

Unity Elementary School Reopening Plan Specifics

August 11, 2020

This document will serve as an **addendum** to our UES student/parent and staff handbooks, specific to the Unity Elementary School Community. I'd like to express gratitude to the UES staff and the SAU6 Reopening Planning Committee for the generosity of their time in conducting research, providing expertise and objective, critical thinking and observations. This has been and will continue to be an intricate process with overarching objectives of keeping our staff and students safe and minute details that involve day-to-day interactions in a deeply relational environment. Students and teachers will re-integrate into the school context with support for overall wellness.

Policies and procedures will be laid out within the constraints of the school itself with stakeholders' responsibilities because every school has a unique community. Students of this critical age and size at times will fit within the adult-related CDC guidelines and at other times fit the recommendations of the younger children. We recognize that all conditions may not be the "normal" students are used to, but we also recognize the glorious resilience and adaptability of our students and staff. For the long-term success of our wellness plan, we must apply flexibility, caution and positivity. In a school/home team effort, Please help us to assure that all students are practicing handwashing and good hygiene practices. There is no doubt that even before COVID19 virus, children were transmitting the flu at an alarming rate. Any habits we are able to instill in them will benefit them against all communicable diseases.

If conditions within your household or health conditions with your child warrant a "stay-at-home" option (temporarily or permanently), we are working with families to assure students can participate in school activities virtually. We will continue the use of our Google platform, training all students to use them as part of our new school year procedures. Please refer to the following documents for our reasoning and recommendations.

Resource Publications:

- [Harvard Schools for Health Publication, June 2020](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidelines for School Re-opening](#), Last Updated 06/25/2020
- [Centers for Disease Control: Considerations for Schools](#), Last reviewed: May 19, 2020
- [Duration of Isolation and Precautions for Adults with COVID-19](#)
- [World Health Organization Advice on the Use of Masks in the Context of COVID-19, June 5, 2020.](#)

Administrator and Staff Training:

The principal will be the primary COVID-19 contact person. All staff will return to school on August 24th to participate in training and development of the “Back-to-Basics” lessons in which they will teach new routines and procedures for school and classroom interactions and expectations, to build a culture around wellness and compassion for others. In addition, the administration will set up a Google Classroom for teachers that will house all COVID-19 resources for building teacher knowledge and classroom routines and procedures.

Mandatory Attendance/Sick Policy Compliance

Documentation of Absence and Illness:

All health forms and emergency contact information will be updated in the office. No student will be allowed in school without this information updated. All absences can be reported to the office.

Visitors:

Non-essential visitors to the building will be limited. Any adult entering the building must sign in and leave contact information in the lobby. All adults must wear face coverings and answer the screening questionnaire. Temperatures will be taken. Visitors that will be outside must wear a mask and maintain social distancing.

Before School Begins Each Day (At Home):

Prevention will be the most effective way to assure wellness in the UES community. Parents should check all children the night before school and in the morning of each school day for symptoms before leaving the home by checking their temperature and reviewing this list of symptoms ([see the CDC Screening Limitations and Considerations](#) and [Symptoms of COVID-19](#)).

Administrative team, nurse, and teachers will facilitate morning temperature screenings at the car/bus to protect the health and wellness of all members of the school community beginning at 7:30am.

We are asking that ALL parents that are dropping off or picking up their child remain in the car. We will meet you at the car to bring your child into the building. When you are picking up, Please call the office at 542-5888 and someone will bring your child out to you.

PLEASE NOTE: At this time, no parents will be allowed to bring their child to the classroom.

Symptomatic students should be kept at home and reported absent by an adult by calling the school. For symptomatic individuals, return to school occurs upon completing 10-day quarantine (see below for exception) and being fever free for 24 hours without medicinal interventions.

Transportation:

Unity buses will be used for transportation beginning the first day of school. All students and bus drivers will wear masks while on the bus. Hand sanitizer will be provided. Students will sit one per seat and have assigned seats. Siblings will sit together. The bus will be filled from the back to the front. On exit, the students will exit from the front to the back. All buses will be thoroughly cleaned after each use.

Administrative team, nurse, and teachers will facilitate morning temperature screenings to protect the health and wellness of all members of the school community beginning at 7:30am if necessary. Teachers, after their own temperature checks, will be present in classrooms at 7:50am. As students are checked and enter the building, students will go directly to their classes. School will begin at 8:00, attendance will be taken at 8:10. **Teachers, staff, and administration will wear masks in all common areas (or other forms of PPE if necessary).**

If Staff or Students Fall Ill (During the Day):

Any teacher or student feeling symptomatic should report to the office, where they will stay in an isolated area in the nurse's suite until they are picked up. They may read books, relax, and close their eyes to rest in a quarantine area.

