



# **STEP BY STEP TOGETHER!**

**Protocols for the “mask optional” Policy  
January 2022  
(COVID-19 Prevention)**

The Board of Trustees of Oak Hall Episcopal School, at its discretion, may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue any part or parts of the policies and associated protocols in this document at any time without prior notice.

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## **I. Introduction**

In December, 2021, the Oak Hall Episcopal School (OHES) Board of Trustees announced that as of Monday, January 3, 2022, classes would operate with a “mask optional” policy. This was a big change that was based in part on the CDC recommendation that “since schools typically serve their surrounding communities, decisions should be based on the school population, families and students served, as well as their communities”.

With the adoption of the “mask optional” policy, the School’s COVID-19 Task Force was given the job of looking at protocols which would maximize the success of this new policy while achieving the goal of being safely in-person.

The number of positive COVID-19 cases has risen since last month and continues to fluctuate weekly. However, because of the rise of the Omicron variant across America, vacation travel, and family gatherings during the holiday period, there is the forecast of a surge after the Christmas break. With this in mind, the Task Force recommends that for the time being, with the exception of some minor changes, the protocols used in the first semester for hygiene and our interaction with each other, remain in effect. Changes to isolating and quarantining have been made in line with new CDC guidelines. The Board has approved the Task Force’s recommendation.

This document outlines the protocols we are using to reduce the spread of the virus within the School community, and our response should a positive case be reported. We ask for every parent to be vigilant for COVID-19 symptoms within their household, and to err on the side of caution by keeping a child who does not feel well, at home.

## **II. Planning Based on What We Know about COVID-19**

Reducing the spread of COVID-19 is a shared responsibility. The CDC recommends a layered prevention strategy. Taking into account the School’s available resources, OHES advocates:

- Promoting COVID-19 vaccination;
- Physical distancing;
- Self monitoring;
- Handwashing;
- Staying home when sick;
- Limiting access of all adults, including parents, family members, and guests to the building;
- Environmental cleaning and disinfection;
- Testing;
- Quarantining and/or isolating when appropriate; and,
- The correct use of masks by those who chose to use them.

### III. Symptoms of COVID-19\*

A person experiencing one (1) “A” Symptom OR three (3) “B” Symptoms should be tested.

- | A   | B   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fever (100.0F or higher)**</li><li>• Sore Throat</li><li>• Cough</li><li>• Difficulty Breathing</li><li>• Diarrhea or Vomiting</li><li>• New Loss of Taste or Smell</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stuffy OR Runny Nose</li><li>• Muscle/Body Aches</li><li>• Fatigue</li><li>• Chills</li><li>• Nausea</li><li>• Loss of Appetite</li><li>• Elevated Temperature (&lt;100.0F)**</li><li>• New Onset of Severe Headaches</li></ul> |

*\* That are not explained by an existing condition such as asthma or allergies.*

*\*\* 100.0F rather than 100.4F is in line with the School’s previous practice during past school years.*

### IV. Promoting Behaviors that Reduce the Spread of COVID-19

OHES is continuing to implement several strategies to encourage behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19. These strategies will help us minimize the potential for spread in our School and in our community.

#### a. Exhibiting COVID-19 Symptoms – Regardless of Vaccination Status

- Stay home; AND,
- The student/employee may return to School after being symptom free (without medication) for 24 hours.
- If symptoms persist or worsen, the employee/student is encouraged to receive a negative COVID-19 test before returning to School.

#### b. Testing Positive – Regardless of Vaccination Status

##### i. With Symptoms

- Isolate for 5 days; AND either,
- With symptoms resolving, return to School on Day 6, and wear a mask when around others for an additional 5 days;  
OR
- Remain at home for 5 additional days.
- At whatever stage the student/employee returns to School, s/he should be fever free (without medication) for 24 hours.

**ii. Asymptomatic**

- Isolate for 5 days; AND either,
  - With no subsequent illness, return to School on Day 6, and wear a mask when around others for an additional 5 days.  
OR
  - Remain at home for 5 additional days.
- 
- If at any time symptoms appear, the timeline starts again, and the employee/student should follow the protocols in Section IV, Parts a and b.

