

SCHOOL HEALTH and SAFETY OPERATIONS 2021-2022

Effective Date 7-23-2021

The 2021-2022 school year for Advantage Academy (AA) will begin with continued adherence to CDC and TEA guidelines for operating a safe school environment. Regulations for health are the most important priorities for the continued safety of AA students, staff and visitors. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Texas Education Agency have provided updated safety guidelines for the new school year. All guidelines and regulations are aligned to data-driven medical guidance provided by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as other medical and scientific personnel. For the health and safety of students, school staff, parents and visitors, Advantage Academy will adhere to the guidance provided by the organizations listed.

Given the crucial services schools offer and the benefits of in-person learning, it is critical for K–12 schools to open and remain open for in-person instruction, as safely as possible. Safe in-person instruction gives students access to critical social and mental health services that prepare them for the future, in addition to the education they need to succeed. Schools should be the last settings to close because of COVID-19 and the first to reopen when they can do so safely. Working together, school officials and community members can take actions to keep schools open for in-person learning by protecting students, school staff, parents and visitors where they live, work, learn and play.

The following updated guidelines provide the evidence-based roadmap to help Advantage Academy open safely and remain open for in-person instruction. To the extent possible, guideline application will be directed by what is feasible and practical. Adjustments to meet unique needs and/or circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis and determined in collaboration with state and local health officials.

TEACHERS / STAFF shall adhere to the following:

- If you run a fever of *100° Fahrenheit (37.8° Celsius) or higher* or do not feel well, stay home and consult your doctor.
- Stay 3ft from other adults and students.
- Wash hands regularly and use hand sanitizer.

Following the school's Health and Safety Protocol, teachers and staff who arrive at school experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should not enter the school. The campus nurse can be contacted to provide non-entry testing. Staff experiencing symptoms during the school day will be excluded and required to be tested for COVID-19 before returning to school.

NOTICE: If the campus nurse performs a "Rapid Test" and the test indicates a NEGATIVE result, but the individual is showing symptoms of concern, a PCR may be required for conformation.

STUDENTS shall adhere to the following:

- If you run a fever of *100° Fahrenheit (37.8° Celsius) or higher* or do not feel well, stay home and consult your doctor.
- Temperature scans will occur upon arrival to campus.
- Stay 3ft from other students and adults.
- Wash hands regularly and use hand sanitizer

Following the schools Health and Safety Protocol, students who arrive at school with a fever and/or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or other serious illness will be sent to the nurse's office for an assessment.

NOTICE: If the campus nurse performs a "Rapid Test" and the test indicates a NEGATIVE result, but the individual is showing symptoms of concern, a PCR may be required for conformation.

PARENTS / VISITORS shall adhere to the following:

- If you run a fever of *100° Fahrenheit (37.8° Celsius) or higher* or do not feel well, consult your doctor. Do not visit the school.
- Stay 3ft from other adults and students.
- Wash hands regularly and use hand sanitizer.

Following the school's Health and Safety Protocol, parents/visitors who arrive at school experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or other serious illness will not be allowed to enter the school or conduct school business.

VACCINES

Vaccines are an important tool to help stop the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of ongoing efforts to reopen K–12 schools, the President directed all states to prioritize K–12 teachers, school staff and childcare workers for COVID-19 and he challenged states to give these educators their first shots by the end of March. CDC is taking a leading role in helping to achieve the President's goal through its Federal Retail Pharmacy Program, which has over 9,000 participating pharmacies nationwide prioritizing K-12 teachers, school staff and childcare workers vaccinations.

FACE COVERINGS*

The CDC continues to recommend universal mask wearing for everyone. However, wearing of a face covering is recommended but **NOT REQUIRED** by the school.

