The health and safety of our students and staff is our top priority. This handbook lays out the health and safety layers of protection we will employ on campus to limit the spread of COVID-19. Thank you for your partnership to keep our campuses safe and open! If you have any questions, please reach out to your designated campus COVID lead or principal.
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Re-opening Our Campuses

We remain committed to protecting the health and safety of our Rocketeers, families, staff, and community while also providing our Rocketeers with the excellent learning experience that they deserve.

We have been consulting with national and local public health professionals, reviewing guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), evaluating how school systems in other countries have successfully reopened, and collaborating with our teachers, staff, parents, and network leaders. Our on-campus learning and safety protocols represent what we believe is the best approach possible given the extraordinary crisis we are facing. There is no perfect plan for an unprecedented crisis and we will need to continue adapting our approach as new evidence and updated guidelines from health authorities are shared. But if we all work together and support each other, the 2020-21 school year will be another year full of learning, growth, joy, community, and progress in our fight for social justice and educational equity.
On-Campus Learning in COVID

Layers of Protection

The new health and safety measures described below create multiple layers of protection on our campus. We understand that we can not expect young children to comply with all of these measures 100% of the time. By creating multiple layers of protection, our students and staff will still be well-protected against COVID even if a single measure described below is not adhered to by all students all of the time. In other words, parents should not worry if they see a student occasionally remove their mask on campus or notice students once in a while not physical distancing when playing together at recess.

Furthermore, following our guidelines, if a staff member has to quarantine or a cohort needs to close, that means that our systems are working. This means that we are containing any cases within small groups and not letting them spread further into our school, allowing the rest of the school to continue learning. In our small student groups, there are multiple precautions that make it less likely for a virus to spread within a group. By using multiple layers of protection we can continue to create a positive, joyful learning environment while still protecting the health and safety of our community.

Health and Safety Protocols on Rocketship Campuses

Stay at Home Requirements

Each and every person in our school community - students, staff, parents - will play a vital role in helping reduce transmission risk at school. Therefore, we need every Rocketeer family to carefully monitor their own health and the health of their Rocketeer.

We ask that you stay at home when exhibiting any of the following symptoms of COVID-19:
- Fever (100.0 or above)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Headache
- Loss of taste or smell
Symptoms of COVID-19

Keep your child home if they’re experiencing any of the following:

- FEVER
- COUGH OR SHORTNESS OF BREATH
- SORE THROAT
- RUNNY NOSE
- DIARRHEA
- VOMITING
- HEADACHE
- LOSS OF TASTE OR SMELL

In addition, if a person has been in direct contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, they will be required to stay home until they are cleared to return to campus. Rocketeers who are temporarily staying home for health reasons or due to exposure to COVID-19 will be able to attend distance learning during their entire time away from school.

Daily Health Screening

Upon arrival, all staff and students/parents will be screened for any COVID symptoms or risks. Screenings will take place while Rocketeers remain in their car and/or with their guardian. Rocketship staff conducting the health screening will be wearing gloves, a face mask, and a face shield.

Our screening process includes:
1. Contactless temperature check (must be below 100.0 degrees to enter)
2. Mask check (if a student is not wearing a mask a disposable mask will be provided).
   A brief survey:
   - “Have you (has your child) experienced any of the following symptoms in the past two weeks: fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose, diarrhea, vomiting, headache, or loss of taste or smell?” (must answer “no” to enter)
   - “Have you (has your child) been in contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID” (must answer “no” to enter)
3. Hand sanitization
Mandatory Mask Wearing

Health authorities are emphasizing that face coverings are an effective way of preventing virus spread. All students grades K-5 are required to wear a mask. Rocketeers will have the opportunity to remove their masks during “mask breaks” when sitting at their desk during lessons and during their lunch period, as desks will be physically distanced from other students and staff. We will make appropriate accommodations for students with respiratory or sensory processing issues. It is critical that staff and students make every effort to sanitize hands before and after touching masks.

