

CHOICE  
ACADEMIES  
INC



## CHOICE ACADEMIES INC.

The following revised COVID 19 mitigation plan is designed to provide guidance to our district for the start of the 2022-2023 school year. We offer In-Person only classroom instruction to all students for the full 180-day school year. Choice Academies Inc. is not a designated on-line school. With the support of the Board of Directors, administration and staff, this plan reflects the needs and desires of our constituents while taking into account necessary safety precautions.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) recommend a number of actions be taken to mitigate the spread of COVID 19 and other infectious diseases. The policy recommendations that follow do not address whether a district should reopen, but instead address risk mitigation and everyday operations strategies. CDC's Community Levels help guide decisions about COVID 19 prevention strategies to implement. Recommendations based on low, medium, or high levels of infection will determine the changes or modifications to the mitigation policy to be implemented. The goal is to provide a safe and healthy environment for students and staff.

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## **CHOICE ACADEMIES INC.**

### **COVID-Protocols & Mitigation Plans**

Choice Academies Inc. operates two charter schools enrolling students in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition to the charter schools, a preschool is operated under the LLC of Choice Services. The following protocols are to be implemented across all schools. Normal procedures for students who qualify for homebound or chronic ill services will be followed; as will normal procedures for employee requests for reasonable accommodations 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, possible closure, and other relevant COVID-19-related information.

Jason Laidlaw, the Facilities Manager coordinates 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 school nurse, or other designee to coordinate communication of cases on school campus. ATA and JPHS registrars and ATB administrative assistant will:

- communicate any reported case of COVID-19 among the school population to CEO (Ms. A Wilson-Smith)
- Staff will be responsible to communicate to HR whether they or members of their household have a case of COVID 19.

The special education coordinator and school principal 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.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Prior to students returning to campus, all staff have been informed on implementation of these protocols. Staff will be provided training that will include proper use of PPE and supplies; cleaning and disinfecting; and other measures.

As the board approved mitigation plan is amended/revised, 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 should 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 for anyone riding the school bus regarding bus protocols.

Each Director or Principal will be the designated COVID-19 point of contact for their particular school. This person will be responsible for answering parent questions regarding implementation of COVID-19 protocols.

## **STUDENTS ON CAMPUS**

The following 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 should 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 should keep students at home if any symptoms are present.

Note: Schools will not give out attendance awards for the duration of the 2022/2023 school year.

### At school

Upon arrival at school, each student will be dropped off at their designated playgrounds. Rainy day schedule directs students directly to their classrooms. 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.

Where possible, students remain with the same groupings or cohort and the same staff throughout the day. Schedules will be designed for middle and high school students to allow the same groupings of students to move from subject to subject as much as possible.

Elementary classes will do extra sanitizing and cleaning of desks and other surface areas each day.

(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 unless otherwise stated on the school calendar. Grades K-4 will remain with the same cohort for the entire year. Grades 5-12 will follow their current schedule with their homeroom and other teachers and specials at the designated times on their class schedules.

### *Drop-off/Pick-Up procedures.*

Staggered drop-off times will continue with High School students beginning their school day at 7:45am and elementary at 8:00am. 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.

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 most students. Students will not be permitted to be picked up in the front lobby at the 3:00 pm dismissal time.

#### Bus Transportation Seating Options:

Students will be able to seat as they choose on the bus. Kindergarten students must sit in the front of the bus. In general, the bus will be loaded back to front at bus stops, and unload front to back when at school. Set ventilation to non-recirculating mode.

- Staff may choose to wear (or not wear) cloth face coverings when on a school bus unless a health condition prevents this.
- Allow siblings to sit together if they wish

School bus riding waiver and guidelines will be provided to families participating in 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

Spacing within the classrooms does not allow spacing of desks 6 feet apart. Position desks as far apart as reasonable & possible . Position desk to face the same direction forward rather than facing each other. Large tables will not be used within classrooms for instruction.