- In common areas, such as school cafeterias, lobbies and auditoriums.
- During activities when increased exhalation occurs, such as singing, sports, or exercise. These activities should be moved outdoors or to large, well-ventilated spaces whenever possible.
- In community settings outside of the classroom.
- Parents are responsible for providing their child with face coverings (for those who choose to wear a covering.) The school will provide a replacement should the one provided by the parent become lost or unusable during the school day.

***School staff will be provided face coverings by the school (for those who choose to wear a covering)**

***Additional protective equipment will be provided to school nurses/nurse aides and custodians**

RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread from person to person through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or can possibly be inhaled in the lungs. The spread of the virus is more likely when people are in close contact for an extended period.

People are thought to be contagious up to two (2) days before symptoms begin and are most contagious when they are actively sick. It may be possible to become infected with COVID-19 by touching a surface that has the virus on it and then touching your mouth or nose, but this is not thought to be unlikely.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website provides the latest information about COVID-19 transmission: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html.

- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
- Used tissues should be thrown in the trash.
- Wash hands immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

The CDC continues to recommend physical distancing for everyone. The following K–12 school guidance reflects the latest science on physical distancing in the classroom. Student desk/tables will be placed three (3) feet apart. It is recommended that students maintain a distance of at least three (3) feet from other students in classroom settings.

- In elementary schools, CDC recommends all students remain at least 3 feet apart in classrooms regardless of whether community transmission is low, moderate, substantial or high.
- In middle and high schools, CDC recommends students should be at least 3 feet apart in classrooms and in communities where transmission is low, moderate or substantial.
- Middle school students and high school students should be at least 6 feet apart in communities where transmission is high. This recommendation is because COVID-19 transmission dynamics are different in older students - that is, they are more likely to be exposed to SARS-CoV-2 and spread it than younger children.

HANDWASHING / SANITIZING

It is recommended that all individuals wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and as frequently as possible or use hand sanitizer consisting of at least 60% alcohol.

- Hand sanitizer will be available at the main entry to the campus, in each classroom, in the cafeteria and in all common areas throughout the campuses.
- Paper towels will be provided near all doors to use for all high-touch areas.
- Staff and students will be expected to frequently wash or sanitize their hands.
- Teachers/Staff shall provide periodic hand washing reminders during the school day.
- Hand sanitizer will be available on all school buses.

Campus Principals may implement additional handwashing times and the use of hand sanitizer based on the needs on their campus

CLEANING and DISINFECTING (facilities)

Frequent cleaning and proper disinfection following CDC recommendations will support a healthy and safe environment for students, staff, parents and visitors.

Daily Campus Cleaning and Disinfecting:

- Restrooms, hallways, high-touch, common and general assembly areas and will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day.
- Custodians will be expected to wear PPE (safety glasses and gloves) during work hours.
- Cafeterias will be disinfected between lunch periods.
- Teachers/Staff will have access to disinfectant solutions for use on high-touch working surfaces and shared objects (such as light switches, handrails and doorknobs/handles).
- Students will have access to disinfecting items to sanitize working surfaces, shared objects and high-touch areas after use.

- The use of shared supplies should be limited when possible.
- Teachers/Staff should contact the custodian if their classroom requires additional cleaning or disinfecting.

Nightly Campus Cleaning and Disinfecting:

- Classrooms will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- All classroom desks, tables and chairs will be cleaned and disinfected.
- All high-touch areas such as light switches, handrails and doorknobs/handles will be cleaned and disinfected.
- Personal items should be removed from desks and tables to facilitate thorough cleaning and disinfecting.

Restrooms:

- Increased cleaning and disinfecting will occur throughout the school day by school custodial staff.
- High-touch surfaces will receive frequent disinfecting per CDC guidance.
- Soap and hand sanitizing solution shall be frequently refilled as is necessary throughout the school day.
- Custodial staff should be contacted if a restroom needs additional cleaning or disinfecting.

Nurses Office:

- The nurses' office will be sanitized after use by a student or adult with fever, COVID symptoms or any other serious illness.