All staff are required to wear a mask as well and can choose to change to a transparent face shield while in front of their own classroom, physically distanced from students. Parents and guardians will also be required to wear a mask at arrival and dismissal. Rocketship will provide a pack of five reusable cloth masks to staff and students at the start of the year. This specific mask is not part of our uniform requirement -- students and staff can wear their own mask instead if they prefer. We will also have disposable masks available if your student forgets their mask.

Hand Washing & Sanitizing

Hand washing with soap and water for 20 seconds is preferred whenever possible. To supplement regular hand washing, students will also use hand sanitizer throughout the day. We will be teaching and reminding our Rocketeers about proper hand hygiene and building hand hygiene breaks into our normal school day routine. Hand washing or hand sanitizing will be prioritized when students enter the building, any time they enter a classroom, any time they exit a classroom, before and after breakfast, before and after lunch, after all bathroom breaks, after P.E. class, after recess and before putting on or removing their face mask. Practicing good hand hygiene is a simple yet effective way to prevent infection. Please reinforce these habits with your Rocketeer at home.
Physical Distancing

We will be practicing physical distancing across our campus to ensure all students and staff are keeping a safe distance from each other to help limit the spread of coronavirus. This practice is also called social distancing but we want to emphasize physical separation that does not limit our ability for healthy and safe social interactions on campus.

Supporting our students’ social and emotional development is an essential component of our education model that we will continue to emphasize in the school year ahead. To promote physical distancing on campus, we will be placing appropriately spaced floor stickers in all classrooms, hallways, entryways, and other spaces where people typically gather. Student desks will be appropriately spaced apart in all classrooms. And we will have signage posted in prominent locations throughout the school to remind students and staff to always practice physical distancing.

Establishing Stable Cohorts of Students

One of the key layers of protection we will use on all campuses is to put Rocketeers into small, stable cohorts of students. Small cohorts help to limit risk, exposure, and possible viral spread within schools. By keeping students in small groups of the same students each day, we minimize the number of people each person interacts with, thus containing any exposure or viral transmission in that group. This helps to protect the rest of the school community.

Students will remain in the same classroom with the same group of classmates and the same teaching staff during the school day. Each student will have one desk only used by him/her for their time on campus. This means students will no longer rotate to different classrooms during the school day. They will also eat lunch in their classroom. Our Humanities, STEM, Learning Lab, and Enrichment teachers will rotate into classrooms.
Recess and Physical Education

Physical education and recess are essential to healthy child development. We will continue to provide both recess and physical education this school year with a few modifications. We will create large “play circles” that our stable cohort classes are required to remain within during P.E. and recess. Play structures will be closed until further notice and use of any play equipment will require supervisor approval first.

Campus Cleaning

According to the CDC, the primary mode of transmission for COVID-19 is through close contact from person-to-person. While much less likely to occur, it may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own face. To reduce the risk of surface-based transmission, we dramatically increased our campus disinfecting protocols this year. We are using a tabletop disinfectant that is safe for kids and eating surfaces while killing the COVID germs in 90 second. Every evening after school, we will disinfect our entire campus. During the school day, all “high-touch” areas will be disinfected at least twice per day. High-touch areas include: door handles, bathroom faucets, light switches, railings, table surfaces, etc. We are training all teachers on how to effectively disinfect their classroom and what areas require regular disinfecting during the school day. Students will wipe down desk surfaces before and after eating. We are investing in an advanced new “electrostatic sprayer” system that disinfects all surfaces more thoroughly and efficiently than manual spraying and wiping.

Student Materials

We will also work to ensure that very few materials are used by multiple students, given that there is some opportunity to share the virus this way. Any time materials do need to be used by more than one student, they will be disinfected between students. Each classroom will have a book bin used as a holding place for used books for 24 hours before another student can use them. A bin labeled “Items to be Sanitized” will hold items (other than books) that need to be disinfected (sprayed with disinfectant and wiped with a paper towel (with one new towel per item to avoid spreading virus from item to item) OR sprayed with the electrostatic sprayer before others can use them. Furthermore, each student has their own bin/pencil box for class materials, which is labeled and only used by that student.
Ventilation and HVAC

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "there are straightforward steps that can be taken to reduce potential airborne transmission of COVID-19... The layout and design of a building, as well as occupancy and type of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system, can all impact potential airborne spread of the virus." Each of our Rocketship campuses has air filtration systems that we have added extra layers of protection to before allowing students back onto campus. Each campus’ HVAC system has new air filters that follow EPA recommendations to help stop the spread of COVID-19. We are also using freestanding air purifiers where appropriate to further purify the air. We also encourage staff to open windows to promote air flow when it is possible and makes sense.