**c. Exposure to Someone with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19**

**i. Boosted**

**OR**

**Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine within the last 6 months**

**OR**

**Completed the primary series of J&J vaccine within the last 2 months**

- Wear a mask around others for 10 days.
  - Test on Day 5 if possible.
  - If symptoms develop the employee/student should get tested.
- 
- ii. Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago and are not boosted**
- OR**
- Completed the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and are not boosted**
- OR**
- Are unvaccinated**
- Stay home for 5 days; AND either,
  - Wear a mask around others for 5 additional days;  
OR
  - Remain at home for 5 additional days.
- 
- Test on day 5 if possible.
  - If at any time symptoms appear, the timeline starts again, and the employee/student should follow the protocols in Section IV, Parts a and b of this document.

**There are now a variety of tests available, including how they are administered (nasal or saliva). Some are less invasive when given. The School encourages parents to explore which type of tests local providers are offering.**

**d. Proper Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**

As with previous years, OHES asks families to partner with us to teach and reinforce hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. We will teach proper hand washing to all students

and as feasible, will monitor hand washing during the day to check the proper technique is being used. In addition, each classroom will have hand sanitizer available. Students and employees are encouraged to sanitize as much as needed.

OHES continues to reinforce proper etiquette for covering coughs and sneezes. This includes the use of tissues, which will be available in the classrooms. If a tissue is not available, the crook of the elbow should be used to cover coughs and sneezes. Upon using a tissue or elbow, students and employees will immediately wash hands or use hand sanitizer. Hand washing will also take place throughout the day, especially:

- When entering classrooms;
- When finishing activities;
- Before, during, and after preparing food;
- Before eating food;
- Before and after treating a cut or wound;
- After using the toilet;
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; and,
- After touching trash.

#### **e. Supplies for Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfecting**

The School continues to make available adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant spray, and whenever possible, disinfectant wipes. Families are also welcome to provide their children with personal/travel sized hand sanitizer to keep in their school bag, desk, or on their person. Any supplies brought to school remain subject to oversight by the faculty and staff to ensure proper and safe use.

**PLEASE NOTE – As the wearing of a mask is optional for all faculty & staff and students, members of the School community are expected to be respectful of individual choices and personal space.**

### **V. Maintaining a Healthy Environment on Campus**

OHES is keeping the following strategies in place to maintain healthy environments.

#### **a. Drop-Off and Pick-Up**

Drop-off times are from 7:30am – 8:15am. Classes begin at 8:15am. Our general protocol remains that individuals who are dropping off or picking up students should stay in their vehicles and not come into the building.

When a student enters the building, s/he should:

- Apply hand sanitizer; and,
- Move to either early care (7:30am – 8:00am) or to his/her classroom (8:00am – 8:15am).

**As of January 3, 2022, parents are still asked not to walk children into the School building during regular drop-off times.**

Early care runs from 7:30am – 8:00am. There is no charge for this service. Students arriving at this time will be supervised in the cafeteria and the library. At 8:00am students will be dismissed to make their way to their classrooms.

If you arrive after 8:15am and the duty staff are no longer outside, please park your car, and escort your child to the front door and ring the buzzer. When your child enters, s/he should utilize the hand sanitizer. S/he will come into the Office to pick up a tardy slip and then transition to his/her class. If you must come into the Office, please utilize the hand sanitizer at the door.

**We ask that any parent/family member/care-giver meeting a child at dismissal wait outside the School building.**

Dismissal remains at 3:30pm. Pick-up time is from 3:30pm – 3:45pm.

First Grade – Eighth Grade students will line up by class on the bricks and in the front foyer.

Early Childhood and Kindergarten classes will be placed into cars on the east side of the gymnasium.

At 3:45pm, all remaining students are taken to OHES Extended Day. Extended Day begins at 3:30pm and goes until 5:30pm. OHES Extended Day fees begin accruing at 4:00pm. There is no charge between 3:30pm and 4:00pm.

When picking up a child after 4:00pm, parents/care-givers should call the relevant Extended Day cell phone number:

Lower School Extended Day: (580) 220-0276

Upper School Extended Day: (580) 220-7637

## **b. Cleaning and Disinfecting**

All classrooms, common spaces, restrooms, and hallways are treated daily with sterilization devices. This process is done when the spaces are not being used in order to ensure safety. High touch surfaces (door handles, sink handles, light switches, etc.) are disinfected daily.

Industrial strength cleaning supplies are stored in locations unavailable to students. Classroom teachers are responsible for the safe storage of cleaning products in the classrooms.