Confirmed COVID-19 Case:

- Affected classroom/area will be closed-off immediately for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Affected classroom/area will not be available for use until a minimum of 24 hours has passed *after cleaning/disinfecting has taken place.*
- Custodial staff will use electrostatic misting sprayers in addition to wiping down all surfaces to complete cleaning/disinfecting of the affected classroom/area.
- Custodial staff will use CDC recommended disinfectant for use on the virus that causes COVID-19.

GATHERING LIMITS*

Students, staff and visitors will be discouraged from congregating in any area of the school inside or outside in large groups regardless of the activity. The plan does not list specific measures for gathering limits, however, limit requirements may be implemented for health and safety reasons as required. Reasonable physical distancing should be maintained; students three (3) feet from other students and adults; and staff and visitors three (3) feet from other adults and students. Groups should maintain separation in indoor and outdoor settings to the maximum extent possible. Physical barriers are not required. High-touch surfaces (e.g., desks, doorknobs) should be sanitized before and after each large gathering.

***Wearing of a face covering is recommended but *NOT REQUIRED* when congregating**

CAMPUS DAILY ROUTINES

Teachers/Staff:

- Teachers/Staff may be required to perform arrival/drop-off/morning (temperature checks) or dismissal/pick-up afternoon duties to help supervise students as they come and go from school.
- Teachers/Staff must always ensure that students are reasonably maintaining physical distancing, inside and outside the classroom.
- High-touch surfaces (e.g., desks, doorknobs, teaching aides) should be sanitized after each class.
- Teachers shall be stationed outside their classroom door during transitions to provide adequate supervision of the hallways.
- To limit the number of students in the hallways during dismissal, teachers may be required to release their students utilizing a staggered method. Check with your campus for requirements.

Students:

- Upon arrival to the campus and prior to entry, students will have their temperature scanned.
- Students will follow physical distancing guidelines to the greatest extent possible.
- Students should wash/sanitize hands upon arrival to school and before dismissal.
- Students may be assigned to report to a specific area and will be expected to adhere to schedules for morning arrival.
- To the extent possible, students' classroom seating (desk and tables) will be arranged to meet the updated distancing recommendation of three (3) feet.
- Students can utilize the restroom, but must observe occupancy limits (no more than 3 students at one time). Students must reasonably maintain physical distancing while in the restroom and must wash their hands before exiting.
- After recess, students in grades PreK-5 should wash their hands or be provided hand sanitizer before returning to the classroom.

Parents:

- Parents are responsible for daily monitoring of their child(ren) for symptoms of COVID 19 or other illnesses. ***Children with a fever of 100° Fahrenheit (37.8° Celsius) or higher, symptoms or other serious illnesses should not be sent to school.***
- Parents are required to provide face coverings for their child (for those who choose to wear a covering.) The school will provide a replacement should the students become lost or unusable during the school day.
- Parents are encouraged to talk with their child about the health benefits of maintaining physical distancing and washing/sanitizing their hands while at school.
- Parents should encourage their child(ren) to follow all health and safety instructions given by the school for their safety and the safety of others.

Improve Ventilation: When possible, windows and doors will be opened to improve ventilation. Outdoor learning will be considered when feasible. Maintenance contracts require that ventilation filters are changed every 3 months.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities will receive needed accommodations to ensure their safety while they are on campus or attending school related/sanctioned events. In the event of COVID related symptoms or other serious illness, students with disabilities will continue to receive their individual plan accommodations as indicated and outlined by the State.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES*

According to CDC guidance, students and adults are less likely to be exposed to COVID-19 during outdoor activities, even without the use of masks. When outdoors, students can have lunch, take part in physical education, recess or have classes without wearing masks or observing strict physical distancing. Students will be encouraged to observe distancing, especially if participating in higher respiration activities (i.e., singing, exercise or sports) or seated/gathered together (i.e., outdoor class or lunch).