Dismissal

In order to limit the number of people on campus, all dismissal will be held indoors in classrooms. We will use car line pick-up only unless there are extenuating circumstances, as car lines support physical distancing and separation between families. Parents will indicate on orientation documentation if they do not have access to a vehicle and need to walk for pick up. Walker cards will only be given to families who do not have the option to drive. Staff will monitor hallways to ensure the “safe” flow of students to their cars and to make sure students go straight to the dismissal area without mingling with other students. In the dismissal area, students will line up 6 feet apart (marked on ground).

For late pick-ups, parents will not enter the school. When a parent arrives with their dismissal card, a staff member will alert staff to send the child to the front.

Monitoring

The majority of students who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms will not likely have COVID-19 but rather a normal cold or flu. Nonetheless, we have to carefully manage any possible risk of transmission on campus. We have developed a detailed protocol for responding to any COVID-19 diagnoses, symptoms, and possible exposure among our students and staff. We have established clear requirements for when individuals at risk of COVID-19 are cleared to return to campus. If any student or staff member was exposed to a positive case or tests positive themselves for COVID-19, we will notify all families who shared a space with the impacted individual during the last seven days. Students with symptoms or risk factors waiting to be cleared to return to school will be fully supported to continue to participate in distance learning from home.
Protocol for Positive COVID-19 Case on Campus

One of our key strategies for reducing COVID transmission risk is monitoring COVID diagnoses, symptoms, and exposure, and having the impacted people stay home until they are “cleared” to return. However, we can not completely eliminate the risk of someone unknowingly bringing COVID-19 into our schools, so have a robust protocol for what to do if there is a positive case on campus. This protocol includes:

- Close partnership with local Public Health agencies
- Immediate contract tracing to determine who has been in close contact with the infected individual.
- Alerting all staff and/or students who may have been in close contact with the infected individual.
- Alerting the school community that there was a positive case on campus.
- Infected individual will quarantine at home for at least 10 days (students can do distance learning during this time). Per public health guidelines, the individual cannot return to campus until at least 10 days have passed, their symptoms have improved, and they are fever-free for at least 72 hours. We will also ask them to submit evidence of a negative COVID test.
- Fully cleaning all places the infected person has been with additional layers of sanitization.

Learning Under Quarantine

If your Rocketeer is directed to stay at home and quarantine, they will be able to access a full day of distance learning, if they are able. Similar to our distance learning program before campuses reopened, students will participate in daily live lessons, work on personalized learning programs, and receive small group instruction.

Communications

We know that in this unprecedented time, timely information and transparency is more important than ever. You can expect to receive communication from your school in the following situations:

Symptoms of COVID-19
- If your child has symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

Exposure
- If your child was exposed to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 (direct exposure).
- If your child was in close contact with (in the same cohort as) someone who was exposed to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 (secondary exposure).

‘Presumed Positive’ Case
- If your child has a ‘presumed positive’ case of COVID-19. This means that even though the diagnosis has not yet been confirmed, there is enough reason to believe your child may likely be positive, so we will operate as if they are until proven otherwise, out of an abundance of caution.
- If your child was in close contact with (in the same cohort as) someone who has a ‘presumed positive’ case of COVID-19. This includes students or staff.
- If there is a ‘presumed positive’ case of COVID-19 on campus in any student or staff member.
COVID Lead

Each Rocketship school has a designated ‘COVID Lead.’ This staff member has been extensively trained on all content in this guide, as well as additional health and safety protocols. This staff member is responsible for monitoring COVID diagnoses, symptoms, and exposure, and having the impacted people stay home until they are “cleared” to return. Each school’s COVID Lead coordinates this work at the school level, with the support of the Rocketship network team. This staff member will be on-campus every day the campus is open. Reach out to your principal for more information about who is the COVID Lead at your campus.