All teachers who are symptomatic, are exposed to a symptomatic individual (according to the CDC guidelines for exposure) or test positive must quarantine for 10 days. In the event of a teachers' quarantine, students will be using the online platform during the class time or a substitute may be called in or a combination of both.

If students or teachers are symptomatic, they must stay home for 10 days from the time of symptoms or possible exposure. Symptomatic individuals not yet tested for COVID will have to quarantine. **Quarantine may be shortened only when 2 negative COVID tests separated by 24 hrs have been documented;** the return to school fever free without medicine still applies. A physician's note attributing illness to something other than COVID may also warrant an exception. ***Students must be with no fever for 24 hours after quarantine without the use of Tylenol or ibuprofen.**

If a student is asymptomatic (COVID19) and tests positive, comes in direct contact with a COVID19 positive individual, or has traveled out of state or by airplane they must be quarantined for 14 days. In addition, *School staff can work with families to assure students can continue to attend school if possible by using our remote learning platform.*

In the Event a Positive COVID-19 Case is Identified:

In the event that a positive case is identified, the administrator will follow the procedures outlined in the CDC guidelines (see [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)).

Cleaning and disinfection will take place in the areas of exposed areas, would be necessary and immediate. In most cases, one positive test does not warrant closing of a school, but there are important actions and considerations we must make (see [FAQ for Administrators on Reopening Schools](#)).

Decisions about Closing the School:

Decisions about closing the school will depend on the magnitude of community spread and the CDC School Decision Making Protocol (See [Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs](#))

Administration/Adult Admittance:

The administrative team will conduct periodic records updates regarding emergency documentation. Administrator and teachers will assure that alternative learning plans are available in the event a student must miss school for an extended period. Administrator will not be admitting adults into the building without temperature checks and health assurances. Pick-up and drop-off will be done directly in the office. No adults will be entering any part of the building other than the front entrance, signing-in and leaving contact information. The administrator will collect absence/sick data and monitor this plan with the Unity School Board monthly or as needed.

Students' Extended Absences:

Staff will maintain online platforms and work with administration to provide "virtual attendance" options for students who must be at home. Students will be responsible for participating in remote attendance and engagement under those circumstances and will be counted as present if they have done so.

Technology:

Our school has 1:1 Chromebooks for students to assure that students have access to digital devices and internet capacity in the school and at home.. In addition, jetpacks have been ordered to provide internet access to families and staff that do not have internet at home.

Wearing Masks During the Day:

UES will provide cloth face masks for staff and students to wear. Disposable masks will be in the office, bus, and lobby for students who forget them. Students can wear masks all day, but they will not be mandatory in all settings. Students should be prepared to use them throughout the day

([see CDC Considerations for Schools](#)). At this time, it is important that students realize we are all doing it to protect each other. Masks can be fun and students can be proud to be leaders in keeping their community safe by wearing masks (see [Guidance for K-12 School Administrators on the Use of Cloth Face Coverings In School](#)).

Reusable face coverings MUST be washable and washed frequently. At the end of the school day, all students will place their used face mask in a laundry bag in their classroom and take a new one to go home. Laundry will be done every night at UES. The laundry bag with cleaned masks will return to the classroom every day.

Please note that masks do not eliminate the continuous need for distancing, handwashing and breaks for fresh air.

UES students will be required to wear cloth masks:

- When they enter and exit the building.
- When they cannot be distanced 3-6 feet from peers.
- When they travel the halls.
- When they are in the lunch line.
- If they are working directly with a teacher or another student in close contact.
- When they are on the bus.

Students will not be required to wear cloth masks:

- When they can be distanced 3-6 feet from peers.
- When they are eating.
- When they are seated at their desks.
- When they are outside.
- When they are partaking in any form of exercise.

Please note: Teachers may require students to wear masks at other times.

Staff and adult face coverings will be required in the building in all common areas.

Daily Interactions

Students will enter the building and go directly into their classrooms to assure all students have continuous supervision while others are entering post-screening.

The Administrative Team will assure that passing times for students are synchronized in scheduling throughout the day, student-teacher ratios remain low, and that teachers and support staff maintain a high regard for childrens' overall well-being including their social wellness.