## **c. Shared Objects**

The use of shared objects (e.g., physical education equipment, art supplies, toys, and games) remain minimized, and when possible, used on a rotational basis, or cleaned between uses.

Each student's belongings are kept separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, lockers, or other areas. Wherever possible, school supplies (i.e. pencils, pens, markers,



crayons, and scissors, etc.) are not shared among students. Each student should have his or her own container of supplies.

We continue to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student their own supplies and equipment). Where possible, we limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of children at a time, and clean, store, and disinfect between use. This includes desktop computers, toys, books, games, and learning resources.

#### **d. Ventilation**

OHES ensures that our ventilation systems operate properly. We encourage increased circulation of outdoor air as much as possible (e.g., opening windows). We do NOT open doors when doing so poses a safety or health risk to children and staff.

#### **e. Water Systems**

Filtered water-bottle filling stations remain in use, and direct-to-mouth drinking fountains continue to be turned off. **There is no change in the requirement for students to bring their own refillable water bottle each day.** Water bottles may not be shared. Please make sure bottles are clearly marked with the student's name. Bottles found that are not identifiable will be thrown away.

#### **f. Modified Classroom Layouts and Guides**

Seating and desks continue to be spaced as close to three (3) feet apart as feasible in all classrooms and during small school gatherings. Wherever possible, desks face the same direction (rather than facing each other). As practical, when/if tables are used, students will sit on only one side and be spaced apart.

#### **g. Playground Equipment**

Outdoor time playing and socializing is very important. Given the difficulty of social distancing when playing games, we stagger use of the space by grade or classroom. Hand washing and/or hand sanitizing is required both before and after use of the playground equipment. Each class has its own set of balls for use at recess. Teachers may require students to practice distancing on the playground by spreading out and rotating use of equipment.

#### **h. Lunch and Snacks**

OHES offers a prepared lunch through the cafeteria. Students and employees may opt to order daily lunches, or to bring their own lunch and snacks. Sharing of food, drink, or utensils is strictly prohibited.

Classes are designated to eat lunch in the cafeteria or classrooms, or weather permitting, outside. Cafeteria lunches are provided in disposable containers, along with disposable cutlery.

The requirement for students in all grades to provide their own snacks remains ongoing. Parents are not asked to provide a snack for an entire class. As you prepare snacks of choice for your

child, it is essential that you take into account allergies of other students. If you are unsure of this information, please contact your child's class teacher.

#### **i. Students without Food/Snacks**

The School's policy is that parents of students who come to school without food for lunch are contacted and asked to bring food to School for the child. If this is not possible, OHES will provide a cafeteria lunch. If a student has five unpaid lunches, a meal of cheese crackers and fruit will be provided. Parents will be billed accordingly.

Prior to COVID-19, we enjoyed the open invitation for family members to visit and have lunch with their child(ren). Often these visits include bringing food for the child's entire class, especially when celebrating a birthday or special occasion. However, for the time being we are continuing to minimize potential exposure from outside guests/visitors, and family participation in these opportunities remains suspended. You can still make plans with your child's teacher to drop off snacks/treats for an occasion.

### **VI. Maintaining Healthy Campus Operations**

OHES continues to implement several strategies to maintain healthy campus operations.

#### **a. Regulatory Awareness**

OHES maintains active awareness of local and/or state regulatory agency policies and recommendations related to group gatherings, to determine if events can be held safely. These include Alumni Day, Grandparents' & Special Friends' Day, Chili Cook Off & Fall Festival, Christmas and End-of-Year Programs, and our annual Dinner Theatre.

#### **b. Assemblies, Guests, and Field Trips**

Many all-school, large-group assemblies (such as school-wide events and chapel services) will continue to be either deferred or reconfigured. As needed, we have limited the size of other gatherings as well. Non-essential people entering the building continues to be kept to an absolute minimum. Should someone need to enter the building they should go directly to the Office. Field trips that are not practical, in terms of limiting the spread or exposure to COVID-19, will not be scheduled.

**Parents/family members are discouraged from coming into the school building unless it is for a scheduled meeting, an unavoidable event, or in case of an emergency. This includes drop-off and pick-up times, as well as lunch periods.**

#### **c. Classes and Groups**

As feasible, our class structure and schedule keeps student and staff groupings as static as possible. OHES has always promoted vertical interaction and mixing classes, but for the time being some of these practices remain suspended.