***Wearing of a face covering is *NOT RECOMMENDED* for outdoor activities**

ATHLETICS and OTHER ACTIVITIES*

If approved for athletic activities, the school will follow the most current guidelines available.

- Coaches will provide an orientation of health and safety protocols and expectations for athletes at the beginning of their respective season(s).
- Practice uniforms will be laundered at home by the athlete. Game uniforms will be laundered at the campus by the coaching staff.
- Equipment used during practices will be sanitized frequently.
- Athletic areas (meeting and locker rooms) will be disinfected during the week with an electrostatic misting sprayer.
- Athletes should bring their own reusable water bottle; water bottles must be clearly marked with athletes name; sharing of water will not be allowed; and athletes are expected to take water bottles home to be cleaned on a daily basis.
- Parents must provide timely notification of any health concerns to the coach and campus nurse. Proper protocols including (communication, quarantine, exclusion and disinfecting) will be followed in the event of fever, COVID symptoms or any other serious illness.

***Wearing of a face covering is *NOT RECOMMENDED* for athletic activities**

Fine Arts/Clubs:

If approved for activities, the school will follow the most current guidelines available.

- Club meetings may be held virtually to minimize exposure.
- Performances will be streamed online when possible.
- Performances may be adjusted based on health and safety guidelines provided by an authorized entity and approved by the school (e.g. CDC, TEA etc.) including but not limited to number of attendees.
- Off-campus performances will only be conducted if specific guidance is provided by an authorized entity and approved by the school (e.g. CDC, TEA etc.) including but not limited to transportation procedures.

FOOD SERVICE

Hand sanitizing will be reinforced per protocol and teachers/staff will monitor the cafeteria and hallways to reasonably maintain physical distancing. Based on building capacity and student enrollment, campus administration will determine areas that may be utilized or designated for breakfast and lunch.

Microwaves may be used to heat student meals. The following will be observed in all cafeterias or other areas where food is consumed:

- Students' going to lunch will follow the updated physical distancing guidelines as they are escorted to the cafeteria.

- Students will report to the cafeteria and wash their hands before picking up their breakfast or lunch.
- Congregating will be allowed on a small scale. The size of groups will follow gathering limits and physical distancing measures.
- Visitors will not be allowed in the cafeteria during meal times until further notice.

TRANSPORTATION*

Advantage Academy transportation will continue to take precautionary measures during the 2021-22 school year as necessary by providing the following safety measures:

- All buses will be sanitized and disinfected prior to the start of the new school year.
- High-touch surfaces such as bus seats, steering wheels, knobs and stairway handrail will be disinfected after each bus run.
- School bus drivers, will spray and wipe down seats and high-touch items with disinfecting spray.
- Electrostatic misting sprayers will be used on all bus interiors at least twice monthly or as necessary. Volume of bus use will determine deep cleaning/disinfecting schedule.
- Students will use hand sanitizer upon boarding the bus. Students should follow physical distancing measures while waiting for the bus and during loading.

***Wearing of a face covering is recommended but *NOT REQUIRED* on school buses**

COVID-19 PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

- Coronavirus disease 2019 commonly referred to as COVID-19 is a disease requiring exclusion from school under 25 Tex. Admin. Code § 97.7.
- Advantage Academy shall exclude from school any student, teacher or staff member having or suspected of having COVID-19.
- Exclusion shall continue until the readmission criteria for the conditions are met (*see below*.)
- Isolation and quarantine help protect the public by preventing exposure to people who have a contagious disease. ISOLATION (10 days) keeps someone who tested positive for COVID-19 away from others, even in their own home. QUARANTINE (14 days) keeps someone who was in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 away from others.
- Close contact is defined as any person within 6 feet of a positive or lab-confirmed case for a cumulative 15 minutes, regardless of mask wearing, or having direct contact (touching, hugging, kissing, sharing drinking/eating utensils, blocking, defending, tackling); or if an infected person sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on another person. Please note: use of face coverings and plastic dividers are not considered in determining close contacts. Contacts of contacts do not need to quarantine.
- If an individual who has been in a school is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must notify its local health department, in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, including confidentiality requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Upon receipt of information that any student, teacher or school staff at a school is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must submit a report to the Texas Department of State Health Services via an online form. The report must be submitted each Monday for the prior seven days (Monday-Sunday).

