after using the restroom, prior to going home).
 - Classroom staff are encouraged to remain attentive to students touching their mouths, noses, and eyes and increase handwashing/sanitizing when appropriate.
- Classroom staff are required to wear masks or face shields.
- All students are required to wear masks.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom.

- Classroom staff will clean and sanitize materials in classroom throughout the day and at the end of the day after students go home.
- Desks arrangement will follow social distancing guidelines and be six feet apart. In areas where that is not possible, a divider will be put in place.
 - All desks will face the same direction.

Common Areas

The Academy understands the needs of our population and wants all students to get the sensory input they need, but also must ensure the health and safety of students and staff.

- Playground will be open for classrooms to use.
 - One classroom at a time
 - Students will be asked to wash their hands prior to going outside and upon returning from the playground.
 - The playground will be cleaned and sanitized between use.
- Sensory room will be open for classrooms to use.
 - Swing must be sanitized after each use.
 - Students will wash hands before and after entering the sensory room.
 - Classrooms must bring their own sensory items into the room and take them back to their classroom, to avoid cross contamination.
- Arrival and dismissal area
 - Staff and students are required to wait in their classrooms until notified by the Office Manager that the van is here for those students.
 - No staff or students are permitted to wait by the back entranceway.
 - No staff or students are permitted to wait by the office manager's desk.
 - If a student is waiting for pick up, they must remain in their classroom.
 - If a student is sick, they will be placed in the separation room until their parent/guardian arrives.
- When students need to move or have a "change of scenery," they will only be allowed to walk around the building in areas where other students may be present.
 - Students can walk outside the perimeter of the building with staff.
 - Students and staff are required to observe social distancing and mask requirements while outside as well.
- Bathrooms
 - Bathrooms will be limited to no more than two students at a time.
 - Students not using the bathroom are not permitted to remain in the bathroom.
- Lunch
 - Classes will eat lunch within their own classrooms.
 - If items need warmed up, staff can use microwaves in lunchroom area.

Arrival and Dismissal of Students being transported by parents/guardians

- At Arrival/Dismissal, parents must pull to the front of the school building and call the school office number to notify school staff that a student is here or can be picked up.

The Office Manager will then notify the appropriate classroom to come and receive the student or bring student to go home.

- Parents may not enter the building unless necessary when dropping off or picking up students.
- Parents are expected to pick their child up within 15 minutes of the end of the school day. If unable to do so in that timeframe, parents must call the school or make other arrangements to ensure their child is picked up in the allotted time.

Training

We understand the need to make sure the school environment is safe for our students and staff. Therefore, all staff are required to complete several professional development courses regarding Coronavirus, cleaning and disinfecting, and proper use of masks. Students will also receive guidance and periodic reminder regarding handwashing, hygiene, social distancing, mask wearing, and other safety protocols.

Exposure, Symptoms, and Confirmation of COVID-19

Illness or Possible Exposure While at Home or School

- In the event that a staff member, student, someone in their household, or someone with whom they have close contact develops or displays symptoms of or tests positive for COVID-19, the staff member or student's parent should remain home and notify the Academy immediately.
 - The Academy will obtain additional information to determine appropriate next steps, if any, including contact tracing and appropriate notifications.
- If a staff or student develops a temperature over 100 degrees or other COVID-19 symptoms while at school, the staff/student will be sent home.
 - Students who become sick at school will be moved to the separation room (by principal's office) until parents/guardians arrive.
- COVID-19 symptoms are identified by the CDC to include:
 - Fever (100 degrees or higher) or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting

Return to School

- Students and staff members will not be allowed to return to school until they are cleared by a healthcare provider. Medical documentation must be provided upon arrival at the Academy or sent to the Academy in advance.
 - If the student or staff member is unable to see their healthcare provider, the student or staff member may only return to school under the following circumstances, as recommended by the CDC:
 - The individual has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication;
 - The individual no longer has symptoms of COVID-19, as listed above; and
 - At least 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms or the first positive test, whichever is later.
 - If the student or staff member tested positive for COVID-19 but did not experience symptoms, they are not permitted to return to school until 10 days after the first positive test, provided the individual remains symptom free during that time.
- The Academy encourages students and staff members to comply with all federal, state, and local health order and to avoid traveling to areas known to have a higher risk of community spread of COVID-19. Employees who have traveled to restricted areas pursuant to Travel Advisories issued by the Ohio Department of Health and Governor DeWine are required to self-quarantine for 14 days.