#### **d. Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact**

The Headmaster, Dr. Ken Willy, is the School's COVID-19 Point of Contact. All concerns, questions, or feedback related to our response to COVID-19 should be directed to him.

#### **e. Communication**

Consistent with applicable law and privacy policies, and in accordance with health information sharing regulations for COVID-19, employees and families should self-report to the School if they or their student have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 10 days. In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, OHES will notify local health officials, staff, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). People who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 are required to follow the School's protocols explained in Section IV, Part c. of this document.

#### **f. Staff Training**

All employees have been trained in all safety protocols. These include hand washing, use and storage of cleaning products, and class setup for social distancing.

#### **g. Recognizing Signs and Symptoms**

When feasible, and at any time, OHES may conduct daily health checks (e.g., temperature screening and/or symptom checking) of employees and students. Health checks will be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations.

#### **h. Local Business and Community Partners, and Use of Our Facilities**

OHES is honored to have established partnerships with local organizations (e.g., Boys Scouts, Noble Research Institute, YMCA, etc.). At this stage, use of indoor spaces remains suspended. The hosting of outdoor sports practices will continue to take place with team members/parents completing the requisite waiver, including a section specific to COVID-19.

### **VII. When/If Someone Gets Sick on Campus**

OHES is implementing several strategies to prepare for when someone gets sick. Guidelines for these occasions are included in the "Promoting Behaviors that Reduce the Spread of COVID-19" section of this document.

Employees and students should not come to School if they are exhibiting any of the symptoms outlined in Section III, and the Headmaster should be notified if an employee or child exhibits COVID-19 symptoms, tests positive for COVID-19, or has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case.

If a student or member of staff exhibits symptoms associated with COVID-19 during the school day, the following protocol will be followed:

- The person will be immediately separated from his/her group or class;
- The person is brought/sent to the Office where s/he is isolated;
- Symptoms are recorded;
- In the case of a staff member, they are to leave the School immediately; and,
- In the case of a student, the parent is called to come and pick-up the student immediately.

If the severity of the case is deemed to warrant it, and an ambulance needs to be called to transport a sick person, then the attending healthcare professionals will be informed that they may be dealing with a COVID-19 case.

CDC/Health Department guidelines will be followed in regard to students and teachers who have had close contact with a person exhibiting symptoms associated with COVID-19.

#### **a. Cleaning and Disinfecting**

Areas used by the sick person are closed off and will not be used until cleaned and disinfected.

#### **b. Notification of Health Officials and Close Contacts**

In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, OHES will notify local health officials, employees, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). People who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 are required to follow the School's protocols explained in Section IV, Part c.

### **VIII. Moving to Distance and/or Blended Learning**

Unfortunately, there may be times during the school year due to acute or widespread COVID-19 outbreaks when School operations need to shift to completely distanced or a blend of distance and in-person classes. Examples of such situations include:

- Directions by local, state, or federal officials to close school campuses;
- An outbreak in a class that requires the grade level, or grade levels, to stay at home based on the guidance in this document; and,
- A decision by the School leadership and the Board of Trustees to move to distance or blended classes out of an abundance of caution.

OHES has implemented the following steps to provide an engaging experience during a potential distance or blended learning environment.

#### **a. Distance vs. Blended Learning**

For the purposes of this guide, distance learning refers to moving all students and teachers to a completely online platform for teaching and learning. Distance learning is the mode used when/if

the physical campus is closed. Blended learning refers to a combination of distance and onsite learning. This most likely occurs when/if a segment of our student population is unable to attend classes on campus for a period of time. Thus, the need for the School to serve both the physical campus and the digital campus.

#### **b. Access to Technology**

If the school needs to implement either a distance or blended experience, all affected students, regardless of age, will have access to School issued iPads for their use. Students may also use an appropriate personal/family device. Class teachers, supported by the technology department, are responsible for issuing and collecting all School-owned technology provided to students. If a family does not need the school owned equipment to support distance or blended learning, that family should speak with the class teacher.

#### **c. Zoom**

All teachers are set up with a Zoom account for their students. Each student, and their parents/guardians, will be provided with individual teacher's PMI and password. To minimize disruption to Zoom sessions, it is very important that you and your child do not to give PMI or password information to anyone not in the same class.