Scheduling

Breaks for Handwashing and Sanitizing Throughout the Day:

Students will be able to visit restrooms and will be taught proper handwashing as part of the “Back-to-Basics” lessons all teachers will facilitate. We have installed hands free sanitizer machines in every classroom and other areas throughout the building. Students will have several times throughout the day to take scheduled breaks.

Classes:

To reduce contact in the first quarter of the year (subject to revision in subsequent quarters) students will be assigned seats in their classroom and other areas in the building.

All students will have their own individual tools: pencil box, pencils, erasers, crayons, colored pencils, etc. There will be **NO** sharing of any items. All supplies will be supplied by the school.

Classroom Seating:

Desks and seating arrangements within the classrooms will be socially distanced in accordance with the Schools for Health Harvard Public Health, p. 28.

Outdoor time:

Teachers will have the option to use our outdoor spaces or gym to teach lessons or take breaks during times of the day when it is not being used by other classes. In addition, students will have *at least* one lunch recess outdoors and one 15-20 minute break throughout the day. By slowing down the pace of the day, allowing for outdoor activities, students will have access to fresh air and socialization beyond the classroom.

Lockers:

Students will have spaced locker assignments and be able to visit twice daily, morning and afternoon. Students will be able to have their backpacks in classrooms. They **WILL NOT** share belongings with others. Classrooms will have materials such as pencils, etc. for students to keep on the desk/table.

Breakfast/Lunch:

Breakfast/Lunch will continue to be served by The Abbey Group. They follow specific stringent guidelines by the FDA for service and will continue to wear masks, gloves and serve individual trays to students followed by disinfection of those trays. Breakfast will be bagged. Lunch will be several options: hot box, cold, salads. All meals will be eaten in the classroom at this time.

Water Coolers/Bubblers:

All building water bubblers will be used to fill water bottles and/or plastic cups ONLY. No bubblers will be in use during the 2020-2021 school year to directly drink from. This will assure students have access to clean, fresh drinking water. Students should come to school with water bottles that they will be able to keep in their classrooms with them as well.

Continued Use of Online Platforms:

Staff will train all students to use the digital platforms for learning in conjunction with traditional educational methods. In the event that a student or teacher must be quarantined or snow days interrupt schooling, "virtual attendance" and online access will allow for students to fully engage in their classes. Physical presence is the preferable model, but in the event that cannot be possible due to illness, students and teachers will apply remote learning strategies. Teachers will also work in collaboration with administrator to develop "Back-to-Basics" mini lessons as part of the new routines and procedures of the school year. Back-to-Basics will support children's overall wellness and hygienic habits.

School Day Departure:

Students will depart as homerooms are called individually with short pauses between to allow students to distance in the hallway. They will wear masks as they leave.

After School Activities:

At this time, after school activities are temporarily on hold. Our plan is to provide soccer in the fall but at this time we do not have a scheduled start date.

Communication:

The administrator will access resources and information for the school and school community, keep families updated about necessary adjustments. Correspondence will be sent via emailed weekly newsletters and weekly voice/video meetings.

Cleaning and Disinfection:

The administrative team will supervise and assure facilitation of proper cleaning and disinfecting processes throughout the school, that adequate training and supplies are provided.

Custodial staff will adhere to the [CDC cleaning guidelines](#) throughout the building and keep record of bathroom cleanings, high-traffic and high-touch areas. If a student falls symptomatic and is isolated at the school, the area will be disinfected immediately after student departure. Bathrooms will be equipped with anti-bacterial soap and paper towels at all times.

One electrostatic sprayer has been purchased for the school using CARES Act federal funding. The sprayer will be used twice daily, during lunch periods and after school. Cleaning supplies were procured from a commercial cleaning company, using the grant, to assure appropriate cleaning and disinfection can be facilitated throughout the school year.

Teachers and students will have access to hand sanitizer and restrooms where they can practice proper hand-washing throughout the day. Classrooms are outfitted with PPE (gloves, masks, and sanitizer) for use when needed.

All groups and/organizations that use the Unity Elementary School must sign a "Terms of Use Agreement" that states they will be responsible for the cleaning of a specific area they are approved to use. Access to the building will be restricted to approved parties in accordance with these agreements.

As noted above, this plan will undergo revision as needed. I'd like to sincerely thank the team of professionals and invested stakeholders who helped undertake this complex and meaningful endeavor.