Protocols for Students, Teachers and School Staff

Students will receive temperature scans when arriving on campus. Students who arrive with a fever of 100° Fahrenheit (37.8° Celsius) or higher will be isolated and then excluded from school. Parents will be called to pick up their child. Students who begin feeling symptomatic during the school day will be sent to the campus nurse and assessed. **Teachers** and **School Staff** who arrive at school experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should not enter the school. The campus nurse can be contacted to provide non-entry testing. Teachers and school staff who begin feeling symptomatic during the school day will be required to receive COVID-19 testing. For confirmed COVID-19 cases, the school shall notify close contacts that occurred 48 hours before the onset of symptoms. The day after exposure is always day 1 of quarantine.

Close contact of a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case:

- If tested, isolate before, during, and until the test result comes back.
- *If POSITIVE:* At least 10 days isolation (from day of test); notify close contacts.
- *If NEGATIVE:* Complete 14 days of quarantine from the last date of exposure to the case, regardless of negative result.
- If COVID testing is not done or available, quarantine for 14 days.

Persons who are clinically diagnosed or have any of the following:

Cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new changes in sense of smell or taste, fever, chills, rigors (a sudden feeling of cold with shivering accompanied by a rise in temperature, often with copious sweating, especially at the onset or height of a fever), myalgia, headache, sore throat, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, congestion/runny nose, or fatigue AND no alternate diagnosis AND No known close contact to a COVID-19 case.

- Will be referred for COVID testing (isolate before, during, and until test results come back.)
- If POSITIVE: At least 10 days isolation (from first day of symptoms); notify close contacts.
- If NEGATIVE: (test must be molecular/PCR).
- If COVID testing is not done or available, isolate for at least 14 days.

For suspect cases only, quarantining of close contacts may be delayed up to two (2) days after meeting clinical criteria to allow for the return of molecular/PCR test results or alternative more likely diagnosis.

- If a molecular/PCR test result is not available within two (2) days of meeting clinical criteria, close contacts should be quarantined as described below.
- If a molecular/PCR test results negative, close contacts do not need to be quarantined. The symptomatic person should not return to school until they are symptom-free for 24 hours.

Positive or Lab-Confirmed COVID-19 Case:

- The school shall notify close contacts.
- Individual must meet readmission criteria before returning to school. See *Readmission Criteria for COVID-19* below.

Quarantine for fully vaccinated close contacts:

Close contacts who meet all of the following criteria do not need to quarantine but should still watch for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure and follow all prevention guidance.

- Are fully vaccinated at the time of exposure, AND
- Have remained asymptomatic since exposure.

If fully vaccinated close contacts have symptoms, they should self-quarantine immediately for 10 days after symptom onset and get tested.

Bus Contact Tracing:

When contact tracing a bus, you have to quarantine the full 2 rows before and after the case (both sides of the aisle). If the case is in the first 2 rows of the bus, the driver must also quarantine.

Readmission Criteria for COVID-19:

Students, teachers or school staff who were symptomatic with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 infection, isolation and precautions can be discontinued 10 days after symptom onset and after resolution of fever for at least 24 hours and improvement of other symptoms.

Students, teachers or school staff who are infected but asymptomatic (never develop symptoms) isolation and precautions can be discontinued 10 days after the positive test.

****Resolution of fever means fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications. Fever is a temperature of 100° Fahrenheit (37.8° Celsius) or higher.***

The school may require proof of documentation (test result or doctor's note) affirming that the student, teacher or staff member has tested negative for COVID-19 before readmission to school.