#### **d. Emergency COVID-19 Student Kits**

Each teacher has created an emergency COVID-19 student kit for each student – to be used in case of blended and distance learning conditions. The contents of the kit will vary by grade level and student need. The purpose of the kit is to provide as many items as possible to aid in student learning during such a period of time. Examples of items that may be in kits include extra copies of books, workbooks, readers, and basic school supplies.

#### **e. Distance Learning Schedules/Operations**

In the event that the campus is closed and we need to move to a completely distance learning platform, the following guiding principles will be used in the creation of learning schedules and adjusted operations:

- Whole class instruction, discussion, feedback, and check-ins are important and support our relationship-based approach to learning. Teachers will check in with the whole class using the video conferencing technology (Zoom). One-on-one personalized guidance is also a critical piece to our program. Teachers will also set-up live help sessions using the same video conferencing interface as with the whole class;
- All video sessions are available to both students and parents/guardians. This helps families partner better with us while providing support at home;
- All video conferencing sessions will be done in a safe and appropriate manner. We will utilize safe practices at all times. This includes being professionally dressed, professionally presentable, and holding sessions in a public setting in one's home. Video sessions should not be done in a person's bedroom, bathroom, or another space that presents a challenge with potential professional boundary issues;

- Traditional testing and grading techniques may be adjusted as necessary to best address the needs of the class; and,
- Video sessions may be recorded in order to preserve a record or support the needs of students who benefit from the ability to re-watch a session. Behavioral expectations during online classes is the same as “in-person” classes. Students and teachers are expected to communicate in a way that demonstrates the Great Expectations’ Eight Expectations for Living, and also shows we are a community of faith and learning that strives to live into our Baptismal Covenant.

#### **f. Blended Learning Schedules/Operations**

In the event that a grade or segment of our School community needs to begin using a blended learning platform, the following guiding principles will be used in the creation of learning schedules and adjusted operations. The principles outlined in our distance learning plan remain. Depending on the situation, blended learning can look very different.

- If a whole class needs to move to a blended learning platform, the experience will closely resemble the online experience described above.
- If part of a class (individual student, etc.) needs to move to a blended experience, the teacher will arrange a schedule to connect with the blended learners based on his/her availability during the school day and/or after regular school hours.
- We do not plan to record in-person classes to post online. Rather, and in keeping with our commitment to a more personalized approach, the blended learner will be supported separately and in a manner that takes that individual’s needs into consideration first.
- There may be times when a blended learner interfaces in real time using live video conferencing in order to facilitate a unique need. Such instances will be arranged in advance between the teacher, student, and family.

#### **g. Attendance & Expectations**

Unless sick, students are expected to be logged on Zoom for the correct class at the correct time. Attendance at on-line classes is recorded.

- Attendance is taken. Children should login to Zoom on time for classes. Students who arrive late to class may be required to make it up at another time. Some subjects may require the use of different PMIs and Passwords.
- Zoom logins should show the real name of each child. Monikers should not be used. As teachers recognize students, they will be admitted from the waiting room into the class;
- No green screens or virtual backgrounds should be used;
- Students should be appropriately dressed for “school”. Students should not wear pajamas for class. We are not requiring uniforms, but unless a specific teacher requests it, accessories, toys, and clothing, which may be distracting, should be avoided. Pets are beloved members of our families, but they too can be distracting to your child and to others when on camera;
- Students should try to use a dedicated “work” area, with space for books, papers, pens, and other materials. Students should not be sitting on their beds or lying on the floor;

- Unless expressly given permission by the teacher of the Zoom class, snacking should be avoided. As in the classroom, a water bottle is permissible;
- With the understanding that depending on the device being used, it may be difficult to see everyone, your teacher wants to see faces. It is therefore important the students remain on camera with the teacher throughout the lesson;
- The teacher should be able to direct the lessons, give directions, demonstrate on the Zoom whiteboard or from his/her device, and control the mute function, without interruption or interference from students;
- Students should not chat or in other ways communicate privately with other class members during class; and,
- All student interactions (video, audio, chat) with the teacher and other students must remain respectful.

### **IX. Future Changes**

The School's response to the COVID-19 pandemic remains a work in progress. The Task Force will continue to review information, guidelines, and recommendations, regarding the virus, and report to the Board on a regular basis. Any future changes to our policies will continue to be made by the Board of Trustees, in the best interest of the students and the School.