Isolation, Quarantining, and Close Contact

Isolation: Keeps someone who is sick (even without symptoms) away from others, even in their own home. Isolation lasts at least 10 days from the time symptoms first appeared, at least 24 hours have passed with no fever without fever-reducing medication, and other symptoms have significantly improved (all 3 conditions have to be met before isolation is lifted).

- If you live with others, stay in a “sick room” or an area away from other people and animals, including pets, and use a separate bathroom if available.
- Special Case: If you tested positive for COVID-19, but do not have symptoms, isolation lasts at least 10 days from date of test.
- If student or staff has provided an alternate diagnosis in written form provided to the school, the individual may return to school before the end of the 10 day isolation period according to the doctor’s guidance.

Quarantine: Keeps someone who was in close contact with someone who is sick (even without symptoms), especially with COVID-19, away from others. Quarantine lasts at least 14 days from the most recent contact, includes 2 temperature checks per day and staying alert to symptoms of COVID-19.

- Stay away from people who are vulnerable and have a high risk classification.

Close Contact: Contact with someone who has had a diagnosis of COVID-19, at a distance of 6 feet or less for 15 minutes or longer, with or without a face covering or barrier, at anytime up to 48 hours before the initial date of exposure/diagnosis, or had direct contact with the COVID-19 positive person within the same time parameters.

Contact Tracing and Notification of Potential Exposure

If the Academy learns that a student or staff member may have COVID-19 or may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, the Academy will implement the following procedure:

- The Academy will determine whether it is necessary or required to contact the local health department.
- The Academy will conduct internal contact tracing to determine which students or staff members may have had close contact (within six feet for 15 minutes or longer) with the individual in question.
 - If the student was not wearing a mask during the 14-day period prior to developing symptoms or receiving a positive test, all individuals in that student's classroom will be deemed to have had close contact, regardless of whether they were socially distanced from the individual.
 - The identity of the individual will be kept confidential during contact tracing unless the staff member or student's parent/guardian provides written consent to disclosure.
- The Academy will notify any individuals determined to have had close contact with the affected individual. Those who have had close contact will be required to stay home and quarantine until 14 days after their last contact and self-monitor for symptoms during that time.
 - To the extent practical, quarantining staff will be required to work remotely.
 - Quarantining students will continue with remote learning until they are permitted to return to school (Yellow).
- The Academy will notify all staff members and students/parents that there has been a potential exposure to the virus at the Academy and the date, time, and location of the potential exposure. The notice will advise staff members and students/parents that, while there is a known or suspected case in the Academy, no further action is needed on their part unless they have already been notified that they were a close contact.
 - The identity of the individual will be kept confidential.
 - This notice is designed to allow individuals to monitor themselves for symptoms and seek treatment or testing, if needed.
- The staff/student's classroom will be closed for at least 24 hours for deep cleaning and sanitizing before opening again for use, as well as any common areas and vans that may have been affected.

Confidentiality

- The Academy is committed to complying with all applicable federal, state and local laws that protect the privacy of employees, students, and other individuals who have been screened for, been diagnosed with, or been exposed to COVID-19.
- Medical information reported to or obtained by the Academy is treated as confidential information. Every effort will be made to ensure procedurally sufficient safeguards are in place to maintain the privacy of employees and students.
- If administration is asked about a potentially exposed employee's or student's identity, they should reply that they are not permitted to disclose any individual's confidential medical information and direct any questions to the Principal.

Any employee, student, or parent who feels that they cannot comply with, or objects to, any of the above protocols due to a medical, religious, or other reason or who has any questions about these protocols should contact the Principal.