Teachers can 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.

*Playgrounds.* Staggered class time on playground equipment Encourage teachers and student to wash their hands following activities.

*Lunchroom.* The multipurpose room will be used for lunch service and consumption including the following:

- Mark tables in the multipurpose room to indicate where students may sit
- Serve lunches on plastic trays. 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 encourage them to maintain social distancing Posters reminding students of proper handwashing techniques are displayed in all bathrooms.

*Front offices.* Plexiglass divider is in place in front of the Receptionist desk. Designated pens are used to sign in/out students.

### **Hand Washing**

Encourage 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, and
- After sneezing, coughing, or blowing nose.

### **Cloth Face Coverings**

Students and staff may wear cloth face coverings, subject to health conditions 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, 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 should not wear cloth face coverings.

Students must bring their own cloth face coverings to and from school. When feasible, schools will also have a supply of face coverings available to provide students who cannot afford or do not have their own

### **Student Belongings/Materials**

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

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

### **Trips and Activities**

Field trips have been reinstated. Field trips are intended to enhance student's educational experiences.

School-wide assemblies will be held with students assembled in the same physical location. The number of grades attending each assembly may be minimized, therefore focusing on particular grades at each assembly.

Large-scale school events such as "Back to School Night" or fall carnivals are scheduled with additional precautions in place. Small-scale activities like parent-teacher conferences will be implemented limiting the number attending to just parent/guardian. Clubs and sports have been resumed with additional precautions of cleaning, sanitizing of equipment being implemented.

### **Visitors to School**

Nonessential visitors and volunteers at school will be limited. Parent volunteers will be used in the classrooms at the discretion of school administration.

## **EMPLOYEES**

Mitigation 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 Screening**

Employees should 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:

Each employee should monitor for symptoms of illness at home prior to arriving at work. Employees clock in and out or sign in and out daily.

### **Handwashing**

Employees are encouraged 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

### **Cloth Face Coverings**

Staff may choose to wear (or not to wear) face coverings while on campus.

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 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.

### **Cleaning and Disinfecting**

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

Staff have been informed that they are expected to clean and disinfect workspaces when they arrive at work and just before leaving work.

## **STUDENTS ON CAMPUS**

Non-essential visitors and volunteers at school is permitted at the discretion of school administration. If volunteers and visitors to school are permitted, they should be limited in number and must agree to adhere to the district's mitigation protocols and school policies.

### **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 arrange to send the employee home in a safe manner. If the employee can 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, except for 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, 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. Cleaning and disinfecting those areas. During that time, if feasible, open windows or outside doors to increase air circulation. Thoroughly clean and disinfect all surfaces in the area.
5. Determine whether other employees or students may have been exposed to the symptomatic individual within 6 feet, and for a prolonged period (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-isolate if any symptoms develop.
6. Employees or students who have developed COVID-19 symptoms or had a positive COVID-19 test from a lab or physician notice, may not return to the site until at least 10 days have passed since the first symptoms emerged.
7. If a staff member or student resides within a household of someone who has tested positive for COVID 19, that student or staff member may not return to the school until at least five days symptom free and test negative for COVID 19.

## STAY HOME

In accordance with applicable laws and regulations, Choice Academies allows flexibility, non-punitive and supportive paid sick leave policies and practices. We encourage sick workers and students to stay home when they are sick. Students will receive school work or receive adequate time to make up missed assignments.

## VENTILATION

In an effort to optimize ventilation and maintain improvements to indoor air quality to reduce risk of germs and contagious spreading through the air maintenance has been done on air conditioning units and MERV 13 air filters are being used in both buildings.

## RESPONSE TO OUTBREAK

If the school site experiences a COVID 19 outbreak, protocols will be reinstated to reduce transmission during the outbreak including, changing or cancelling group activities and open doors/windows where safe and possible to ventilate. The school will work with state or local health department in accordance with state and local regulations.

[Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Education Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning | CDC](#)